



Midway Como monitor

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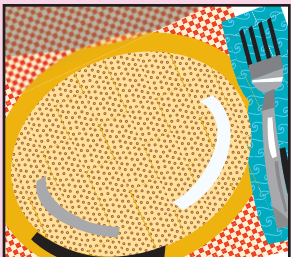
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Family Academy holds Environmental Exhibit on Jan. 27

Has the Hiawatha ridership spurred likelihood of a Central Corridor?

Merits of University Ave. Light Rail still debated

By JAN WILLMS

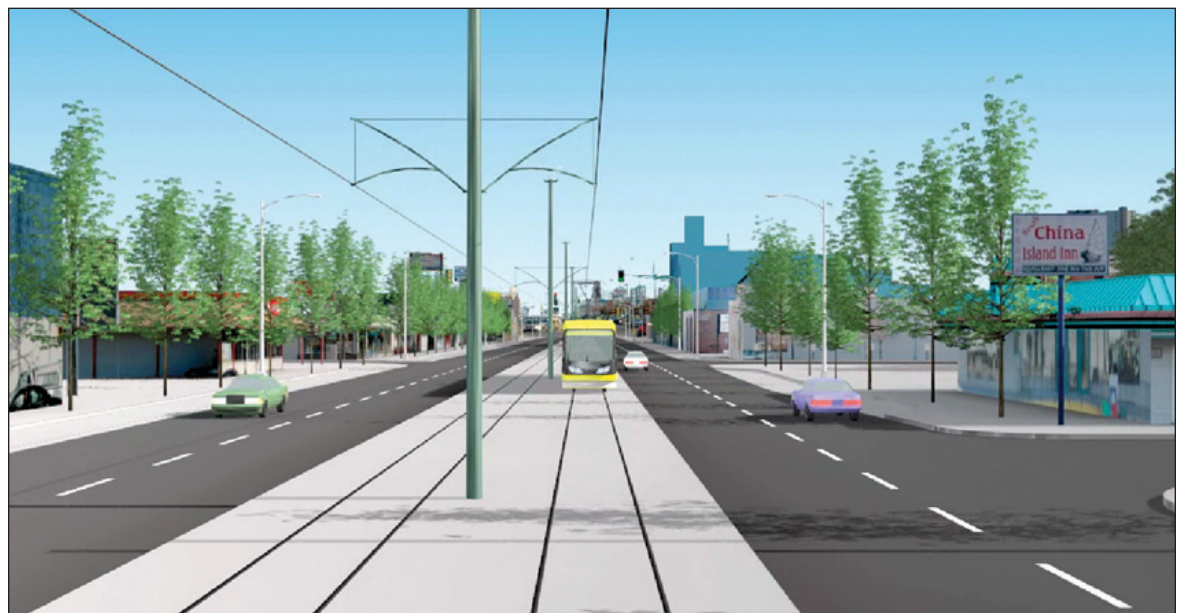
With the Hiawatha Light Rail up and running, the proposed track along University Avenue from St. Paul to Minneapolis is back on the planning board. The project was set aside because the strong support for it was not forthcoming a few years ago, and business support was behind the Hiawatha Line.

However, the Chamber of Commerce in St. Paul currently is backing a light rail line connecting the Twin Cities, and momentum has been building.

University Avenue appears to be the location of choice for light rail. However, the Metropolitan Council has not yet determined whether to go ahead with the LRT or a bus transit system.

Opinions are strong and varied on the proposal to put light rail down University Avenue, ranging from total opposition to light rail to complete support for the transportation system. Many are supportive, but also have reservations.

Brian McMahon, executive director of University UNITED, a



This image represents a still from the Central Corridor Conceptual Simulation prepared for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. It shows a Light Rail Vehicle in the University Avenue Right of Way approaching the intersection with Snelling Avenue. (Image courtesy of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority)

coalition of businesses along University Ave., is definitely one of the supporters.

"The overall transportation mess has sparked the idea of looking at transit as improving the sit-

uation," McMahon said. "I think the Central Corridor down University Avenue is a good idea, and the success of the Hiawatha Line has been a big help in generating support. It's the best way, not only for transportation, but for development."

Acknowledging the common concerns of parking and waiting for traffic lights that also have been concerns for the Hiawatha Line, McMahon cited a study from several years ago that suggested park and ride lots could be shared by commuters and retail businesses. He said a movie theater complex, as an example, could provide parking for its customers at top movie times but for the light rail commuters at other times.

He said University UNITED has just appointed a task force from its board to study some of the issues raised by light rail.

"Among the issues we will be looking at will be parking, construction disruption and station placement," he said. "We do not want to put small businesses at any disadvantage."

He said the light rail should be made as accessible as possible for the residential community, also, stressing alternative ways to get to light rail and creating better pedestrian paths. He said the Central Corridor Coordinating Com-

mittee has done extensive research on the light rail option.

McMahon said he is going to be suggesting that while digging up the street for light rail, methods be considered for utilizing a utility trench that could connect to locally generated power stations, providing heat. "There would also be great security benefits by having a regional corridor that could still have power to stay in operation in case of a black-out."

Another proponent of light rail is Dave Gagne, executive director for Hamline-Midway Coalition.

"I have been involved in a variety of ways since 1989," Gagne said. "Right now the Coalition is not directly involved, but there will be community meetings we will be organizing to get residential and business input into the upcoming light rail."

Gagne stressed the importance of St. Paul being at the hub of the light rail system. He said some of the main concerns he has heard are the impact on businesses during construction and the weakening of the bus 16A route. He said people mention cost, but he thinks they are more concerned with the other issues.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Como Visitor Center Grand Opening



Visitors to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory are in for a treat this weekend. There will be a host of special events Saturday, Feb. 12 to mark the opening of the new Visitor Center at Como Park. Activities will include a sneak preview of the Tropical Encounters exhibit, which officially opened in the fall of 2005, a look at the botanical and zoological art exhibit, and plant and animal demonstrations, not to mention live entertainment, costumed characters and face painters.

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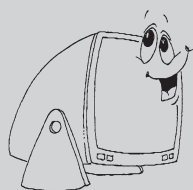
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Midway Como in a Minute

University-Raymond possible historic area

A historic district centered on the University and Raymond intersection will be the topic of a St. Paul City Council public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 16 on the proposed University-Raymond Commercial Historic District. The district has been nominated by the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) as a St. Paul Heritage Preservation site. It has been the topic of hearings before the HPC and St. Paul Planning Commission.

Property owners have been involved in the historic designation discussion and have generally been supportive. Local designation is not as restrictive as national designation.

The general boundaries of the area are University and Raymond avenues, with Cromwell on the west, Territorial and Charles avenues on the north, Myrtle Avenue on the south and Hampden Avenue on the east.

Information on the upcoming hearing can be obtained by calling Amy Spong, historic preservation specialist for the City of St. Paul, at 651-266-9078.

The district is the result of a recent study of St. Paul neighborhoods. Consultants looked at individual sites and districts as possibilities for individual and district designation. More than a dozen building, many of them Midway area churches and commercial buildings, were nominated for individual designation. Those nominations haven't been acted upon yet.

University Ave. tattoo parlor fined by City

A University Avenue tattoo parlor must pay a \$1,000 fine for health and safety violations, the St. Paul

City Council decided January 19. Planet Ink, 1499 University Av., is accused of tattooing an underage girl without parental consent and for failing to comply with health and safety standards.

An administrative law judge recommended a \$600 fine, but City Council members agreed that the \$1,000 fine should be paid. Ward Four City Council Member Jay Benanav said the conditions in the business were "awful."

The judge held an adverse action hearing on the violations in November. The hearing was prompted by a complaint from a woman whose daughter was able to get two tattoos without parental consent. In St. Paul it's illegal for minors to get tattoos without parental consent.

The complainant, who visited Planet Ink after learning about her daughter's tattoos, also complained to the city that the premises had a "funky smell" and "stunk real bad."

License, Inspection and Environmental Protection (LIEP) staff inspected Planet Ink in March 2004 and found the premises to be grossly unsanitary, with soiled floors, improperly stored needles, inadequate supplies of sanitizers, a dirty garbage area and improper use of the autoclave device used to sterilize the tattooing equipment. The inspector also found incomplete records of customer contacts. City staff worked with Planet Ink throughout the summer as the business was cleaned up and violations corrected.

But during the hearing testimony, there was inconsistent information about the tattoo artist the girl had visited. Planet Ink leases studio space to artists, in the same way some beauty salons lease chairs. The girl's description of the tattoo artists she saw isn't consistent with the artists working at Planet Ink at the time. Because the city was unable to prove that the girl was tattooed at Planet Ink, the city's request for a \$1,000 fine was re-

jected by the judge. He said the city could only prove that the premises were unsanitary and cut the fine to \$600.

Assistant City Attorney Virginia Palmer asked that the higher fine be reinstated, because the business conditions did pose a risk to the public and could have spread diseases such as hepatitis. A LIEP inspection last fall revealed that the business still isn't following proper record-keeping procedures.

Planet Ink manager Chedy Kuebbler, who took over after the violations were reported, said there are new tattoo artists at the business. He said the business is keeping records and is being maintained in a sanitary manner. But Benanav said the higher fine was warranted, given the business conditions.

Historic Iris Park building to be rehabbed

A historic Iris Park building will be rehabilitated under a plan approved December 22 by the St. Paul City Council. Crosby Block owners Naomi Isaacson and Lauren Marie Ballinger posted a \$25,000 performance bond by the end of 2004. They also provided city officials with detailed plans for rehabilitating the three-story building at 1956 Feronia Av., along with materials and documents demonstrating their financial capability to execute the plans.

The performance bond will be return upon completion of the project. The women have 180 days to complete the work, although they can seek an extension that would extend the rehabilitation over 360 days.

After working with three different building owners and encountering years of delays, Ward Four City Council Member Jay Benanav said he is satisfied that the long-postponed building rehabilitation can move ahead. The bond is a much larger amount

than the city typically requires, he noted. But the bond amount is appropriate because of the building's large size.

If a building cannot be rehabilitated, the developer would forfeit the bond. The bond would then be used to help cover demolition costs. City staff have estimated it would cost \$30,000 to \$40,000 to tear down the building and more than \$1 million to renovate it.

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

Benanav said he has made extra efforts to push the building rehabilitation along because of its historic status. The Crosby Block was designed by Barber and Barber Architects and built by J.N. Noble in 1888. The building is named for its first owner, Herbert M. Crosby, who was cashier of the Bank of Merriam Bank and a Merriam Park and Midway area civic leader. The building is a remnant of the late 19th century business district that served the Iris Park and Union Park areas of Merriam Park. Interstate 94 construction wiped out most of its neighboring buildings years ago.

The building became run-down in recent years, housing as many as 16 to 18 small apartments. Tenants generated many police calls in the 1980s and 1990s before the last tenants moved out. The building has also languished on the city's vacant building and problem property lists for several years.

But redeveloping the building for a new use has been difficult, with three different ownership teams trying to rehabilitate and reoccupy the structure. One challenge is that the building has been a target for vandals. Most of the windows are now boarded up, including windows replaced in a previous rehabilitation effort.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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Political wrangling earns Council say over Ayd Mill Road rebuild

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council will get a say on how Ayd Mill Road is rebuilt, but it took a bureaucratic roadblock to get their chance to weigh in.

During the wrangling over the 2005 city budget, the council decided December 8 to put \$5.8 million or three-fourths of Public Works' 2005 engineering budget into a council-controlled contingency fund. That meant that the City Council must approve engineering work expenditures on all city street projects.

By the time the budget was approved December 15, the impasse had been resolved. Mayor Randy Kelly's administration reached agreement with the council on the Ayd Mill Road issue, saying the council will have a say. That in turn prompted the council to release the engineering budget from contingency.

The City Council's funding grab came just before the environmental impact statement (EIS) study of Ayd Mill Road as a four-lane roadway is released for public comment. Study review by the state and federal governments is expected to be wrapped up in January, with Kelly hosting a community meeting on the EIS in late January or February. No date has been set.

The council's action surprised Public Works and budget office staff. "Are you talking about the entire engineering budget or just the part for Ayd Mill Road?" asked Bruce Beese, who oversees finances for Public Works.

Ayd Mill Road isn't even scheduled for work beyond the EIS completion, said City Engi-

neer John Maczko. He and Budget Director Matt Smith said that Public Works' top priority street projects for 2005 are Phalen Corridor and Pierce Butler Route.

Noting that the test of a connected Ayd Mill Road and the EIS work itself went forward without City Council input or approval, Ward Four City Council Member Jay Benanav said, "This is an effort to make sure the St. Paul City Council has the ability to influence the Ayd Mill Road discussion."

Ward Two City Council Member Dave Thune agreed, saying the council will have a say "even if we have to approve it one street light at a time."

Thune noted there is precedent for the City Council to take control of a budget by putting it in contingency. It usually happens when there's not an agreement on how to spend money or if a project's status is uncertain. But the City Council has also used its contingency accounts to rein in departments it disagrees with. More than a decade ago, then-Council Budget Chairperson Janice Rettman put most of the city licensing budget in contingency after she and staff clashed.

The move to control future spending on Ayd Mill Road comes as district councils and activists prepare to comment on a recently completed EIS study of Ayd Mill Road as a four-lane street with a direct connection to Interstate 35E at the south and Interstate 94 at the north. More than 70 people attended a November 30 Snelling-Hamline Community Council hearing to voice concerns about the road

plans. Residents in Snelling-Hamline already get cut-through traffic as well as increased traffic on Selby Avenue. Now there are fears that a north end connection could isolate the tiny Snelling Park neighborhood, which is between Pascal, Marshall, Snelling and Concordia avenues.

done, Public Works staff decided that the four-lane extended alternative minimized traffic impacts on Lexington and Hamline," said Maczko. One project that would be done in conjunction with rebuilding Ayd Mill Road would be replacement of the Hamline Avenue Bridge.

said the task force's original intent was to deal with commuter traffic that exited I-35E at Randolph and clogged South Lexington Parkway.

That traffic congestion was eased when the south end connection opened in 2002, said Casey. "But it's all in front of my house now."

Casey's neighbor, Dave Monson, agreed, saying "I live at 1527 Interstate Highway 35E. It used to be Selby Avenue but that changed two years ago."

Extending Ayd Mill Road north could be seen as way to reduce the cut-through traffic. But that plan raises worries about the tiny Snelling Park neighborhood. Some speakers questioned whether the city is simply trying to pit people against each other.

Maczko said Ayd Mill Road would follow a tunnel beneath the Selby Avenue Bridge, then emerge at grade north of the bridge. This would mean the demolition of warehouses north and south of the bridge.

The extended road would be east of Concordia University's new ball fields. Ayd Mill Road would cross Marshall at grade and a traffic signal would be installed. Then it would extend north through the Corning Donohue property and the Snelling Heating and Cooling property.

The EIS recommends an at grade crossing of Ayd Mill Road and Concordia, with a new bridge built over I-94 to reach St. Anthony Avenue and westbound I-94. This would require removing the current Pascal Bridge and the Metro Transit bus bypass ramp at Pascal.

"This is an effort to make sure the St. Paul City Council has the ability to influence the Ayd Mill Road discussion."

— Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav

About two dozen members of the activists' group Neighborhoods First! rallied December 5 at the Snelling-Hamline Community Garden to prepare for the upcoming EIS meeting. Member Mike Madden spent 30 hours camping out by Ayd Mill Road as a protest against the ongoing road connection test —one hour for every month of the test.

Lexington-Hamline Community and Summit Hill Association plan meetings the second week of January.

One question repeatedly heard in recent weeks is why a four-lane road was chosen for the EIS study. The Ayd Mill Road Task Force recommended the road be removed and replaced with a linear park. The St. Paul Planning Commission recommended a four-lane roadway. In 2000 the St. Paul City Council approved a two-lane parkway with a direct connection to I-35E at the south end and indirect connection to I-94 at the north end.

"When it was all said and

Maczko said Public Works staff believes a four-lane road, not a two-lane, will better serve the area. The four-lane road studied in the EIS would have a 40 miles per hour speed limit. It would have on-street bike lanes and adjacent sidewalk.

Some speakers scoffed at the speed limit, saying the current 45 MPH limit isn't followed now. "If you do drive 45 you're practically run over by SUVs from the suburbs, hurrying to get home," said Summit Hill resident Dan Dobson.

Most sentiments heard at the Snelling-Hamline meeting centered on the increased traffic through the neighborhood. Some motorists take Hamline to Ashland or Portland, then take neighborhood north-south streets to get to Snelling and I-94. Others cut through north of Selby to bypass the Snelling-Selby light.

Mike Casey, a Selby Avenue resident who put in 23 years as a Snelling-Hamline representative on two Ayd Mill Road task forces,

Next deadline: February 28
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HMC establishes Land Use Committee

The Hamline Midway Coalition Board has appointed the first members of its newly formed Land Use Committee. As an advisory committee to the HMC Board the Land Use Committee will provide a forum for resident and business comments on proposed development sites, transportation issues, neighborhood blight, zoning modifications and proposed land use changes.

The Land Use Committee will make recommendations to the HMC Board on policy matters related to these various issues. The first meeting of the Land Use Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information or to obtain an application to serve on the Land Use Committee contact Dave Gagne at 651-646-1986 or email dgagne@hamlinemidwaycoalition.org.

Level 3 sex offender back in prison

Level three sex offender, Michael Olszewski, who was to

Hamline Midway Coalition

BY THE STAFF OF HAMLINEMIDWAY COALITION

Land Use Committee established; sex offender in prison

be released on intensive supervision to live in the Hamline Midway neighborhood was re-arrested on December 30th, 2004, for a parole violation and sentenced on January 14th, 2005, to at least five more months in prison. When Olszewski is released there will be another formal community notification process for the neighborhood in which he decides to reside. At this time there is no information where that might be. For more information contact Jun-Li Wang at HMC - 651-646-1986.

Hamline Midway residents honored by City of St. Paul

On January 21, three long term Hamline Midway residents were recognized for their work on various neighborhood issues. Linda Druck was recognized for her crime prevention work. Krista Hanson was recognized

for her work to set up and coordinate the 2003 and 2004 annual community yard sales in Hamline Midway. Jerry Ratliff was recognized for his five year effort to work with other residents and businesses to prevent the littering of shopping carts from area retailers throughout our neighborhood.

Help build a stronger and safer neighborhood!

Are you committed to strengthening the Hamline Midway neighborhood? If you answer yes, you are invited to apply to our new program - Leadership in Support of Neighborhoods (LISN). A collaborative program between Hamline University and HMC, LISN will support individuals and groups in the Hamline Midway neighborhood to develop leadership on issues important to our neighborhood. Up to twelve fellows per year will receive a \$1,000 stipend and additional funding to cover approved expenses to participate in leadership skills development and a community project. For more information contact Jun-Li Wang, Community Leadership Coordinator at 646-1986 or email jjwang@hamlinemidwaycoalition.org.

(Editor's note: The following is a new column. It's an outgrowth of the Starting Over column. This column will reflect these changing times as we grow older. We hope you like it.)



The Best Years

By SHERRI MOORE

Aging, the final frontier

Once, while visiting Hearst Castle in California, I came upon a wonderful saying inscribed on a donation brick.

"Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be."

—Robert Browning

That quote has stayed with me for 20 years now. I even wrote it in the wet cement of our sidewalk. That to me is what aging is: The best is yet to be. We, the baby boomers, have defined each stage of life. Our generation observed changing times; the tragedy of losing loved ones in the Vietnam war and as college students, demonstrating against the war until finally, it ended, badly, but it ended. We helped our veteran brothers and friends return to work, or go back to school and find their way in the business world.

We've seen the dawn of the Civil Rights movement. It was just 40 years ago when Negroes (Blacks, now African Americans) were denied their right to vote throughout the South. We've also seen intimidation at voting sites raise its ugly head again in the 2000 presidential election. We've argued about the validity of Affirmative Action. A friend of mine said, "There's always been Affirmative Action—it was rich white guys."

We've seen the Equal Rights movement for women. The Equal Rights Amendment never passed, but the doors were opened anyway. Today my stepdaughter has so many more career opportunities open to her than I did. It staggers the mind to think where she can go today.

We've lived through the first oil crisis of the mid 1970's, and the staggering dependence on foreign oil in the 1980's, and the 1990's. We lowered our energy consumption in the mid 70's by driving smaller vehicles, lowering thermostats and wearing sweaters. It looks like this winter, we'll be doing the same thing again, with the exception of driving smaller vehicles.

We've experienced the greed of the 80's and the fall of many financial institutions. We've also seen the elimination of retirement pensions and the acceptance of the 401K and the IRA.

Four years ago we welcomed in the New Millennium with great excitement. Some of us thought the computers would stop and our society would be thrown into chaos. Luckily, that didn't happen.

Every day I talk to people who are starting a new career, retiring to donate their time to volunteering, caring for grandchildren, and pursuing a new lifestyle. These years can be the best years. Our children are gone, we have more money, we might have more time. At least, we're not in the throes of balancing work and family.

We were stunned by 9/11. I couldn't help comparing my experience to my mother's when she saw movie clips of the attack on Pearl Harbor. We all hung out our flags and became Americans, one people against terrorism.

Before we knew what happened, we were rushed in-

to another war. This time the jungles and swamps of Vietnam were replaced with sand, desert terrain, and city fighting. This time our co-workers' sons and kids we know are going off to war. People we know in the National Guard are leaving their families to fight in Iraq. Let's not forget Afghanistan, we're still there.

If you are my age, or older, you've seen the first polio vaccines, advanced treatments for cancer, organ transplants, the obliteration of small pox and many other medical advances. Unfortunately, there has been the advent of new diseases such as AIDs. We have treatments for that too, but as yet, no cure. Scientific discoveries are coming so fast, hopefully, it's only a matter of time until we have a cure.

We've lived through all of that, and now, if we're lucky, we'll live into old age. Once again, the Baby Boomers will redefine another stage of life. My mother used to say to me:

"We'll see how active you are when you're 58."

I have tried hard to be active; biking, skiing, working on home renovation projects, walking on the treadmill every other day, traveling as much as financially possible, and running after my little nephews. My friends and I share our secrets for treating sore muscles, arthritis, and the hot flashes of menopause.

Every day I talk to people who are starting a new career, retiring to donate their time to volunteering, caring for grandchildren, and pursuing a new lifestyle. These years can be the best years. Our children are gone, we have more money, we might have more time. At least, we're not in the throes of balancing work and family.

So what happens now? This column can be a place where we exchange ideas and experiences. We can support each other as we wrestle with the problems we're facing. We can laugh together as we fight off aging. What do you think? Do you want to jump on our train and go along for the ride? I hope so. We can have fun together. What do you think?

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



Do the Write Thing!

For more information on submitting letters or news announcements to the Monitor call Denis Woulfe at 651-645-7045.



About the reviewers:

The Bachelor likes a lot of food with a minimum of silverware, preferably with a liquor store attached.

The Food Snob says things like, "How much caviar can one person take?"

The Cheapskate likes lunch to come with leftovers, both edible and monetary.

The Food Snob says:

How much caviar *can* one person take?

After two weeks on an upscale cruise ship, faced with an endless procession of delicacies: foie gras, rack of lamb, dark chocolate, tiny crustless sandwiches, exotic fruit tarts, yadda, yadda, yadda—it was a relief to get back to real food. I mean huge portions of carbs, slabs of meat, and glorious trans fats. So, I'm probably more enthusiastic about my meal at Abettos Deli than under normal circumstances.

Rarely does a sandwich look as appealing as the thick, dripping marble rye Reuben (\$5.99) I was served at Abettos. A side order of cheese-stuffed breadsticks called Boscors (\$2.65) and a pepperoni-laden salad (\$2.99) were ideal side dishes. But the crowning glory was without a doubt the dessert pizza (\$7.99), a 10-inch round of dough covered with bubbling pie filling. (We had cherry on one half and apple on the other.)

Such is the contradictory nature of human longing. Normally, I decry the lack of refined, luxurious dishes made with top quality ingredients. But 14 days of quenelles, terrines, and noisettes had me rooting for the old-fashioned "Eye-talian" dishes served at Abettos. To split hairs, a Reuben, of course, is not Italian.



Without Reservations

Abettos Deli gets 'thumbs up' from diners

Nor of course is it a Jewish dish—after all, mixing meat and milk products (cheese) isn't kosher. But it fits smoothly into Abettos menu.

Being totally honest, I'll admit that the red sauce served with the lasagna was overdosed with dried oregano, and that the sodium content of all the dishes was off the charts. But I've got just as many criticisms of the cruise ship food: overcooked lobster, broken sauces, tough duck, etc.

Obviously, there's no such thing as perfect food, no matter where you're eating or how much it costs. Does it matter whether you're eating on china or out of Styrofoam containers? Not really. Now if only I could convince myself that I really believe that.

The Bachelor says:

For all you Simpsons fans out there, my reaction when walking into Abettos was a bit like Homer's when he spots free cookie samples at the grocery store. I tilted my head back and released a guttural growl of satisfaction as drool began to seep out of my open mouth. It's as if some sort of benevolent bachelors, fairy godmother (I'm envisioning a matronly Angelina Jolie) whipped together everything I hold dear and plopped it down on a nondescript stretch of Como Avenue. I mean, one half of the place is a liquor store, and the other serves some of the best pizza, pasta, and breadsticks I've

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had since Hogan's Heroes went off the air—and all in an environment that is staunchly blue collar and a little offbeat.

How could this place have been right in our backyard for nearly seven years without me even knowing it?

Let's start with the breadsticks—or as I like to call them, heroin sticks, because they are just that addictive. At Abettos, they're called Boscors and the centers are filled with a nice warm, gooey mozzarella. I don't think I need to mention that I gorged myself to the precipice of a coma on those things.

Just when I was coming down from my breadsticks high, my pizza arrived. Where to even begin? I'm a bachelor. I could ramble at Tolstoy-like length in

describing my love for pizza, and how so few "pizzas" out there deserve the name. The veggie pizza I ordered at Abettos is a pizza's pizza. She was your standard thin crust, but she was anything but cardboardy. When I picked the first slice off the plate, the cheese just stretched and stretched and stretched. I could

have walked the length of Abettos, huge, church-basement-like banquet hall (it looks like the type of place pancake breakfasts go to die) without snapping the string of cheese. That's a pizza. Even though there were plenty of sliced and diced veggies swimming in the cheese, it didn't result in the wet, sloppy mess that mars so many other specimens.

Oh, and that dessert pizza that the Food Snob mentioned. It was all fine and dandy, but I don't like people playing with the sanctity of pizza and its God-intended form. I ate it, of course, but not without harboring a quiet, lonely guilt.

The Cheapskate says:

To a substantial extent, the three magical attributes converge at Abettos: Cheap, good, and plenty. Walking in from the parking lot, I saw a sign bearing the precious message "Special - Lasagne \$4.99" and I began to run. Through the window I saw someone plowing a generous spatula through a giant, steaming pan of lasagne. I ran faster.

The others have gone on long enough. I can add little to their paean of praise to this out-of-the-way spot. I will only tell you that the counter staff and kitchen staff are my kind of people—just plain nice and helpful, really wanting you to have a good lunch at a good price.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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Light rail

Continued from page 1

"The biggest argument against light rail will be the impact it may have on businesses in the next five years, but the impact of the next 20 years looms larger," claimed Gagne. He said light rail and its benefits are longer term than most people think.

"I think the great success of the line in Minneapolis will help us get funding approval for the University Line," said Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL), who represents District 66 A. "In the last five to six years, the Republican party became anti-train. I think the success of the Hiawatha is changing all that. I think the political obstacles are getting a little smaller. That has been part of the delay in getting funding."

According to Anderson, supporters of the Central Corridor can learn from the mistakes of the first line in planning for parking and easing disruption of construction. "We are woefully behind every metropolitan area in the nation in terms of light rail, and we have a lot of catch-up to do," she said. She said her family has ridden the Hiawatha several times for fun, and she is hoping to use it herself for transportation to the airport. She said that although she is not currently on the transportation committee in the Legislature, she is a big advocate of light rail.

"One of the other things we have seen in Minneapolis has been economic development," she said. "It has been enormous. I think University Avenue will be more attractive, and there will be lots of added benefits from the line."

One who sees no benefits from the Central Corridor is Tom Stransky, who said he is opposed to LRT anywhere in the country because he believes it to be such a poor way of spending public money.

He said he especially does not want it along University Ave., where he and his wife have owned an independent bookstore for the past 25 years. "It would duplicate the bus service already on University," he said, "stealing ridership from the 16A bus." Stransky said he feels this is one of the only bus lines in the city that comes close to paying for itself, getting 65 cents on the dollar back through fares.

He said he has followed the

transit issue since it first was discussed, back in 1985.

"The first thing they told us at a meeting back in March 2002 is that all parking would be removed around station areas," he noted. "I don't believe for one second the rest of University Avenue will have quality parking."

He expressed concerns about traffic backups on Snelling and the inability to make left turns along University. "It's just insanity," he said, "a permanent barrier coming down the middle of the street."

Stransky is convinced that LRT is never about transit, but about big business economic development only. "Take a look at who's lobbying for it," he stated. "They'll ride it one time, the day it opens."

He is concerned that big developments and large chain stores will move in around the stations, eliminating the mom and pop stores. "They build it to connect the Mall of America, downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, but the neighborhoods in between are working class and minority neighborhoods," Stransky said. "If they put LRT down Grand Avenue, the shop owners would scream bloody murder."

Stransky said he thought a better spending of money would be to triple the size of the current bus system and improve the current freeway system.

"They can build freeways as they should have been built 30 years ago, stacking them," he added.

Rick Beeson, president of Park Midway Bank and chair of the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, addressed some of the concerns about business being lost during construction of the Central Corridor.

"In terms of construction, hard lessons have been learned as a result of Highway 394 being built, and more recently, the reconstruction of Ford Bridge in Highland Park," he noted. He said based on the input of the business community, a part of the bridge was kept open all the time.

"There has to be a very strong system in place under which local

businesses are brought into meetings early, so the engineers can understand their concerns, particularly retail businesses," Beeson said. "There will always be traffic available up and down University Avenue—there is no time the entire street will be blocked off."

He said the Central Corridor is a joint effort of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and of Ramsey and Hennepin counties, and he looks forward to a collaboration of support for the project.

J. Kou Vang, president of J.B. Realty Co., said he has talked to a number of people up and down the avenue. "Most of them are talking about how it is going to get built, how long the construction will last, and whether there will be

we will survive to realize some of those gains," he said.

He said advocates want to put the line on University Avenue because that is where the ridership is, but he is also concerned about train stops. "The bulk of riders are east of Lexington, but there are only three stops proposed east of Lexington," he said. "On the west end of the avenue, by Raymond and 280, there are stops every two blocks. That doesn't make sense."

Vang said this type of thing leads to small businesses and residents questioning the real motive of light rail. "If the motive is for lawyers in St. Paul to do business with lawyers in Minneapolis, they can use I-94," he said.

He mentioned that University Avenue is one of the last affordable places for low-income people to live in St. Paul, and he doesn't want to see a gentrification of the area, losing some of the people who were first there.

He said he does not want to see University Avenue become the home of only national retailers, losing the small business atmosphere.

Bob Wicker, a longtime resident of the University Avenue area, has been involved in many civic organizations that have been instrumental in the planning of the Central Corridor.

He said he is not against light rail, per se, but he feels the supporters of LRT are selling it on congestion, but building it for economic development. He believes it is too early to tell whether the Hiawatha Line has been a success, thinking a lot of the costs have been hidden. Citing the problems with signaling and traffic backup with the Hiawatha, he said he could only see problems putting a track down the middle of University.

Noting that buses stop every block, he commented that the light rail would have fewer stops. He said mass transit is primarily for the elderly, the infirm, students and low-income residents.

"Supporters hope more people will use it, and I think more people will. But it will be at the ex-

pense of those who need it," he said.

Wicker said I-94 was built right down the middle of Rondo and other communities, for the "greater good." He said the Central Corridor would be built for the "greater good," but at the expense of small businesses.

He said the people who are doing the planning are bureaucrats, engineers and MNDOT employees, among other professional groups. "They are good people, but they tend to build things as it relates to them," he said.

"I look at light rail as a very important component of the total transportation system that includes improved highways, bike lanes, better buses and hard rail, as well as LRT," Wicker said.

He said he would recommend a light rail with limited stops on the north side of the freeway, running either over or under Lexington and Snelling. "It should not impair traffic, but should go very fast," he said.

He added that he thought businesses should be removed from the tax rolls while the light rail is being built on University Avenue, and they should be given money to compensate for any business lost while the light rail is under construction.

"You have to strike when the iron is hot, and the iron is hot," said Ultan Duggan, owner of a shoe store along University Avenue that has recently closed. He has spent many years in the area as a small business owner.

"Everyone likes the light rail for its quietness; they like to go to football, baseball and basketball games and entertainment at the Target Center; it is convenient, and people can avoid the exorbitant parking charges for events," he said. He said that, because of improved construction methods, he sees the University Corridor as going ahead. "The positives are certainly there," he said.

He said the unknowns, for him, are where the stations might be located, how the challenges of parking will be met, and the cost factor.

He said that if major stops would have trouble getting people across the tracks, he thought it would make sense to put stops at Pascal and Hamline, rather than Lexington and Snelling.

Duggan also favors a survey about the LRT. "I am not aware of any property owner or business owner being specifically asked if we favor some sort of other of light rail transit," he said. "I would like to see at least some consideration of an alternate route," he noted.

Alice Hausman, (DFL) representative of 66B, said she had at first thought the Hiawatha Line's success would have sped up the process of the Corridor light rail. "But now I see that the Hiawatha doesn't affect the light rail on University Avenue at all," she said. "The people who were opponents to the Hiawatha continue to be opponents of the University line, and the supporters believe St. Paul and Minneapolis should be connected. This is more about St. Paul's future than it is about light rail."

She said she believes the opponents to light rail are using fear to great effect, frightening small businesses about the project. "That fear is real, and we need to respect it," she said. "What we need to assure them is that we understand it, and that we intend from beginning

"These people don't have deep pockets or a line of credit at the bank that will allow them to take a big cut. The fear is whether we will survive to realize some of those gains."

— J. Kou Vang

grants or low interest loans to help the businesses who will be affected by the construction," he said.

He said the bulk of businesses along University are one-owner businesses supporting families.

"These people don't have deep pockets or a line of credit at the bank that will allow them to take a big cut," he noted. He said that if there is a way to minimize the loss of business during construction, he thinks the light rail will see quite a bit of support.

He said that he has talked to many Asian businesses, as well as other small business owners, and the thought is that once the LRT is in, there will be an increase in traffic and people. "The fear is whether

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Como Zoo, Pierce Butler and Central Corridor top St. Paul's legislative agenda

By JANE MCCLURE

Funding for improvements to Como Zoo, a connection of Pierce Butler Route with the East Side's Phalen Boulevard and the Central Corridor transit project along University Avenue are part of the City of St. Paul's 2005 legislative agenda.

Along with brick-and-mortar requests, city officials also are weighing in on many policy issues as well. Restoring cuts to local government aid, maintaining limited market value cap on residential property taxes and preserving funding for the Minnesota Gang Strike Task Force are among the issues the city will delve into when the Minnesota Legislature convened January 4.

The council's actions on state legislative issues in December end several weeks' discussion of priorities for bonding projects, law changes and shifts in state policy. If past legislative sessions are any indication, more items could be added to the city's list in the weeks ahead. City Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator Nancy Haas, who works out of Mayor Randy Kelly's office, is continuing to work with city departments on legislative priorities.

Earlier this year the City Council formed an ad hoc legislative committee to better plan state and federal wants and needs. That committee and others were eliminated when the part-

time City Council took office in 1993. Recently some council members have complained that they were shut out of the legislative process.

In the past few years the City Council and Kelly have clashed over lobbying efforts on a proposed Twins stadium in downtown St. Paul and on the formation of a separate St. Paul Public Library agency. Ward Five City Council Member Lee Helgen, who chairs the legislative committee, said the council's intent is to be more active on legislative issues that affect the city.

But it was the council that split 4-3 on the bonding bill portion of its legislative priorities list. The ranking approved was bioscience corridor, \$20 million; Phalen Corridor completion, \$5 million; Ordway Center rehabilitation, \$10 million; Como Zoo, \$300,000; Desnoyer Park/Meeker Island Park improvements, \$388,000; Highland Golf Course Clubhouse rehabilitation, \$4 million; Raspberry Island improvements, \$7.3 million; and connection of the east end of Pierce Butler Route to I-35E and the Phalen Corridor, \$10 million.

The rankings were changed by the council to bump Como Zoo and Meeker Island each up one spot, and move the golf course building down two spots. Helgen and council members Pat Harris and Debbie Montgomery opposed the changes; council

members Jay Benanav, Dan Bostrom, Kathy Lantry and Dave Thune voted in support.

St. Paul is also supporting requests for transportation funding that include \$5.25 million for preliminary engineering for the Central Corridor transit project between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis; and \$2.5 million for preliminary studies of converting the old Union Depot into a multi-modal transit hub.

St. Paul is also supporting funding for a study for Rock-Tenn (formerly Waldorf) and its paper recycling facility in the Midway. Because that facility is losing its source of steam energy, the firm wants to study the use of wood chips or biomass fuel. The city and St. Paul Port Authority are supporting the study funding request.

On a 3-4 vote the council rejected a request to repeal a state law that prohibits the city from imposing residential electric franchise fees during the winter months. The city already collects some franchise fees from Xcel Energy. Since 1979 St. Paul has been prohibited from imposing the residential electric and gas fees during winter months.

Helgen said the proposal could generate an additional \$3.5 million in revenue per year for the city. No one can remember why the law was enacted.

Helgen, Lantry and Bostrom

voted for repealing the law. Harris, Benanav, Montgomery and Thune voted against the fee, saying it would be another cost for utility customers that Xcel would simply pass on.

"I'd question whether we're adding an unnecessary financial burden for our residents," Benanav said. Harris agreed, saying, "Franchise fees are our least accountable form of government."

Highlights of the 2005 St. Paul legislative agenda include:

*Opposition to the planned phase-out of limited market value, a measure that limits the extent to which a residential dwelling can be taxed. The cap is being phased out, which is raising concerns that home owners throughout Minnesota could face soaring property taxes in the future. Harris said retaining the cap is probably the city's most important policy issue to pursue this session.

*Seeking a change in state laws governing off-sale liquor licenses to allow a store to open within one-half mile of the University of Minnesota. The need to change the law came up recently when a wine and spirits shop in St. Anthony Park was barred from opening because of the current prohibitions.

*Restoration of after-school program funds for youth, which were eliminated in a 2003 budget-balancing cut. The cuts affected programs throughout the area.

*Changes that would make it easier for the city to use the tenant remedies act and its "excessive consumption of city services" ordinance against problem property owners. Changes are sought to make it easier for inspectors to gain access to properties and to speed up enforcement processes.

*Support for more legal penalties against those who commit "quality of life" crimes. This includes support for the "photocop" system that would take photos of traffic violations and produce violations that would be mailed to offenders. It also includes a request for increased penalties for illegal drag racing, production of fake identification and noise caused by loud vehicle sound systems.

*Support for a study of 25 miles per hour speed limits on residential neighborhood streets in St. Paul, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Several district councils and block clubs have sought support for lowering residential street speed limits, with a lawn sign campaign underway that began in Macalester-Groveland neighborhood this summer.

*Support to reorganize the Rivercentre governance, by merging the Rivercentre and St. Paul Convention and Visitors Bureau. The merger is seen as a way to reduce expenses and enhance marketing and promotions for the city.

Light rail

Continued from page 6

to end to do everything we can from construction to a whole range of other issues, to assure that we do as little harm as possible."

Hausman said the alternative is to do nothing, and if that is the case, the city will be disconnected from the regional transit system. "Then, as the whole region moves to a different way of getting around, St. Paul dies. University Avenue dies, and all those small businesses die."

She stressed that St. Paul needs to learn from other cities around the world and understand how new transportation tools can help the area remain a healthy, stable community.

"All small businesses along University Avenue should flourish, and I think that is especially true with Asian businesses," she stated. "Right now University Avenue is not a destination point, and many people do not shop there. But if we do careful land use and transportation planning, we can build a corridor that will help to be intentional about the diversity of business."

Although the exact costs have not been given, the estimates are around \$700-\$800 million. Hausman said that would connect St. Paul, Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota, an impact that will benefit people 50 years from now.

"When you invest in light rail, you invest for the long term," she said. "Business and industry come in, because they know once there is a rail line, it won't move. If it's just a bus line, it could change the next week."


Hausman noted that five transit corridors that are on the drawing board are all in the west metro, ending in Minneapolis. "That should make every St. Paul resident and business very frightened," she said, stating that if St. Paul is not part of the grid, the investment will be going to the west metro.

She said opponents to light rail have made broad statements of light rail failure. She said she had heard a few years ago that the system was such a failure in Salt Lake City it was being torn down. She checked into it, and found that the system was being dismantled to build an even bigger system, because of its success.

"The lesson we need to learn is the lesson from Georgetown," Hausman said. The city did not want to be connected to light rail when it was being built in Washington, DC. Once Georgetown saw how well it was working in DC, residents and businesses demanded a stop be placed in Georgetown.

"But the transit authority said it was too late, and Georgetown missed its chance," Hausman said.

"The critics could win in this discussion over light rail, and they won't be around to bear the results."



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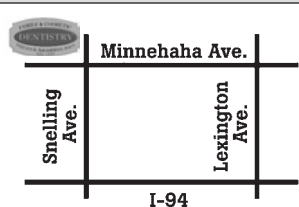
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Survey shows major Midway shopping areas fall short on shopping experience



If you combined Midway Center, Midway Marketplace and Midway Target, you'd have the same retail space as Rosedale. But according to a new survey, Rosedale is able to offer a better shopping experience.

By JANE MCCLURE

Combine Midway Center, Midway Marketplace and Midway Target and you have 72 acres of retail space—the same size as Rosedale. But Rosedale is able to offer a better shopping experience, according to respondents to an on-line survey.

"People who live here shop here, but they don't really enjoy the experience," said Russ Stark of University UNITED. That's one sentiment gleaned from an online survey that 205 area residents responded to.

Changing the perceptions and even the design of Midway's largest retail area was the topic of a University UNITED presentation January 27 at Model Cities Brownstone. More than 40 people heard the result of the survey

and discussed ways to make the community's primary retail area safer and more inviting.

What's encouraging for UNITED, a coalition of district councils, business groups and small businesses, is that more than 80 people have volunteered to serve on task forces. These groups will study the area's mix of stores, local ownership and entrepreneurship, marking, college connections, senior connections, housing, safety and appearance, and access, circulation, transportation and parking. UNITED hopes those groups can make recommendations that would then be forwarded to the city and retail property owners. UNITED is also working to form a separate merchants and property owners' association.

Ideas for the area are diverse, ranging from requests for movie theaters to better bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to even having a trolley circling through the area. Another need is for a united theme or marketing campaign to tie the area together.

UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon said that strong community interest, coupled with the potential for redevelopment, bodes well for the Midway's future. But involvement by the city and major property owners will be crucial to success. McMahon brought forward a number of past studies of ways to improve the shopping area but noted none of them have come to fruition.

"People talk about Rosedale," McMahon said. "Midway centers have the same demographics as

Rosedale." Yet people drive there to shop, taking their money out of the city.

Of the survey respondents, about 30 percent are from Hamline-Midway, with 15 percent from Lexington-Hamline, 11 percent from Merriam Park, 8 percent from Macalester-Groveland and 6 percent from Snelling Hamline. Another 25 percent come from other neighborhoods.

"We were totally blown away by the response," said Stark. People can still take the survey and have their comments added in updated tallies.

Of the 205 respondents, 58 percent visit Midway Marketplace bi-weekly or more frequently, with 56 percent visiting Midway Target and 50 percent visiting Midway Center. Not surprisingly

Rainbow Foods (Midway Center) and Cub Foods (Midway Marketplace) were the most frequently visited destinations at each center. At Midway Center Office Max came in second while Borders, Herbergers and PetsMart came in virtually tied for second at Midway Marketplace.

About 37 percent agree and 6 percent strongly agree that Midway's shopping centers offer a selection of retailers that service nearly all of their needs. Almost 30 percent disagreed with that sentiment and another 10 percent strongly disagree.

Respondents gave Rosedale the thumbs-up over Midway for having trained and courteous employees and good customer service. Rosedale also came out ahead when attractiveness, management and maintenance was discussed, and on the question of having a "safe and inviting atmosphere."

The safety question showed the most marked difference between Rosedale and Midway, with about 53 percent saying they agree that Rosedale has a safe and inviting atmosphere. Only 11 percent would agree that Midway has a safe and inviting atmosphere. "Some of this is real and some of this is perception," said Stark.

Safety is a growing concern in the area near Snelling and University. St. Paul Police West District Commander Tom Smith agreed that the safety issues are a mix of perception and reality. He noted that just as the Selby-Dale and Frogtown neighborhoods became safer over the past several years, so, too can the Midway.

Improving the perception of public safety and more focus on so-called "quality of life" crimes is an area the police department is working on. Some ideas being implemented include more use of the mounted patrol and, when weather allows, bicycle patrols. Another focus for police is to bring in another storefront office, possibly at Midway Center. A storefront at Spruce Tree closed several months ago.

On University between Hamline and Snelling, most crimes reported are thefts from businesses, said Smith. Police are seeing an increase in complaints about assault, drug dealing, panhandling and loitering. A growing number of complaints are coming in from bus stops.



"People who live here shop here, but they don't really enjoy the experience."

— Russ Stark, University UNITED

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

These are the leanest days of winter, and this February day feels especially cold, hard, and gray. I don't see much activity outside except for the gathering of charity cases—all the usual suspects that are primarily supported by bird-feeders.

I see footprints in the snow telling me that a cottontail rabbit is spending the winter huddled in our backyard woodpile, but even he seems to be living off the spilled sunflower seeds under the feeder.

There are some tough cookies around that do know how to get through a cold winter without our generosity, but I don't appreciate some of their survival tactics.

Both reviled and revered, American crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) are definitely survivors in all seasons.

To my



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

As the crow flies, slides, and cries

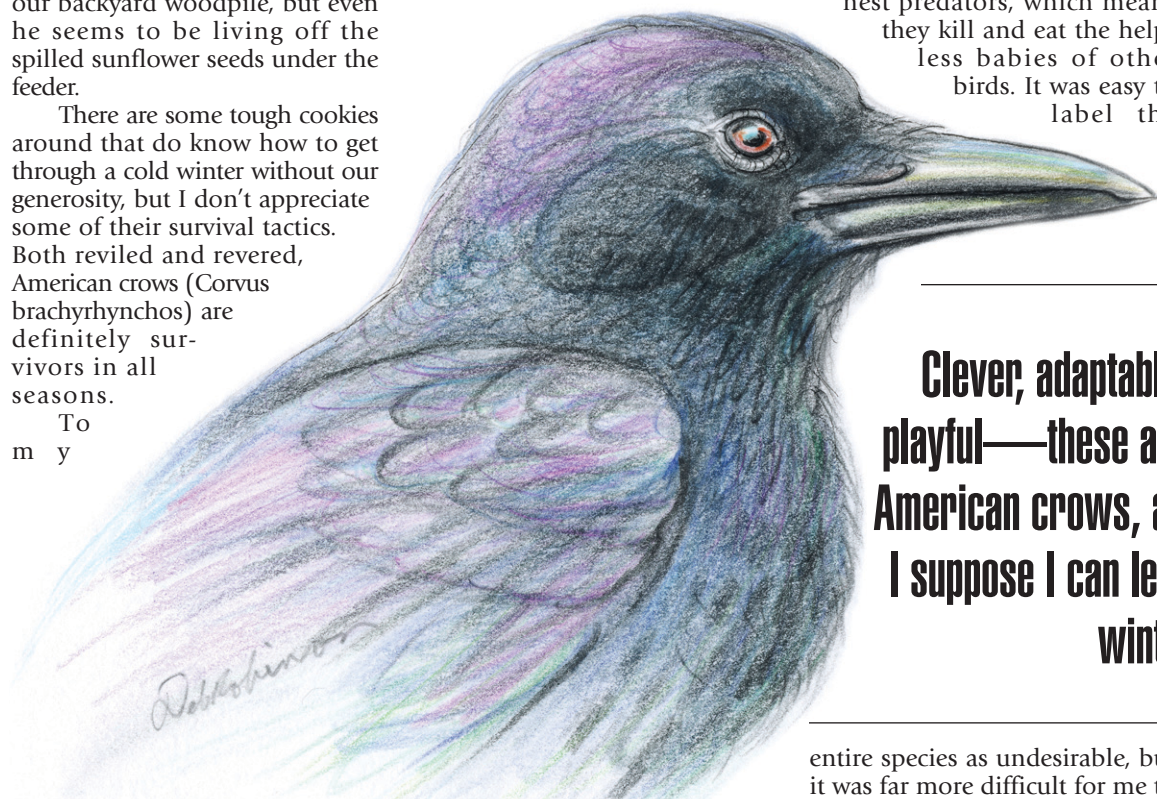


Illustration by Deb Robinson

knowledge, wild American crows have not been extensively studied. However, there is a wealth of intriguing crow behaviors that have been observed if not fully explained. And I have observed some of those baffling behaviors myself.

One winter day a few years ago, I looked up from my shoveling to see a crow standing on the peak of my neighbor's garage roof. I watched as the crow slid down the slop of the snow-covered roof and off the edge. It would then fly back to the peak of the roof, have a good chuckle, and repeat the process. Maybe I'm anthropomorphizing, but the crow looked like it was playing in the snow.

Animal behavioral scientists generally believe that the function of animal play is to prepare inexperienced youngsters for the rigors of adulthood in a non-threatening way. But the crow sliding down my neighbor's roof was an adult. Evidently humans aren't the only animals that don't always act their age, which reminds me of another

weird crow behavior I witnessed.

One midsummer afternoon, I heard an awful caterwauling coming from across the street in the park. On the grass near the side of the road was a crow on his back, kicking his feet in the air, and bawling loudly.

My first impression was that the writhing crow had been hit by a car and was severely injured. Crows are often seen eating roadkill, but I'd always assumed that crows were too smart to become roadkill themselves.

Two larger crows, unruffled by the ruckus, were foraging in the grass nearby. I'd read that crows were gregarious and stay in family groups until later in the summer, but the other two crows hardly gave their suffering relative a second glance.

Hesitantly I stepped out the front door . . . did I really want to go through the trouble of taking an injured crow to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center? After all, crows are considered agricultural pests. And crows are notorious

nest predators, which means they kill and eat the helpless babies of other birds. It was easy to label the

ed walking across the street to rescue the pitiful creature. As soon as the "injured" crow saw me, he hopped to his feet, walked normally for a short distance, and flew off to join his companions. I had been duped. The crow wasn't hurt—he was throwing a tantrum.

Earlier that summer, there

Clever, adaptable, opportunistic, social, playful—these are all words that describe American crows, and humans for that matter. I suppose I can learn to appreciate a fellow winter survivor.

entire species as undesirable, but it was far more difficult for me to ignore the agony of one individual crow.

Finally, the crow's human-like crying got to me and I start-

ed had been a crow's nest in the neighbor's spruce tree. A mated pair of crows, along with two yearling helpers (the previous year's young), had successfully reared three fledglings from that

nest just a few weeks prior to the roadside-tantrum incident.

The timing suggested that the crying, kicking crow was a recent fledgling that had been denied parental feeding and was having difficulty adjusting to his new adult role. Many parents might recognize this scenario as plausible. His hunger and his parents were encouraging him to forage for himself.

It's still cold, but the sun found a break in the clouds just before sunset. Thankfully, this gray winter day is ending in a warm red glow. The crows are cavorting in the park as they gather in small flocks. All the crows are drifting southwest towards one large communal roost where they spend each night as one big family.

Clever, adaptable, opportunistic, social, playful—these are all words that describe American crows, and humans for that matter. I suppose I can learn to appreciate a fellow winter survivor.

Endnotes: *The Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (2530 Dale St. in Roseville) Open House will be on Feb. 13, noon to 4 p.m. *Don't miss the Grand Opening of the Como Zoo & Conservatory Visitors Center on Feb. 12 & 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (info: 651-487-8200). *Help The Raptor Center and reduce waste by recycling your empty inkjet cartridges - for mailing envelopes, call: 612-624-6945 *To contact writer: dm-robinson@bitstream.net

Family Academy holds Student Environmental Exhibit



Several students at Family Academy Charter School participated in a Student Environmental Exhibit on January 27. Students researched topics of concern to the Minnesota environment and built interactive displays which included a video, giant Board game about bald eagles, an airplane pollution demonstration, information on tornadoes, and a daily production exhibit which featured butter-making and simulated cow-milking. Above, student Bill Daly talks to visitors to his board game about bald eagles.



SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

8:00AM Morning Prayer
 9:30AM Traditional Worship, Sunday School,
 10:30AM Hospitality and Fellowship
 10:45AM Adult Forum

Wednesdays through Lent
 6:30PM Lenten Vesper Service

Adult Forums
 Sunday, February 20
 Celebrating Missions
Local Missions: Project Home
 Sunday, February 27
 Celebrating Hospitality
Dining Hall Committee, Membership & Outreach Committee, Tour Group Ministry
 Sunday, March 13
 Celebrating Missions *Foreign Missions*

Details on website <www.hamlinechurch.org>

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In Our Community

Annual Midway Home & Garden Show Mar. 19

The 14th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show will be held on Saturday, March 19. The show, sponsored by Sparc, will be held at Crossroads Elementary School, 543 Front Ave. (Front/Dale). Workshops will feature energy efficiency, kitchen remodeling, old window repair, mosaic tile projects and more! Exhibitors will include home improvement contractors/products, financing options, and the Ramsey County Master Gardeners. Workshops run 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Exhibit Hall open 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Questions? Call Sparc at 651-488-1039.

Storytimes continue at Hamline Midway Library

Winter storytimes at the Hamline Midway Branch of the St. Paul Public Library continue on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings, through February. Bedtime storytimes are offered for preschool and early elementary age children on Tuesdays, February 15 and 22, at 7 p.m. All children are encouraged to wear their pajamas and bring a favorite bear or blanket to storytime.

The toddler and preschool storytimes are offered on Wednesdays, February 16 and 23, at 10:30 a.m. Parents with babies are welcome. Both storytimes include storytelling, flannel boards, songs, fingerplays, movies, and much more.

Pre-registration is requested, but not required. The library is located at 1558 W. Minnehaha Avenue. For more information or to register, please contact the Hamline Midway Branch Library at 651-642-0293; information is also available on the Library's Website at: www.sppl.org.

Community Barn Dances at Hamline Church

Hamline United Methodist Church hosts two Barn Dances on Friday, February 18, and Friday, March 18. Dancing with a caller and live Old-Time music takes place from 7-9 p.m. at Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue.

All ages are welcome; a suggested donation is \$2 per person or \$6 per family, or whatever is affordable.

Members of Hamline-Midway Neighbors for Peace will be on hand to share information about their programs. Contact the church office at 651-645-0667 for event information.

MMSA 7th Graders pray for peace, make cranes

Many people pray for peace each day. Amelia Smith and Adrienne Sherman wanted to do more. They were especially concerned because one of Smith's relatives is fighting the war in Iraq. So in September of last year the MMSA School 7th graders began folding Origami Peace Cranes in Mrs. Maura McEvoy's class. They agreed to use only recycled paper for the cranes to be kind to the environment.

Through the fall and into the winter, along with their fellow classmates, they folded and folded until they reached 1000 cranes. And then one cold January day Smith, Sherman, their classmates and teacher went outside to hang the peace cranes on the trees in the school yard. They hope all their prayers for Peace will soon be answered and that the cranes will be enjoyed by all who drive past MMSA School at Arlington and Dale in St. Paul.



The photo shows Amelia Smith (left) and Adrienne Sherman (right), both 7th graders at MMSA School.

Avalon School plans new middle school in fall 2005

Avalon School is planning a new middle school to open in the fall of 2005. If you would like information about how you can become part of this new, small learning community, please come to an open house on Feb. 17th, March 17th, April 21st, or April 28th.

Avalon School is a progressive, democratic public school for the independent learner sponsored by Hamline University. Check our website for open house dates for the high school at www.avalon-school.org. Please call 651-649-5495 for further information.

St. Matthew's holds Sauerkraut meal Feb. 25

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, located at 701 North Lexington Pkwy. (intersection of Lexington and Minnehaha), will hold its annual Sauerkraut Supper on Friday, Feb. 25, from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

The menu will consist of roast pork, potatoes and gravy, sauerkraut, carrots, bread and butter, dessert and beverage. Prices - \$7 and children 10 and under \$3. You may purchase tickets at the door.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church participates in this as a fundraiser with matching funds from Thrivent Lutheran Branch #10019. For more information call 651-645-6700.

Celebrating Hospitality at Hamline Methodist Church

Join us for the Adult Forum on February 27th for some of that good, old-fashioned hospitality, as served up by the Dining Hall committee. This group (though not the same people!) have had a continuous presence at the State Fair for more than 100 years, bringing the hospitality of our congregation to thousands each year, while earning funds to help HUMC carry on its mission of sharing Christ's love with all people.

This creative group always has surprises for us. Come to the Forum on February 27th, at 10:45 a.m. following worship at 9:30 a.m.!

Fun Fair at Central Lutheran School Feb. 13

Central Lutheran School's FREE Family Fun Fair will be held on Sunday, February 13, 2-4 p.m. Games, activities, popcorn, cookies and cool-ade 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.

Art of Breastfeeding topic of La Leche meeting

The Art of Breastfeeding and Avoiding Difficulties is the topic of the next meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, March 8.

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

A lending library on a wide variety of related topics is also available.

For meeting location or more information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

'Eating Healthy' topic for March 8 luncheon

March is Good Nutrition month and "The Importance of Eating Healthy" will be the topic at the next "Second Tuesday" luncheon sponsored by the Hamline Midway Living at Home/Block Nurse Program and held on March 8 beginning at 11:30 a.m. at the Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue (at the corner of Minnehaha and Simpson). The speaker will be Janet Johnson, Registered Dietician with Store to Door. A good will donation is taken for the meal and free transportation is available by calling 651-209-6542.

The April luncheon, "Legislative Q&A," will be held on April 12 at the same time and location and the speaker will be Minnesota State Representative, Alice Hausman. Representative Hausman will provide a 2005 legislative review of issues that pertain to seniors.

Local mission Project Home at Hamline Church

As part of Hamline United Methodist Church's 125th anniversary celebration, the speaker for the Adult Forum on February 20th will be Sara Liegl of Project Home, a local mission sponsored through the St. Paul Area Council on Churches for families that are temporarily living without housing. Our own Church and Society Committee is considering this as a new project for Hamline UMC, in conjunction with Hamline University.

The Church and Society Committee under the leadership of David Purcell is active in our community and church, providing

many opportunities for service to others. From Crop Walk to "Undie Sunday," this group carries on the long tradition of HUMC's involvement in today's social issues and assistance for those less fortunate.

Come and learn about Project Home: February 20th, at 10:45 a.m. following worship at 9:30 a.m.!

Service group volunteers needed on April 23

Service groups desiring a project are asked to consider helping clean up the yards of neighborhood elders on Saturday, April 23 from approximately 10 a.m.-Noon. Please call Monica Gallagher, 651-209-6542 at the Hamline Midway Living at Home/Block nurse office if you would like to learn more. Individual volunteers and households are also welcome.

St. Cecilia's to host annual parish dinner March 6

The Church of St. Cecilia invites friends and neighbors to its annual dinner on Sunday, March 6th, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church basement.

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

The ever popular raffle is back. Prizes include a \$750 travel voucher, a gas grill, and a Play Station 2.

This year's silent auction features unique gifts and services. And sports fans will want to bid on some very special memorabilia!

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

Schweitzer performs at GINKGO February 26

Pam Schweitzer performs at GINKGO coffeehouse, Saturday, Feb. 26 at 10 a.m. at a Children's Event with stories from around the world.

Well known storyteller Pam Schweitzer brings her international tales to GINKGO, captivating even the youngest audience members. Schweitzer invites the kids to participate in some parts of the presentation, making it even more fun for them!

Enjoy a cup of coffee, while expanding your children's horizons, and letting them have a fun time!

As with any of our Saturday morning family events, plenty of small chairs will be up front for the little ones who want to be close. At the end of the storytelling, a drawing for prizes will be held! This event is a free will donation event.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Living Word Church moving into Banta building

By DEBORAH BROTZ

When the church doors opened in 1983, the Living Word Church had only seven members. Slowly but surely the church kept growing and growing. Today, with 400 members, Living Word Church & World Outreach Ministries, at 205 Otis Ave., in St. Paul, recently purchased the Banta building, at 655 Fairview Ave. N., in St. Paul, for its new church site.

"For the past five years, we have been looking for property to expand our ministry," said Lesley Ford, senior pastor of Living Word Church & World Outreach Ministries. "The Lord opened up the door so we were able to buy the building. We want to create a spiritual Mall of America. All the gifts of the ministry will be in one area."

Currently, all the church's ministries are not all located at the same site.

"We have outgrown the building we're in," said Ford. "We get set in the building and then start to grow. The Banta building can do that for us. We thank the Lord for opening the door and giving us the opportunity to come to the area. We want to be a light. Hopefully, that area will become better because of our presence."

The church selected the Midway area because in 1983 when they started the church, the Lord said they should be in the City.

"We were instructed to be an inner city ministry," said Ford. "We wanted to be in the middle of the city. It just fit perfect."

tor, and Station 19 Architects, with Ray Geiger, doing the architectural design. They will be going before the City with the design and hope to get an occupancy permit by April.

"We're going to start in one small corner on the Fairview

We're just looking at a 10-year plan for the church."

The church has 40 ministries for the operation of the church site itself and for outreach. Some of the church's outreach ministries include Christ Helping Addicts Recovery Ministry (CHARM), Prison Ministry, and Clothes Closet, where people who get out of prison can get help with clothes. They can also get care packages, which contain a razor, toothpaste and bus cards.

"We help them dress for whatever they're looking for," said Ford. "We provide them with Voice Mails. Normally, when a person gets out of prison, they get \$100. We help them find housing."

The mission of the church is "Souls At Any Cost."

"We want people to know how to live out the values of Christ in their everyday walk of life," said Ford. "Our values come from the Bible. That's where the name of the church comes from. We want people to become the Living Word."

The church hopes to continue growing with its new site in the Midway.

"Our job is to spread the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ," said Ford. "We will do that wherever we are. That's the

reason He has given us increased space so we can grow and increase the family members of Living Word Church. We become part of the spiritual family called Living Word. There are times when stress and problems come. We love each other as family members and develop a close relationship with one another."

The chose an industrial setting for its building because they needed a lot of space to grow. Their goal is to have 3,000 or more members.

"That's the only place large enough to support our vision," said Ford. "We'll take the warehouse and make it into God's house."

Ford's hope is that the church will become a world-wide outreach ministry directed by God and that they will use every available means to reach "Souls At Any Cost."

"I hope we will continue to do what God has called us to as far as Evangelizing," he said. "We can't go to all the world. We're in the Midway area. Our responsibility is to go preach the Gospel in that area. If we do that well, we will be a success. We will use all 40 areas of our ministries to make this happen. Those are the people who actively work to make it grow."

"For the past five years, we have been looking for property to expand our ministry."

— Lesley Ford, senior pastor

Ford says they did not even see the Banta building five years ago. They looked at the current Menard's site.

"Menard's outbid us," he said. "Five years later, God was able to put us two blocks away. It's just wonderful how things worked out."

The church paid \$3 million for the 11.3 acre site and 329,000 square foot building. The building will be remodeled by Bor-Son Construction, as the contrac-

side," said Ford. "We'll do whatever structural things need to be done."

The church needed such a large site so they would be able to grow.

"Right now, we have 400 members who are committed to the church," said Ford. "We hope to increase the church size to 1,200 members. We have 600 people attending now. That's what the auditorium size is going to be. We'll be building in stages.

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

"Lent-Liturgy-Life" Begins February 13 at Jehovah

So what do all those responses and prayers and standing up and sitting down in church have to do with life? Really? Discover how the liturgy is a rehearsal for Christian living and an experience of Lenten faith renewal. Discover the biblical sources and ancient meanings of worship. Discover how to weave those deep meanings into daily life.

"Lent - Liturgy - and Life" is the title of this series which promise to answer some questions about worship. The classes will be held during the season of Lent, the six weeks prior to Easter, used as time of preparation for Easter celebration. The first class starts on February 13 at Jehovah Lutheran Church, Snelling and Thomas, Sunday at 9:15 a.m. in the library lounge. Neighborhood persons are welcome to attend these classes and also worship services.

Dr. Victor Gebauer will lead the six sessions drawing upon his 40 years of study and leadership in the area of worship, liturgy, hymnody and church music at all levels. Gebauer is a pastor and church musician who taught at Concordia University, St. Paul, from 1966 to 1995 and directed the Lutheran Music Program which offers especially summer music training for gifted musicians until recently and has written and lectured widely in the area of worship and music. He particularly enjoys the give and take of adult Bible classes.

The topics include "Liturgy and Lent - Sources of Faith," "Roots of Christian Worship" (2 sessions), "Living the Liturgy in the World," "The Work of the People - How We Do Our Worship," and "Journey to the Center of Time - The Three Day Liturgy."

Annual humanities lecture at Hamline set for Mar. 2

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her publication, Woman's Bible, will be the topic of the annual Hamline University Symposium on the Humanities on March 2. Featured speaker will be Dr. Kathi L. Kern, associate professor of history at the University of Kentucky. The lecture will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Sundin Music Hall, located at 1531 Hewitt Ave. on the Hamline campus. The event is free and open to the public.

Scouting begins annual support campaign

The North Star district of Scouting's Indianhead Council has officially kicked off their 2005 Fund Drive. For nearly 95 years this area has provided youth with opportunities that reinforce the ideals of Trustworthiness, Honor, Leadership, Resourcefulness and Respect for others and the environment.

Each year, over 30% of this District's budget was raised by our "Friends of Scouting" Parents, local Businesses, and Community Leaders and we look forward to another successful year.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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Rondo Library plans fall into place piece by piece

By JANE MCCLURE

Piece by piece, plans for the new Rondo Community Outreach Library and its upper-level apartments are falling into place. The city and its development partners, Legacy Management, Selby Avenue Community Development Corporation and Aurora St. Anthony Community Development Corporation, are hoping to start site work soon. The \$23.5 million project is expected to open in fall 2005 at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Dale Street.

The library, which will be located on the ground floor of the building, will replace the current Lexington Outreach Library. Its building will have underground and second-level parking, with a total of 98 apartments on the building's top three levels. Building the housing has a cost of \$14.2 million, using eight different funding sources.

This is the first time the city has built one of its branch libraries as part of a mixed-use building with housing. That has meant a lot of different actions have to be taken to purchase land, file plats and line up proj-

ect financing. In November and December, almost every week's St. Paul city Council or Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) agendas included action items for the project.

to pay for the new library. Putting the housing package together has meant drawing on several funding sources including tax increment financing, federal Community Development

Member Debbie Montgomery agrees that the project has been complex. But she believes it is very much worth the effort. "People are really excited about this project," she said. Ward One only has one branch library, the Lexington library. Lexington must be replaced because of its small size and long-term structural and maintenance problems.

Rondo will not only provide a larger library for area residents, it will also provide additional public access computers, a larger business resource center and community meeting space.

One of the project's biggest hurdles was cleared in mid-November when the City Council, acting as the HRA, unanimously approved the development agreement for the project. The HRA also approved the sale of land to University Dale Apartments Limited Partnership and the city. The partnership paid \$244,750 and the city paid \$200,250. That cost is based on the property's fair market value.

What's unique about the project is that the ownership will be of different levels of the

building, said city planner Yang Zhang. That meant filing a vertical plat split, which required county and City Council approval.

The latest piece of project funding expected to be approved by the City Council soon is a \$200,000 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grant for the library's planned business resource center. Lexington is currently house the library's business resource materials. The new Rondo library will have a much larger business resource center.

Montgomery has provided an additional \$65,000 in Neighborhood STAR from the Ward One neighborhood Investment Initiative Fund (NIIF).

Other key pieces of the University and Dale project include:

*HRA approval of temporary financing to help the project get a faster start. The City Council voted unanimously December 8 to use \$2.3 million in Housing 5000 Neighborhood STAR as an interim project financing source for the apartments.

Part of the project financing includes \$2.3 million in scattered site tax increment financing (TIF) dollars. Because final arrangement for the TIF bonds won't be in place until February 2005, the developers sought interim funding to get the project rolling.

The STAR dollars will be repaid after the bonds are issued.

*Also on December 8, the council gave final approval to \$8.8 million in multi-family housing revenue bonds. The bond issue had been approved in November but needed a second vote because the original bond package documents contained incorrect information.

*The apartments shared in \$34.9 million in grants awarded this fall by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The MHFA grants will assist in the construction or rehabilitation of 2,034 housing units throughout Minnesota. The intent of the grants is to provide new affordable housing, preserve existing affordable housing stock and address long-term problems of homelessness.

The University and Dale apartments will receive \$792,000.

*Public art for the library has received a \$25,000 Cultural STAR grant. Friends of the St. Paul Public Library had hoped to obtain Neighborhood STAR for the project but were turned down by the Neighborhood STAR Board in the 2004 large grant and loan competition. (That same competition did provide the business resource center dollars).

The Friends sought a \$75,000 grant for a specially designed security gate, fireplace area and entryway for the new library. The Cultural STAR Board did approve the project this fall, but at the \$25,000 level. It's not clear which part of the project will be built first.

Montgomery said the public art funding is needed now because the public art will be incorporated into the library entrance as the building goes up.

"People are really excited about this project."

— Ward One City Council Member Debbie Montgomery

Archie Givens of Legacy Management said the developers hope to start work at the site before the end of 2004. He said that putting together a project, that includes ownership by the city's library agency and a private partnership that will own the apartments, has been challenging and complex. The city is using capital improvement dollars

Block Grants, low-income housing tax credits and grants from the Metropolitan Council, Family Housing Fund and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

"But we do expect everything will fit together," Givens said. The final closing on the property is expected in mid to late December.

Ward One City Council

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Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

STAR revitalization grants, loans approved

After a mayoral veto, the 2004 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization large grants and loans won unanimous St. Paul City Council approval January 12. That's good news for area grant and loan recipients, who have been waiting for the funds for several months.

The City Council had approved the STAR grants and loans in November. But that action also included the council's grab of \$1.4 million in Neighborhood STAR funds. Mayor Randy Kelly wanted half of that funding for commercial corridor improvements. The other half of the funding came from estimated Neighborhood STAR revenues. Council members wanted to split the \$1.4 million seven ways and allocate it to projects in their own wards.

Kelly's veto meant that the Neighborhood STAR large grants and loans had to be brought back to the City Council separately.

No changes were made to the original list of projects, that won approval from the Neighborhood STAR Board last fall. Twenty-five projects were submitted. Applicants sought a total of \$3,147 million. A total of \$1.530 million was allocated to 16 projects.

The lone citywide program submitted in the 2004 funding round, Neighborhood Lending Partnership II, was approved. University National Bank sought a \$250,000 loan and was awarded \$200,000.

One project that will be shared by the three district councils in District 13 is Pride in Neighborhood Housing, which received a \$100,000 grant. The money will be used for exterior improvements for homes in Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline and Lexington-Hamline neighborhoods.

Local projects that will receive 2004 grants and loans include Open Cities Health Center dental clinic (\$70,000 grant).

Friends of the St. Paul Public Library obtained an awarded for a \$75,000 grant for a new business resource center for the Ron-do Community Outreach library. All Neighborhood STAR grants and loans must be matched on a one-to-one basis, with either money, goods and services or donated labor.

Repairs to playground building proposed

Improvements to one of the Hamline-Midway neighborhood's most historic buildings top the list of proposed 2006-2007 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) projects. By the January 24 deadline, St. Paul district councils, community development corporations and neighborhood groups had submitted 51 projects to the city's Office of Financial Services.

Of the 51 projects, 31 will be considered by the CIB Committee's Streets and Utilities Task Force. Another 11 projects are classified as community facilities and another 11 fall under the residential and economic development categories. The community facilities, streets and utilities and residential and economic development task forces will start reviewing projects in the next few weeks and then make recommendations to the full CIB Committee. The St. Paul City Council and Mayor Randy Kelly will eventually decide which projects are and are not funded.

Hamline-Midway Coalition is seeking funding to repair and restore the Hamline Park Playground building, which was built in 1938 and rehabilitated in 1993. The Kasota stone building was designed by Clarence Wigington, the nation's first African-American municipal architect. Moisture is leaking into the walls and windows and damaging the stone.

Another large area project is the phase one of Pierce Butler Realignment. The Great Northern Corridor initiative and Public Works wants to move the street slightly to the north, then extend it east beneath the Dale Street Bridge. The extension would run to Arundel, the turn and connect with Minnehaha Avenue. Great Northern Corri-

dor and the St. Paul Port Authority are also seeking funds to pay for infrastructure in the Great Northern Business Park's Dale Street Shops area.

Most of the competition for 2006-2007 funds will be in streets and utilities. One local street project is traffic calming along Marshall Avenue, from Mississippi River Boulevard to Snelling Avenue. Merriam Park Community Council (MPCC) wants grass or landscaped medians installed along Marshall to slow down traffic and allow spaces for pedestrians to safely cross. The median wouldn't alter traffic patterns as it wouldn't be contiguous.

Other submissions include requests from Sparc and Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation is seeking funds to continue its Frogtown Facelift Home Loan Rehabilitation Program and Flexible Fund for Housing. The GFCDC and Thomas-Dale Planning Council are seeking funds to improve storefronts on Dale Street. Sparc is seeking funding to continue a deferred home improvement loan program.

Sparc and North End-South Como Planning Council want funding to rebuild the Rice-Maryland intersection and to make streetscape improvements on Rice Street. The Midway Transportation Management Organization, St. Anthony Park Community Council and Public Works submitted a request to connect the bicycle lane at the end of Capp Road to Robbins Street, improving connections to existing area trails. Lexington-Hamline Community Council is asking that the Griggs Walking Bridge over Interstate 94 be removed and replaced. Thomas Dale Planning Council is seeking funds to improve Victoria Street from University to Thomas.

Three requests came in for bike improvements. Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles is seeking bike route markings and signs on the existing Pierce Butler on-street bike lanes. District 11 Neighbors is seeking improved connections for bicycles along Lexington Parkway. The St. Paul Bicycle Advisory Board is seeking signs and striping for the Grand Round, a citywide bicycle trail system.

-Compiled by Jane McClure

Without Reservations

Continued from page 5

That and the fact that, a day later, I made a large meal of left-

over lasagne, salad, buttered herb toast, the remains of the Snob's reuben sandwich, and yes—the Bachelor's guilty pleasure, dessert pizza.

Please note that Abettos does a lot of catering—your place or theirs. It seems like a

very good choice for a relaxed group event (informal staff luncheon, boisterous birthday party, etc.).



The Midway Como Monitor is typically published the second Thursday of each month. If you're not receiving a timely delivery call 651-645-7045

Question of the month

Where does the name "Abettos" come from, and is it a plural or a possessive in search of an apostrophe? Be warned: A mere Google search is not going to help you much. Visit Abettos and ask. Send your answers (multiple choices encouraged) to withoutres@yahoo.com for your chance to lunch with the Trilateral Commission of Midway-Como Food Review.



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5:30 p.m. Alpha

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BEGINNING FEBRUARY 6

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My wife and I have a standing joke that our neighborhood rec center has become the nexus of our universe. We find ourselves there up to several times per week. In addition to the aerobics classes and basketball open gyms that we have attended, I host a weekly Minnesota Dad's at Home (MDAH) playgroup there every Wednesday. Myself and a group of stay at home dads meet at North Dale during the regularly scheduled "Tot Time" and chat and watch as our wee ones race toy cars, build block towers, and play on the other equipment the center sets out.

I have been an at home parent since our son was born a little over a year and a half ago. I am relatively new to this whole parenting scene, but like any stay at home parent, I have to find activities like this to fill our week or we both go crazy. Our ECFE class and the Saint Paul Public Library story hours are our other good stand-ins.

But you know, it took me a while to get good at this stuff. My wife and I have lived in Saint Paul for just over a year now, and when we moved here last summer, we didn't know a soul. We had no playgroups, no ECFE, no friends;



New to the Neighborhood

By NATE HAMILTON

Baby, it's cold outside

heck, I didn't even know where the library was. We were pretty isolated. I was becoming worried that my son didn't have a peer group to learn from. And I'm not too proud to admit it: I was lonely. Thank goodness my neighbor (bless her heart), along with the MDAH dads took me under their wing, so to speak, and showed us all the wonderful things that there are for kids to do in our neighborhood.

Now it is not uncommon for my son and I along with our friends to have daily activities booked solid for weeks at a time. (We are very popular.) My new mom friends don't seem to notice that I am intruding on their girl dominated profession. While our kids play, I am generally included in the coffee talks of discipline, schools, breastfeeding, books,

whatever.

But I would hate to tell you how many parents I meet out and about who don't have any support system like this. I don't know if it is that their interests are so limited, or that they just aren't aware of the vast resources available to them. But there really is no need to sit indoors with your crew all winter and stare out at the cold, snowy ground. "It's too lonely in there," I tell them. "Get out and do something!" Try ECFE or a neighborhood or church playgroup for starters.

Because as much as our children like to play together, it isn't just our kids who need that connectedness, right? As parents, it can be easy to isolate ourselves as well. As I quickly learned, it is essential to network, to meet new

people, to get to know your new neighbors, try new activities—to diversify your life. What better way to do it (and have some fun!) than at your neighborhood meeting place? I'm telling you, it will quickly become the center of your universe.

So back to the rec center: they run this open gym for toddlers every Monday and Wednesday mornings. And in addition to hosting kids, sports, dance, music and activities and a whole regimen of community ed. classes, the center also has an outdoor ice skating rink in the winter months, and an indoor walking track and exercise room. So even through the cold Minnesota winter months there is plenty for an active parent and child to do.

And there are some five other

St. Paul rec centers just in the Midway/Como area including: West Minnehaha, Griggs, Orchard, Hancock, and Northwest Como. You can go to the city's web page to find out more and what exactly your neighborhood center has to offer: www.ci.stpaul.mn.us

So this is the first installment of what I hope is a long line of (semi)-regular columns for the *Monitor*. My hope is to raise some discussion of parenting topics and awareness of family happenings in our neighborhood—and to give this particular parent's perspective on the happenings that shape our community. If you have some ideas you would like discussed, or a family event you would like to comment on, my email is listed below. I'd be glad to entertain any of your thoughts.

(Editor's note: To find out more information on stay at home dads, including playgroups in the Twin Cities areas, go to www.mdah.org. For more information on Saint Paul ECFE programs, visit www.ecfe.spps.org. Nate Hamilton is a stay at home parent living in the Lake Como area. To contact him, email: nate@mdah.org)

In Our Community

Continued from page 11

Free children's activity hour at GINKGO

Beginning Jan 31, the art and story hours for children at GINKGO coffeehouse will take place on Thursday mornings. Children (with the help of their parents) will be invited to create an art project to take home. Art projects will be planned in advance, and materials will be provided. Stories will also be part of the fun. The activities are designed with 1-6 year olds in mind, but will also be well suited for children as old as 7. Siblings are invited. This event is free, and takes place every Thursday at 10 a.m., at GINKGO, 721 N.

Snelling Ave, 651-645-2647.

MMSA School hosts information meetings

Maternity of Mary-St. Andrew School is a great place for children to learn and grow. Please come and find out more about the school community at the following informational meetings. The Kindergarten information meeting is scheduled for February 17 at 7 pm. Meet the teachers, visit the classrooms, learn about our great program. Bring birth certificate and baptismal certificate. Registration fee is \$100, applicable to next year's tuition.

Registration opens for Preschool through grade 8 on February 17 as well. MMSA School is proud to have specialists in music, art, phy. ed., computer, library, speech communications, Spanish, plus a great

middle school program. Extended Day is available before and after school.

The Preschool Information Meeting is Thursday, February 24, at 7 p.m. The school offers two different sessions. The two-day program is Tuesday and Thursday from 8:05-10:45 a.m. and the three-day program is Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:05-10:45 a.m. Extended Day is also available after 10:45 a.m.

MMSA School is located at 592 West Arlington Avenue in St. Paul. MMSA is committed to academic excellence and prides itself on providing a quality, affordable, Catholic education for all children. The school serves preschool through grade 8.

Galtier requests Midway community volunteers

Galtier Magnet Elementary School

calls the Midway community to action! Recharge your spirit in this vibrant, diverse school as a volunteer tutor, improving students' reading, writing and math skills. One hour weekly. 9:10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Training provided. Contact Mike Petersen, Volunteer Coordinator, 651-293-8710 or mike.petersen@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Family together pre-school needs volunteers

Help ensure that all of the children in our community have the skills they need to succeed in life by volunteering with Families Together Preschool at Lifetrack Resources. Families Together Preschool is in need of a few individuals to volunteer only an hour a week during regular school hours.

Volunteers would act as literacy tutors, reading with children and focusing on improving

literacy skills through play. This is a great opportunity to build meaningful and rewarding relationships with children who will benefit from having you as a positive mentor in their lives.

Lifetrack Resources is a non-profit organization that provides comprehensive employment services to people who are leaving welfare, immigrants and refugees, persons with disabilities and people with little or no work history.

In addition, Lifetrack Resources also provides rehabilitation therapies and early childhood services. Lifetrack Resources is the 2004 Winner of the Nonprofit Excellence Award.

For more information, please contact Molly Green, Literacy Volunteer Coordinator for Families Together Preschool, at 651-265-2408.



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Classifieds

Monitor Want Ads are now 70 cents per word. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. \$7.00 minimum on all classifieds. Classifieds must be pre-paid via cash, check, or credit card. Classifieds are accepted over the phone with credit card payment only (\$12 minimum order). Want ads must be in the Monitor before February 28 for the March 10 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information.

ADDITIONS

Kustom additions, garages, vinyl siding, patio decks, kitchens, bathrooms, taping, ceiling texturing, reasonable rates. Marty. 612-724-8819. 5-05

APT. FOR RENT

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BUY AND SELL

Buy and sell for older homes: vintage lights, hardware, tubs, doors, etc. 651-644-9270. 5-05

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CARPET CLEANING

Carpet Cleaning - Clean, deodorize, protect and groom. Home and business. Prompt and dependable. ProServ Property Services. 651-647-5500. 3-05

EMPLOYMENT

The Monitor is experimenting with Service Display ads for 2004. For a limited time, if you buy sign a 6-month contract for a Service Display ad, you will receive a FREE 15-word classified in addition. Copy for the ad must be mailed or faxed in by the deadline at 651-645-4780. (Next deadline is February 28.) Call 651-645-7045 for details. 3-98

Looking for delivery carriers to deliver the Monitor approximately 3 to 4 hours per month. Pay by route. Great for supplemental income! Call 651-458-8053, ask for Lloyd. 12-03

FRENCH LESSONS

Fun French for preschoolers. Native speaker. Small classes. Five openings left. Call Myriam at 651-488-1785. 2-05

HAULING

Hauling/Rubbish. Small trees cut down or trimmed. Licensed and insured. 612-869-8697. 12-04

REAL ESTATE

Lake Lots For Sale - Rare opportunity. 2+ acre lake lots near Siren, Wisconsin. Only 90 minutes from St. Paul. Call Betty Knutson at ReMAX Northwoods Realty, 715-349-7990.

PAINTING

Painting - specializing in wallpaper removal. Average house \$600, average 3 rooms \$200, average garage \$200. Jim 651-698-0840. 4-05

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Interior/exterior painting, enameling, spray textured ceilings, plaster patching, free estimates. Bob. 651-633-5565. 10-05

FOR SALE

For sale: 1993 Harley-Davidson FXDL, Dyna Low Rider, 1340 cc Evolution, 21K miles, black paint, lots of chrome, straight cannon pipes, never been in an accident. \$9,200. Call 651-436-5538. 7-04

SERVICES

Professional Exterior and Interior Painting, wall repair and plastering; ceiling texturing, wallpaper-hanging, moderate prices; free estimates, licensed, bonded, insured; Merriam Park Painting, 651-224-3660, 651-552-2090. 1-03

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etc., glassware, crocks, stained glass windows, many miscellaneous items. 651-227-2469 (anytime). 6-05

Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knickknacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary 612-729-3110. 3-05

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Griggs Rec Center schedules skating hours

Griggs Rec Center's skating hours, weather permitting are Thur & Fri (4-8 p.m.); Fri., Adult Skate Only (8-10 p.m.); Sat. & Sun. (2-8 p.m.).

Reminder: If the temperature reaches -25 or colder the rinks and building will not be open for skating.

Spring sports registration: Registration for youth volleyball, indoor soccer & floor hockey will begin the week of Feb., 7 and end February 18. Days, cost and ages will vary with sport.

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When survey respondents who don't shop often at Midway shopping centers were asked why, their responses split among personal safety, litter and upkeep, unattractive/unpleasant places, or a dislike of the store mix. Other negatives in the survey are the difficulty of bicycle and pedestrian access to the area, design and layout of parking, traffic congestion.

Midway Center

Continued from page 8

When survey respondents who don't shop often at Midway shopping centers were asked why, their responses split among personal safety, litter and upkeep, unattractive/unpleasant places, or a dislike of the store mix. These each scored more than 20 percent. Other negatives found in the survey are the difficulty of bicycle and pedestrian access to the area, design and layout of parking, traffic congestion.

People felt very strongly about what they want to see in the area, said Stark. Ninety-one percent of those surveyed want

the meeting to imagine the possibilities for the Midway, while focusing on areas that need to be corrected. One long-standing

not the highest and best use of very very expensive real estate."

The serious point McMahon makes is that Midway land is underused and undervalued. The estimated value of the 72 acres in Midway's shopping node is \$65 million. McMahon compared that with the \$70 million value of the Emerald Garden and 808 Berry residential developments near University Avenue and Highway 280. That site is just seven acres in size.

One study a few years ago called for changing the street grid, adding retail buildings along University, bringing in mixed-use residential-retail development and demolishing part of Midway Center.

The current design of the re-

tail centers, with large parking lots that are treacherous for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel through. Many buildings don't have windows or open fronts that put eyes on the street. That problem became even more evident Christmas Eve, during a purse-snatching incident right outside of Herberger's front door.

Another problem is unattractive billboards. "We are the billboard capital of the world," McMahon said as audience members chuckled. "There is no other regional mall I know of that has this at its front door."

(Editor's Note: University UNITED will be continuing to offer the survey on its website at: www.universityunited.com)

"We are the billboard capital of the world."

— University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon

the area to add more destinations for eating out, going to movies and socializing.

McMahon asked those at

concern for UNITED is land use. Of the 72 acres of retail space in the Midway, more than 50 acres are surface parking lots. "This is

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month Speaker

Speaker: Dr. Tamrat Tademe,
St. Cloud State University
Date: Tuesday, February 15
Time: 5 p.m.
Location: University Conference Center

Spirituality Service

Date: Thursday, February 17
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: Bush Student Center Chapel

Spoken Word:

Black Language, Black Thoughts

A night of poetry and music, featuring various writers and artists.
Date: Friday, February 18
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Bush Student Center, lower level

Annual Gospel Night

"The World Behind Me, The Cross Before Me"

Date: Sunday, February 27
Time: 6 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall

All events are free and open to the public.
Contact information for all events:
Center for Multicultural and International Student Affairs, 651-523-2423

OTHER FEBRUARY EVENTS...

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Featuring the "Trout" Quintet by Schubert and music by Durufle and Wagner

Date: Saturday, February 12
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: For tickets and information, 651-523-2459

Carrie Newcomer Concert

Date: Saturday, February 12
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Alexander Hill Ballroom, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, Saint Paul
Cost: Free and open to the public, freewill donation or foodshelf donation requested
Contact: The Wesley Center, 651-523-2789

Minnesota Guitar Society – Jazz Guitarathon

Date: Saturday, February 19
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: For tickets and information, 612-677-1151

Music at Hamline, 150 Years and Going Strong

Concert featuring the premiere of "Diagrams" for choir and orchestra by Anne Kilstofte, commissioned by the Music Department and the College of Liberal Arts in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Hamline University.

Date: Friday, February 25
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: Janet Greene, 651-523-2412



150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION STORE

Hamline University's Celebration Store is having a clearance on all 150th anniversary apparel and memorabilia. To shop the site, go to www.hamline.edu/150 and click on "Celebration Store."