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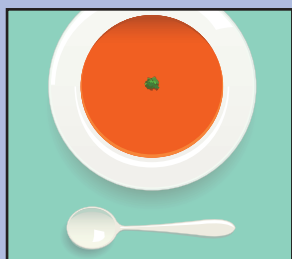
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New Mayor poised for balancing act in office

By JAN WILLMS

When new Mayor Chris Coleman was making the rounds on the campaign trail last fall, he often told a story about his very first job experience. He worked busing dishes for House of Wong restaurant on Larpenteur Avenue, and one of his first days on the job he dropped a large tray of glasses.

The incident, not escaping notice by Mr. Wong himself, drew a stern warning from the owner. Coleman said he was told by Mr. Wong that if he dropped any more glasses, his very first job would be history.

A number of years have passed, but Coleman may be looking at his current position as mayor of St. Paul as a not-too-dissimilar task. But rather than balancing glasses, he is balancing issues and segments of his DFL party and different components of Saint Paul. He recently took some time to reflect on his 60 days in office and his hopes for the future of his city.

Transit-oriented development was a major theme during his campaign, and Coleman said that with the advent of light rail transit along University Avenue, he sees an opportunity to take the development to the next level, whether it pertains to business or retail or housing.

"There is a great opportunity to really use the Midway District for real economic development," Coleman said. "It serves as a kind of stimulus for the whole city."



New Mayor Chris Coleman said he has concerns for the small businesses along University that are fearful about the loss of customers during light rail construction, especially the smaller businesses that often feel they are not being heard. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Coleman said he has concerns for the small businesses along University that are fearful about the loss of customers during light rail construction, especially the smaller businesses that often feel they are not being heard.

"The Chamber of Commerce, in particular, has taken on

the exact issue of light rail transit and how small businesses want to be heard," Coleman said. "The Chamber has particularly taken a look at what Salt Lake City did."

Coleman said that Salt Lake learned from building its first line and corrected any mistakes.

"On the second line, they made a commitment that no one would go out of business while it was being built, and they were successful on meeting that goal."

Addressing development along University Avenue, Coleman commented on a business like CVS Pharmacy, recently built on the corner of Snelling and University, "That's one of the busiest intersections in the state of Minnesota," he said. "It will be a critical stop on the light rail line in a few years. CVS is a building that doesn't really relate to either one of those factors."

Coleman emphasized the importance of focusing block by

block on the building along the Central Corridor.

"We need to make a determination about what kind of development we will have along University Avenue," he said.

"Developers make their decisions based on a number of factors," Coleman added. He said that Brian McMahon, executive director of University United, has made a point that the area is under-utilized.

"We're not really taking advantage of the opportunities along University," Coleman said. "Brian is assuming the role the city should have been playing for the last decade. The city needs to step up and play more with that planning function."

Regarding the fact that the Como Zoo and Conservatory recently missed out on being part of the Governor's bonding bill

"There is a great opportunity to really use the Midway District for real economic development. It serves as a kind of stimulus for the whole city."

- Mayor Chris Coleman

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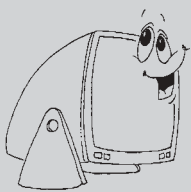
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Midway Como in a Minute

Compiled by Jane McClure

Dubliner granted sound variance for St. Pat's

An often-controversial request for a St. Patrick's Day party quietly won St. Paul City Council approval this year. The Dubliner Pub, 2162 University Av., was granted a sound level variance to allow live music between noon and midnight March 16 and 17.

No one appeared at a February 1 City Council public hearing on the request. In the past the Dubliner has run into opposition from neighboring businesses, with complaints about past years' noise, litter, and blocking of traffic and parking areas. City Council members seemed a bit surprised when no one spoke against the variance request.

The City Council approved the sound level variance but did attach several conditions. The Dubliner must provide continuous sound level monitoring, and provide the staff and sound measuring equipment. Amplifiers and speakers in the tent where the music is located need to be pointed away from an adjacent hotel. All music and public address systems must be turned off at midnight both nights.

The Dubliner will provide at least 10 satellite or portable restrooms and will pick up debris in the area.

means a small beauty salon will be allowed to open in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood.

Branson Builders sought the change in non-conforming use permit for 850 Hamline Av. The property is at Hamline and Hewitt avenues, in a two-story building. Most of the building is used for offices for the construction business. Two residential units are also in the building, which dates from 1913. It was built as a mixed-use structure.

The buildings owners want to convert some of the office space into a small beauty salon, with two stylists.

The Planning Commission Zoning Committee held a public hearing on the proposal in early February. The full Planning Commission recommended the change in non-conforming use February 10. The Planning Commission decision is final as it was not appealed to the St. Paul City Council within the mandatory 10-day appeal period.

The Planning Commission did put conditions on the new non-conforming use. Those conditions are:

*That the number of stylists in the salon be limited to two

*That hours of operation be 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 9 a.m.-noon on Saturday.

A non-conforming use is a land use that isn't in sync with a property's current zoning or neighborhood. It is typically a use that predates the current zoning code. It is allowed to remain in place with a permit, but that permit has to change if the use changes, as was the case at

Hamline and Hewitt.

The historic intent of a non-conforming use designation was to allow a use to remain in place, with an eye toward phasing it out later. However, recent changes in state law make it easier to replace or rebuild a non-conforming use and keep it in place over the long term.

Town House fined for underage sales

Sale of alcohol to two underage persons means Town House, 1415 University Av., must pay a fine, the St. Paul City Council decided February 1.

The violation occurred in December 2005, when the city was conducting a compliance check or "sting." It is the first violation at the University Avenue bar/nightclub.

According to city records, the bartender did check the identification of the two underage person but misread and miscalculated the ages of the two. Town House asked to have staff appear before the City Council to apologize and explain the violation.

The council didn't discuss the fine before approving it. A matrix is used to determine what level of fine a business pays. A fine is assessed for the first and second violations. On a third violation, a business's licenses can be suspended and the business closed for a time. On a fourth violation licenses can be revoked and a business shut down.

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Beauty salon gets OK for non-conforming use

A change in non-conforming use

Mayor

Continued from page 1

for the new legislative session, Coleman said that getting money for renovation for the zoo is one of his administration's top priorities.

"Como Zoo has twice as many visitors as the Minnesota Zoo, and they come from all over the region," he said. "Rep. Alice Houseman and Sen. Ellen Anderson are working hard to get money for that project."

With the recent concerns over closure of the Ford Plant, Coleman said he is not looking at possible redevelopment of the Ford site. "Our only focus is on preserving the Ford plant right now," he said.

"The city can play a role," he said, adding that although Saint Paul does not have the resources to rebuild, he believes that a partnership among the city, port authority and state can create a strategy that will help Ford make a commitment to its plant here well into the future.

At one time Coleman was president of District 7 Community Council. Over the years the District Councils have been threatened with extinction due to funding cuts.



Regarding the fact that the Como Zoo and Conservatory recently missed out on being part of the Governor's bonding bill for the new legislative session, Coleman said that getting money for renovation for the zoo is one of his administration's top priorities. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Coleman said the community council system is an extremely important part of the city, an extension of city hall into the neighborhoods.

"With all of our functions, given the state budget cuts, we're trying to do a lot more with a lot less," he said. "I am a very strong supporter of District Councils."

Coleman has been cited as a coalition builder. He said that he sees, first of all, the need to build a coalition along the University Avenue corridor that really brings in the African American and Asian communities and the peo-

ple who have been living there for generations, both big and small businesses.

"This is a classic example of where we need to come together to move Saint Paul forward," he said.

When asked what the biggest surprise of his new position as mayor has been, Coleman cited the intensity of the job.

"I have been running fast and furious since I was sworn in," he said. "There is a lot of energy and excitement around the city, and we need to tap into that."

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Whitaker Buick motors to new Forest Lake location

By JANE MCCLURE

Car buyers have fewer tires to kick in the Midway. At the end of February Whitaker Buick Jeep motored to a new location in Forest Lake, leaving Midway Chevrolet as University Avenue's lone new vehicle dealer. Whitaker staff drove away the vehicles and packed up the parts and service department in late February, with an eye toward opening in Forest Lake March 1.

In vehicle sales, it's location, location, location. Whitaker Buick President Steve Whitaker said that he needs to move the business to be with other motor vehicle dealers. The new business, in the former Novak Pontiac Buick and GMC Truck dealership, will be named Whitaker Buick-Pontiac-GMC. The Jeep franchise will be sold to other dealers.

"It's been a very emotional time for us," Whitaker said. His father William opened his car dealership in 1954. The Whitaker family bought Capital Jeep Eagle in 1990 and merged the dealerships.

University Avenue was once one of the Twin Cities auto rows, with more than a dozen new vehicle dealerships at its peak. Service stations, repair garages and used vehicles sale lots also prevailed here. But as the suburbs grew in the 1980s and 1990s, the dealerships began to move to larger sites in White Bear Lake, Inver Grove heights and other communities.

The exodus to the suburbs has hurt sales for those who stay in the city, said Steve Whitaker. He estimates that sales at Whitaker Buick dropped by half since 2000.

Whitaker's move follows Ron Saxon Ford, which left its longtime University Avenue location last fall. The Saxon family had sold new vehicles on University Avenue since 1936, but is still selling used vehicles here.

The Whitaker move leaves Midway Chevrolet as University's lone new vehicle dealer. Owner Tom Krebsbach notes his family has been selling vehicles here since 1922. "We don't want to move," he said. "We do very well here."

Moving would not only mean losing a longtime new and used sales center, Krebsbach notes it would also mean losing many of his business's service customers. Moving would also be difficult because of the distance requirements manufacturers put on new vehicle dealers.

At 83 years of age, Midway



At the end of February Whitaker Buick Jeep motored to a new location in Forest Lake, leaving Midway Chevrolet as University Avenue's lone new vehicle dealer. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Chevrolet is St. Paul's oldest new vehicle dealership. It is a business that has changed with changing times along University Avenue and in the city. One hundred years ago, St. Paul had just half a dozen auto dealers and repair garages. Compare that to the two dozen bicycle dealers, manufacturers and repair shops listed in directories.

By 1910 the first vehicle sales and repair businesses had opened in the Midway. Schmidt Auto Manufacturing Company was at 1642 University, just west of Snelling. It was time when a buyer could have the vehicle built at the same place it was purchased for.

But that would soon change as mass production of motor vehicles accelerated. At both ends of University Avenue in the 1910s, vehicles were manufactured.

Fords were built at 114 University, in a building that is still standing today. Willys-Overland cars were built at what is now Court International. Duesenberg autos were built in the Midway as well.

The number of new vehicle dealerships peaked after World War II, to about 14 businesses. The car culture took hold at that point, and University's reputation as St. Paul's auto row took shape as dealerships moved out of the downtown, Seven Corners and Grand Avenue neighborhoods.

There were thirteen dealerships in 1956, the year Al Saxon first opened his doors near University and Marion. Midway Chevrolet was already well established at 1389 University. Willys Jeeps, cars and trucks could be purchased at Sather Motors at 809 University. Studebakers were sold at Central Motor Company at 225 University. Kobb Motor Sales sold Nash autos at 654 University.

Harold Slawik's dealership sold Plymouths and Desotos at 1834 University, the corner of University and Fairview. Two other dealerships also sold Plymouths, Midtown Motors at 1223 University and Hetfield-Queenan at 1013 University.

You could buy a Mercury auto at Hassberg-Jones Motors Inc. at 1197 University. (Unlike other Mercury dealers, Hassberg-Jones didn't sell Lincolns, according to its advertisements.)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

"It's been a very emotional time for us."

- Whitaker Buick Owner Steve Whitaker, whose father William opened the dealership in 1954

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In 2004, the Midway Chamber of Commerce in a joint effort with the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce founded the Central Corridor Partnership, a business-led advocacy effort to promote the funding and development of the Central Corridor light rail transit line (LRT). The Partnership is made up of area businesses who share the belief that the most overdue idea for transportation in the Twin Cities is a light rail transit line that connects Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the Midway communities.

The Midway is a unique area whose business owners and residents take pride in where they choose to work and live. Why promote change and support the Central Corridor LRT?

In a 2003, 2004, and 2005 regional survey, metro area residents continued to list traffic congestion as the region's top problem, outpacing crime, education, and housing. Though Minnesota has always been considered a state that provides its residents with a high quality of life, we continue to rank lower and lower on transportation.

Some of this translates into concerns for businesses whose goods are not being moved quickly or efficiently. It also means that the average Twin Cities resident spends 48 hours/year stuck in traffic. And, increasing congestion hurts our overall ability to attract new jobs and support new industries, like the developing bioscience corridor in the West Midway.

It has been proven nationwide that light rail transit is an efficient, cost-effective and ecological way to move people and goods. Light rail transit would bring additional access to jobs, access to businesses, while expanding economic opportunities. It is both a transportation vehicle and economic engine.

There will be 1,000,000 new residents in the Twin Cities by 2030. That is a reality and one that may be conservative. At least a quarter of these residents are likely to seek housing near transit. There are housing developments underway in the Midway along University Avenue, such as the Johnson Bros. site, additional units at Emerald Gardens and a new Episcopal Homes project at Lexing-



Guest Column

By RICK BEESON

Why support the Central Corridor LRT?

ton.

For existing businesses along the Hiawatha LRT, housing projects have brought new and exciting opportunities to small businesses. Caps Grill, at 50th and Hiawatha for example, has seen a 15% increase in revenue since the opening of the line.

Caps founder and owner, Don Mattson, attributes the increase in revenue to the exposure his restaurant has received from the light rail. He has a steady flow of downtown Minneapolis business people that ride the light rail to his restaurant for lunch. He even has an agreement with some of the larger corporations, such as Target, who bring out-of-town clientele to his restaurant on the light rail in larger groups and then he bills them directly.

This is an excellent example of the benefits LRT can bring both business and residents, and it will provide the same opportunity in the Midway.

Between December 2004—when LRT service to the airport and the Mall of America opened—through November 2005, the Hiawatha LRT carried 7.8 million passengers. Ridership is 58.2 percent ahead of pre-construction estimates, and now exceeds that of the region's most-used bus line, Route 5, linking Brookdale, downtown Minneapolis and the Mall of America. 26,000 riders utilize the Hiawatha LRT daily.

According to Metropolitan Council's projections, 43,000 people will ride the Central Corridor LRT in 2030. That's one of the reasons that I want my business to be linked to the regional transit system and why I am working to ensure that the Central Corridor is the next major transportation investment in the Twin Cities.

As a business owner on University Avenue, I do recognize that special steps need to be taken to make sure that the construction process employed by this large proj-

ect respects the needs of our many University Avenue small businesses. To address this, the Partnership has formed the Central Corridor Business Advisory Council (CCBAC). The CCBAC will serve as the voice for the business community and address concerns during planning and implementation phases of the Central Corridor light rail transit

line.

Objectives include generating recommendations that will ensure a design that reflects the needs of business as well as the community and transit riders; exploring resource provisions to impacted businesses (this may include utilizing programs of local colleges and universities to educate businesses, providing financial planning, investigating grant/loan opportunities, creating a marketing plan for use during the construction period, to name a few).

This is a critical component to ensure that local businesses and their employees are heard and supported throughout the construction phase of this important enhancement to transportation in our Twin Cities.

It's not uncommon to hear naysayers louder than supporters, to see signs rather than the strategic lobbying efforts for funding at the Capitol; however, it is clear that there are countless supporters for this project, in the Midway and throughout the region. In fact, the Partnership has over 1000 individuals and 500 businesses in their database of supporters. To add your name to the list, simply call 651-265-2782 or e-mail priscilla@saintpaulchamber.com.

The Central Corridor LRT is the best solution to the Midway and our region's growing transportation challenges, benefiting Midway businesses, workers and communities with a positive economic and social impact.

Let's get the Central Corridor LRT built and make the Midway an even better place to work and live.

Learn more about the Central Corridor Project by logging onto www.centralcorridorpartnership.org.

(Rick Beeson, President of Park Midway Bank and Co-Chair of the Central Corridor Partnership.)

What is the role of a stepmother at a wedding? I have pondered this in earlier columns, but the question has never been answered to my satisfaction. This question has come up because my stepdaughter, Krista, is getting married. We can take that question further and ask, what role does a stepmother have at a wedding shower. Some of you may think this is trivial, but many of us stepmothers think not. We have faced countless family events with trepidation, knowing we will be feeling out of place, like a fifth wheel.

Last month I attended Krista's wedding shower in Laguna Beach, California. I arrived two days early, so we could go shopping for wedding shoes and drink champagne in a restaurant, celebrating the bride. I felt it was important to do that because she bought her wedding dress alone. She missed out on the "ooing" and "ah-ing" of her mother, close friends, siblings, etc. These little times of joy can bring so much happiness.

Where was her mother? She's against the marriage, so has refused to participate in the wedding plans. She has chosen not to talk to her daughter. They have had words.

When planning my trip, I asked Krista to invite her mother-in-law-to-be to join us for shopping. Sara happily accepted. She has two boys, so she will never have the wedding dress experience. Well, neither will I since Krista already bought her wedding dress, but we could still have the wedding shoe experience.

Krista has lucked out by getting the best in-laws in the world. They have treated Krista as their own, and have not interfered with her wedding plans. Sara, a very beautiful, young woman in her fifties is a family law attorney. She has long chestnut brown hair, laughing eyes, and abundant energy. She's great fun! All day long she deals



Starting Over

By SHERRI MOORE

The wedding shower and the stepmother

with people's divorces, and sees people at their worst. Sara has managed to maintain her belief in marriage, and struggles to interject some degree of civility for her clients. After a day of struggles, an evening of shopping for wedding shoes could only be fun.

When we met to shop, I mentioned that we needed to find Krista a skirt for the shower. Sara knew the shop to go to. We proceeded with a solid hour of trying on outfits. Krista was a good sport at trying on all the outfits Sara and I found. Finally, Krista settled on a lovely white cotton short skirt, a white tank top and a sage green, crocheted short-sleeved sweater. Sara also picked out a pretty green bracelet. When I went to pay for it with her father's credit card, Sara asked me to let her pay. She explained that she hadn't had the opportunity to shop with Krista and really wanted to buy for her. I agreed, and said I'd pay for the wedding shoes. Krista was thrilled to have us both fawning over her.

We took a dinner break, drank champagne, and ate salads and appetizers at a restaurant in the mall. I toasted Krista with a heartfelt toast about being the fourth bride to wear my grandmother's wedding bracelet. Sara toasted Krista with wonderful words for a bright future and a lovely wedding.

Later, we bought her wedding shoes within minutes of the mall store's closing. Her silver shoes were a perfect accent to her wedding dress.

Already, I was feeling pretty special. I started thinking about the stepmother's role. Was it to fit in wherever there was a need? There are plenty of mothers who, for a variety of reasons, can't or don't handle all the details of a wedding. Some brides, like Krista, have demanding jobs and could use the help. A stepmother's role could be more of a

benevolent aunt, or perhaps a fairy godmother. I have to say, Sara's got the role of fairy godmother here!

Later, Krista and I discussed the next day's wedding shower. She was worried her mother wouldn't come, would come, wouldn't be polite, or would make outrageous remarks. We talked about how to diffuse the situation. I urged diplomacy. We enlisted her aunts; her father's sisters to help. They'd sit with her mother, and attempt to keep her calm. I offered not to go, thinking perhaps my presence would only add tension. Krista said she really wanted me there, to meet Sara's family and friends who had been so kind to her. Naturally, those words were music to my ears, so I thought the best thing would be for me to go and hang out in the background as much as possible.

Saturday afternoon was a beautiful, sunny, warm California day. The skies were clear blue, there was a soft breeze off the ocean to keep the air fresh. We arrived at the guard's house in front of the gated community (aren't they locking up the wrong people?), and joked a bit with the nice man. Krista was visibly nervous, but I assured her everything would be fine. (I always say that in the face of impending doom.)

Happily, I was right! Everything was fine with one little exception. After a lovely lunch of salads and fruit, we

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I was recently on a spring family vacation to San Francisco. The beautiful weather was a nice break from the Minnesota winter doldrums. Just north of the city is a giant redwood forest called Muir Woods. It happens to be the place where a portion of one of the Star Wars movies was shot. Standing among these giant, benevolent Redwoods is peaceful and also very humbling.

I find myself thinking about these trees at the oddest moments – when I need a moment of enlightenment and clarity; when I observe the beautiful and intricate parts of life coming together. Many of the trees growing there are over a thousand years old. Imagine that. Some five hundred years before Christopher Columbus took a boat ride across the Atlantic and about nine hundred years before Como Park existed, some of these trees were in their infancy.

From the Como Zoo web



New to the Neighborhood

By NATE HAMILTON

Another day in paradise

site: “[In] 1897 Como Zoo is founded when the City of St. Paul receives a gift of three deer. A pasture is fenced for them in Como Park.” Lots of changes are taking place at the park more recently; not the least of which is the ongoing construction of the Tropical Encounters exhibit. I understand there are other major renovations on the way. With the completion last fall of the “Hodge Podge Park” in Como Town, I think Como Park is going to definitely be the place to be come this spring. But to me what may be more en- dearing is the recent announce-

ment that they had a new baby giraffe born here.

Well, I was actually digging around this month for information on the upcoming Como High School talent show. I wasn't able to find out much – except that it is Friday, March 24th at 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium. The organizer, Mrs. Chong Thao, is an English teacher. I did read some engaging thoughts from her teacher's web page. She writes: “I believe that most if not all problems stem from fear and ignorance and that education is our tool to demystify the “other”

and our own fears and ignorance. Understanding, then, can be cultivated...To have a voice is to have identity, thus power.” So, I'm thinking I would really like to go to this talent show – to sort of get a flavor for what the arts are like at Como High; to hear each student's unique voice.

Speaking of the arts, I took my son Jonah to a concert last weekend at Como Park Lutheran Church. It was given by my friend Jonathan Rundman, whom I've mentioned here before. The concert was a benefit for a whole host of causes, including Habitat for

Humanity. Jonah was as delighted with the band as I was, and we both found it pretty hilarious when Jonathan got a frog in his throat and temporarily lost his voice mid way through his third song. He recovered quite nicely, though.

While I'm well off the subject, here's another somewhat random thought: my son thinks I am the strongest and wisest person in the universe. Now, I'll not have any of you telling him otherwise – at least for the next fifteen years or so. But every now and then, I think it might be good for young Jonah to see dad fail at something (kickball, especially). My parenting instructor tells me it is as important for our children to understand how we adults deal with failure and loss, as to see us achieve and win.

With all this in mind, now for some reason I find myself thinking about those old Redwood trees again.

Transportation, transit emerge as key issues for city-county legislative agendas

By JANE MCCLURE

Transportation and transit have emerged as key issues as the St. Paul City Council and Ramsey County Board finalize their legislative agendas. Funding for Central Corridor and a push for a Constitutional amendment for dedicated transit and transportation funding are topping elected officials' lists for the upcoming legislative session.

2006 is a short session, so local units of government are focusing on fewer policy, budget and bonding requests than in the past. Much of what local elected officials will be doing this year is supporting priorities from

statewide or regional groups, such as the Minnesota League of Cities and Association of Minnesota Counties.

Legislators have made it clear they want to adjourn the session on time, said Nick Riley of Ramsey County's intergovernmental relations staff. “We're being mindful of that and are submitting fewer Ramsey County items.” The county has passed several individual legislative items and is in the process of finishing its full legislative agenda. The city has adopted its bonding, policy and budget and support agendas, but is still adding items as the session nears.

One trend emerging is more partnerships and mutual support of legislation. St. Paul and Minneapolis council members met February 16 to review a first-ever joint legislative agenda for the Twin Cities. The two councils will each vote on the agenda prior to the start of session.

St. Paul City Council and Ramsey County Board members met February 22 to review their agendas and discuss ways to work together. Issues city and county officials share as priorities in 2006 are familiar ones—preservation of state funding for various local government programs, support of increased crim-

inal penalties for several different types of crimes, opposition to the phase-out of limited market value and opposition to levy limits. Both the city and county will be involved in discussion of how the state regulates local government's condemnation or eminent domain taking of property.

Riley predicts an on-time end to the session. “I think there's enough of a hangover from last year that this session will wrap up on time,” he said. Last year state lawmakers went into special session, forcing a partial shutdown of state government.

Bonding requests are also

fewer and more targeted in 2006. At the top of its bonding list, Ramsey County is seeking \$50 million for Central Corridor, the light rail or busway connection proposed between the two downtowns. Metropolitan Council proposed \$10 million. Governor Tim Pawlenty's bonding list recommends only \$2.5 million.

Riley said the \$50 million is sought because the county needs to start banking local and state dollars for a match for future federal funding. The project has a cost estimated at \$840 million if light rail is built.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Starting Over

Continued from page 4

were instructed to move our chairs to the grassy area of the yard to watch Krista open her presents. I followed the minister's wife and the other ladies at my table, and moved my chair to the side, behind the presents. I noticed an empty chair was placed next to me, but figured another guest would be seated there. Much to my surprise and chagrin, Krista sat down next to me, behind a large mound of presents piled on the lawn, directly across from her mother, seated at a table just a few yards away!! I thought about moving, but it would've looked funny, so I stayed. Krista opened her wonderful gifts and was so appreciative.

If looks could kill I would've been skewered on a post and hung out in the town square.

Throughout the long hour of gift opening, I smiled politely and even joked a little. I thoroughly enjoyed the view from high on the hill, overlooking the ocean and listened to the sound of the surf hitting the rocks. The event was wrapped up with lots of smiles and warm wishes for the wedding.

Everything was great!! Krista's mother behaved, Krista was beautiful, I looked good in my best suit, and Sara was as beautiful as ever. We all had a wonderful time.

Yes, I am fortunate to have forged a loving relationship with my stepdaughter. We have both worked hard to get to this place. On the return flight, I pondered again, the role of a stepmother.

Perhaps it is to fill in wherever and whenever another mother is needed. Could it be as simple as that?

(Sherri Moore is a freelance writer and former resident of the Como neighborhood. She welcomes your comments and can be reached at sherrimoore92@msn.com.)



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Flannery Construction's new headquarters a testament to environmental sustainability

By JANE MCCLURE

One of the Midway area's newest buildings may also be its most environmentally sustainable. From the solar panels on its roof to the heated floors of its ground-level work spaces and shop, Flannery Construction's new headquarters at 1375 St. Anthony Avenue features innovative construction and design, as well as features meant to highlight green building technology.

A large crowd jammed the new building for its February 23 open house. Many toured the building and learned about its "green" features. "Everybody on the team was just so proud to work on this project," said architect Peter Kramer of Roark Kramer Kosowski Design.

Company President Gerry

Flannery said the new building reflects the company's commitment to getting the best efficiencies out of its new building. The building will serve as a model for other projects and will be available for tours.

Family-owned Flannery Construction has been in business for 30 years. The company does residential, commercial and industrial new construction and renovation of existing structures. One new service the company will unveil in the weeks ahead is a professional maintenance and repair or handyman service.

"Stay tuned for that," Gerry Flannery said.

About 50 percent of Flannery's business is with non-profit corporations, such as community development corporations and

housing providers. Several of the city's non-profit developers were represented at the open house.

Non-profit and for-profit businesses could use green design and technology to reduce operating costs, as Flannery will in the years ahead. The goal in designing and building the new headquarters was to incorporate as much green technology and sustainable construction programs while at the same time have a seven to eight-year payback period, Jamey Flannery said. She oversees communications and is service coordinator for the business.

Mayor Chris Coleman said the new building reflects Flannery's commitment to the city and the environment. The mayor recently signed a U.S. mayors' climate control agreement, to commit the city to reducing "greenhouse gas" emissions. He thanked the company for leading the way in green construction.

While using green methods did increase building construction costs by about 6 percent at the front end, the result is a building that is 37 percent more energy-efficient. The payback period is estimated at seven to eight years.

The building is LEED-certified, meaning it meets a rigorous set of national standards for energy-efficient and sustainable design. Kevin Flynn, an architect



From the solar panels on its roof to the heated floors of its ground-level work spaces and shop, Flannery Construction's new headquarters at 1375 St. Anthony Avenue features innovative construction and design, as well as features meant to highlight green building technology. Above, architect Peter Kramer with owner Gerry Flannery poses in front of cubicals and desks made of recycled doors and other wood products. (Photo by Terry Faust)

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



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It's mighty good to breathe!

Now is the season of bothersome respiratory infections, causing all kinds of miserable symptoms, including coughing. As you probably know, the common cold usually resolves within 10 days, however the cough can sometimes linger for 6-8 weeks.

If you have a cough that doesn't resolve, or that is not accompanied by the other typical cold symptoms (runny nose, body aches, etc.) then you might want to see your doctor. While a respiratory infection is often the cause of an acute cough, a chronic cough can be caused by a number of different medical problems.

Causes for a chronic cough include allergies, asthma, heartburn, and medication reaction. It can sometimes be difficult to determine which of these problems is causing your cough.

Allergies can start at any time during your life. Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, increased mucous production, and itchy eyes. Causes are as varied as you can imagine: dust, pollen, pets, carpet fibers, building materials. If you move, change work places, make home changes, or get a new pet and then develop a cough, allergies are one cause of a cough that come to mind.

Allergies can be treated by avoidance of the allergen (the item that causes the allergy).

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

The common cough that lingers

There are also medicines that can help. Some people take oral antihistamines on a daily basis to keep their allergies in check. When symptoms are primarily nasal in origin (mucous, post-nasal drip) nasal sprays can work to reduce your symptoms.

When you have asthma, your lungs respond to irritants by becoming inflamed and constricted. This makes it difficult for you to exhale air, and you may feel short of breath. Common triggers for asthma are allergies, cold air, and sometimes exercise. Exposure to your own or others cigarette smoke can also trigger asthma. And—for some reason—exposure to cockroaches (or their poop) makes many folks have problems with asthma.

For some, the only symptom of asthma is a cough. Often this cough is worse at night, or after exposure to one of their triggers. Asthma can be mild or severe, you can have symptoms every day or only a few times a month.

Treatment for asthma includes—first of all—avoiding the triggers. If medication is needed, inhalers are often used. You might need to use an inhaler very rarely, or daily. For exercise induced asthma, use of the medicine before exercising will allow you to do your good-for-you physical activity.

Severe asthma exacerbations require prompt attention and sometimes hospitalization. If you have asthma, you should have regular visits with your health care provider to ensure that your treatment is adequate and to develop a plan for what to do in case of worsening symptoms.

Now we get to heartburn—this is one that surprises people. Most folks think that heartburn means a burning sensation in the center of the chest. Often that is the case. However, lots of people have all kinds of odd symptoms from heartburn. One of those symptoms is a chronic, nagging cough.

There are several over the

counter and prescription medications that treat heartburn. As with most ailments, eliminating the cause is preferable to medicine because all medications have side effects and—of course—financial costs.

So what should you avoid do to avoid heartburn? It is different for everyone but the following foods commonly aggravate heartburn: spicy and greasy foods, garlic, alcohol, peppermint (that might surprise you), caffeine, acidic foods (tomatoes are frequently a culprit).

Being overweight, overeating at meals, and cigarette smoking can also cause heartburn. Too much emotional stress may result in an over-production of stomach acid, making heartburn worse. So...I know, easier said than done...reducing the stress in your life is a great idea.

Finally, coughing as a medication complication is common for people who use a particular class of high blood pressure med-

icines. The class of medicines is called ACE Inhibitors. Common names for these medicines are lisinopril, monopril, enalapril. If you notice a cough after starting a new medication, mention this to your doctor.

Allergies, asthma, heartburn ... each of these topics deserve their own articles. If you have been bothered by a cough that doesn't seem to go away, consider these causes, and discuss your symptoms with your health care provider.

I hope you enjoy the last few months of winter free of coughs and colds. A final caution - if you have a fever and sore throat, especially without other cold symptoms, get tested for strep throat. There is a lot of it going around right now.

Remember to have fun. Stay happy and healthy.

(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@aplacotemember.com.)

Legislative agendas

Continued from page 5

St. Paul and Minneapolis city councils are supporting the Central Corridor request, calling it the region's top priority. It is on a joint legislative agenda the two councils adopted in February.

The county is also seeking \$12.5 million for the conversion of Union Depot into a multi-modal transit hub, to match a \$50 million federal contribution received last year. The city is supporting that request. It wasn't included in Pawlenty's bonding proposal.

Nonetheless Ramsey County, which is also supporting a num-

ber of suburban road and regional transit projects, did better than St. Paul in the governor's bonding package. None of St. Paul's six proposals, which the City Council adopted last fall, made it onto Pawlenty's list. The council is now winnowing down some requests, which include Ordway Theater, Great River Park and bioscience development.

The city's top bonding priority remains \$12 million for Ordway Theater improvements, followed by \$10 million for Pierce Butler's extension to I-35E; \$12 million for the first phase of the Great River Park; \$10 million for Como Zoo improvements; \$7.5 million for Union Depot reuse as a transit hub and \$3.7 million for development of a bioscience corridor in the South St. Anthony Park-West Midway areas.

"I think there's enough of a hangover from last year that this session will wrap up on time."

- Nick Riley, Ramsey County's intergovernmental relations staff

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earmarked for public transit and no more than 60 percent for highways. Currently about 54 percent of MVET dollars go to the state's general fund.

The St. Paul City Council unanimously supported the Constitutional amendment February 15. Ramsey County Board approved a similar resolution in January. The 2005 Minnesota Legislature passed a Constitutional amendment to be placed on the November 2006 ballot.

City and county officials are asking that the language proposed in 2005 not be changed. The ballot question was the only part of a 2005 House and Senate-approved transit and transportation package to survive the governor's veto pen.

Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega, who chairs the county's Regional Rail Author-

ity, said passing the MVET Constitutional amendment is "critically important." Ramsey County is seeking \$50 million for the Central Corridor project, as well as lesser amounts for the Union Depot multi-modal transportation hub project and the Rush Line and Red Rock transit corridors.

Support of MVET is also one

of 16 items on the St. Paul-Minneapolis legislative agenda. Both cities are also asking that funding for Central Corridor, a proposed light rail line or busway between the two downtowns, be considered a top regional priority.

Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen chairs St. Paul's Ad Hoc Legislative Advisory Com-

mittee. He said having the state's two largest cities supporting a dedicated funding source for transit and transportation "sends a very powerful statement" to state lawmakers. He said that dedicating all of the MVET funds to transit and transportation provides stability for both needs, but especially for mass transit.

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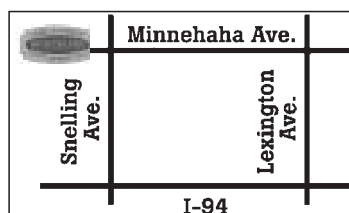
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15th Annual Home and Garden Show turns attention to home improvements, gardening

By DEBORAH BROTZ

Just as spring turns people's thoughts to what's fresh and new, they start thinking about home improvements and gardening. And what could be better than talking to local businesses and contractors who work in their neighborhood.

This year, Sparc, a non-profit community development corporation, presents the 15th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show at Crossroads Elementary School, 543 Front Ave., on Sat., March 18. Expanded workshops on energy-saving improvements, windows, gardening, kitchen design, color trends, pavers, and more will be held from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The Exhibit Hall features local home improvement contractors/products, tree/garden experts, financing options, senior resources, and Q & A with Ramsey County Master Gardeners from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. There is free admission and parking.

Before North End Area Revitalization (NEAR) merged with H-MARC to form Sparc, H-MARC held the Greater Midway Home & Garden Show.

"It was a tradition H-MARC started which fit into their mission to connect people with contractors," said Beth Hyser, coordinator of this year's Greater Midway Home & Garden Show. "They developed some grant and loan programs. They were incentives for folks to keep fixing their



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homes up."

The show has changed over the years.

"It has evolved from the very early years of being housing policy oriented to being consumer home improvement how-to oriented," said Hyser. "People can learn how to do it in the workshop and who can do it for you."

While they used to have a keynote speaker at the show,

they've gotten away from that.

"We're a show for real people who want to do things," said Hyser. "Maybe someone just wants new flooring and countertops. That's more attainable for a lot of folks. We'll show you how to remodel your kitchen without breaking the bank. We're the longest running community show in St. Paul."

While kitchen remodeling and the gardening workshops

have been popular in the past, people may have to make choices between workshops they want to attend due to overlapping scheduled times.

"We have seven different workshops that are only run once," said Hyser. "The workshops weren't such a draw until we started renting space. Now, we're up to seven. I keep elbowing the school to give me more room so we can either repeat workshops or offer more. I'd love to repeat them."

With most workshops drawing between 30-50 people per workshop, Hyser thinks it's because people want to learn how to do things themselves.

"They want the knowledge with their home improvement dollars," she said. "They really want to stretch those dollars as far as they can. The show is sponsored by a community group that does not have a vested interest. People can get a neutral opinion because we're not trying to sell them a particular thing or only one way to do it."

Attendance at the show has steadily grown.

"The year I came in 1995, 80 people attended the show," said Hyser. "The first five years, 100 to 200 people came. Now, we're consistently getting 350 and up. One year we had over 1,000."

This year, Hyser expects about 400 people.

"We'd love to have more," she said. "We want everybody to come out. Last year was the first year we had seven workshops. We want to continue that again this year. We kept favorites and added on new things."

One of the show's advantages is that people can get good advice from someone who is not vested in the industry.

"Putting new windows in is not cost efficient," said Hyser. "Windows are the slowest payback. If people are doing it expressly for the energy they're going to save, they should look into how to make the old ones work as good as new ones."

People can retrofit the old

window with a spring system, which costs about \$100 a window.

"You lose a lot of energy under the trim," said Hyser. "You can fill that pocket with insulation."

The show offers a window restoration workshop, "Energy Enhancements for Old Windows," from 9 a.m.-10 a.m., with Paul Schmidt, who teaches in St. Paul Public Schools Community Education. People can learn how to repair and weatherstrip the original windows in their home.

"He was so sick of hearing tales of woe," said Hyser. "People did not know what their options are."

With the average Midway house age in the teens and '20s, companies that sell windows would be replacing wood windows with vinyl.

"You should only replace windows because they don't fit well or are rotten but not for energy reasons," said Hyser. "At \$350 for a window in a box and someone to install that, it puts the cost at \$400-\$500 for a window. It's an enormous investment for most people to do that."

With housing values having appreciated greatly in the last 15 years and new families moving in, people are doing home improvements to turn their house into their dream home. The home improvements that will give you the best return when it comes time to sell the house are kitchens and bathrooms.

"Kitchens are number one, and bathrooms are number two," said Eric Oberg, broker for Eos Realty who is also a licensed builder for Oberg Construction & Development LLC. "If anyone is going to put money into their house in terms of remodeling, that's where they should put their money. In general, you get the largest return in investment in kitchen and baths."

Oberg thinks housing values have increased in the Hamline-Midway area because it's an up and coming neighborhood.

"In the last few years, property values have increased," he said. "It's a fairly affordable place for young couples to move into. A lot of value can be attributed to improvements they're doing in the area such as the proposed rail line. People see that as a possibility in the future and view it as a pretty good neighborhood because of that."

Oberg says Como is just a great place to live.

"It's seen a lot of improvement," he said. "A lot of people are putting additions on their homes. A lot of neighbors tore off their roof and put in a second story. People like its proximity to Como Park and shopping in Roseville. People like the idea of being close to things but are still in the city."

By far, the home improvement homeowners can do which doesn't cost too much but which will enhance the selling price of their home is painting.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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The Food Snob

Hoa Bien is the "Little Engine That Could" of Vietnamese restaurants. It has never achieved the fame of Mai Village, nor the 'best kept secret' status of Tai Hoa, nor the passionate following of Saigon – all three just down the street on University Avenue.

That's a shame, because Hoa Bien has reliably served some of the best Vietnamese soups and stir-fries in St. Paul for a long time. It was just a handful of tables in a crumbling old building on University, just west of Lexington, but a real refuge on cold days when nothing but hot soup would do. And on one memorable occasion when I was restricted to clear fluids in advance of a certain invasive medical procedure, two bowls of Hoa Bien's broth kept me going for nearly 24 hours.

Now there is a new Hoa Bien, just a few steps from the old one, right on the corner of Lexington and University. It seems almost as large, if not as fancy, as the expanded Mai Village. As we drove up, the Bachelor said: "Does University Avenue really need two Pho palaces?"

After a meal in this large but modest space, I say yes. I do miss the old Hoa Bien, especially the manageable menu and prompt service. But just because I loved the caterpillar doesn't mean I can't appreciate the butterfly. At the new place, your choices have increased exponentially, including the opportunity to cook meat and seafood on a portable grill right at your table. I chose squid and beef, which came with rice paper spring roll wrappers, a bowl of warm water in which to soak them, and a garden's worth of lettuce and fresh herbs. The grilling, soaking and assembling process was messy and distracting, but gave the Bachelor plenty of fodder for wisecracks. If my appetite had allowed, I would have ordered the seafood clear noodle soup, my favorite Hoa Bien dish. Instead we sampled flan and a layered concoction of coconut milk, gelatinous green strips and sweet red beans. It was both tasty and dramatic.

The new Hoa Bien hasn't hit its stride yet. Service was slow and disorganized. But the food came out as fresh and appetizing as always, and by the time we left, every table was filled. You won't see a koi pond at Hoa Bien, but smiling faces and delicious food more than make up for that – at least for me.

The Bachelor

The thought of walking up to an elegantly set dinner table and, with one grand swipe of my massive arm, sweeping everything that's been so carefully laid upon it to the floor can at times be almost irresistible. Granted, I am a man, so there is typically no rhyme or reason behind lusting for such a senseless, destructive act. We fellows just like to see things go crash.

Yet, there are times when I would be more than justified to ruin yet another dinner party with my flailing arms. Take for example, those splendid affairs when the table is so choked with saucers, plates, butter dishes, salad plates, napkins, forks, salad forks, dessert forks, spoons, bread baskets, wine glasses, water



Without Reservations

Hoa Bien unveils new home on University

glasses, table tents – you get the point—that you can't hardly reach across the table without ending up with a sleeve smeared with hummus and an elbow soaked in merlot....back comes my sweeping arm!

Although it was far from an elegant dinner affair, my lunch at Hoa Bien with the Snob and Cheapy certainly had my arm twitching. It all began when the Snob inexplicably decided to cook her own lunch. I know, I know.

In preparation, the waitress practically began piling my dishes into my lap to make room for the veritable kitchen the Snob would need. A giant bowl full of water, platters of raw this and that, and my favorite part, an immense portable grill just inches from my face. If it hadn't been for the threat of third-degree burns up and down my arm, the whole shebang could easily have ended up on the floor.

When I wasn't waving smoke out of my eyes and dodging splatters of hot grease, I found myself dining on a vegetable curry dish that was good enough to soothe my twitchy arm. The portions were plenty big, and the rice nice and sticky. The curry itself was a bit spicier than I'm used to, but I welcomed the distraction. Oh, man, I almost forgot. Our waitress! She certainly added a desperately needed bit of beauty to the cavernous, convention center-esque surroundings. If it wasn't for that big rock on her finger, I would have....oh who am I kidding. We both know I would have done nothing but silently pine for her, clutching the customer copy of the receipt she handed me to my massive chest night after night. Weep for me, Midway Como!

Back to the point of this review. So is Hoa Bien worth it? Sure. But if you're going to cook lunch at your table, you'd best be at least an arm's length away from me.

The Cheapskate

I wish you could all have been there for lunch with the Snob, the Bachelor, and me. (About half of you actually were, judging from the packed dining room and the line at the door.)

About 30 seconds into our visit, the Snob entered into her usual rapid-fire interrogation of the server, violating (at least in spirit) several international conventions on the treatment of suspects and prisoners. By now, the Bachelor and I know better than to intervene. We just fasten our seatbelts and enjoy the ride.

I did sit up and take notice, however, when I heard the server turn the tables on the Snob. "Do you like to cook?" she asked. And so it began ... I have left it to the Bachelor to describe the unfolding of that debacle.

As for me, I have this old-fashioned notion that when I go to a restaurant, other people should cook for me. So I was relieved when my meal, the \$12.95 Hoa Bien Special Seafood, came fully assembled and ready to eat.

The Hoa Bien Special Seafood is a dish I recommend. For my money they could omit that particleboard of the seafood world, fake crab meat. However, the crispy fried-noodle nest was filled with plenty of other genuine seafood – shrimp, scallops, and squid strips – and the piles of bright-green, crisp-tender broccoli, peapods and bok choy made me feel positively wholesome about eating out. The whole dish was drenched in a tasty oyster sauce that permeated the noodle nest and made it a lot more fun to eat that much broccoli.

Mind you, \$13 dollars is a lot to pay for lunch from the Cheapskate's point of view. It was more than enough food for two meals, but somehow I forgot to pack up my leftovers. In truth, I was temporarily unable to perform the Activities of Daily Living, overcome with exhaustion

from watching the Snob stir-fry, flip, dip, soak, stuff, wrap, fold and eat with one hand—while composing email on her BlackBerry device with the other.

For the record, I side with the Snobista and against the Bachelorissimo on the tri-color yellow/green/red soybean dessert swimming in iced coconut milk. I like it. It's different – not in the sense used by my Minnesota forebears ("That's ... different") but in the sense of "Hmm ... It's not what I usually eat out of a parfait glass, but it's strangely compelling."

However, when I returned the next day for another heapin' helpin' of Hoa Bien hospitality, accompanied by two far less ad-

venturous eaters, they did not echo the Snob's pronouncement that the bean dessert was "tasty and dramatic." There was drama, all right. But it was accompanied by a shudder and I think I heard the word "dreadful" in English and Slovak. There were faces of politely masked horror, and tentative poking at the parfait glass with a very long spoon. Never mind – more for me.

So if you visit Hoa Bien (or any other Asian restaurant on University Avenue, with the possible exception of Lee Ann Chin) with people who usually gravitate more toward Perkins and Keys, take my advice. First, don't bother to turn past page 1 of the menu (egg rolls, chicken wings, cream cheese wontons, chow mein, lo mein). Second, stay away from anything that might cause the Snob to use the word "dramatic." And third, for heaven's sake, let the professionals cook your food.

(Editor's note: Contact the Gang of Three: withoutres@yahoo.com)

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In Our Community

Diabetes Awareness topic of program March 14

"Diabetes Awareness & Management" will be the topic at a luncheon for elders on Tuesday, March 14 at 1514 Englewood Avenue from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The speakers will be a Registered Nurse and a representative who will demonstrate the latest testing devices and insulin pumps. Free transportation is available by calling Monica at 209-6542. Hamline Midway Elders provides volunteer & professional services to keep seniors in their own homes.

Hamline Midway Elders currently has the following volunteer needs: Daytime drivers to transport seniors to medical appointments; individuals, families and service groups willing to rake a senior's yard during the first two weeks of April; and a recording secretary for the board of directors (monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month from 7-9 p.m.). Anyone interested in any of the above may call the Hamline Midway Elders office at 651-209-6542.

Taxes and Stories at Hamline Midway Branch

The last winter storytime at Hamline Midway Branch of the St. Paul Public Library will be a Bedtime storytime on Tuesday, March 14, at 7 p.m.

Spring storytime for toddlers and preschoolers will be offered on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., from March 22 through April 12. Parents and babies are welcome. Spring Bedtime storytime for preschool and early elementary-aged children will be offered on Tuesdays at 7 p.m., from April 18 through May 23. All children are encouraged to wear their pajamas and bring a favorite bear or blanket to Bedtime storytime. Both storytimes will include storytelling, songs, fingerplays, and much more.

Free tax help will continue to 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.sp-pl.org, under Web Links, Tax Help at the Library.

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

Hamline Midway History Group meets March 26

Hamline Midway History Group to hold organizational meeting at the Historic Hamline Playground Building—main level on Sunday,

March 26, from 3 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Please bring along a picture, artifact or a story, (if you have one) related to the Hamline Midway area or history.

This meeting is the first of several, to come in the future regarding Hamline Midway Home History. This first meeting is being held to identify core ideas for the group and get projects started.

For more information, go to HamlineMidwayHistory.org

New director at Jehovah Lutheran Church named

Dean R. Galvin will be installed as Director of Christian Outreach at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue, St. Paul, on Sunday, March 12 at the 10:30 a.m. service. Galvin and his family will also attend the earlier 9 a.m. service, and special music will be offered at both services. Following the installation a reception will be held in the church fellowship hall.

A 1991 graduate of Concordia University in St. Paul, Galvin and his family are moving to the twin cities after serving parishes in Canada and Nevada. Galvin's wide experience in urban, multi-cultural outreach equips him well for the work before him. He looks forward to meeting area residents, exploring ways to serve the community and "bringing people into a practicing and growing relationship with Jesus Christ."

During his most recent parish experience in Gardnerville, Nevada, Galvin not only enabled outreach but also worked with youth and developed a weekly television program.

Galvin's oldest son attends Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. His wife and two younger children will join him in St. Paul at the end of the Nevada school year, and his youngest son hopes to find good fishing in his new home state of Minnesota.

For further information call Dawn at 651-644-1421.



Dean Galvin

Eagle Scout award presented February 28

Thomas Newsom, 17, recently earned the highest advancement award the Boy Scouts of America offers to Scouts, the Eagle Scout Award.

Newsom was recognized in ceremony on February 28 at the St. Columba School.

A member of Troop 13, Newsom is one of approximately 4 percent of all Boy Scouts who attain the Eagle rank, according to Scoutmaster Nick Denking.

Each candidate must earn 21 merit badges and successfully complete a community service project to earn his Eagle; Newsom chose to Placed Triva questions along the walk ways of the Como Park Campus.

He has served as Patrol Leader and Quartermaster, attended the National Scout Jamboree in Virginia and worked at Tomahawk Scout Reservations as a counselor in training (CIT).

Newsom joins other outstanding American citizens who have become Eagle Scouts, among them former President Gerald R. Ford, Jr., astronaut Neil A. Armstrong, cinematographer Steven Spielberg, and the head of the F.B.I., William Sessions.

Newsom is a member of St. Columba church and is active in Tennis, Wrestling and Chess teams at St. Paul Central High School, where he is a Junior.

Men's Club hosts annual spaghetti dinner April 1

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)

Craft and Bake Sale for the Youth Ministry and Women's Ministry will be held in church lobby during the supper.

Celebration of Creativity presented May 6

Como Park Living at Home Block Nurse Program Presents a "Celebration of Creativity" on Saturday, May 6th, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Coffee Grounds, 1579 Hamline Ave. N.

Please Join us as we Celebrate Elders, Volunteers and Supporters of the Como Park Living at Home Block Nurse Program.

St. Paul Como B PeeWees sets 14-0 record

Congratulations to the St. Paul Como B PeeWees who ended their regular league season undefeated with a 14-0 record and on winning the TC District Championship on Thursday, February 16 at Highland Ice Arena. Once again, two fierce competitors, Como and Mpls. Southwest, gave the crowded arena a great hockey game. In the first period, Southwest snuck one in on Como's goalie, Travis Kurth. Despite the number of shots, Como was not able to answer with a goal until late in the second period when Kyle Christopherson scored on an assist from Alex Novak.

In the third period, Colin O'Brien popped one in for the go-ahead goal with assists from Mike Eng and Brenden Monn-Kreitz. However, Southwest was not ready to give up and tied the game less than two minutes to go. Then with 37 seconds left in the game, the second penalty of the entire game was called on Como for interference. Como's offense, defense and goalie stepped it up and protected the goal fiercely as the game went into overtime. With just over four minutes into overtime, Mario Rubi passed the puck to Colin O'Brien who was able to maneuver past two d-men from Southwest and sink one in the net for the winning goal.

It took the effort from every Como player to pull this win out. Congratulations to all and good luck in Regionals. Team members include: Joey Kray, Alex Novak, Adam Kusterman, Chauncey O'Brien, Colin O'Brien, Adam Carrillo, Conor Comiskey, Mike Eng, Adam Ayotte, Brenden Monn-Kreitz, Alex Lee, Nathan Abbott, Mario Rubi, Kyle Christopherson, Billy Darwitz and Travis Kurth. The team is coached by Al Imbrone, Kevin Comiskey, and Brian Belde.



Art Gallery displaying creations from our multi-talented elders in the Como Park and Falcon Heights Communities. Including: Paintings, Paper Cuttings, Silhouettes, Writing, Quilting, Ceramics, Needlework, and much more!

Honor our Volunteers—A special recognition event at 1 p.m. honoring all of our kindhearted volunteers and supporters.

Enjoy a delightful cup of gourmet coffee and delicious soup.

MMSA Auction changed to Saturday, April 22

Maternity of Mary-St. Andrew School, 592 Arlington Ave. W., is having its annual silent and live auction on Saturday, April 22. This annual event had always been in February, however, surveys of attendees indicated that a spring date would be more desirable. The auction committee determined that February is a tough time to raise money. To reinforce the change from February to April, this year's theme is April in Paris.

The auction is MMSA's largest fundraiser each year. This year's goal is \$90,000 up from \$81,000 generated last year. Like last year, the evening begins at 5 p.m. with

hors d'oeuvres, cash bar and viewing of silent auction items. A sit-down dinner follows in the gym beginning at 6:30 p.m. Shortly after dessert is served, the live auction begins. The silent auction will only close after the live auction has concluded. The committee is confident the event will sell out with 400 attendees.

Adults in the community are invited to participate in the following ways:

1. MMSA school children are selling raffle tickets for \$1 each (or \$20 per book). Each ticket gives you the chance to win \$500 cash or \$1,375 toward MMSA tuition (1/2 of the parishioner rate for a year's tuition). For the chance to win \$5,000 cash, a second raffle ticket for \$100 each is also available to purchase. Only 100 of those \$100 tickets will be sold.

2. We are looking for donated items for our silent and live auctions. Cash donations are also welcome.

3. If you'd like to attend the dinner and auction, tickets are \$25 per person.

To purchase raffle tickets or a ticket to the April 22 event, or to make a donation, please call MMSA school at 651-489-1459.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Whitaker

Continued from page 3

Kline Oldsmobile was at 1469 University. Owens Motor Sales, St. Paul's oldest Hudson dealer, was at 709 University. Bud Johnson sold Pontiacs at 1515 University and Hayden Motor Sales offered Fords at 1800 University.

Changes came in the 1950s and 1960s as some vehicle models ceased production. The move away from University Avenue accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s. The eight remaining new vehicle dealers in 1980 formed a Midway Auto Dealers Association. "The intent of the association is to stress the convenience of shopping at the easily accessible car dealerships on University Avenue," a *Pioneer Press* article stated. James Smith of Royal Olds and Krebsbach were the association co-chairs.

In the 1990s dealerships leaving University included Metro Mazda, Wilkins Dodge and Rick Kline Oldsmobile and Isuzu left University and Fairview for a Maplewood location. That left just Midway Chevrolet-Geo and its companion dealerships Midway Hyundai and Midway Suzuki, Whitaker Buick Jeep Eagle, Ron Saxon Ford and Rihm Motor Company.

Steve Whitaker and Tom Krebsbach may disagree on University Avenue's viability as a new vehicle sales center. But they do agree that the street and its surrounding neighborhoods are changing for the better.

Whitaker serves on the Midway Chamber of Commerce Board. "There's a lot of exciting redevelopment plans on the drawing boards here," he said, noting plans for a Super Target, continued housing development and the possibility of light rail transit on University. He expects Whitaker's four acres of property to sell and become part of the redevelopment resurgence.

But that resurgence and increase in property values and housing revitalization in surrounding neighborhoods are reasons to stay, Krebsbach said. "I think all of the bad times are behind University Avenue." Citing the amount of new commercial and residential development, he added, "Don't tell me people don't have faith in the area."

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City Council wrangles with siting of housing development for local college students

By JANE MCCLURE

A development proposal to put more than 500 college students in new buildings in an industrial area could generate debate well beyond St. Anthony Park neighborhood. The St. Paul City Council voted 6-0 February 22 to uphold an appeal by St. Anthony Park Community Council against the development. But upholding the appeal doesn't block the development of 150 units of student housing at 2669 Territorial Road.

Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav noted there is disagreement over whether the project should be regulated as rooming house or apartment units. "The truth is it's neither," he said. Benanav suggested ways the JPI Development could move ahead, while allowing for a study of future student housing developments.

JPI Development is required to rezone the Territorial Road property and obtain a conditional use permit for the project. The developer is well on the way to getting that permission, getting a zoning variance approved February 24 by the St. Paul Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission

also voted February 24 to recommend rezoning the property from industrial to traditional neighborhoods use. The rezoning decision will be made by the City Council, after another public hearing. No hearing date has been announced. It will either be March 15 or April 5 at the earliest.

Benanav also said the development should have a conditional use permit.

The rezoning hearing will most likely mean a continuation of debate over the project. SAPCC wants the area to be used for industrial development, possibly as part of the Twin Cities bioscience corridor and not for housing. The district council contends that rezoning the site for housing is illegal spot zoning and should be denied. The Prospect Park and East River Road Improvement Association is joining SAPCC in opposing the project.

But the property owners and developers indicated that industrial and commercial users are not interested in the property. Owner Hubbard Broadcasting had considered using it for an expansion but those plans didn't materialize.

But the bigger decision the St. Paul Planning Commission and

City Council may face in the weeks ahead is this: How should multi-unit buildings meant to house students be regulated? The buildings are growing in popularity for students who want to live off-campus, yet don't want the hassles of traditional rental leasing. But are the current standards for apartment buildings and rooming houses adequate for what is a fairly new land use? Which standards should be applied?

Or is there a need for a new, separate zoning code definition. If the answer is yes to that question, expect residents of St. Anthony Park and other neighborhoods near colleges to weigh in over the next several weeks as the Planning Commission and City Council hammer out a new zoning definition. That could have implications for future developments meant to attract student residents.

Similar student housing developments have been discussed in recent years in the Merriam Park and Snelling-Hamline neighborhoods. A few years ago University UNITED did a study that urged the construction of student housing on University Avenue, on the Johnson Brothers Liquors

warehouse complex site. That site is now being developed as housing.

But while access to transit and convenience to the University of Minnesota and other area schools could make the area more attractive for large student housing complexes, there are questions about density, adequate off-street parking and access to services. Benanav said there's a need for study, because city regulations currently don't cover a development like JPI's.

At issue is a 4.2 acre site at the northwest corner of Territorial Road and Berry Street, near the Minneapolis-St. Paul border. It is surrounded by industrial uses on the St. Paul side and residential uses on the Minneapolis side. It is north of the KSTP broadcast studios.

Last year the city's zoning administrator decided that the proposed student housing development is a rooming house. The rooming house designation was applied because each bedroom in each two to four-bedroom unit would be leased separately. Each person leasing a bedroom would have his or her own key for that room. Each bedroom would also

be equipped with a telephone with an exclusive phone number.

Each bedroom occupant would share a kitchen, bathroom and living room space with one to three other residents in a suite arrangement. Sharing of these rooms is included in each room lease.

JPI disagreed, saying the building is an apartment house. The developer appealed that decision to the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), which voted 4-3 in December 2005 to uphold the appeal and designate the property as an apartment building.

St. Anthony Park Community Council appealed the BZA decision. Community Organizer Nina Axelson said the development and the BZA ruling are raising concerns about the JPI development and other potential projects. While the biggest issue is how the housing units are classified and regulated, other worries center on traffic, parking and density.

Lack of parking is a concern, although Axelson notes that neither rooming house nor apartment designation would provide enough off-street parking for as many as 525 residents.

Another issue is the land use itself, said District 12 Board Member Ray Bryan. The community council is undergoing a community planning process, to update its district plan. He said the district council wants to see the land remain zoned for industrial use. "We feel that's a more appropriate land use than housing, especially housing aimed at students."

But JPI and Hubbard Broadcasting representatives argued that the BZA didn't make an error and that the decision should stand. They also argued that the appeal should be rejected because a state-mandated 60-day deadline to hear zoning cases has passed. The St. Paul City Attorney's Office disagrees with that interpretation and said the City council may properly consider the District 12 appeal. Thinking that the project was free to move ahead, the developers then racked up costs for surveys, architectural drawings, a traffic student and engineering work.

Attorney Eric Galatz noted that St. Paul has 33 rooming houses, including fraternities and sororities. The key difference between the JPI proposal and rooming houses is that in rooming houses, landlords control kitchen, bathroom and living room space—not the tenants. In JPI's buildings the tenants would control those spaces, just as any other apartment dwellers would.

Galatz listed several other differences between rooming houses and the JPI building, to further make the case that the development should be regulated as apartments. Average rooming houses in St. Paul are older buildings can cost less per square foot than the JPI buildings. Also, far fewer people would be sharing kitchen, bathroom and living rooms spaces. In rooming houses as many as a dozen people may share those spaces. In the JPI buildings, only two to four residents could share those spaces.

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Midway Chev plans to stay anchored in the Midway

By JAN WILLMS

Midway Chevrolet is staying put, according to owner Tom Krebsbach.

The car dealership has been a presence on the Midway since 1922, and at its present location at 1389 University Avenue since about 1926.

"The area was a bustling auto mecca when I first started working there full-time," Krebsbach said. This was in 1973, and his father, who had started working for Midway Chevrolet in 1958, had just purchased the dealership.

Krebsbach said there were about 16 car dealers on University Avenue at the time.

"We were the largest Chevy dealer in the whole region," he said. "Polar Chevy had started out of a gas station. There was another Chevy dealer on Grand and three on Lake Street. We and Champion were the two Chevy dealers on University."

Champion has since moved to Rosedale, and Polar Chevy is on Highway 61. As time passed, most of the dealers moved to suburban sites.

"People who moved out were improving what they had," Krebsbach said. "They either outgrew their space or were in a poor location."

With the recent closure of Saxon Ford and the impending merger of Whitaker Buick, Midway Chevrolet will soon be the only dealer on University.

"Right now we're the only car dealer left in Saint Paul," Krebsbach said.

"It's kind of dumb luck, but we're located on the best part of University. We're right across from Wal-Mart and Target, and there is big retail traffic in our vicinity."

Krebsbach said that Saxon Ford was on a part of University Avenue where traffic flow has been virtually nothing, down by the Capitol building.

"Saxon has three other dealerships, and they have a very good operation," he added.

He said the demographics for Buick have changed drastically, and that company does not have as wide of a buyer choice.

"Buick has been trying to convince dealers to sell or merge," he said, "and they were able to put something together for Whittaker," he said, adding that Whittaker also has run a good dealership.

He said that when many dealers were heading for the suburbs,

Midway Chevrolet remained on University because his father had just purchased the business and had no money to move. Also, the dealership had plenty of space. It is the second or third-largest land owner on University, covering two and a quarter city blocks. There is plenty of space for selling new and used cars, a repair service, and the company has its own gas station.

"We also had a good location on University," Krebsbach said, "and there was no reason to move."

Krebsbach said that Ford business is off dramatically in this region compared to General Motors.

"Chevy is the top seller this year," he said. "Eight years ago, Ford had an 890,000 car/truck lead over Chevy. It dwindled to an 8,000 lead last year, and we put in lots of pressure to beat Ford this year."

Krebsbach said dealers count the vehicles sold each year in two ways. When they sell a car, at the end of the month they report the number of sales to the main company. The other way is to check sales by registrations, reported by R. L. Polk.

"In mid-June, Ford said they had outsold Chevy by registrations. But for 40 years, they have based their sales on what the dealers report. This is the first time they have wanted to go by R. L. Polk and not by the number of cars reported sold."

Although Ford has had a difficult year, Krebsbach said he thinks things will get better.

"Every mature company goes through problems," he said. He feels that Ford and GM are at a disadvantage, because other plants start up in states where there are no unions.

"There is severe labor advantage over Ford and GM products," he said.

Krebsbach said the quality of domestic cars has also greatly improved.

"Ten or 15 years ago domestic cars did not meet the standards of imports," he said.

"People tend to remember this, but today the quality of our cars is superb, and they're all equal to the imports."

During his many years on the Midway, Krebsbach has seen car sales go through periods of decay and has also seen them flourish.

"For the past five or six years, there has been a lot of development and urban renewal," he said.

"Businesses along University are growing and growing."

He said the area does not have much crime compared to other parts of Saint Paul.

"Target and Menards would not put new buildings in a blighted area," he said.

Krebsbach said that if light rail comes to University, it would be hard to operate during the construction phase, but he is holding his opinions until something happens.

"University Avenue has the highest-use bus route in the state," he said. "Why take something that's working, and change it? Light rail won't do what so many starry-eyed people think it will. And who will pay for the extra cost?"

But whatever happens, he is confident in his business' ability to remain in its Midway location.

"We still need to have people in a five or six-mile radius keep us on their shopping list," he said. He said that when city dwellers shop in the city for big ticket items, rather than going to the suburbs, their tax dollars go back to Saint Paul.

He said that a woman had called him last week, concerned about paying extra sales tax in Saint Paul.

"Cars are exempt from the sales tax increase in Saint Paul," he said. "I thought everyone knew that. If that were not true, I would have gone out of business long ago."

He said that part of his company's staying power, besides the location and space, is the quality of employees. "Most of our employees have been with us for many years," he said. "We also have a wider selection of vehicles for people to choose from."

He said that the days are gone when someone would leave the house Saturday morning and go out looking for a car, running from one dealership to another, unsure of what they might purchase.

"Most people research on the Internet the kind of car they are looking for," he said. "Once people make a decision, they pretty much know what they want to buy."

Krebsbach said his company has a website run by his daughter at midwaychevy.com.

"For being in an old part of town, we're pretty progressive," he added.

not as economical as painting."

People can also replace linoleum.

"A lot of houses have hardwood floors," said Oberg. "One of the cheapest things to do is to remove the carpet and expose the hardwood floors. Hardwood floors are back in style. It's a pretty small expense to remove the carpeting and throw it away."

The Greater Midway Home & Garden Show is important because it's a free community event.

"The whole purpose is for people to improve their house in a cost-effective way," said Hyser. "The show isn't there as a money producer. It's there for people to make smart home improvement invest-

ments. If you want to remodel your kitchen, you can find a couple of experienced kitchen designers and contractors. We've narrowed the list down to folks who are interested in working in St. Paul."

Hyser hopes many people take advantage of this fun community event.

"I really hope the 400 plus folks who attend really come away from the show feeling more knowledgeable and confident and get good tools to start with even if they do not have the cash to do it all," she said. "They can continue to use the show as an ongoing resource as they work through their list of projects. The show encourages folks to keep their home up."

Home and Garden Show

Continued from page 8

"It's the most inexpensive way to freshen up a home," said Oberg. "Paint can make nice, bright, white ceilings. Most people don't realize their ceilings are not bright and white."

The second thing is floor coverings.

"They're a little more expensive," said Oberg. "Old dated carpeting that has stains or is an out-dated color or has seen a lot of visible wear and can't be cleaned or revitalized should be replaced. It's



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Neighbors work to build a better Midway

Do you want to get to know your neighbors better and create a stronger neighborhood?

Seeking creative and energetic people who want to make beautiful streets and intersections on their blocks!

Come to a meeting to find out how you can turn "space" into "place":

There will be a "Paint the Pavement Meeting" on Tuesday, March 14th, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Hamline Midway Coalition, 1564 Lafond Avenue.

At this meeting, we will introduce Paint the Pavement and how you can get involved. Through the Leadership in Support of Neighborhood program, we will have limited funds available for a few projects.

We're looking for people who might be interested in starting a project at their own intersection and people who are interested in seeing Paint the Pavement projects sprinkled around the neighborhood.

Please contact Andrea Erickson at 651-644-9007 or paerickson007@msn.com with questions or to join the movement!



Above is a photo of the street painting from Portland's City Repair (neighbors can check out what Portland did at www.cityrepair.org), called Sunnyside Piazza. Hamline Midway neighbors are meeting March 14 to consider whether a project of this type would be helpful to their neighborhood.

Flannery

Continued from page 6

and board member of the Minnesota Chapter of the United States Green Building Council, said the new building is important for a couple of reasons. Not only was it built in a way that is better for the environment, its design promotes better community health.

During construction, crews hauled out old appliances and other debris that had been buried on site for many years. The two-story building is slab-on-grade construction. Recycled materials were used as much as possible in construction, including converting doors into desktops and reusing ceiling tiles. Boards on the stairwell railings are reclaimed Douglas Fir. Office dividers are made of wheatboard, a material made from wheat stalks. The company also purchased locally produced materials to reduce costs of transporting materials.

The building's rooftop solar panels provide renewable energy. Employees joke that the building is a giant radiator, with a boiler and pipe system as part of a high-efficiency heating and cooling system. Flannery will generate much of its own electricity. Additional power purchased from Xcel Energy is through an initiative that supports wind farms in southwestern Minnesota.

The building also has a white roof system, which is meant to reduce air conditioning costs in the summer.

Windows in the buildings were placed so that between 80 and 90 percent of the employees have daylight and views.

The building is designed in a way to better manage storm water and reduce flow into the storm sewers. Landscaping and shade trees were chosen that would need less water and maintenance.

Materials used in construction, such as paint and sealants, were chosen to reduce toxicity. There was a two-week gap between interior work and move-in, so that the work environment would be healthier. Flannery has been in the building for about five months and there have been fewer sick days, Jamey Flannery said.

What makes a building "green"? The U.S. Green Building Council suggest several elements. One is site selection, to limit any negative impacts on the surrounding ecosystem. Green buildings also reduce the amount of energy needed to operate. Such buildings also use alternative sources of energy. Materials are used to promote resource conservation and efficiency, with a focus on reuse and recycling. Water consumption is reduced. Building design, operation and maintenance are done in ways that promote the occupants' health.

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Cub Scout Pack 243 has cake bake, banquet

On Jan 30th, Pack 243 hosted a "Feller Cake Bake." The boys of the pack along with their adult partner(s) bake a creative cake. Tied for first place were Jonathan Menke with his creation of "The Reindeer" and Jay DeRoos with his creation of "The Bonfire." In second place was Nicholas Lentch with his creation of "The Gumball Machine" and in third place was Jesse Colvin with his creation of "The Snowman." They could be as creative as they wanted and they did a great job.

Feb. 27th was the Pack's Blue and Gold Banquet. This banquet is a celebration of the five years that the boys have been in cub scouts and when they bridge into boy scouts. At our banquet we had special guests from the Midway Mens Club, The National Karate club and a special guest Archer, Karl Miesen. Our spaghetti dinner was catered by Sonshine Catering, Inc. Ten cub scout boys bridged into boy scouts and were honored.

Cub Scout Pack 243 meets Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran Church on the corners of Thomas and Snelling Avenues. If you have questions about cub scouts or are interested in joining, please call Sandy Kolar, Cub Master, at 651-644-6858.



Kneeling: Derek Murray and Matthew Westpfahl who are going to Troop 243, Charles Davis who is going to Troop 17, Dylan Koltz-Hale who is going to Troop 1 and Jacob Goodale who is going to Troop 17. Standing: Brian Kruchowski, their cub scout leader, David Kolar and Greg Kruchowski who are going to Troop 17, Karl Miesen, the archer, Connor Heck who is going to Troop 17, Daniel Gould who is going to Troop 1 and Christian Strasser who is going to Troop 17.

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Stop foreclosure, save home, \$ provided now. Pay back later. Home solutions. 651-330-2311. 3-06

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LOVELY OLD HOME!

Lovely old home! Large home in the Midway awaiting your restoration! Hardwood floors, natural woodwork, clawfoot tub! Elegant dining room with plate rail and built-in hutch! Close to Hamline U, perfect for students! 1519 Sherburne Ave. 5BR/2BA \$215,000 Beth Richardson, RE/MAX Results 651-646-2100. 3-06

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Call Hamline University for Suzuki violin and piano lessons 651-523-2332. 4-06

NANNY

Mature female sophomore from Gustavus Adolphus College seeks full time job as a nanny this summer. Has had prior experience as a nanny for two twin girls in addition to several years of babysitting experience. Open to working with children of any age. Willing to work during the day only. Loves kids and will work with any age group. References available. Looking for \$10-\$11 per hour. Please call Jessica at 651-983-6364 and leave a message.

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Environmental Group holds meetings in Hamline-Midway

The Hamline-Midway Environmental Group formed in the fall of 2005. The group consists of neighbors, residents, and business owners in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood who plan to create and nurture a healthy and sustainable environment in the Hamline-Midway community.

The group plans to accomplish this by taking action with projects, increase public awareness and education, involve members in the community, and collaborate with a variety of organizations. Many topics have been identified as possible areas to address including education for the community on how to use environmentally friendly

household products, how to recycle a variety of items, embrace Voluntary Simplicity, reduce litter, plant more native trees, be aware of how to get involved with community gardens, create wildlife corridors, reduce air pollution, and beautify the community.

The initial project is the clean-up, planting, and maintenance of the planters and trees on Snelling Avenue. Neighbors and organizations including Community Gardeners, SABI, Neighbors for Peace, Hamline-University and the Hamline-Midway Midway Coalition along with other groups are working together in these beautification

efforts. Discussions include selecting the most beautiful, durable, native plants, and how to maintain them. Artists may incorporate decorative elements on the planters that may also help with traffic calming. Many volunteer opportunities are available.

The Hamline-Midway Environmental Group's next meeting is 7-8:30 p.m., April 19 at the Hamline-Midway Coalition Building. Meetings are generally held every third Wednesday of each month. All are invited and welcome to attend and volunteer. Bring your ideas and help with the "greening" of Hamline-Midway. For more information contact Mike 651-235-9584.

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Galtier holds art show at Bean Factory April 13

Galtier Magnet Elementary School and J & S Bean Factory (located on the corner of Hamline and Thomas Avenues) would like to invite you to an art exhibit on Friday, April 13. This will be a multi-grade level show-

ing of eclectic works of art. Please join us from 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. to view and/or purchase some of this fine art. Proceeds will go to the betterment of the school and its art program, as well as the students that participated. Your support not only helps financially, but bolsters the confidence in participating students and inspires others to participate.

Nutrition, weaning topic of La Leche April 10

Nutrition and Weaning is the

topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, April 10, 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.

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Commonly, it's called "cabin fever." For me, it is a winter malaise that can take hold of me whenever I feel cut off from my outdoor roots—holed up inside at work, at school, at home. But then I always have my indoor forest of houseplants.

A portion of my plants suffer from cabin fever too. The patio plants I brought indoors last fall are nursed through the long, dark winter on the windowsills. They don't all make it. One of my favorite scented geraniums died last month. Sad as it was to lose an old friend, I was given something new and hopeful in its place. Up through the brittle stems of the dead geranium grew a tiny oak seedling: an accidental gift from those annoying gray squirrels I like to complain about. The big bur oak growing in our backyard is likely the parent to this tiny stem with two leaves.

Everything starts out like this: so small, vulnerable and with an uncertain future. Of course, growing big is no protection against straight-line winds, insidious diseases, or humans with chainsaws. Still, an oak seedling is pure possibility. The question is: where should I plant this seedling when spring returns? The woodland, of course.

Most of Como Park is landscaped for human uses: golf course, picnic areas, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, zoo and conservatory grounds—all features that are much appreciated and used by the public. Yet, there is a dearth of healthy woodlands in Como Park. I've often written about how European buckthorn trees, and other invasives, are taking over the few unlandscaped



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

A place to grow

wooded areas in our parks, but valiant efforts to control buckthorn in Como Park are in progress.

what will we have to show for all our hard labor?

A healthy woodland serves many purposes such as absorbing



Photo by Deb Robinson

St. Paul Parks' Eco Partners, collaborating organizations, volunteers from the District 10 Community Council, and others labor away at buckthorn removal whenever there is time and willing hands to put towards this monumental task. But to what end? If and when the job is done,

air, water, and sound pollution. A grove of trees cools the air through transpiration and through simple shade. And natural woodlands can also cool our busy, city-stressed minds and open up our imaginations. Kids, most of all, need such places. When the eminent scientist, Ed-

ward O. Wilson, recalled his childhood inspirations, he wrote, "A lifetime can be spent in a Magellanic voyage around the trunk of a single tree."

I've never lived in the country, but I was lucky to live half of my childhood in a river town with the Mississippi River Valley right over the hill behind our family home. Nodding trillium, bloodroot, and other early spring flowers carpeted my untamed playground. We children would swing like Tarzans from the sinuous wild grape vines that hung from the giant American elms. The boisterous dawn songs of a multitude of birds was the gloriously background music during those spring months. And one of our best friends was an ancient oak tree with huge, low branches that held us in its welcoming embrace—even into our teenage years.

Most of the elms and many of the oaks are long dead from Dutch elm disease and oak wilt. And the songbird populations have since been severely reduced by pesticides and habitat destruction. So much has been lost in so short a time.

Yet, kids today deserve and need the same access to natural places that we older folks enjoyed in our childhoods. Some of those wild woodlands may wind off in-

to the distance like the timbered bluffs of the Mississippi River, but others are small and intimate like the wooded areas of Como Park. In the imagination of a child, even a small urban woodland can become the forest primeval.

When I'm feeling nature-deprived, I feel cut off from my roots. Many children today are not even given the opportunity to grow those roots in the first place. In his recent book, *Last Child in the Woods*, author and child advocate Richard Louv recounts an interview with a student from San Diego, California. When the fourth-grader was asked if he liked playing outdoors, the youngster replied: "I like to play indoors better, 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are."

Like oak seedlings, we all start out small, vulnerable and with uncertain futures. Hopefully we have the wisdom to preserve a few urban wild places—places that will be the fertile ground for the developing roots of oak trees and children.

Endnotes: *Take a virtual tour of St. Paul Public Schools' Belwin Outdoor Classroom in Afton, where kids learn about nature surrounded by nature: www.belwin.spps.org *Join the Eco Partner's team as a volunteer busting buckthorn and restoring native plant communities to our city parks. Volunteer hotline: 651-266-6458 *Congratulations to a local champion of woodland protection, Val Cunningham, who recently received the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter volunteer award for Outstanding Contribution to Forestry. *To contact this writer: dmrobinson@bitstream.net

UPCOMING EVENTS AT HAMLINE UNIVERSITY

Asian Heritage Month Events

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, please contact 651-523-2423 or apac@hamline.edu

APAC Unplugged: Beyond Yellow

Featuring spoken word artist Bao Phi

Date: Thursday, March 16

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Bush Student Center, lower level

Asian Heritage Month Keynote Speaker

Featuring Asian American writer and poet

Juliana Pegues

Date: Tuesday, March 28

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Contemporary Art and Artists: Critical Choice in a World of Freedom and Diversity

Part of the Hamline Dialogue series "Thinking Forward: Finding Future Direction for Today's Critical Issues." For more information and to register, visit www.hamline.edu/news_events/dialogues/36622.html

Date: Thursday, March 16

Time: 4-6 p.m.

Location: Skyline Room, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Cost: \$10

To receive credit: \$25 (for the Graduate School of Management, CEUs, or CLEs)

Contact: Kristen Norman-Major, 651-523-2814

FOUNDERS DAY

CELEBRATION
MARCH 28



Call to Service: The Role of Faith Communities in Disaster Response

Hamline University's Founders Day celebration, featuring Mark Berkson, associate professor of religion, Bruce Bjork '83, Joe Peschek, professor of political science, and Nora Peterson '08.

Date: Tuesday, March 28

Time: Various events, 9:15 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Location: Kay Fredericks Room, the Klas Center

Cost: Free and open to the public, with suggested donation of \$10 cash or Target gift card going towards relief efforts in the Gulf Coast.

Contact: Linda Nybakken, 651-523-2200 or lnybakken@hamline.edu. Register online at www.hamline.edu/ur/foundersday.

HAMLIN
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Pakistani Fundraising Dinner

Proceeds donated to Pakistani relief efforts to aid victims of the 2005 Pakistani earthquake.

Date: Friday, April 7

Time: 7 p.m.

Cost: \$10 for students, \$25 for non-students

Location: University Conference Center, Room 106

Contact: Damian Waite, 651-523-4482 or

651-233-7735. Tickets are available at the Center

for Multicultural and International Student Affairs,

Student Center Front Desk, or by e-mailing

higs01@hamline.edu

A New Alternative for the Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Northern Yucatan

Speaker: James Callaghan, director of the Xakil Kiuc Biocultural Reserve and founding director of UADY (Autonomous University of Yucatan)

Date: Friday, April 7

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Drew Science, Room 118

Cost: Free to Maya Society members and the

Hamline community, \$5 general public

Contact: Skip Messenger, 651-523-2682

smessenger@hamline.edu

Piano-e-Competition Benefit Concert

Featuring Jie Chen, first prize winner of the Second International Piano-e-Competition

Date: Friday, April 7

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Contact: 651-523-2197 for ticket information