



# Midway Como monitor

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MARCH 2007  
Vol. 31 No. 8  
20,000 Circulation



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## What's INSIDE

News .....5



Home Depot submits plans

Feature .....6



Military, schools seek co-existence

Feature .....7



Everyone's Irish at the Dubliner

Coupons .....7



Check out this month's offers

Central girls ranked #1 in state...

# Central girls basketball favored to advance to State

By TOM CONLON

The coach of the state's top-ranked girls basketball team told his team not to score.

With Harding trailing Central High School's team 98-17 in the final two minutes of the Feb. 15 game, the psychological humiliation of losing 100-17 would look bad—even with your bench reserves on the court.

This season, Central has faced this dilemma in most of its games, averaging 85 points per game against all opponents; 95 for city conference schools. Central Coach Willie Taylor directs his team to honor good sportsmanship with a touch of humility and control when the ability and temptation to score maximum points is great.

Apart from the Feb. 15 game above, such has not been uncommon with Central High School's girl's basketball team in this season's city conference games (with a 12-0 conference record and championship). On Feb. 24, Central defeated powerhouse Minneapolis South 83-64 on their turf to capture the Twin City Championship with a 26-0 undefeated record. Many expect Central not only to make the state tournament, but are favored to win it all.

"Talent-wise, this is the best basketball team I've ever coached," said Central Head Coach Willie Taylor. "Division I college teams are expressing interest in or have signed all of our starters. After



Coach Willie Taylor speaking to his players during a time out of the Feb. 15 game vs. Harding. (Photo by Tom Conlon.)

winning our first two games against perennial strengths Hopkins and Centennial in the Hamline University tournament in November, it sank in that we have the potential to win it all this season."

And not without pressures. Many coaches rise or fall on their win-loss records. Taylor has completely different stresses to deal with.

"Last year, some of my starters who had worked hard felt it was their turn to build on their skills in a similar role this year," Taylor said. "Instead, some of them only see 10-12 minutes of playing time per game because of new, stronger talent that joined our team this

year. I know it has been difficult for them, but I'm pleased they've stuck with the team. Everyone is a valued contributor." Central's 2005-06 team also won the city conference championship and third place in the state tournament, with a strong but less-talented team.

## The Open Enrollment Debate

Central's team was the beneficiary of the state's open enrollment law, allowing students to transfer schools and remain eligible for varsity level competition at their



Senior Angel Robinson, the team's leading scorer who will play Division I basketball for Marquette University in Milwaukee next year. (Photo by Tom Conlon.)

new school. Once an issue with St. Paul public schools' best talent transferring to Cretin-Derham Hall (CDH), it was a big factor in CDH leaving the St. Paul City Conference 2 years ago.

Now, transfers are coming from within St. Paul Public Schools and which some say benefited Central at other schools' expense. Georgie Jones, Theaira Taylor, Ebony Black and Samantha Robinson-Ricks all joined the team this year after playing for other St. Paul Public School teams last year.

Acknowledging Central's success in girl's basketball, Cen-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Monitor expands coverage to serve North End community

By JANE MCCLURE

As of the April 2007 issue, the *Midway Como Monitor* will be adding the North End to its coverage area. The newspaper's name will change to *Monitor*, with a tagline noting that the paper will serve Midway-Como-North End to reflect the change and the commitment to serving an expanded coverage area.

The announcement of the Monitor's expansion was to be made at the monthly meeting of North End Business Association March 7. Monitor representatives have already met with members of the District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council

and neighborhood businesses.

District 6 will publicize the change in its upcoming newsletter.

The decision to expand the coverage area was made after the announcement that the monthly *North End News* would suspend publication, effective with its February issue. North End News, Inc., the newspaper's non-profit parent, announced it would dissolve its organization. The newspaper was governed by a volunteer board.

Several years ago St. Paul had almost dozen non-profit neighborhood newspapers. Those newspapers have struggled in the

face of a decline in grants and a change in the non-profit economy.

The North End News was founded more than 30 years ago as a means of providing information to the North End community. It was one of St. Paul's oldest non-profit neighborhood newspapers.

But the newspaper had struggled financially in recent times, according to its board treasurer, Bruce Larson. The newspaper board sought a solution to continue news coverage in the North End and asked the *Monitor's* parent company, deRuyter-Nelson Publications, to consider serving

the neighborhood.

"It's no secret that publishing a newspaper in today's world is a daunting business," said *Monitor* Editor Denis Woulfe. "The daily newspapers in the Twin Cities have struggled mightily to keep their advertising revenue and circulation numbers to hold steady. Now, more than ever before, neighborhoods like the North End deserve a high-quality neighborhood newspaper to serve their residents, businesses and non-profit institutions. We'd like to be that newspaper and we're hoping that the community will support our effort."

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

**Publishers:**  
Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

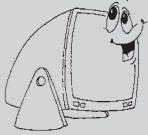
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The Midway Como Monitor is a monthly community publication in the Midway and Como areas of St. Paul, owned and operated by deRuyter-Nelson Publications, Inc. All correspondence should be sent to the Monitor, 1885 University Ave., #110, St. Paul, MN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

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## Midway Como in a Minute

### Port Authority seeks help for Rock-Tenn

The St. Paul Port Authority is seeking legislative assistance to help keep Rock-Tenn's Midway paper recycling facility operating. The plant's steam line will be shut down this summer after Xcel Energy's new High bridge Plant goes on-line. Rock-Tenn can use older boilers it has on-site for power but would like to find a new energy source.

Rock-Tenn is working with the St. Paul Port Authority and District Energy to find a permanent source of energy, with an eye toward installing a flexible system that could burn several different types of fuel. One idea is for District Energy and its affiliate Market Street Energy to build a larger power plant that would serve the West Midway, much as District Energy provides heating and cooling for much of downtown St. Paul.

The Port Authority is seeking legislation to help Rock-Tenn recover its costs for the new energy supply. That is because that state's push away from coal-fired power plants, including the existing High Bridge Plant, is what cost Rock-Tenn its steam power. The coal-fired plant is being shut down and replaced as part of the state's Metropolitan Emissions Reduction Plan or MERP.

The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously to support the legislation February 21. The Ramsey County Board voted its support February 27.

The city and county resolutions of support don't cite a specific fuel source, Rock-Tenn officials have discussed using biomass, which could be anything from burning clean wood or switchgrass to using refuse-derived fuel made from garbage. Refuse-derived fuel has been controversial because of the poten-



The St. Paul Port Authority is seeking legislative assistance to help keep Rock-Tenn's Midway paper recycling facility operating.

tial for volatile organic chemicals in plant emissions.

Two different groups are studying Rock-Tenn and its future energy needs. Results of a Green Institute study are expected in March. Also in March, county officials should release results of a study of available wood waste and whether that could be used at Rock-Tenn. Much of the area's wood waste, including wood collected at county compost sites already goes to District Energy. But one idea is that of capturing food from construction and demolition sites.

### Judge reviews Minnehaha Lanes beef

Could Minnehaha Lanes be in trouble for violating the city's smoking ban at bowling alleys, bars, restaurant and billiard halls? That is an issue an administrative law judge began to sort out February 28. Reese-Brooks Hospitality, doing business as Minnehaha Lanes, 955 Seminary Av., is accused of allowing smoking in violation of city ordinance.

Following the hearing the judge will prepare a recommendation and send it to the St. Paul

City Council for final action. That will be in March at the earliest. The council will hold a public hearing on the recommendation. No date has been set.

The bowling alley band many other St. Paul businesses have been under a full smoking ban for more than a year. In January a city inspector found an ashtray full of cigarette butts and cigarette butts on the floor of the bowling alley's basement.

The inspection also found that the city's required signs had not been posted. The signs state that "This establishment is a smoke-free area in its entirety." All businesses covered by the smoking ban must post the signs.

If the violation is upheld by the judge, it would be the first for Minnehaha Lanes under the smoking ban ordinance and the business would have to pay a fine. A fine of \$500 is recommended.

The fine amount will ultimately be set by the City Council, which will be asked to review the judge's recommendations at a later date. The council has the right to impose the fine as recommended, increase the fine, reduce the fine or stay all or part of the fine if there are no further violations.

If a business contests the recommended fine, the business owner or manager can ask that the violation be placed on the City Council agenda for a public hearing.

### Council votes to deny license for pizza parlor

The St. Paul City Council has taken adverse action against a license application for a proposed Snelling Avenue pizza parlor. The council voted February 14 to deny the application for malt on sale, wine on sale and restaurant licenses sought by Fred Macalus Jr. Macalus had sought to open Fatheadz Pizza at 735 N. Snelling Av. but the City Council denied his request for a parking variance in January. The denial of the variance led city licensing staff to recommend denial of the malt liquor, wine and restaurant licenses.

Macalus did not contest the city licensing recommendation although he did have the right to request a public hearing before the City Council. He did not do so and the licenses were denied.

While the City Council's decision doesn't mean that Macalus or some other business owner could not apply for restaurant licenses for the site in the future, having an adverse action on one's record could be a factor in future city licensing decisions.

The restaurant was proposed in a building that is currently vacant. The two-story building has housed a number of businesses in recent years, including consignment businesses. The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and City Council recommended that a variance to the city's parking standards to allow the business be denied.

The restaurant proposal had strong supporters as well as de-

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# Light rail to bring major changes to surrounding neighborhoods

By JANE MCCLURE

The Central Corridor won't just transform transportation through area neighborhoods. It could also bring major changes to the surrounding neighborhoods themselves. Guiding that change is the intent of the Central Corridor Development Strategy, which was unveiled February 15 and 16. The draft development plan will be acted on in the days ahead by task forces studying land use plans and ideas in the downtown area and the neighborhoods along University Avenue. The downtown group hopes to finish its work by mid-March; the University Avenue group should wrap up its work in late March or April.

Recommendations from the task forces will be reviewed and eventually adopted by the St. Paul Planning Commission and City Council, and will become part of the city's comprehensive plan. The plan would be used to shape redevelopment along the light rail line and in some cases, provide an impetus for zoning changes.

The task forces, which were appointed last year by the Planning Commission, have been working with consultants from Toronto-based Urban Strategies to shape the vision for University Avenue and the downtown area. The draft plan includes 90 different strategies. The 90 ideas, de-

veloped by the task force and consultants from Urban Strategies, range from specific ideas for redevelopment areas to general ideas such as housing revitalization in the neighborhoods north and south of University.

In areas all along University Avenue, there is a focus toward better bus, walking and biking connections to and from light rail. There is also an effort to tie in existing community plans for nodes from Raymond and University to Capitol Heights, and to develop new community plans in areas where there are none.

Other focuses in the development strategy include creation of new public spaces, infill development to fill in some of the gaps along University Avenue, and jobs creation all along University. More retail and housing density are key recommendations in the plan.

The \$932 million Central Corridor represents a unique, once-in-a-century opportunity for city-building, said Melanie Hare of Urban Strategies. "Central Corridor has to be about a lot more than going from Point A to Point B," she said. Residents and business owners need to think about what the community is like, what changes they'd like to see and how to get there. Hare and Mayor Chris Cole-

man and city planner caution that redevelopment will not happen overnight. It is expected to be a much more gradual process.

Over a period of 30 years, the redevelopment ideas could bring 9 million square feet of office space, 14,000 new housing units, 750,000 square feet of

retail space and 1,000 hotel units. But if sites develop before the plans can be implemented, the opportunities for redevelopment area lost. One point Hare and Dark brought up is the idea of an interim moratorium to restrict redevelopment, an idea the University Avenue task force shot down last year at the behest of Midway Chamber, developers and Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery. Several district councils and University UNITED had pushed for the moratorium, saying it is needed so that the task force study could be completed and zoning changes implemented. Opponents said the moratorium would have been too restrictive.

Most people at the open houses found something to like February 15-16. All along the route there are plans for pedestrian improvements and amenities including street trees and green space. Other plans focus redevelopment around the station sites including Dale Street, Lexington, Snelling, Fairview, Raymond and Westgate avenues. Redevelopment in those areas could come in the form of new retail and housing opportunities, as well as new green space and community amenities.

"We're fond of saying 12 new stations, 12 new parks,"

said George Dark of Urban Strategies.

Along University, the draft plan continues numerous recommendations. In some areas, the goal is to retain small businesses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. That is one goal at the east end of University, where ethnic businesses could be strengthened and promoted through a planned world cultures district. More dense development is proposed at key intersections and station sites, with infill development proposed in areas dominated by large parking lots or blighted properties.

In other areas the recommendations are more dramatic. For example, the Sears complex near Rice and University is envisioned as the site of a new mixed-use urban village with more than 1,000 housing units and new commercial space.

Downtown there are fewer recommendations for sweeping physical change. "With downtown you're not reinventing the world," Dark said.

The most dramatic change proposed downtown would put light rail diagonally through the block at Fourth and Cedar, taking out a bank building and creating a new transit center-retail complex and pedestrian plaza. This would provide better connections to the skyway system.



"This is a starting point and it could evolve over a period of years," said Hare.

The draft plan, when it is adopted, should not only help city officials make any zoning or land use changes, it also would help in the allocation of scarce economic and housing development resources.

Next deadline: April 2

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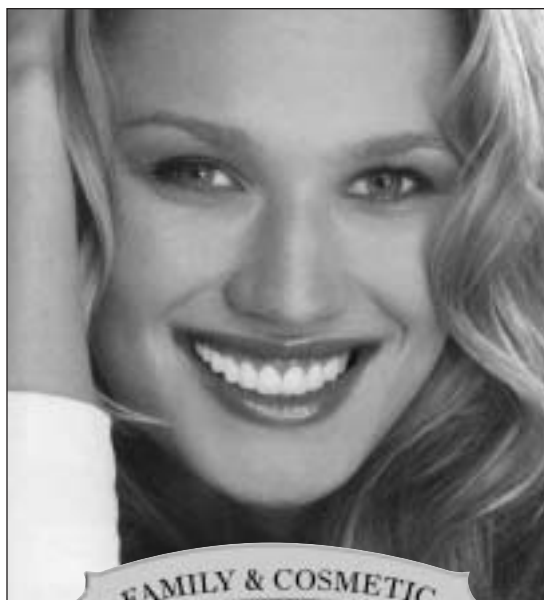
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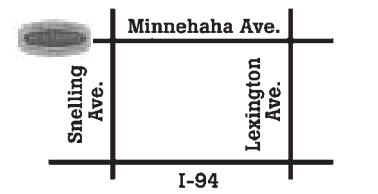


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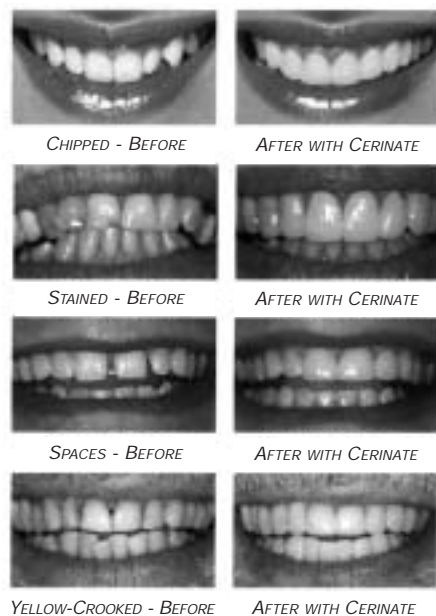


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April 8 EASTER SUNDAY  
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# Como District 10 continues to discuss mounted police stables in Como Park

By DEBORAH BROTZ

While most of the discussion about building stables for St. Paul's mounted police unit in Como Park has been in support of the project, there are a number of people who are adamantly opposed to it.

Como resident Sharon Shinomiya, is opposed to leasing a large, valuable chunk of "unused" park land to police for building stables.

"It would take away open park space that wouldn't be replaced," she said.

The proposed site, at Como and Beulah Lane, is now used to store large rocks and other landscaping material.

"A lot of people feel the land is not being used, and that it can be given away for free," said Shinomiya. "Piece by piece the park is going to get smaller and smaller."

The proposal to build the stables was initiated by a few individuals from District 10.

"They kind of offered up the park as the perfect place," said Shinomiya. "They have not looked at other sites within the city."

Ward 5 City Councilmember Lee Helgen and the Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County are also opposed to the proposal because it would violate city rules which prohibit the elimination of park land without acre-for-acre replacement.

District 10 board members do not unanimously support Como Park as the site for the stables, so other sites are still being considered.

"The Land Use Committee prefers Como Park," said District 10 Community Organizer Sue McCall. "I'll be asking other district councils to think about other possible sites in their areas."

While the police department has looked at sites on the East Side, Stroh's Brewery, areas by the Fairgrounds, and explored the idea with the U of M, they feel Como is the best location.

"We looked at a number of different things," said St. Paul police Sgt. Eric Anderson, of the mounted police unit. "The Police Department has not decided anything. This is a District 10 initiative."

Anderson is pleased with the way the proposal to move the sta-

bles from Stillwater is progressing.

While the District 10 Board has submitted a CIB (Capital Improvement Budget) proposal for the project, no dollar amount has been decided on yet.

"They're getting close," said McCall. "They would like to implement some green technology in it. That can bring up the cost of a project."

CIB proposals were due in early February.

"The Land Use Committee is working on the proposal and will be presenting it sometime this spring," said McCall.

Shinomiya feels other nearby existing stables at the State Fairgrounds and the U of M Equine Center need to be more thoughtfully explored.

"I would like to keep Como Park land for the park and for future use of the park," she said. "For me, I want it to remain open space. That's what I like about Como Park its wooded areas and open space. I am not opposed to them moving the stables into or closer to St. Paul. I just want them to choose another location, preferably not a park."

## 16th Annual Show...

# Bird feeder workshop highlights Greater Midway Home and Garden Show

By DEBORAH BROTZ

If you, as a parent, would love to build a bird feeder with your child but feel you don't have the skills to do it, there are some teens who can help. And you have Elpis to thank for it.

Elpis Enterprises, a youth development organization focusing on youth employment training and small business education, will be holding a bird feeder building workshop at Sparc's 16th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show, on Saturday, March 17, at Crossroads Elementary School, 543 Front Ave. Workshops will run from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., while the exhibit hall will be open from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

"Elpis provides a good work experience for youth and a good family activity for families that come to the show," said Beth Hyser, co-coordinator of the Greater Midway Home & Garden Show, with Seth Benziger, of Sparc. "I first saw them at the South Minneapolis Housing & Home Improvement Fair. It seemed like a great fit."

Participants in Elpis, a Greek word for hope, work in all areas of the business and learn, earn, and profit as they go. Operating business enterprises include a four and six-color screen-printing operation and a woodworking shop that utilizes only reclaimed and recycled wood products.

Started by the Minneapolis Jaycees Charitable Foundation in 1993, Elpis Enterprises was incorporated as a non-profit in 2002.

It has two main programs, with about 20 youth participating each year. The Leadership Program works with youth who have had trouble staying engaged in school. Their commitment to the program is limited to several

training programs at the Elpis shop, which is located at 550 Vandalia St., and facilitating 10-12 experiential workshops in the community. These youth become the teachers.

"A lot of the kids have problems with truancy," said Paul Ramsour, Elpis Enterprises executive director. "This program puts them in a better light. Instead of being a problem, they act as a resource of the group."

Students are in a teaching position as opposed to being a student.

"It gives them responsibility," said Ramsour. "It's a partnership between teacher and student. The goal is to walk away with a bird feeder. They are there to assist and answer questions."

Youth participate in the Leadership Program after the regular school day is over.

"It helps them reframe the education piece," said Ramsour. "Teachers and students are not in adversarial roles. They really work in partnership."

The Community Internship Program works with youth who are homeless or precariously housed. They work in the Elpis shop once a week for up to a year. The stipend they receive covers monthly rent in transitional housing and gives them a year's worth of work history.

"The Community Internship Program tries to help them be more independent," said Ramsour.

Providing hope for youth, the organization's name makes sense.

In working with Minneapolis Parks and Rec, Elpis has scheduled over 60 bird feeder building workshops in rec centers throughout Minneapolis. It offers experiential workshops to over

1,200 youth each year.

At a typical workshop, the youth facilitate the building process.

"Pieces of the bird feeder fit around jigs," said Ramsour. "They guide and instruct but don't build it for them. The whole system is designed for people who are not good at putting stuff together."

Elpis has another business, tag art T-shirts, which supports youth artists through a license agreement.

"Tag art is a line of shirts we own and developed," said Ramsour. "We redirected the energy of kids who did graffiti style art."

With 40-50 exhibitors attending this year's show, there are several new ones including Ecoscapes Sustainable Landscaping; Borden Window, a window contractor; and Lettus Service, a handyman service, plus many more.

"We always try to recruit new business to the show," said Hyser.

The show is a service to the community to bring them information about improving their home and yard.

"It really helps to connect homeowners with services and vendors to improve the comfort of their home and give them good information," said Hyser.

The show is a great motivator to do home projects now rather than wait.

"We want people to feel confident in making investments in their urban neighborhood and that they'll see benefit, comfort and enjoyment in their house and property and eventually in resale," said Hyser. "It's worth doing. Neighborhoods going down the toilet do not have home and garden shows. We want to bolster that confidence. These neighborhoods are good to live in."

Big box fight revs up...

# Home Depot site plan submitted

By JANE MCCLURE

Months of speculation about Home Depot's future in the Midway have come to the end, but the fight over big box retail and transit-oriented development will be revving up. The nation's second-largest home improvement retailer filed a site plan to build its first St. Paul store, on a 4.7-acre lot southeast of Midway Center.

City zoning staff have already decided the site plan will be the subject of a public hearing in March before the St. Paul Planning Commission. Staff review of the plans began last week, with a staff meeting March 1.

The proposed store site at the northeast corner of St. Anthony Avenue and Pascal Street has been vacant for many years and used for parking. It is owned by RD Management, parent of Midway Center owner RK Midway. The site has been eyed for a number of other uses over the past 20 years, as a separate site and as part of a larger redevelopment of the former Metro Transit bus barn site to the west at Snelling and St. Anthony. The bus barn site, which RD Management would like to purchase from the Metropolitan Council, has been eyed recently as a site for a Lowe's home improvement store or a Best Buy. Officials from those companies haven't commented publicly about their plans.

Home Depot officials in Georgia didn't return calls seeking comment. Site plan documents indicate that the store will represent an investment of \$22 to \$30 million in St. Paul and have an average of \$34 million per year in sales. The store is expected to generate 180 hourly jobs with about half of the associates working full-time, as well as several salaried jobs. The average wage is expected to be \$13 per hour.

"The Home Depot urban retail development will have significant employment and economic benefits for the City of St. Paul and for the surrounding neighborhood and will enhance pedestrian access while providing a new type of retail development to the area," Home Depot officials stated in the site plan documents.

Home Depot has six stores in the east metro area. Despite more than a decade of trying, Home Depot has been unable to find a St. Paul store location. A proposal to locate a store at the southwest corner of Lexington Parkway and University Avenue stalled in 2001, in large part due to City Council concerns about the level of public financing sought.

The site plan filing comes as city task forces unveil draft plans for redevelopment in the neighborhoods along University Avenue, in anticipation of the proposed Central Corridor light rail line. It also comes less than two months after the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force rejected the idea of an interim overlay district and moratorium on development along University Avenue at the behest of Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery. The overlay district and moratorium were sought by several area district councils and University UNITED, a group of dis-



The nation's second-largest home improvement retailer filed a site plan to build its first St. Paul store, on a 4.7-acre lot southeast of Midway Center.

trict councils, neighborhood business groups and small businesses along University.

Proponents said the overlay district would preserve key spots for transit-oriented development. But opponents, led by the Midway Chamber of Commerce and developers, said the proposal was too restrictive and unfairly tied property owners' hands. Montgomery also said the overlay district and moratorium shouldn't be adopted until after University and downtown task forces finish their work, which isn't expected until March.

"Having the overlay district in place would have given us more leverage in commenting on the plans," said University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon. UNITED has the lead charge against past big box retail in the Midway, including the new Super-Target store under construction a block away at Hamline and St. Anthony avenues. The battle has pitted UNITED and area district councils against the Midway and St. Paul Chambers of Commerce.

In the site plan documents Home Depot officials quote the draft University Avenue Central Corridor Development Strategy as noting that Midway Center and adjacent Midway Marketplace area "is currently functioning as a large single purpose retail market place and every indication is that this is both valuable to the corridor and likely to continue to expand in the future." The development strategy also talks about improving the market mix of businesses and services in the retail area, improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians and maximizing the value of the land through more intensive use.

Tom Beach, who oversees site plans for the city, said the plans do show an effort to orient the store more toward transit and away from the traditional big box model of a store surrounded by a large parking lot. In fact the building takes up the entire site. Home Depot would have 333 parking spaces located on the roof of its one-story building. Twenty-seven street-level parking spaces would be located north and northeast of the store. The loading area is at the southwest corner of the store.

The store would be 103,021 square feet in size, with a 19,303 square foot glassed-in garden center on the building's Pascal side. The tan block building will have a tower at its northeast corner.

The property is zoned for community business use, so no zoning change is needed. Nor does the project require any variances. St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED) Direc-

tor Cecile Bedor said Home Depot is not asking for any public subsidies, meaning no action by the St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is required. One precedent for Midway home improvement retailers was set when Menard's opened at Prior and University avenues in 2005. Menard's didn't ask for any public subsidy.

Bedor said she doesn't see any problems with the site plan as proposed, noting that the parking has been placed on the roof. That gets around concerns about big box retail set in a large parking lot.

Bedor said she hopes the Menard's development will inspire other, similar types of development—not just in the Midway but throughout St. Paul. She also said the 200 jobs to be created are a plus for the city.

Although Bedor said the Home Depot site is appropriate for a freeway frontage location, City Council members have to more circumspect in their comments as they walk a fine line with the Home Depot plans. A Planning Commission decision on the site plan could be appealed to the City Council, which means council members can't

take a position on the site plan itself. Montgomery has long been a proponent of Home Depot in some location the Midway, citing its potential for job creation. "Residents of my ward need jobs and this would provide good-paying jobs," she said.

But Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav, who represents neighborhoods north and west of the site, said the concerns about traffic and design need to be weighed carefully before any decisions are made. As of last week he hadn't had a chance to review the site plan.

Snelling-Hamline Community Council (SHCC), which has opposed additional big box development in its neighborhood, is organizing meetings with councils from Merriam Park and Lexington-Hamline to review the Home Depot site plans and decide next steps. SHCC Community Organizer Patrick Smith said the council is concerned about what the development could mean for the neighborhood. "We need to get everyone together to discuss this." He said neighborhood meetings are likely prior to any Planning Commission hearing.

Issues SHCC will be raising include that of site access and traf-

fic. When and if the north end of Ayd Mill Road is connected to the Interstate 94 frontage roads, plans call for removal of the Pascal Bridge. Smith and others note the bridge serves as an outlet for neighborhood residents who tire of busy Snelling and Hamline avenues. Closing the bridge, in combination with traffic to and from Home Depot and possibly a Best Buy, has raised fears of even more congestion on the other north-south streets.

Home Depot has already submitted a 24-page traffic study of the Pascal-St. Anthony site, which indicates that building Home Depot and retail to the west would increase daily trips here by 11,804. Home Depot's study indicates that no signalized intersections would have to be added in the area, where Home Depot and traffic from Midway Marketplace would flow.

McMahon said that while the Home Depot design this time around is an improvement over what was proposed earlier, he still has reservations about whether it fits into the transit-oriented vision of University Avenue redevelopment.

City staff from several departments will meet to review the site plans February 28, said Beach. Traffic and access will be major issues and the Public Works review of the site plan is already underway. Although proponents cite the property's visibility and access to and from Interstate 94, Beach said that does bring Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) into the picture. MnDOT will want to restrict the number of curb cuts along St. Anthony, for Home Depot and for any new development to the west.

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Join or not to join?

# Central students grapple with proper balance with military recruiters

By JAN WILLMS

To join or not to join—that is the question. More and more, today's youth are facing the prospect of whether to join the military as a post-secondary option.

Where and how often they should be contacted about this choice has arisen as a concern in schools like Central High School in Saint Paul.

A branch of the group Youth Against War and Racism (YAWR) was started about a year ago at Central by Willie Jacobson and Shane Davis. Recently the group had requested the Saint Paul School Board to set some limitations for recruiters in all secondary schools.

"We were informed in January that the board was taking a month to investigate each public school and learn how best to meet demands," Jacobson said. He said the students had recently been told that the researching of schools had not been completed.

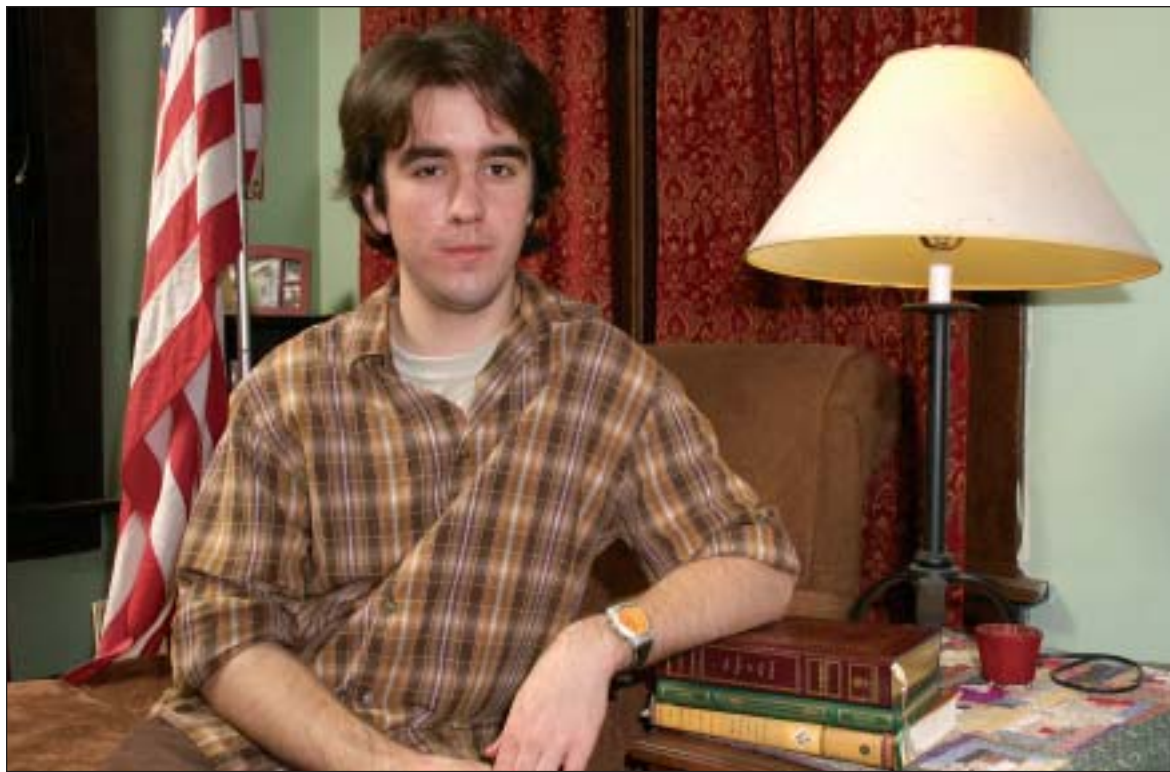
"We were also told the board may be giving the decision back to each school to make up its own rules," Jacobson said. "We felt there was no progress. The whole reason we went there was to get something done," Jacobson said. He expressed concern that each school administration may be making the decisions about recruiting.

He said the group requested that the military not visit any more often than the most frequent college.

He said that when the military recruiters do appear, YAWR sets up a table across from them to counter their information.

Jacobson said YAWR has four points of unity: to combat racism, to combat homophobia, to spend money for education and not war, and to try to keep military recruiters out of public schools.

He said setting limits on re-



Central High School student Willie Jacobson (above), a recruitment objector, and another student, Shane Davis, started a branch of the group Youth Against War and Racism (YAWR) about a year ago. Photo by Terry Faust)

cruting has recently become an issue because "we felt it was something we could actually do," he said.

"We realize the school board has to follow No Child Left Behind rules," Jacobson said, "and we have worked within those boundaries." Under the policies of No Child Left Behind, schools are obligated to allow access to military recruiters or risk the loss of federal funding.

Davis, also a Central student, said that in the past the military had not adhered to its schedule, but is starting to do so more frequently.

"We just try to present alternative information, setting up a table as close to the recruiters as we can," he said. "We're trying to find more alternatives."

"I think the most important thing in the whole recruitment

message is that they say they are just doing their job. But if they are coming into the school with a specific agenda, the school should not help them with that agenda."

Davis said he believes it is inappropriate to have military or colleges in the cafeteria.

"Students who would like to see them can seek them out," he said.

Principal Mary Mackbee said she believes the current process is not intrusive and has not created any real issues.

"I see no need for a change," she said. "The military has access to a foyer, just outside the lunchroom. I have been here for 14 years, and it seems to have worked. Students have not complained about it."

She said that since YAWR formed, certain students have

been in opposition to the military.

"Colleges as well as the military have to register before they can be provided a booth or table," she said.

"I like to let the kids make a choice for themselves," she said. "Voices should all be represented, and let the students choose for themselves."

Sgt. Robert Mazur has been a recruiter at Central since last June.

"We have a really good working relationship with Principal Mary Mackbee, her assistant principals and the career resource center," he said. "They are really friendly and open."

He said it has been easy for him to schedule a table, and he and a colleague have been at Central two times this past month.

He said that many who do join the military are following a line of family tradition; many have had parents and grandparents in service.

"A lot of their motivation is a sense of pride and a sense of patriotism," he said. He said he has found most parents are supportive, especially if serving in the military is what their children have decided they want to do.

When questioned as to whether he has concerns about recruiting youth during a time of war, Mazur said it never really occurred to him to put some thought into it.

"We are an all-volunteer army," he said. "I get that question all the time. Will I have to go to war? I just don't know."

"When I enlisted, I knew I could deploy to an area where significant things are happening. But I have been in the service four years, and I have never deployed. My cousin, meanwhile, is back in Iraq for the second time."

He added that he does empathize and sympathize with families who have soldiers left behind in Afghanistan or Iraq.

"It's human nature to do so," he said.

School board member Tom Conlon said the board has not yet determined policy for the schools.

"The board voted 6-1 to make opt out forms available to the 7th grade. I voted against it," he said. Such forms are available for parents to sign if they do not want military recruiters contacting their children. He said the board is in the process of gathering information from Central and other schools.

Conlon said he believes there is no reason for concern with recruiting as it is now.

"It's a solution in search of a problem," he said.

"I think the school board should be working on student achievement issues, not micro-managing schools."

Board member Anne Carroll, who worked with YAWR members on crafting their request, disagrees. She said signing up for the military is not the same as purchasing yearbooks or class rings.

She said making a choice about military service is an important, thoughtful, lifetime altering decision.

"It should not be discussed in the cafeteria for five minutes," she said.

Carroll stressed that most high schools currently host college recruiters in their career resource centers, while military recruiters are typically in the cafeteria.

"That's not appropriate for these kinds of serious decisions," she said.

Fran Ford, an actress living in Saint Paul, is providing another opportunity for schools and community organizations to gather additional information about war. She and others have formed the War Plays Project, Inc.

"It's a group that uses theater and spoken word to create community conversations about the effects of war on individuals, families and communities," Ford said.

The group's current project is Vetspeak, a collection of interviews with Minnesota veterans talking about their own experiences. The interviews have been put on two 47-minute DVDs and designed for high school classes or community meetings.

"We have the voice of a conscientious objector from World War II," Ford said. She said another video is of a man who was working to help train soldiers to go to Iraq when he suddenly realized he couldn't lift a rifle and be part of the war.

"In between are the voices and faces of the Panama War, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf," Ford said.

"We have voices of people who are very proud of their service as a Marine or foot soldier, and voices of people who began to question what they were told. We wanted to let the youth make choices, and realize that soldiers don't come home exactly the way they left."

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# Everyone's Irish at the Dubliner for dance lessons

By JAN WILLMS

It's a Wednesday evening, and the pub-like atmosphere of the Dubliner at 2162 University Ave. W. in St. Paul suddenly undergoes a change. Four of the patrons clear a space towards the front of the bar, strains of Irish music fill the air, and the four begin a sprightly dance.

Within about 15 minutes, observers of the group come forward and ask to join in. Soon there are 14 dancers out there, some more experienced and some learning for the first time the basic steps of the ceili dance.

"There are two kinds of Irish social dances, the ceili and the set," said Suin Lowary, the dance instructor. She said set dancing is the older dance form, beginning in the 1700s in Ireland.

"It is fairly complex and can be compared to square dancing," Lowary said. "The dances are long and quite intricate."

She said the ceili dance, which more resembles a form of line dancing, is from the early 1900s.

"A group of Irish expatriates were living in London," Lowary said. "They started having parties for their friends, but they were a bit rowdy and kept getting into trouble with the police. They thought they had to do something."

She said they looked around and saw the Scots had similar gatherings, but they were more formalized, with bagpipes and performances.

The expatriates began holding the first modern-day ceilis.

"Since then, the gatherings have been considerably less organized," Lowary said.

She uses a book, *Ar Rinci Foirne*, put out by the Community for Irish Dancers of Dublin. The book gives directions for steps to the 30 most common ceili dances.

"I do a basic beginning class on Wednesday nights," Lowary said. The lessons begin at 7 p.m. On the first Saturday of each month, ceilis are held at the Dubliner from 2 to 5 p.m.

Lowary said these gatherings are family-friendly, with children as young as 4 participating. Some steps are taught, but Saturday is primarily a day for dances to be held.

For the basic beginning class on Wednesdays, Lowary said she can teach the steps of a reel and a jig in less than half an hour.

"I call the dance as it is being done, so that makes it easier," she said. She said some of the ceilis are partner dances, some are for threesomes and some are long dances, where partners are traded.

"We are working on a circle waltz now," she said. Lowary said the average crowd on a Wednesday ranges from about 12 to 16 people.

"There are new ones every week," she said.

Lowary started out as a student at one of the Wednesday night Dubliner dances, which have been going on for years. "I was looking to get more involved with the Irish, and I have been here ever since," she said.

Kathi Jones, who with her husband Doug is a regular at the Wednesday night gatherings, said they had read an article some years ago about the Dubliner offering dancing lessons.

"We were going on a trip to Ireland, and we thought we should



It's a Wednesday evening, and the pub-like atmosphere of the Dubliner at 2162 University Ave. W. in St. Paul suddenly undergoes a change. Several of the patrons clear a space towards the front of the bar, strains of Irish music fill the air, and the four begin a sprightly dance. (Photo by Terry Faust)

learn some of the dances," she said. They have been attending the Ceili dances for the past five years.

She said Tom Scanlon, the owner of the Dubliner, has been very generous with his space. "Although, once you come here, you get recruited to work for the Irish Fair," she said with a laugh.

"It's a really good time, and we have made some really good friends," Jones said. "We had a ceili at our daughter's wedding."

Lowary said there is a lot of movement with the ceili, and the

dancing provides extensive aerobic exercise.

"We're working on one long dance, the Siege of Carrick," she said. "It's my one chance to be sadistic; I sometimes keep the dance going for a long time."

Will Harrison is another regular ceili dancer. Harrison, who lives in Hopkins, has hurling practice after work on Wednesdays. Hurling is an Irish game similar to hockey.

"After hurling practice, I stop by the Dubliner for a pint and a

dance," he said.

Harrison said he sees more and more people discovering the ceili dancing.

"They are a lot less shy about getting out and trying it," he said. He added that the connections people make to the rest of the Irish community by coming to dance the ceili are great.

"Americans tend not to embrace their folk traditions, the way other cultures do," he said. He noted that the same youngsters who might never consider doing

American square dancing would turn around and be excited to learn to do a ceili dance.

"There's an older couple who always comes in and watches us dance," Jones said. "They sit in the back and are pretty quiet. We started talking to them, and they are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. They have asked about 10 of us to come and dance for their party. The ripples really do go out from the ceilis here."

Lowary has some new people come up and ask to learn more about the dance. She quickly moves through some steps, demonstrating them as she talks. Over and over she repeats the instructions, and soon she has the group performing its first dance.

"Teaching Irish dance is an awful lot like trying to herd cats," Lowary said. "I have also heard it described as trying to put an octopus into a string bag."

The group goes through its paces, and eventually even the newest beginners are starting to catch on. They dance to the taped Irish music, but later in the evening a live group will play.

"We always try to do at least one dance to the live music," Lowary said. She encourages the new recruits to return and learn some more steps.

"Dancing is an introduction to the whole rest of Irish culture," she said.

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# In Our Community

## Hamline Church Barn Dance March 30

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Ave., hosts a Community Barn Dance on Friday, March 30.

Appropriate for all ages and stages, the event features a three-piece Appalachian string band. Robin, the dance caller, teaches the dances; those who wish to listen and watch are welcome, too. Recommended donation is \$3 per person or \$10 per family.

Dancing takes place from 7-9 p.m., with snacks and beverages available from 6:30 p.m. on. For more information, please contact the church office at 651-645-0667.

## Volunteers give tax help at Jehovah Lutheran

Help in preparing 2006 tax forms is once again available at Jehovah Lutheran Church every Monday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the lower level choir room. Two American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) volunteers—Dave Hallen and Dave Buerke—welcome all comers and help them file returns electronically. Jehovah has hosted this program about 15 years.

AARP volunteers have prepared more than 3,000 tax returns at two sites in the Midway - Jehovah and Keystone Community Center—in the past eight years. Last year the two sites served over 500 persons seeking tax help. A new site has been added this year: Como Park Lutheran Church. At Keystone and Como Park Lutheran appointments are made in advance. Jehovah takes only “walk-ins.”

Jehovah Lutheran Church provides the room and use of a copy machine, AARP provides the personnel, and there is no charge for the service. Donations may be made if desired. The program is geared toward helping senior citizens and lower income families. Enter Jehovah through the Thomas Street entrance and follow the signs to the choir room.

## Educational Event on Caregiving April 5

Lyngblomsten (healthcare, housing, and services for older adults since 1906) invites you to a FREE educational session entitled Community Resources for Caregivers (covering how to identify aging-related services/resources available to seniors and their caregivers, even if you're a long-distance caregiver).

Join us in the Newman-Benson Chapel on the Lyngblomsten campus (1415 Almond Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108) on April 5, from 3-4:30 p.m. Pre-registration is appreciated, but not required. Call

952-261-5235 for more information or visit [www.lyngblomsten.org](http://www.lyngblomsten.org).

Save the date—May 3—Critical Caregiving Conversations (3-4:30 p.m. at Lyngblomsten).

## Find savings while supporting a good cause

Lyngblomsten (healthcare, housing, and services for older adults since 1906) Auxiliary's annual Spring Rummage Sale is just around the corner! With proceeds going towards bettering the lives of older adults, you can find everything for your home and family.

The sale will be held at the Lyngblomsten Community Center—lower level of the chapel on the Lyngblomsten campus (1415 Almond Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108—street parking available on N. Pascal St.) April 18-20 (Wed. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Fri. 9 a.m.-noon \$3 bag day).

Tax-deductible donations of new and gently used items can be dropped off at the Lyngblomsten Care Center April 9-14, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. For more information, call 651-646-2941 or visit [www.lyngblomsten.org](http://www.lyngblomsten.org).

## St. Columba hosts Festival Sunday, April 29

The Church of St. Columba located at 1327 Lafond Ave in the Midway area is hosting an International Festival on Sunday, April 29. Four cultures will be represented at the festival—Irish, Hispanic, Indian, and Vietnamese.

The festival will begin with mass at 11 a.m. and will include music and readings from each culture. The festival will follow mass in the school auditorium, with food, music and dancers from each culture. Dance performances will begin at 1 p.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Please come and join us and taste food from Ireland, Mexico, India, and Vietnam and watch the fabulous dancers perform the dance from their native countries.

## Fun Fair, Open House at Central Lutheran School

Our FREE Family Fun Fair will be held on Monday, March 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Games, activities, popcorn, cookies and fruit drink will all be available at the Central Lutheran School Family Fun Fair. Each classroom will have a fun activity and a small prize for the children, while our teachers are available to answer question from the adults. Snacks will be served in the gym. Some of our school families will also be on hand to answer questions. Central Lutheran School offers Christian education from preschool through eighth grade and year round child care.

We are located at 775 N. Lexington Parkway (at Englewood Ave.), St. Paul, MN, 55104. If you have any questions, please contact principal Bob Kuhlman at 651-645-8649 or go to our website at [www.clssp.org](http://www.clssp.org)

## Preventing falls topic of March 13 luncheon

“Keeping in Balance: Preventing Falls” will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors held Tuesday, March 13 at 11:30 at 1514 Englewood Avenue. A representative from the Area Agency on Aging will explain many ways to help maintain and/or repair a person's since of balance.

Free transportation is provided and a free will donation is taken for the meal. The event is sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders, one of the many Living at Home/Block Nurse Programs in the area. (Call HM Elders to make reservations for the luncheon or for more information (651-209-6542) about what we do to keep seniors independent.

Artists willing to contribute a piece of work to be sold at a benefit event for Hamline Midway Elders on April 21-22 at 1514 Englewood Ave are asked to call Monica or Beth at 651-209-6542. Art will Desired mediums include: photos, paintings (framed), textiles (cross-stitch, knit, crochet, quilting, sewn items), sculpture, woodwork, metal, jewelry/ beading, mosaics, ceramics, pottery, children's art (framed if flat). “Used” art in excellent condition will be accepted.

## Lyngblomsten Community Center is AARP tax site

Lyngblomsten Community Center at 1298 Pascal is offering free tax help for seniors and low-income people through April 12th. The AARP volunteers will be at Lyngblomsten every Tuesday and Thursday. Call 651-632-5330 to schedule an appointment.

Bring your W-2's and 1099 forms in addition to information relating to sales of stocks, bonds, real estate, etc. and Social Security numbers of dependents. You will need the Property Tax statement to complete your property tax refund forms or CRP (rent form) from your landlord. It is also very helpful to bring along a copy of last years tax forms.

## Local environmental groups honored

The Friends of Horton Park/The Hamline Midway Tree Team, The Hamline Midway Environmental Group, and The Midway Green-spirit Community Garden were honored at the Minnesota State Horticultural Society 2006 State Award held February 3, 2007.

Each year the Minnesota State

Horticultural Society recognizes individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to horticulture and greening efforts in public gardens, community projects and through exemplary community achievements. Individuals, projects and activities of neighborhood groups, governmental organizations, garden clubs and communities that have meritoriously contributed to gardening and rejuvenating communities through plants are honored each year.

Nineteen award winners were nominated by fellow community members from across the state for their outstanding contributions to horticulture and greening efforts and recognized by the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Winners were announced at the State Awards and Recognition Event held at the Minnesota State Horticultural Society on February 3th, 2007.

## A cure for Alzheimer's? New research findings

There have been very big findings in Alzheimer's Cure Research—all from a very tiny mouse! Lyngblomsten (healthcare, housing, and services for older adults since 1906 at 1415 Almond Ave.) is hosting Sarah Chevallier, Associate Director of the Center for Memory Research and Care at the University of Minnesota, who will talk about the new and encouraging findings about Alzheimer's. If you or someone you know is dealing with this disease, this FREE presentation is important to attend! (There will be time after each session for your questions.) Join us at ONE of these two sessions: Thursday, April 19 from 7-8:30 p.m., or, Friday, April 20 from 9:30-11 a.m. Pre-registration to (651) 646-2941 or [jkellen@lyngblomsten.org](mailto:jkellen@lyngblomsten.org) is greatly appreciated but not required.

## Sports historian Stew Thornley speaks Mar. 8

Shake off the Minnesota winter, think Spring Training, and join us for an evening of Minnesota and Midway baseball history!

The second event in the Ham-

line Midway History Corps Speaker Series is set for Thursday, March 8 at 7 p.m. in the Hamline Midway Branch Library auditorium.

Sports historian Stew Thornley is author of “Baseball in Minnesota: The Definitive History” (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006). His other recent titles include: Six Feet Under: A Graveyard Guide to Minnesota and Minnesota Hoops: Basketball in the North Star State (co-author).

With the former Lexington Park just off one corner of the Hamline Midway neighborhood and Midway Stadium on the other, we've got a rich baseball heritage.

There will also be a representative from the St. Paul Saints with some goodies and Micawbers Books will be on hand with some of Stew's titles.

## Nutrition and weaning topic of La Leche meeting

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.

## Lyngblomsten hosts four- hour driving class Apr. 30

The Lyngblomsten Community Center, 1298 Pascal Avenue will host a four-hour defensive driving class on Monday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a one-hour break for lunch. Cost is \$14 for the class and \$4 for lunch. If you care to join us for lunch please call the dining line at 651-632-5332 by noon on Friday, April 27th.

Please call the Minnesota Safety Council at 651-291-9150 and ask for the Lyngblomsten registration form. If you have any further questions call 651-632-5330.

## Monitor expansion

Continued from page 1

Expanding into the North End continues a pattern of expansion for the *Monitor*. The newspaper recently added South St. Anthony Park and part of Merriam Park to the coverage area.

North End community leaders welcome the *Monitor* to the neighborhood. “The news-

paper has covered the South Como neighborhood for many years, so now all of District 6 will get coverage. We welcome the *Monitor* and are glad to have the paper on Rice Street,” said District 6 President Ray Andrea-son.

NEBA President Mike Remmers of Capital Bank said having a newspaper in the community is very important for the North End and the Rice Street business district. “We're very pleased to have the *Monitor* coming into the community.”



# Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

tractors. Supporters, including many from the Hamline University student body and faculty, said such a restaurant is an unmet need for the area. But a handful of local businesses oppose the variance saying the area already lacks adequate off-street parking.

The Fatheadz proposal is not the first to run up against the Snelling-Minnehaha area's parking shortage. Last year part of the building was eyed as a potential site for a place of worship. But that plan was also rejected due to concerns about parking.

## Hamline-Midway signs go before City Council

Longtime Hamline-Midway residents may remember when bright yellow, red, green and blue metal street signs, doorway decorations, trash cans and wood and metal public information kiosks sprouted along North Snelling and Minnehaha avenues. Those fixtures, provided through St. Paul's now-defunct Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP), are nearing 20 years of age and need replacement.

The Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) Board gave the Hamline Midway Coalition a recommendation of approval February 14 for \$4,500 to replace the rusting street signs. The funds, which would be matched one-to-one, would pay for new banner brackets on the 24 median light poles between University Avenue and Pierce Butler Route.

The funding recommendation goes to the St. Paul City Council for final approval in March.

The sales tax funds would come from the City Council's Neighborhood Investment Initiative Program. The funds are from Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav. In years past each City Council member would receive funding through this program. However, funds in 2007 were shifted to help pay for public safety vehicles and balance the city budget. So the council-controlled funds are dwindling.

The brackets will hold banners provided by a partnership including the district councils, Sparc, Hamline University, the Minnesota State Fair and the Snelling Avenue Business Initiative (SABI). The banners could change with seasons or events, such as banners announcing Hamline commencement or banners during the state fair.

Replacement of the metal signs is just one more step in improving the appearance of Snelling. The NPP improvements have aged over time and that program never included funds for maintenance or replacement of streetscape improvements. Trash cans have been removed, along with some of the kiosks. Recently mosaic planters began to sprout along Snelling. Business facade improvements are also planned.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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# Central basketball

Continued from page 1

tral Athletic Director Nate Galloway said Coach Taylor has unfairly been accused of recruiting players from other conference schools. "Coach Taylor has never recruited anyone outside of Central's student body," he said. "Central is a great school academically, and Coach Taylor and his staff have led a very successful basketball program. The school and program sell itself."

The recruiting charge is not unique to Central. Recognizing the problem exists statewide, the Minnesota State High School League's (MSHSL) Representative Assembly is set to vote March 16 on a one-year competitive athletics/activities ban at the varsity level for transfer students unless one's family has physically moved to the new school's attendance area.

Taylor and Galloway say they have no objections to the ban passing, but noted it may be difficult to enforce. "It may come down to checking a family's utility bills to prove residence," Galloway said. "There are a lot of details that may be hard to iron out so it really is fair to all. We'll see what happens."

In any case, Central's success is unlikely to die soon. Its Junior Varsity (JV) and 9th grade teams also went undefeated in city conference play, 8-0 and 12-0 respectively, though lost a handful of non-conference games. Obviously, the varsity team hopes to finish the season 32-0, winning the three regional playoff games and all three state tournament games for a championship in the AAAA large school division.

## Player Viewpoints & Accomplishments

"Being the team to beat, it means

we must always play hard, play together, play consistent, and play fundamental," said Kiara Buford, a team captain and junior starter (playing forward) who has given oral commitment to play for the University Minnesota in 2 years. "Everyone wants to make you the target for an upset."

Buford added that the success factors have added pressures to the players as well. "When our new players joined us this year, we told them what we expected of them, and made clear we were and would remain a team with different strengths and abilities," she said. "I think that chemistry has worked out and we are performing at our peak, even if not everyone is happy 100 percent of the time. We're all committed to the common goal of a state championship and know we must work together to attain it."

Megan Howard, a junior forward, sees the team's success as an opportunity to be role models and mentors for the rising freshman and sophomores who will play in future years. "They look up to us and hope to be in our shoes one day," she said. "We try to help them and see ourselves as a basketball program for all three teams, not just a varsity team. I believe we will be as strong next year if we keep developing each other and work hard."

Taylor's assistant coach Tom Gunderson said with the team averaging 95 points per game and holding city conference opponents to 30 points per game, it is difficult to keep the team at its peak. "The tough games are ahead, and we'll have to shift to a tougher mindset," he said. "Park (Cottage Grove), Tartan, Woodbury and Cretin-Derham Hall are all in our regional playoffs and will play us tough. But I think we will rise to the occasion."



Team photo of the Central Varsity girls' basketball team — currently top-ranked in the state for girl's high school basketball teams pre-tournament and likely #1 seed if they qualify for the state tournament in mid-March. (Photo by Tom Conlon)

## Mentoring and Life Lessons

Central 9th Grade Coach Elizabeth Hennen agrees with Howard that mentoring is crucial. "While I'm proud of my team's success, I recognize greater challenges besides just athletics," she said. "Ninth grade is a year that kids can really succeed or withdraw. It's crucial they have friends and feel connected to something. I strive to make basketball one way they can make those connections to Central, to their team, and to their own interests and passions. If our team can do those things, we will be successful on and off the basketball court."

Some of those connections may have come about through tragedy. Samantha Couper, a sophomore JV player, lost her older sister in a car accident this winter. "Nearly our entire JV team went to her sister's funeral, and it helped us learn many more important lessons about life," said John Robinson, Central's JV coach.

"We learned about that young lady's legacy of love by seeing customers where she had worked come to honor her. We realized we all have feelings and embraced Samantha. We learned things more important than basketball that day, and it is hopefully a bond that these teammates will remember and share with each other for years to come."

Robinson is the father of senior starting guard (and tri-captain) Angel Robinson, who will play Division I basketball for Marquette University in Milwaukee next fall. His younger daughter Chantel plays on his JV team. Buford has given an oral commitment to play for the University of Minnesota; others are under consideration elsewhere.

## The Coaches

Taylor was once an assistant to Gunderson when he began coaching girl's basketball with him at Harding High School 22 years ago. After 6 years, he took his first head coaching assignment at

Mounds View high school. Seven years later, he came to Central, where he is now in his 9th season as girl's head basketball coach. He also will be the new head coach for Central's track and field team this spring.

A native of Birmingham, Ala., Taylor moved to Duluth, Minn. at age 13 and played on Duluth-Central's 1977 state tournament basketball team, losing in the championship game to Prior Lake. He later played basketball for the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Robinson, who previously coached at Johnson, joined the JV coaching staff in 2005. Hennen is in her first season as Central's 9th grade coach.

Outside of basketball, the coaching staff all have connections to education. Both Taylor and Robinson are educational assistants at Central. Gunderson is a retired St. Paul teacher; Hennen is a future teacher studying elementary education at the College of St. Catherine.

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### Central Baptist, Bethel University collaborate on art exhibition

Central Baptist Church, in collaboration with the art department of Bethel University, is producing their sixth annual art exhibition, "Love that Empowers," March 30 to April 8. Artists are invited to enter original works of art for jury selection. Selected art will be exhibited at Central Baptist Church, 420 North Roy

Street.

Entries are due by 1 p.m. Saturday, March 24. Entries will be accepted at Central Baptist Church on Thursday, March 22, 3-6 p.m., Friday, March 23, 3-6 p.m., and Saturday, March 24, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. For more information on guidelines, call Central Baptist at 651-646-2751.

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Even the threat of a snowstorm couldn't stop two mourning doves from returning to our yard on February 23. The intrepid pair sat huddled under the bird feeder as the wind swirled around them. They came back to their breeding grounds early in hopes of finding spring-like weather, and maybe an opportunity to start nesting soon. (Hopes that were dashed the next day.)

March is an erratic month when a wicked backslide into winter is just as likely as blooming crocuses. Looking back into my own journals, I found some major weather-extremes for the beginning of March.

On March 7, 2000, I heard the first robin of the season as my husband and I ate lunch outside on a 75-degree day. Conversely, on March 7, 1995, we had just received several inches of snow and the high for that day was in the 20s. Expect the unexpected in March.

Flocks of male American robins often return to our area in March. Before long, the males will become less tolerant of each other's company. And the once gregarious flocks start to break up as they each lay claim to individual nesting territories.

The female robins arrive later, and will often return to the same mate and territory from the previous year. Robins are not necessarily mated for life. However, picking up where they left off last year can save time. From all I've seen and read, American robins have no obvious courtship rituals or displays—the paired mates just stay close to each other.

A stretch of mild weather (in late March or early April) may induce the robins to press their luck



# Nature in the City

By DEB ROBINSON

## March: a lean time on the cusp of spring

by nesting early. This first nest is usually built in a protected site like a thick evergreen shrub or under an eave.

A robin with a muddy breast or a wad of mud in her bill is a sure sign that she is building a nest. She shapes the nest of twigs and grass with her breast by pressing the mud into the nesting material.

If winter reasserts itself, the robins' first clutch of eggs may fail. If cold weather returns after the eggs hatch, the parents will not be able to find insects or worms to feed the young. Early nesting is a risky business for robins, but you can't blame them for trying.

The tiny cottontail rabbit I wrote about in October has made it through the winter . . . so far. This winter, whenever I came home late from a meeting or a class, I saw my resident rabbit under the bird feeder or back in the raspberry patch. Besides eating spilled bird seed, the rabbit has been steadily nibbling its way through our raspberry canes leaving just a few inches of each cane standing at the base of the plant.

Normally, we cut all of last year's canes to the ground in late winter to avoid disease during the next growing season and to increase our fall raspberry harvest. Thanks to the rabbit, we'll not have much cutting to do, but I'll

be miffed if the cottontail switches to eating the bark off our trees.

All winter long, the rabbit has

also been fertilizing the yard. Cottontails need a little extra time to digest tough foods like twigs and



bark. They don't like being exposed to danger out in the open for long, so they eat quickly and retire to a concealed location for the next unsavory step in their digestion process.

While safely hidden, the rabbits excrete soft, green partially digested dropping, which they reingest (a practice known as: coprophagy). The copious number of hard, brown pellets scattered all over our backyard are the twice-digested droppings.

I've never had rabbits eating our tough raspberry canes before. This makes me think that the local rabbit population could be at a high point. Red foxes could bring the rabbit population back into balance.

Foxes eat small prey, like voles and mice, on the spot. A rabbit, however, is a large meal worthy of bringing back to the den to feed their cubs. It has been a few years since I've seen a red fox trotting through Como Park, and I haven't seen a litter of fox cubs in the park since May of 2002. But much of the wildlife around us live secret lives, which is the secret to their survival. Maybe you'll never see the fox—maybe all you'll notice is fewer rabbits.

Endnotes: \*Can't wait for spring? The Spring Flower Show at McNeely Conservatory starts March 24. \*Capitol Region Watershed District's Open House is April 11, 5 p.m. Climatologist, Dr. Mark Seeley, will speak at 6:30 pm on "The Effects of Climate Change on Water Resources." Location: 1410 Energy Park Dr. Suite 4. More info: [www.capitolregionwd.org](http://www.capitolregionwd.org) \*To contact this writer: [dmrobinson@bitstream.net](mailto:dmrobinson@bitstream.net)

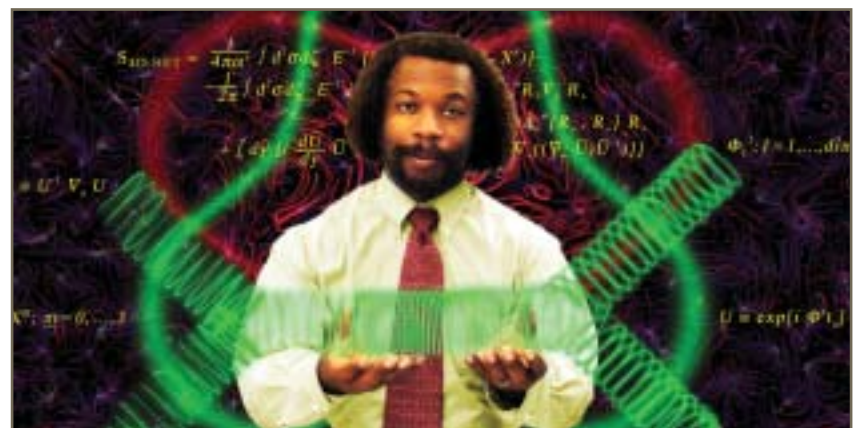
Illustration by Deb Robinson

## Hamline University

### Save the Date

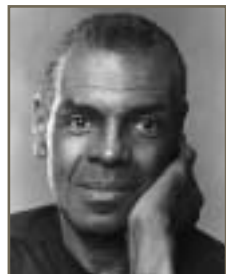
#### Controversy! Conflicts! Cosmology!

Save the Date for this year's Kay Malmstrom Lecture in Physics, featuring string theorist Jim Gates Jr., the John S. Toll Professor of Physics at the University of Maryland, on Friday, May 4 at 12:40 p.m. in Sundin Music Hall. Watch for our April *Midway Como Monitor* ad for more information or contact Christine Berg Schroeder at 651-523-2426 or [cbergschroeder01@hamline.edu](mailto:cbergschroeder01@hamline.edu).



Computer Manipulated Image by Ken Griggs

### Upcoming Events at Hamline University



Tom Caravaglia

#### "50 Million Ways to Make a Dance"

Gus Solomons jr., the 2007 Phi Beta Kappa visiting scholar, will discuss how his choreographic process has changed over his forty-plus years of choreographing, from the

days of Judson Dance Theater's experimentalism to his current dance-making for older dancers, and how he creates movement for young, agile dancers.

Date: Monday, March 12

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Anne Simley Theatre

Cost: Free and open to the public

Contact: Direct questions to [tickets@hamline.edu](mailto:tickets@hamline.edu).

#### Never the Sinner

Dates: Thursday-Saturday, March 8-10

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Anne Simley Theatre

Cost: General admission \$7, Senior citizens and non-ACTC students \$5, Hamline faculty and staff \$3, ACTC students \$1, Children 12 and under free

#### Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel

Date: Tuesday, March 13

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Contact: For tickets, 651-523-2459

#### Shifrin-Turkovic-Wosner Trio

Three members of the prestigious Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (New York City) perform.

Date: Thursday, March 29

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Contact: For tickets, 651-523-2459

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