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Pawlenty's axe casts a shadow over city's budget deliberations

By Jane McClure

Governor Tim Pawlenty is expected to unveil his plan for cutting \$2.7 billion from the state's 2010-2011 budget in the next two weeks. Cuts to Local Government Aid (LGA) are expected to figure prominently in the total. Cities across the state have asked that the LGA cuts be reasonable, and that they be announced sooner rather than later to aid in budgeting.

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman is due to announce his proposed 2010 city budget in early August. Meanwhile, Coleman and the City Council are still struggling to bring the city's 2009 budget into balance.

Coleman has warned that more cuts to city services are coming, despite the pleas this spring by cities across the state for lawmakers to tread lightly on LGA. "We're not optimistic at this point that things are going to get better," he told the Highland District Council (HDC) on June 4. "It's going to be devastating."

Coleman placed a freeze on city hiring last winter, and as a result the St. Paul police force is down to 588 officers from an authorized strength of 630. That worries some HDC board members. "The livability issues are a concern," said HDC board member Paul Krech.

Coleman assured residents that St. Paul continues to be a safe city and that the incidence of many crimes has declined in recent years. "But if you don't feel safe, that's not relevant," he said.

A smaller force has put the police in the position of reacting to crime rather than working to prevent it, according to Coleman. "We have the ability to respond to problems, but we'd rather keep kids out of bad situations in the first place," he said.

That sentiment is shared by St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington. While the police are "making it work" with a smaller force, he said, the department has had to cut back on beat officers, traffic enforcement and other police functions to keep officers on regular street patrols.

LGA payments are received twice a year by Minnesota cities, in July and December. Last December Pawlenty cut \$5.7 million from St. Paul's 2008 LGA allotment to address an unexpected downturn in state revenue. That forced city officials to use budget reserves to cover costs.

St. Paul officials had anticipated LGA payments of \$62.6 million in 2009 and \$64.1 million in 2010. Those payments could drop by as much as \$7.7 million in

BUDGET UNCERTAINTY ►3



Cooler weather didn't stop the fun during Grand Old Day on June 7. Pictured from the top, Jan Elftmann prepares to add more objects to her Art Car, Chinese American Association of Minnesota members weave through spectators toting a dragon and members of Chopstix Percussion hammer out a catchy rhythm.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



Rondo group files complaint over LRT's affect on minorities

By Jane McClure

A federal civil rights discrimination complaint has been filed against the Central Corridor light-rail project by the Preserve and Benefit Historic Rondo Committee (PBHRC). The group is alleging that the Metropolitan Council committed a host of violations in its planning for the project, especially in regard to the corridor's potential negative impact on low-income residents and minorities.

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) civil rights office confirmed the receipt of the complaint and acknowledged that an investigation is under way. The Metropolitan Council has

30 days to respond.

The PBHRC draws its name from St. Paul's predominately African American Rondo neighborhood that was split in two by the construction of I-94 in the late 1960s. Its member groups include the St. Paul Chapter of the NAACP, the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, the Community Stabilization Project as well as individual residents and business owners.

Spokesperson Veronica Burt says the PBHRC contends that the light-rail project is flawed. Members fear it will result in business interruption, displacement, gentrification, increased property taxes, reductions in existing bus service,

loss of parking for businesses, and neighborhood isolation. It believes that unless protections and benefits are put in place, the area's low-income and minority populations will not be around to enjoy light rail and prosper from its promised economic boom.

The complaint also states that the committee's concerns have not received the same attention as those raised by Minnesota Public Radio and the University of Minnesota over light-rail noise and vibrations. The 11-mile Central Corridor from downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul along University Avenue goes through diverse

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT ►2

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Customer parking in era of light rail

University proprietors circle the blocks in search of a few spaces

BY JANE MCCLURE

The advent of light rail on University Avenue could redefine the meaning of "survival of the fittest" for local business: Those shops that are best able to fit customer parking in the altered streetscape will have the best chance of surviving the Central Corridor transit project.

Construction of the 11-mile Central Corridor light-rail line will begin next year and be completed by 2014, if the federal government comes through with \$457 million in financing as expected. The proposed transit line between the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis would run down the middle of University Avenue. Making room for the tracks along with four lanes of automobile traffic means the loss of 85 percent of the 1,100-plus parking spaces on University between Rice Street in St. Paul and Washington Avenue in Minneapolis.

The University Avenue Business Association (UABA) is urging local business owners to learn more about how the light-rail project is likely to affect their on-street parking and customer access. A series of parking workshops for specific sections of University are being held throughout the summer.

UABA is also asking the Metropolitan Council for help in keeping local businesses viable during and after construction of the light-rail line. UABA is calling for detailed traffic studies to determine where University Avenue motorists are currently going and from where they are

coming.

The parking issues will change as the light-rail project progresses, according to UABA chair Jack McCann, whose family owns and manages properties near the intersection of University and Raymond avenues.

"People need to understand that (the light-rail line) is pretty much a done deal," said Mike Baca, owner of Impressive Print at 1754 University Ave. and one of the founders of UABA.

UABA is urging businesses to contact Central Corridor project staff to learn exactly how the project will affect their on-street parking. Finding off-street parking to replace it may not be easy.

"Everybody wants there to be a magic bullet," said Craig Blakely, project manager in the St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development. But there is no such thing in this case, he said. University Avenue parking needs to be thought of as a system, according to him, and many measures must be taken to mitigate the impact of the Central Corridor line.

Parking solutions may come one vehicle at a time, according to McCann. "One parking spot may not seem like much in the larger scheme of things," he said, "but it's huge to the person who has that parking spot."

A report by the Central Corridor project staff identifies 11 critical areas along University and the potential parking solutions for each—from shared parking to alley parking to metered parking to residential permit parking.

According to Dan Soler of the Central Corridor project staff, about 560 parking spaces are available on north-south streets within a block of University. Another 25,000 parking spaces are in private parking lots along the street. Some

of those parking lots are heavily used, Soler said, but others often sit empty.

The Metropolitan Council's \$914 million budget for the Central Corridor project does not include any money for mitigating parking shortages created by the transit line's construction. At this point, the only money available is \$350,000 through the city of St. Paul's Capital Improvement Budget for 2010-2011. That money would be used to repave 10 or 11 alleys and mark them for parking.

The Metropolitan Council has twice turned down city of St. Paul requests for Livable Communities grants to address Central Corridor parking issues. City officials have also suggested changing state law to allow funds from several tax-increment financing districts along University Avenue to be pooled and used for parking improvements. However, that idea was rejected by the 2009 Minnesota Legislature.

"Something I keep scratching my head about is that the Central Corridor project doesn't have the resources to solve the problems it has created," said Jim Segal of Ax Man Surplus. "You have this betterment coming down the street, but it's not an equitable situation for everyone involved."

In a related matter, UABA will present "Business & Construction Mitigation Law: Know Your Rights" on Thursday, June 18. The association is bringing in a panel of lawyers to advise University Avenue business owners on their legal options for addressing business losses during and after light-rail construction. The event will open with coffee and a light breakfast at 7:45 a.m. followed by the program from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. in the Model Cities Brownstone meeting room, 849 University Ave.

1 CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT

neighborhoods, including Hamline-Midway, Frogtown and Summit-University.

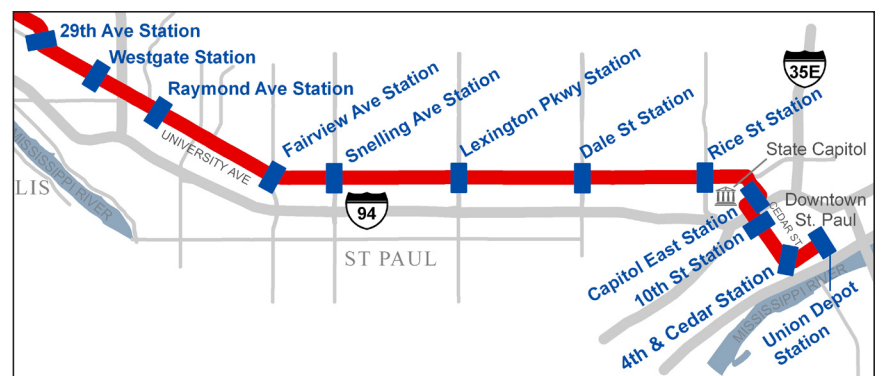
Burt said the PBHRC questions why the Central Corridor was not being built elsewhere, such as along I-94 or Pierce Butler Route. "We have to fight for what's right," she said.

Metropolitan Council officials contend they have been addressing the concerns raised by the PBHRC and that the rail project will not have disproportionate impacts on minority or low-income populations. The project has been through years of review, with hundreds of public meetings held.

"My sense and hope is that this does not delay publication of the environmental impact statement," said Met Council chair Peter Bell. That statement is to be published on June 26 and is a key step in moving the project forward at the federal level. Federal funding is expected to pay for half of the \$914 million project.

The Central Corridor Management Committee, which is composed largely of elected officials, discussed the PBHRC's complaint on June 10. The committee also tabled a proposal by Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter to add a light-rail station at Western Avenue. Infill stations at Western, Hamline and Victoria are supported by neighborhood residents as well as Ramsey County and St. Paul city officials. Last year, the Met Council agreed it would build the infrastructure for the three stations when rail construction begins in 2010, with the goal of adding at least one station if there is any money left in the project's budget.

Carter asked for the committee to reaffirm its support for an infill station



and to have staff prepare cost estimates for adding the Western Avenue station to the project. She also spoke for enhancing bus service in the area to address some of the issues the PBHRC is raising.

However, Bell noted that the committee is already on record in support of the infill stations and that he is "firmly committed" to making sure any unspent money is used to add at least one of them. He questioned why the resolution was needed.

Adding another station now would change the cost-effectiveness index that is used to determine the project's eligibility for FTA funding, said Central Corridor project director Mark Fuhrmann. Any increase in the index could hurt the light-rail project's chances for federal financial assistance. Fuhrmann described the project as being on the "razor's edge" for getting to the FTA on time and within budget as it is.

At the committee meeting on June 10, John Levin, director of service development for Metro Transit, outlined the results of a Title VI study conducted in 2008. Title VI is a federal regulation that prohibits discrimination in federally funded projects, including transit proj-

ects like the Central Corridor.

"We did this analysis to make sure the project would not have a disproportionately negative impact," he said.

The study covered the entire length of the rail project. In St. Paul neighborhoods, it includes an area one-half mile on either side of the Central Corridor, from Minnehaha Avenue on the north to Marshall Avenue on the south.

The study assessed the level of transit service before and after light rail begins operating, including the location of transit stops. The study found that transit access will actually increase for all residents around the corridor for the most part.

One exception is the area near University and Western, where neighbors have lobbied especially hard for an infill station. Levine said that lack of a Western Avenue station could be rectified by making changes in transit service in that area. His other recommendations include retaining or improving overall transit service within a half mile of the light-rail route, beginning more studies two years before light rail begins operating and providing opportunities for the public to be involved in the transit service studies.

St. Paul seeks funding for long-awaited Ayd Mill Road trail

Union Park objects to council leaving out its stretch of route

By JANE McCLURE

The long-planned Ayd Mill Road bicycle and pedestrian trail is one of nine projects that were approved by the St. Paul City Council on June 10 for submission to the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to meet a June 15 deadline for funding.

Project funding requests from the city total \$18 million and include replacing the Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road, making Central Corridor streetscape improvements and supporting other road and trail projects throughout the city. The largest project is \$7 million to study the extension of Pierce Butler Route to I-35E.

However, the request that has raised the most local objections is \$2 million for the Ayd Mill Road trail. That is because the newest proposal would only extend the trail from Summit Avenue to I-35E, leaving the stretch between Selby and Summit avenues without a trail. The Union Park District Council (UPDC) voted on June 1 to ask city officials to study extending the trail to Selby.

"When it comes to the road, we get dumped on," said UPDC member Mike Madden, referring to the increase in traffic in the Snelting-Hamline neighborhood following the south-end connection of Ayd Mill Road to I-35E. "But when it comes to a project we support, we can't have it in our district."

The resolution adopted by the UPDC on June 1 calls for city officials to complete the design and a supplemental draft environmental impact statement for an Ayd Mill Road bike and pedestrian trail between Selby and Jefferson avenues. It also asks city officials to evaluate the cost and likelihood of using condemnation to acquire land for the trail. Over the past several months, the UPDC has clashed with the St. Paul Public Works Department over whether the trail should be located off-road or striped on the street. Bicycles are currently prohibited on the roadway.

In March, St. Paul lost a federal grant for the project because city and Canadian Pacific Railroad officials could not reach an agreement on right-of-way acquisition for the trail. The trail is supposed to link up with the Midtown Greenway, which would be extended from Minneapolis to St. Paul via a railroad bridge north of Marshall Avenue. However, that project has also met delays due to diffi-

culties with land acquisition. Last month, the City Council took away part of the Midtown Greenway funding to use on another project.

Public Works engineer John Maczko said the long-term plan is to extend the bike and pedestrian trail the full length of Ayd Mill Road and make the connection with the Midtown Greenway. However, at this point, he said, property acquisition issues north of Summit would take longer to resolve. Although the UPDC has pushed for condemnation of land for the trail, Public Works has been reluctant to expend the potential time and money involved in that.

"If we get funding to build the trail as now proposed, we can still connect to other area trails from Summit to the north and south, east and west," Maczko said.

He also pointed out that extending the trail north of Summit may have to wait until the Hamline Avenue bridge is rebuilt. Bicyclists who cross the bridge now are forced to share narrow sidewalks with pedestrians.

The project's funding request is for 2013-2014 and would come via federal pass-through money under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Program. The Metropolitan Council and MnDOT will rank St. Paul's requests with

those from other cities.

The funding requests fall into three categories: surface transportation, bridge replacement and transportation enhancements. The Ayd Mill Road trail and Pierce Butler Route extension fall into the first category, while the city's lone request in the second category is \$3.8 million to replace the 50-year-old Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road. The bridge is considered deficient and had weight limits posted earlier this year. The federal funds would be used as a match with St. Paul Capital Improvement budget (CIB) dollars that are penciled in for 2010-2011.

St. Paul submitted six projects as transportation enhancements. They include \$1 million to provide soil and irrigation for the planting of 1,600 trees along the Central Corridor light-rail line on University Avenue. That is just part of the 5,000 trees that are included in streetscape plans for the corridor. The project is also recommended for partial CIB funding.

The city is also seeking \$1 million in each of two phases to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the Central Corridor along Raymond Avenue. The other two projects in that category include streetscape improvements to the Trout Brook Regional Trail in the North End and on Payne Avenue.

1◀ BUDGET UNCERTAINTY

2009 and \$16 million in 2010, according to Coleman. That means if city services are kept at their current level, the city could be facing a deficit of \$26.6 million for 2010 in a total budget of just under \$540 million.

According to Coleman, there is no way property tax increases would even begin to make up what the state could cut in LGA. In the worst-case scenario, he said, the property tax levy would need to increase 65 percent to maintain the same level of city services.

"We're just facing a lot of unknowns," said

Deputy Mayor Ann Mulholland.

Cutting services and closing facilities may not be popular. "But there are no alternatives except to make the hard choices," said Ward 3 City Council member Pat Harris. "The money's not there and there's no way to get it."

Ward 4 City Council member Russ Stark has been working with Hamline-Midway residents on ways to keep that neighborhood's library open. Stark has also assigned an intern this summer to research private-public partnerships around the U.S. in hopes of keeping city facilities operating.

Earlier this year, Coleman directed his de-

partment heads to plan for 14 percent cuts in their budgets. Mulholland said she hopes the cuts do not go beyond that level.

In some city departments, they may have to. Coleman said it is unlikely the city's budget cuts will be across the board. He told the HDC that public safety is the city's top priority. That could mean bigger cuts to parks and library budgets, according to City Council president Kathy Lantry.

The 2010 budget process that begins in August will be the first in many years not to feature a truth-in-taxation public hearing in December. The Minnesota Legislature dropped

the public hearing requirement this session in response to complaints that the December hearing occurred too late in the budget process to effect meaningful change. Instead, the City Council plans to hold a public hearing on the budget earlier in the fall.

Beginning this fall, St. Paul, Ramsey County and the St. Paul Public Schools will also be allowed to raise their tax levies for the following year after the mid-September truth-in-taxation deadline. However, they can only do that if the higher levy is needed to address a budget deficit caused by cuts in state aid made by the governor.

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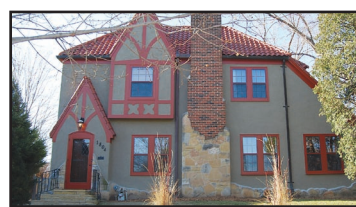
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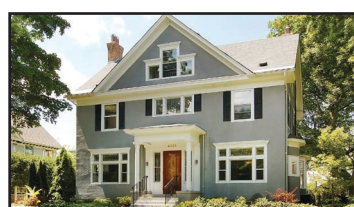
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St. Paul removes affected trees, sets traps for invasive ash borer

By JANE MCCLURE

Some ash trees in local neighborhoods are now sporting purple cardboard traps as state and city officials try to get a handle on the spread of the potentially devastating emerald ash borer. During the second week of June, Minnesota Department of Agriculture and St. Paul Parks and Recreation forestry crews began hanging the traps in ash trees in several neighborhoods, including Merriam Park, Macalester-Groveland, Highland Park, the West End and Summit Hill. Trapping and monitoring is also under way in Minneapolis.

The Department of Agriculture is working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the city to track and monitor the pests. According to the DNR, the mailbox-sized traps are sticky and smell like a diseased ash tree. The insects are attracted by the smell and by the color purple and get stuck to the sticky surface. The traps will be removed in the fall.

The discovery of the ash borers in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood last month has sparked a flurry of activity to slow and track the pests. Emerald ash borers are invasive beetles from Asia that were first discovered in this country in southeastern Michigan in 2002. The pests are believed to have killed as many as 30 million ash trees in the United States and Canada. The infestation in St. Anthony Park was the first found in Minnesota.

Although various chemicals and natural methods of control have been tried, forestry experts say there is no known method for eradicating the pest. Last month, the Department of Agriculture indicated that 40 percent of Minnesota's 937 million black, white and green ash trees are at risk from the ash borer.

As of June 8, a total of 68 trees (34 on public and 34 on private property) had been removed in St. Paul. State workers collected samples from the trees and are continuing their research.

Elsewhere, crews removed bark from nearly two dozen unhealthy trees on public property to attract borers for trapping. The "trap trees" are scheduled for removal this fall.

Officials are asking the public to join the effort by watching their ash trees for signs of infestation. Symptoms include dieback of leaves in the upper third of tree branches, heavy woodpecker activity, D-shaped holes in the bark and S-shaped tunnels under the bark. Residents who notice any of these signs should call the forestry office at 651-632-5129 if the tree is on public property or 651-201-6684 if it is on private property.

The public also is being asked to water their trees during dry periods to keep them healthy and to not transport ash firewood in Ramsey and Hennepin counties.

"Our goal is to make it as tough as possible for this pest to become a Minnesota resident,"



An adult emerald ash borer.

said Geir Friisoe, director of plant protection for the Department of Agriculture. "We know from other states how difficult it can be to eradicate emerald ash borer, but we're encouraged that infested trees have only been found within a half-mile radius of the (original St. Anthony Park) site."

The next steps for the city's control and removal plan will be announced soon. The city has received requests from homeowners who want to treat their boulevard ash trees to prevent the disease, but city officials have not decided how to respond to those requests.

The Tree Advisory Committee, a citizens' group that works with city staff on tree and forestry-related issues, is monitoring the situation and received an update on the emerald ash borer on June 3.

"This is going to be a huge loss to our neighborhoods," said committee chair Shawn Bartsh of Highland Park.

City staff are preparing a detailed presentation on the emerald ash borer, which will be available for district councils and other neighborhood groups. The Highland District Council is planning to host a meeting about the problem. Highland could be especially hard hit because developers planted a large number of ash trees along its boulevards in the post-World War II era, Bartsh said.

Part of the city's presentation will center on the best way to control the pests. Some cities, private tree services and the Minnesota State Fair have treated ash trees with injections in the past. However, Bartsh said there are pros and cons to such treatments.

One huge challenge in dealing with the emerald ash borer is how difficult it is to detect. The pests start their life cycle as flat, rust-colored eggs. The eggs are about the size of a period in this article. A single female can lay about 80 eggs at a time on the bark of a tree during the summer. The eggs produce white larvae that burrow into the tree bark and begin to eat the trunk. That cuts off the tree's circulatory system, which carries water and nutrients from the roots to the branches.

In the spring, the larvae become pupae and grow into adult beetles, which burrow out of the bark, fly away, mate and restart the cycle. It usually takes a couple of years for trees to show the effects of an emerald ash borer infestation.

Updated information is available by visiting www.stpaul.gov/parks.

Buyers found for UST's Grand properties

By JANE MCCLURE

Three off-campus properties owned by the University of St. Thomas at 2076, 2080 and 2084 Grand Ave. could all have new owners by the end of the summer. Though various larger-scale redevelopment plans and purchase agreements have fallen through over the past few years due to the slumping housing market, selling the three lots separately has met with better results.

According to Tanya Hietpas of Edina Realty, who is marketing the properties for St. Thomas, 2084 Grand Ave. has been sold to a member of the university's staff, a couple has signed a purchase agreement for 2080 Grand, and the one-story brick maintenance shed at 2076 Grand has a prospective buyer who would like to convert it into a loft-style

home. The three purchases should close over the next several weeks, Hietpas said.

Selling off the three properties is a requirement of the 2004 agreement that St. Thomas made with the city when it sought to expand its St. Paul campus onto the two blocks bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand and Cretin avenues. The sale of the properties outside its campus boundaries has to be completed by August or St. Thomas would be in violation of the permit, triggering a review of the university's special condition use permit by the St. Paul Planning Commission.

Correction

An article in the June 3 *Villager* should have stated that the Arts Partnership worked to receive Cultural STAR funds for the Ordway and not the Arts & Culture Partnership.

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County buys more of historic Union Depot for future transit hub

By JANE MCCLURE

Ramsey County is now the proud owner of most of St. Paul's Union Depot on 4th and Sibley streets in downtown St. Paul. The intent of its recent purchase is to turn the historic building and its attached concourse, which is also owned by the county, into a multi-modal transit hub for buses, high-speed rail, light rail and commuter rail. It could open as early as 2012.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners voted 6-0 on June 2 to purchase much of the building's marble-columned head house from JAS Apartments, a Minneapolis developer, for \$8.19 million. A week later, commissioners approved spending \$813,900 in federal economic stimulus funds to improve energy efficiency at more than a dozen buildings, including the Union Depot.

A county study indicates the

building will need about \$350,000 in improvements in the near future and another \$969,000 over the next two years. Many of the improvements would make the building accessible to disabled people. The building's heating and cooling systems also need work and skylights have to be reglazed. The area needing the most work is the building's prominent entry plaza and steps facing 4th Street.

Still unknown is the amount of lead paint and asbestos that will have to be abated from the head house. Because the depot has been on the National Register of Historic Places for 35 years, any changes to the property's exterior need to be reviewed by the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission.

The county's study indicated that, overall, the 86-year-old head house is in good shape. "Considering the building's age, multiple renovation efforts and the attempts to repurpose the property over many de-



Ramsey County bought much of the Union Depot's marble-columned head house on June 2 for \$8.19 million. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

acades, the property has maintained much of its historic character and solid structure," the study stated.

The purchase of the depot includes a 265-space parking garage and the lease of longtime building occupant Christo's restaurant. It does not include 39 condominiums that are being developed privately.

JAS, which bought the property in 2003, will continue to market the condos, which are on the building's upper floors.

One of the next steps for the county is to develop a master plan for the building and attract more main-floor shops and restaurants. Welsh Companies will work with

the county to lease that space.

County property management director Julio Mangine said the building will more than pay for itself once the conversion to a transit hub is completed.

The 188,000-square-foot, three-story head house is linked over Kellogg Boulevard to the depot's concourse, which the county purchased for \$49.6 million from the U.S. Postal Service a few years ago. The postal service will move its operations to Eagan next year. Altogether, the county bought about 9 acres of property from the Postal Service, including the downtown post office building.

Nine different railroads once ran out of the Union Depot, with 280 passenger trains passing through each day at the peak of operations. The depot also was a major point for shipping and mail delivery in the Upper Midwest. The last passenger train pulled out of the concourse in 1971.

Federation wants West 7th removed from high-speed bus study

By JANE MCCLURE

The West 7th/Fort Road Federation board voted 8-1 on June 8 to approve a resolution opposing the use of West 7th Street as a high-speed bus route and asking that Shepard Road and I-35E be studied instead. The resolution is being sent to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, the St. Paul City Council and U.S. Representative Betty McCollum.

McCollum has requested \$1 million from Congress for a new study of the Riverview Transit Corridor between the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, where it would connect with the Hiawatha light-rail transit line that runs between downtown Minneapolis and the Mall of America. The request was submitted on behalf of the Ramsey County Board and its Regional Rail Authority.

Though McCollum's request specifies that

Shepard Road be the Riverview route, engineers involved in the project have said that West 7th Street cannot be ruled out.

Bus rapid transit along West 7th was studied a decade ago at the behest of the Metropolitan Council. The idea was vehemently opposed by local residents and business owners who were concerned about the loss of on-street parking, the loss of private property to new transit stations and changes to local bus service. The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$44 mil-

lion for the project, but the money was taken away in 2003 by Governor Tim Pawlenty to help address a multibillion-dollar deficit in the state budget.

Most federation board members agreed that bus service along West 7th is adequate and that the addition of high-speed buses would not improve matters. Board member Rachel Robinson, who cast the lone vote against the resolution, was not so sure. According to her, West 7th should not be left out of the study.

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News Briefs

Commission recommends changes to Grand sign district

The St. Paul Planning Commission has recommended revising the special sign district guidelines for Grand Avenue between Oakland and Cretin avenues. The purpose of the special sign district, which has been in place since 1983, is to reduce sign clutter, preserve Grand Avenue's character, and provide clear identification of the avenue's businesses.

The Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) and Summit Hill Association (SHA) worked together on the revisions, which are intended to clarify the guidelines, provide for stricter enforcement, restrict spillover light from new signs and spell out the process under which district planning councils and GABA review sign permits.

Two issues were debated at a public hearing in May, including the use of portable or sandwich-board signs and lighted "dynamic" signs whose message changes electronically.

Some business representatives argued in favor of the dynamic signs. However, GABA, the SHA and the Planning Commission want them prohibited, saying they are distracting to motorists and not in keeping with Grand's character.

Portable or sandwich-board signs, which are typically placed on sidewalks, are generally prohibited citywide. GABA and the SHA had sought a way to allow them on Grand. However, according to St. Paul city planner Emily Goodman, allowing the signs would be outside the scope of the special sign district. She recommended that city planning and licensing staff work with the city attorney's office on modifying city regulations to allow the signs.

Only one business, Moscow on the Hill on Selby Avenue, has the city's permission to have a portable sign. Other portable signs can be found on the city's sidewalks. Though they are illegal, city officials tend to allow them unless there is a complaint about a sidewalk being blocked.

Picky Girl is granted parking variance for new Grand shop

Picky Girl, a women's clothing store that was located at 1326 Grand Ave., has obtained a two-space parking variance from the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for its new location at 949 Grand Ave.

The variance had the support of the Summit Hill Association and the Grand Avenue Business Association. City staff also recommended approval.

Picky Girl, which has moved into the former Cartridge World space, shares the building with Wonderment Toys and the Retreat.



Katie Percival, 5, daughter of Sibley High School principal Robin Percival, got into the school spirit—and colors—to help celebrate District 197's 150th anniversary on a rainy June 6. Above, children add soil to an oak tree that will be planted at Sibley to mark the milestone. PHOTOS BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Each of the businesses is required by the city to have 6.7 parking spaces. According to city staff, the building already has a 15-space parking variance grandfathered in. Six parking spaces are provided in a parking lot off the alley. However, the two-space parking variance is still needed, according to city staff, because a retail store like Picky Girl requires two more parking spaces than a service business like Cartridge World.

Building owner Mark Prokop informed the BZA that he recently replaced a large trash receptacle in back of the Grand shops with a smaller container, freeing up one more parking space. The BZA ruled that if replacing the Dumpster did create one more off-street parking space, it would reduce the variance for Picky Girl from two spaces to one.

Lex-Ham name proposed for neighborhood's playground

What's in a name? Plenty, judging by the Union Park District Council's debate over an appropriate new name for the playground adjacent to the Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road.

The playground at Hague and Scheuneman avenues has had many names over the years, including the Hamline-Hague Tot Lot, Hague Tot Lot and Scheuneman Park. The Union Park council recommended on June 3 that the playground be renamed Lex-Ham Neighborhood Park. That recommendation will be reviewed by the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission and then sent to the St. Paul City Council for approval.

The name change could coincide with the replacement of the playground's equipment this summer. The neighborhood committee

that has been working on the playground improvements proposed the new name. It also has the support of the Lexington-Hamline Community Council.

However, some members of the Union Park council's board of directors questioned the new name, suggesting that not everyone is familiar with Lex-Ham, which is also the name for the neighborhood bounded by Lexington Parkway, Hamline, Summit and University avenues. Others wondered whether "Lex-Ham" would confuse people, leading them to believe that the park is at the corner of Lexington Parkway and Hamline Avenue, streets that do not intersect. Still others suggested there may be objections to dropping the Scheuneman name.

The origin of the name Scheuneman is a bit of a mystery. According to Donald Empson, author of *On the Street Where You Live*, Scheuneman Avenue was platted in 1883 by Anna Ramsey, the widow of Minnesota's first territorial governor, Alexander Ramsey. However, that was not the street's original name and it is not clear when and why it was renamed Scheuneman.

City approves the financing for Higher Ground expansion

Higher Ground Academy's expansion plans got a boost on June 10 when the St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board, granted preliminary approval to the project and up to \$4.3 million in conduit revenue bonds to help finance it.

The money will be used to renovate classrooms, buy new equipment and build a two-story addition to the K-12 public charter school at 1381 Marshall Ave. Among other

things, the project will provide badly needed science and math facilities for the academy's upper grades. Construction is expected to begin in July.

Higher Ground was founded in 1999 by former St. Paul City Council member Bill Wilson. The school currently enrolls 575 students, mostly from the Frogtown, Summit-University, Lexington-Hamline, Snelling-Hamline and Merriam Park neighborhoods. However, it has more than 50 students on a waiting list. The school has 63 employees and plans to add three new positions over the next few years.

With conduit bond issues, the city acts as a pass-through agent for the bonds. Higher Ground is solely responsible for the debt. The school plans to repay the bonds with the building lease aid that it receives from the state as a charter school.

Shamrock's is allowed liquor service on its sidewalk patio

Shamrock's Irish Nook, 995 West 7th St., may serve liquor on its sidewalk patio as a result of a June 10 vote by the St. Paul City Council, which also waived the usual 45-day waiting period.

The liquor service extension has the support of the local West 7th/Fort Road Federation. However, the City Council set several conditions on the service: Liquor may only be served with food, the sidewalk may not be totally blocked, and if there is any complaint within the first 45 days of outdoor liquor service, the license will be suspended until a public hearing can be held on the complaint.

Shamrock's is one of a growing number of St. Paul restaurants that are taking advantage of relaxed city regulations to offer outdoor liquor service. In past years, the city required the signed consent of 90 percent of the property owners within 300 feet of an establishment to extend liquor service outdoors. When restaurant owners complained about the difficulty in reaching absentee landlords and getting some property owners to answer their doors, the City Council reduced the percentage of signatures needed as long as other conditions are met and the business owner can prove that he or she made a good-faith effort to obtain the necessary signatures.

In a letter to city officials, Shamrock's indicated that it had worked for the past year to obtain the signatures, sending out two mailings and going door to door in the neighborhood. In that time, Shamrock's obtained the signed consent of six of the 15 property owners within 300 feet.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

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Soccer proposal prompts call to study recreational uses of Victoria Park site

By JANE McCLURE

If the former ExxonMobil property near West 7th Street and Otto Avenue is to be turned into a city park, neighborhood residents would like a say on what amenities are added there. After hearing that city officials are considering building a soccer complex on the 37-acre site, the West 7th/Fort Road Federation voted on June 8 to ask the St. Paul Division of Parks and Recreation for a study of the property. The study would include deliberations of future uses by a neighborhood task force.

Redevelopment of the site has been the topic of ongoing litigation between the city and ExxonMobil. The property was used as a fuel tank farm for many years and was later eyed as part of the Victoria Park residential development.

Victoria Park was originally envisioned as one of the city's largest housing developments, with as many as 854 dwellings. West End residents saw the development as a way to replace the homes that were lost decades ago to the construction of I-35E and Shepard Road.

Ground was broken in November 2005 on the first phase of Victoria Park. However, the softening housing market, coupled with ExxonMobil's unwillingness to sell its portion of the site for residential use, doomed much of the development.

Brighton Development built two townhouse buildings on property that had been owned by Koch/Flint Hills, and those units are now being offered for rent. The Shalom Community Alliance recently moved its St. Paul senior housing campus to the Koch property and Mississippi Market plans to open its new natural food co-op there next month.

ExxonMobil does not want to sell its part of the property for housing, citing the long-term legal liabilities it could face if future residents experience health problems, even

though the site has undergone an environmental cleanup.

Earlier this spring, the federation voted against a proposal by the city, the St. Paul Saints baseball team and the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce to build a baseball stadium on the site. "So we go from baseball to soccer," said federation president Dave Bredemus.

Ward 2 City Council member Dave Thune said he was approached by city staff about the soccer complex. ExxonMobil has offered to give the city \$5 million if the land is used for recreational purposes.

Though the city may need more soccer fields, Thune said a soccer complex should not be built without public discussion. "The neighborhood should be in the driver's seat," he said. Under the agreement the city is crafting with ExxonMobil, "it has to be a park," Thune said. "But what the park is should be up to the community."

While playing fields, including those for soccer, might be welcomed by area residents, federation board members said they would like to see additional ideas discussed for the park. "We really need a playground," said board member Tanya Johnson. "There is no playground on that side of West 7th."

Board member Leonard Schwartz said some field space might be nice, but a heavily used soccer complex could detract from efforts to develop the rest of Victoria Park. "If you had tournaments every weekend, that could be a negative thing," he said.

"We're giving up a lot by going from residential use to a park," said federation executive director Ed Johnson.

However, Thune said the city has no choice and that a continued legal fight with ExxonMobil is unlikely. Another challenge is dwindling city resources.

"We have no money," said Thune, who chairs the city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

SHA sets hearing on Grand clinic

By JANE McCLURE

A proposed 10,000-square-foot HealthEast clinic at Grand Avenue and Victoria Street will be the subject of a neighborhood meeting at 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 29, at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave. The Summit Hill Association (SHA) board scheduled the meeting following its 7-5 vote on June 11 against sending the city of St. Paul a letter in support of having the clinic in Grand Place, 870 Grand Ave. The board will vote on the matter again on July 9.

Grand Place LLC wants to lease 8,000 square feet on the first floor and 2,000 square feet in the basement to HealthEast. Rob Stolpestad, president of Exeter Realty, the property manager for the building and its adjacent parking ramp, said he was hoping the clinic could move in as early as August. Now that may have to be pushed back at least a month, he said, if it happens at all. HealthEast representatives left the SHA meeting without commenting.

Fourteen-thousand square feet on the first floor of Grand Place has been empty since the fall of 2007 when former tenant eq-life moved out. Standing in the way of leasing all but 4,400 square feet of that space is a long-standing parking shortage on Grand Avenue and a complicated 2005 legal agreement on the use of Grand Place's basement.

The site plan originally approved by the city for the construction of Grand Place only allowed storage in the basement. However, Bound to be Read, one of the original tenants of Grand Place, obtained a city building permit in 2001 to remodel the basement for offices. After Bound to be Read closed in 2005, the St. Paul City Council reached an agree-

ment with the Summit Hill Association and eq-life that allowed eq-life to use a portion of the basement for sales and services.

The agreement, which was intended for eq-life only, required the retailer to validate ramp parking for customers and employees. Any change in the use of the basement was to be reviewed by the city zoning administrator for compliance with the original site plan. In 2007 the SHA blocked an attempt to change the legal agreement to allow phresh spa salon to move into the space. Phresh subsequently located down the block on Grand.

SHA members are leery of the continued use of the Grand Place basement, fearing it could lead to increased demand for parking. It is not clear whether a parking variance would be needed for the HealthEast clinic.

The SHA board argued at length on June 11 over the agreement and how it could be changed to allow the clinic to move in. Some members wanted a new agreement, others wanted to have HealthEast apply for a parking variance if one is needed, and still others argued for just allowing the clinic to move in. HealthEast has said it will also validate parking in the Grand Place ramp for its clients.

"For two years, a major space on Grand Avenue has sat vacant," said SHA board member Jim White. "We should do everything we can to support the reoccupation of spaces on Grand."

However, a motion to write a letter to the city in support of the proposed clinic in Grand Place failed. SHA board member Linda Winsor said she had received "negative feedback" on the proposed clinic. According to her, small-businesses owners have been "livid" about the public processes involving previous Grand Place tenants.

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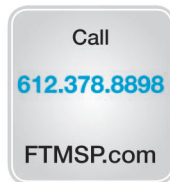
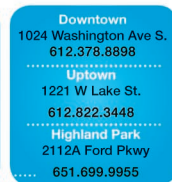
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Viewpoint

Drug Store War: Purchasing power is the only deterrence

BY MICHAEL MISCHKE

While Walgreens' plan to build a new pharmacy in Highland Village continues to undergo review and revision, it appears there has been no change in the strong neighborhood opposition to the impending project no matter what tweaks are made, only because the site sits next door to Highland's venerable Snyders Drug Store.

As of last week, Walgreens had announced no timetable for submitting its site plan to the city of St. Paul. Site plan reviews are typically conducted by staff from several city departments before being approved or rejected. However, anyone can petition—and pay—for a public hearing on a site plan before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission's decision is final unless it is appealed to the City Council. However, the commission and council can only reject a site plan because it does not conform to local land-use regulations, not just because someone doesn't happen to like the idea of a particular business opening at a particular location.

Walgreens intends to tear down the closed Oasis Market and the building next door that houses Party City at the northeast corner of Ford Parkway and Finn Street. Walgreens would then replace them with a new 9,500-square-foot store.

The project has sparked vehement opposition from some quarters, no doubt due in part to a high-profile lobbying campaign conducted by Snyders. After Snyders' employees gathered more than 2,500 signatures on a petition opposing the project, Walgreens' foes packed a Highland District Council meeting last month to speak against the plan. Another meeting was scheduled for June 16, after this edition of the *Villager* went to press.

Most district council members concede that they and city officials have no legal standing to block Walgreens from building in Highland Village. The property requires no zoning changes or variances, nor does Walgreens require any city licenses that prescribe distance limitations or dictate broader public review.

Walgreens' opponents are framing the issue as one of David versus Goliath: a comparatively small, locally owned chain of pharmacies versus an international corporate behemoth. On the surface, that would certainly seem to be the case.

Walgreens, which is based in Deerfield, Illinois, had 7,573 stores in the U.S. and Puerto Rico as of last month. Snyders Drug Stores, based in Minnetonka, had 60 corporately owned stores and 60 independent stores in Minnesota, Montana, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. However, that was before Snyders announced last February that it would be either closing or selling 19 of its 47 corporate stores in Minnesota by this spring. Dave Schwartz, president of Snyders Drug Stores, said that the closings were necessary due to the struggling economy, and that the stores to be closed or sold were all "underperforming." The Highland Village store was not one of them. In fact, the Highland Village store has been one of Snyders' best-performing stores over the years.

But Snyders Drug Stores today is not just a 41-store local chain; it is a subsidiary of Edmonton, Alberta-based Katz Group of Companies, which operates 1,900 drug stores in the U.S. and Canada. In addition to its retail stores, Katz Group owns Canada's only national mail-order pharmacy business, Rexall Direct (formerly Meditrust Pharmacy), which Katz Group describes as "one of Canada's largest institutional pharmacy operations."

As the owner of a company that relies on small, locally owned, independent businesses for the bulk of its revenue, your friendly neighborhood newspaper publisher appreciates as much as Walgreens' opponents the threat that large, national and even international chain stores represent to the fabric of local commerce. However, the only votes that count in a case such as this are the votes that customers cast with their wallets.

For those who would support Snyders in this latest local skirmish in the much larger and ongoing Drug Store War, I'd suggest voting early.

And often.



Inbox

Avenue for two-wheelers

There are more and more cyclists on our roads, and it is good that we continue to look for ways to make our roads safer for everyone. One proposal is to make Jefferson Avenue a "bicycle boulevard," a rather new distinction being tried in a number of cities that aims to make streets safer for cyclists by alerting motorists with signs and adopting measures to slow speeds.

Because Jefferson varies in width and in traffic volume, there may be different treatments for various stretches of the avenue. Where the street is narrow, road markings called sharrows could be painted on the pavement to designate it as a biking corridor. Where the street widens, there may be delineated bike lanes. Traffic-calming measures are also being considered, such as corner bumpouts and traffic circles. Giving Jefferson this distinction will give riders another east-west route through the city.

A presentation on concepts for making Jefferson a bicycle boulevard will be made before the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Transportation Committee at 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 22, at the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St. David Kuebler from St. Paul Department of Public Works and Steve Clark from Transit for Livable Communities will be on hand to lay out the proposal in detail, allowing everyone to see the plan, ask questions and make suggestions.

I urge everyone in Macalester-Groveland who has an interest in this proposal to come out on June 22 and see how this might work for our neighborhood.

*Don Muske, Ward 3 Representative
St. Paul Bicycle Advisory Board*

Editor's note: The writer is a resident of Macalester-Groveland.

Lesson of elms was lost on city

In the wake of Dutch elm disease, I've never understood the city of St. Paul's practice of planting a single species of tree along the boulevards of each avenue. It is as if they are trying to accommodate disease. Now, with the arrival of the emerald ash borer (*Villager*, June 3), history appears likely to repeat itself.

When we lost our boulevard tree some years back, we requested that it be replaced with a tree of another species. We were told that the city would only plant a tree of the same

species (basswood in our case) for our entire street. This practice makes no sense. If a disease affects one species of tree, its loss, while unfortunate, does not leave a boulevard barren if there is a mixture of species. If, on the other hand, boulevards are planted mile after mile with a single species, then disease in that species leaves an aesthetic wasteland.

Allowing homeowners to choose which species of tree is planted would ensure biodiversity that would in turn mitigate the spread and effect of disease. Further, giving homeowners a choice in the process would result in greater pride in and greater care of boulevard trees.

*Kurt Schulzetenberg
Merriam Park*

Why a Walgreens?

Walgreens wants to build a new store immediately next to Snyders on Ford Parkway. Why? It's not that we need more pharmacy retail in Highland Park. If Walgreens were to build, it would make four pharmacies within a half block of Ford and Finn Street.

Highland residents have for years depended on Snyders for the medications many of us need. It's a well-established part of our community. We trust its services and we rely on its advice. Anyone who prefers to patronize Walgreens only has to drive a mile and a half east or west to one of its stores.

It looks like Walgreens wants to drive Snyders out of business on Ford Parkway. Does anyone think we need this kind of entrepreneurship?

Walgreens is rapidly adding drugstores to its empire. A recent example is in Burnsville, where it built near an existing Snyders. If in its drugstore wars Walgreens wins out on Ford Parkway, we'll be left with an empty big box. The same could result if Snyders turns out to win by our continuing support.

Do we really need a Walgreens to be added to our neighborhood? Rather, don't we need them not to build here?

*Willis Stoesz
Highland Park*

Abortion protest goes too far

I am in agreement with the person who wanted to know if the anti-abortion protesters outside the Planned Parenthood clinic in Highland Village would curb their tactics of putting up giant photographs of bloody fetuses next to the Dairy

Confessions of a cat-stroller

BY AIMEE HOUSER

I've always been one to test new solutions to old problems. For years I've wanted to smother my lawn and replace it with perennial ground cover, replacing my resource-intensive grass with hardier, more tolerant plants. Now I have a 10-by-25-foot sheet of black plastic lining my sidewalk strip that is covered with mulch.

This spirit of adventure has since taken me somewhere I never thought I'd go: cat-strolling. I don't mean that my cats and I go strolling. I mean that I put my cats in a stroller designed for pets and push it around my neighborhood.

You can imagine the reactions we get. Looks of bemusement and confusion; looks of delight accompanied by children's sweet squeals; a woman's and occasionally a man's approving comments; and studied avoidance of the odd figure my cat stroller and I cut.

Sometimes I see someone scrutinizing us from a block away, trying to match his or her perceptions with something familiar. I can imagine the thought process: "That's a stroller. But wait, that's not a baby. That's



Aimee Houser: Have cat, will stroll.

something furry. A dog? No, a...a cat?"

Once I got an unequivocal look of horror from a man who turned around in the back seat of a car and mouthed a question—three words that began with "what" and ended with an expletive.

Whenever possible, I try to chit-chat, say "hi" or smile reassuringly. I try to break through the wall of Minnesota nice, the barrier that can prevent someone from simply asking a question like, "Why is your cat in a stroller?" and result instead in a frozen stare.

Both of my cats are "rescued" animals. Both were declawed by others before we adopted them. My husband and I know the statistics for the life spans of urban outdoor cats—5.7 years versus 15-plus years for indoor cats. And that's for outdoor cats with claws. We know that roaming cats can be a nuisance to wildlife, to other people's gardens and to pets living in other people's houses. So we made the choice to keep our cats indoors, which worked out well for most of our time with them.

However, one of our cats is dying. The other spent most of its first five years locked in a room the size of a walk-in closet. Like humans, they crave sunshine and fresh air, and I see contentment in their postures and faces when summer warmth means a window is constantly open.

The treatments that our elderly cat needs to stay alive are not working. I told myself that before he died, I'd let him experience the outdoors. A mesh-enclosed stroller is perhaps not what nature intended, but neither was declawing. Otherwise, I'd leash him and let him roam our backyard.

The next time you see me with my green pet stroller that sort of looks like a baby stroller but sort of not, don't be afraid. It's just a woman who needs exercise and a cat who wants—and deserves—fresh air.

Aimee Houser is a writer and editor who makes her home in Macalester-Groveland.

8◀ INBOX

Queen and Hillcrest Recreation Center, which are swarming with children (*Villager* Inbox, June 3).

I am so sick and tired of going to my neighborhood Dairy Queen or rec center with my 3- and 4-year-old daughters and driving past Planned Parenthood where the antiabortion protesters have planted their giant photographs of disturbing bloody fetuses that look like monsters. These people are so focused on their mission that they have passed caring about their impact on small children. What do you say about those priorities? Is it more important to give children horrifying images to take home and dream about and wrestle with than to surrender their tactics?

*Susan Crosby
Highland Park*

Barrier to peace in Palestine

In Cairo, President Obama addressed the issue most important to Muslims. He acknowledged the intolerable 60 years of suffering by the Palestinians as a result of the creation of Israel, proposed a halt in Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the creation of a separate Palestinian state, to much applause.

The problem in Israel is not new settlements. It is the existing settlements that dot the West Bank, the roads that connect them

and the Israeli security forces needed to protect them. In addition, there is a massive wall built by the Israelis that is twice as high as the infamous Berlin Wall and separates Palestinian property from Palestinian jobs. All of this prevents any independent Palestinian state from functioning on the West Bank.

If President Obama really wants to win Muslim cooperation and reduce the motivation for terrorists, he could take inspiration from President Reagan, who uttered the famous "tear down this wall" at the Berlin Wall. A similar wall statement from Obama would electrify Muslims and help push al-Qaida toward irrelevance.

Until something like that happens, those applauding Cairo Muslims will wait for specifics before taking much action favorable to U.S. interests.

*Rolf E. Westgard
Macalester-Groveland*

Ritchie Boy reunion

The first time I saw the movie *The Ritchie Boys* back in 2006, I carefully studied the faces of the principals to see if there was anyone who looked familiar. Having been a Ritchie Boy 64 years ago, I was seeking someone I knew. One person stood out. I was certain I had seen him before—I did not know where or when—but I quickly

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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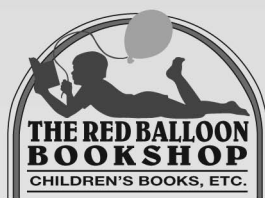
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Readers sound off on Snelling median

I've been surprised to hear of opposition to the proposed Snelling Avenue median between Grand and St. Clair avenues. As one who has lived in the area for several years, I can't see a downside. I realize that it could conceivably make left-hand turns into some businesses more difficult, but the fact that it can take upwards of five stoplight cycles to sneak across Snelling on foot or bike can't help businesses either.

The simple fact is, people on Snelling drive like maniacs. I can't count the number of times that one motorist has slowed for me and the car behind them has swerved around them and nearly hit me, or that a car has passed so close I could have knocked on the driver's window.

Having a median would greatly improve safety and convenience for almost everyone in the neighborhood. We have money for the median. Why block the project? Let's do something to make this entire area friendlier to the car-less.

Chris Schodt
Merriam Park

I was upset to learn that some St. Paul City Council members have opposed the proposed Snelling Avenue median. I cross Snelling daily, and I have nearly been hit dozens of times by cars whose drivers fail to yield to pedestrians. These experiences are especially frightening in light of the fact that I was hit by a car on Snelling in 2007. I would like to say that my experience is unique, but I know several friends who have had similar experiences.

Snelling Avenue currently represents a tremendous threat to pedestrian safety. I love my neighborhood deeply, but my proximity to Snelling has negatively impacted the safety and health of me and my friends. The proposed median could seriously mitigate these dangers. It is my hope that the City Council will recognize the significant impact the median could have on the quality of life in our neighborhood.

Julia Quanrud
Merriam Park

We write in support of the Snelling Avenue median, a project with broad-based community support. This project is many years in the making and reflects the best of community input. It has substantial state and federal financial backing as well. It would be a real setback to see it hijacked by a small but vocal opposition at this late stage in the process. The project should be supported and approved on its merits, which are impressive and familiar to all by now.

Craig and Elizabeth Aase
Macalester-Groveland

As a long-time Macalester-Groveland homeowner, I strongly favor the Snelling Avenue median as a serious attempt to protect the lives of area residents, of the students from the nearby schools, and of the local business customers and personnel. In addition to saving lives, the median is a method of saving costly emergency services, of increasing pedestrian and driver safety, and educating drivers to observe the posted speed limit.

Saving lives from injury and death makes the challenges and obstacles of the median appear very minor.

Diana Lundin
Macalester-Groveland

As a resident of Macalester-Groveland for over 25 years, I am writing in support of the Snelling Avenue median. This project was initiated by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Transportation Committee and has generated significant support from the neighborhood as well as Macalester College. This would be an enhancement of Snelling Avenue benefiting the immediate neighbors and those who drive on Snelling. The cost to the city of St. Paul would be minimal. I believe it would have an impact just like the medians on North Snelling and North Lexington Parkway. I patronize Fed Ex/Kinkos, Coastal Seafood and Caribou Coffee, but as I drive south on Snelling I do not attempt to turn left into their parking lot. It is too dangerous.

Mark Dickinson
Macalester-Groveland

Editor's note: The writer is the director of facilities services at Macalester College.

It is baffling to me why anyone would oppose a proven strategy to improve pedestrian safety and provide more green space on the hideous stretch of Snelling Avenue between St. Clair and Grand avenues. Since the left-turn lane into Lincoln Commons doesn't seem to even meet minimum road standards, why not turn this hazardous area into a safer place? Greener, safer, calmer—what's not to like in a Snelling Avenue median?

Alice Tibbetts
Merriam Park

Can an urban thoroughfare get safer for pedestrians, become greener and more scenic, encourage drivers to obey the speed limit and still accommodate traffic, neighborhood and business interests? The Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul Department of Public Works, the Macalester-Groveland Community Council, area residents and the U.S. Government are all willing to bet their dollars and support that it can be done.

St. Paul City Council member Pat Harris, let's take advantage of all this good will. Please introduce a resolution to the City Council to build the Snelling Avenue median between Grand and St. Clair avenues.

Elizabeth Fabel
Macalester-Groveland

Like a pair of letter writers in the May 20 *Villager*, I too believe that a median is an important component in making Snelling Avenue safer to cross. Unlike the writers, however, I don't believe that Macalester College's proposed 10-foot-wide median is appropriate for our stretch of Snelling. Macalester's proposal is flawed because it blocks access to both area businesses and the neighborhood. It eliminates parking that is sorely needed during events at Macalester, and by eliminating parking lanes, it forces buses to stop in traffic lanes to load and unload passengers.

Alternatives that achieve a common good for Macalester, businesses and the neighborhood exist. I applaud St. Paul City Council member Pat Harris' efforts to get Macalester to modify its median proposal to allow access to businesses as well as the neighborhood. I urge Macalester to scale back its median to preserve as much parking as possible and to allow buses a safe place to pull out of traffic lanes when loading and unloading passengers.

Patricia Ball
Macalester-Groveland

I am writing in strong support of the proposed median on Snelling Avenue between St. Clair and Grand avenues. This is a high-traffic area for pedestrians as well as motor vehicles. It could reduce accidents and save lives. People have a tendency to speed on this stretch of Snelling. The area needs to be safer, and as a local resident whose son walks to Ramsey Junior High School, it is very important to me that it is safe. I strongly believe the median would enhance and beautify the neighborhood. This is a win-win proposal. I see no reason why the median has to be stopped when the overwhelming majority is in favor of this improvement to our city.

Frederic Decourt
Macalester-Groveland

About eight years ago, one of my younger cousins was hit by a car while crossing legally within a crosswalk on Snelling Avenue. She and other children had started crossing when the traffic was clear, and as the cars came they stopped for them. One motorist did not stop, but drove around the other cars and hit my cousin. The driver said he had been in a rush and didn't see the young people crossing the road.

The problem with Snelling is that it is a wide street, and even if it is clear when you start, the traffic moves fast enough to not allow a lot of time to cross. Having a median could have prevented my cousin's injury, which kept her from ever playing basketball and volleyball again. Giving pedestrians a safe place to stand and wait for all the traffic to pass will keep many more people, young and old, safer.

Kristina Kvarnlov-Leverty
Merriam Park

9◀ INBOX

dismissed the notion, thinking I must have been mistaken.

Then on May 21, I screened the movie once more at the West 7th Community Center (*Villager*, May 20). The screening received much publicity due to the efforts of Ellen Kennedy of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota. Ellen sent an announcement of the screening to agencies and individuals all over the country. The announcement reached the ear of Guy Stern in Detroit, a Ritchie Boy himself who indicated in an e-mail to Kennedy that he had known a GI named Walter Schwarz at Camp Ritchie and would like to get in touch with him.

Sadly, my memory isn't as good as Mr. Stern's. However, I was delighted to hear that he wanted to meet me. Then I watched the movie. There was Guy Stern's picture! The same man who looked familiar to me! I finally was able to put the name and face together.

I immediately sent Guy an e-mail to let him know how glad I am that we have made contact again after 64 years of separation. I can hardly wait to throw my arms around him. We have established a lively e-mail correspondence, and we hope to meet in person soon. It will be a helluva reunion.

*Walter Schwarz
Macalester-Groveland*

Green thumbs up

Volunteers are essential in our current economy, and we have some in Highland who helped with the Highland Plant Share, proceeds from which will go to the public gardens in our community. With the support of Kathy Carruth at the Highland District Council, staff from the Hillcrest Recreation Center and the Garden Club of Ramsey County, we enabled approximately 200 gardeners to share and exchange their plants. This enthusiastic team of local residents included: Molly Armstrong, Shawn Bartsh, MaryDon Beeson, Jodie Carlson, Barb Gallagher, Donna Genck, Lynn Hodulik, Terry Hoffmann, Susan Muntifering, Barb Parisien, Anna Reid, master gardener Rochelle Robideau, Ann Sturm and Kris Tillery. A thank-you to the horticulture department at Century College for its donation of plants to our cause.

*Susan Knapton
Highland Park*

City trees also fit Legacy Fund

I want to recognize Representative Rick Hansen (DFL-District 39A) for his efforts on behalf of the environment. Representative Hansen was a critical behind-the-scenes player in securing legislative funding to protect Minnesota's natural resources and urban forests. Throughout the 2009 legislative session and especially in the critical final hours, Representative Hansen insisted that the emerald ash borer was a pest that deserved attention from the state, notably from the Legacy Fund.

The emerald ash borer has arrived in Minnesota with the threat of wiping out our state's 930 million ash trees. While some argued that detection and rapid response weren't the intent of the Legacy Fund, trees are indeed a vital part of the habitat for many types of wildlife. Plus, trees in both a natural and urban setting help to sequester carbon dioxide, capture stormwater runoff and reduce heating and cooling costs for buildings. Trees provide a wealth of environmental benefits consistent with the goals of the Legacy Fund. I want to thank Representative Hansen for recognizing this.

*Steve Sylvester, Owner
S&S Tree Specialists
South St. Paul*

Relay for life

Many of us have been affected by cancer in some way. Maybe you volunteer at a local hospital, or you, a relative or friend has been diagnosed with cancer. No matter your story, we all have a stake in the fight against cancer because one in three people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.

The Relay for Life is a way that the Highland Park community is fighting back. On Friday, July 17, hundreds of high school students, their families and friends will gather at the Highland Park High School track to celebrate, remember and join the fight against cancer. Throughout the fun-filled event, we will honor and remember those who have been touched by cancer while raising vital funds to support American Cancer Society cancer research, patient services, and education and prevention programs. Sign up at www.relayforlife.org/highlandpark.

In 2009, an estimated 1.5 million Americans will be newly diagnosed with cancer and nearly 570,000 will lose their battle with the disease. Cancer is an issue near to the hearts of

members of this community. This passionate concern is why so many come and why many tell us they will continue to walk every year until there is a cure.

*John Kieffer, Community Relations Intern
American Cancer Society
Mendota Heights*

Extra! News' future is bright

I agree with Bill Stieger that there's no rosy future for the print media, at least the part that prints news ("Bad news on the doorstep," *Villager* Viewpoint, May 20). But nature is inexorable and continues to abhor a vacuum. Changing communication's form does not end it.

Stieger's assessment of radio is sadly similar to mine: Insanity seems to be the new norm. As for TV, let's get specific. First, CNN doesn't count. Once it did news, but post-Ted Turner, it is marketing that might as well sell cookware. Fox seems to rely on twisting and even falsifying snippets of what might be news to suit whatever insults it wants to pursue. MSNBC tends at least to speak in demonstrable facts most of the time. Still, I mostly agree with Stieger: I miss responsible, sober TV news. But when he generically trashes on-line media, he gets my attention.

The Huffington Post is more than 1,000 bloggers. It does have opinions, but it also aggregates factual material from everywhere. You may not agree with all of it, but being snide in defense of your own ox doesn't serve your credibility. There are other sites. Consider politico.com or drudgereport.com. Insider, D.C. gossip? Try thehill.com. Choose what you prefer, just don't toss them all aside. The range of actual newspapers worldwide that publish their content on-line is amazing. There's information at whatever level of detail you desire. It may not have the satisfying thump of a folded newspaper on your porch, but news is available in ways we've never seen.

For 300 years, newspapers have provided the information that civilization demands. I hope they do for 300 more years. However, news comes from many sources now. We must find them, study them and come to our own conclusions. This is not new. The change is in the amazing choice of news sources. Perhaps Stieger should read more of them.

*J. Howard Carmichael
Summit Hill*

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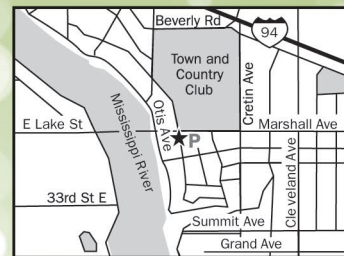
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Sustainable Summit

Garden Stroll & Tea will be even greener this year

BY FRANK JOSSI

In the cloistered backyard of Katey Athow's Summit Avenue home, seven chickens strut about, pecking at greenery and availing themselves of food purchased from a Stillwater feed store. They appear completely at home in their urban setting, surrounded by vegetable plots, fruit trees and native plants.

Though elegant Summit Avenue is usually not associated with farming, Athow easily gained the approval of her neighbors to raise chickens and bees in her backyard. "Most of my neighbors were enthusiastic," she said.

Athow's garden will one of 10 featured on this year's Summit Avenue Garden Stroll & Tea on Sunday, June 28. Jane Tschida, chairwoman of the stroll, said the twist on this year's event will be Athow's urban farm and a handful of other gardens that feature not only flowers, but vegetables.

"People are looking to economize and are going green," she said.

Among the other highlights of the 12th annual tour will be the gardens of former *St. Paul Pioneer Press* garden columnist Marge Hols at 1180 Summit and that of a homeowner at 513 Summit who designed his lavish tract after being inspired by what he saw in France on a bicycle trip.

Another intriguing garden, this one at 7 Heather Place, features a colorful riot of flowers overlooking the city. "It's an imposing duplex with this great garden going down the hill to Grand Avenue," Tschida said.

Some of the gardens on the tour have been previously featured, but have new plants to showcase, Tschida added. (See the sidebar for full list of tour stops.)

Athow's urban farm is the result of a great deal of planning, research and effort by a committed gardener and farmer. Athow's chickens include three Salmon Faverolles, two Americanas, a Buckeye and a golden-laced Wyandotte. Collectively, they produce four eggs a day.

The chickens will live between five and seven years, Athow said,



Those taking in the Summit Avenue Garden Stroll & Tea on June 28 will discover what the flap is about at the home of Katey Athow, shown here with son Nelson corralling a couple of chickens. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

and pretty much take care of themselves. They eat "anything and everything," she said, and require "way lower maintenance than a dog. I maybe spend 10 minutes a day taking care of them and once a week I clean up the coop."

A former Washington state resident, Athow said Seattle has been regarded for years as the nation's urban chicken-raising capital. Her urban farm was inspired by the success of her hometown practitioners as well as the book *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by organic

food advocate and journalist Michael Pollan.

Athow found plenty of information on urban farming on the Internet. The coop was not difficult to build and she did much of the work herself, with an occasional assist from husband Greg Brown, an orthopedic surgeon. The chickens took the past winter in stride in their insulated coop.

The family's 4-foot-high, boxed beehives hold around five pounds of bees. They have consumed the honey they created so far in their

first year in her backyard, though after a couple of years there should be enough excess for Athow and her family to enjoy homegrown honey.

The yard has fruit trees, honeysuckle, native plants and other plants that offer nectar to the bees, which tend to stay in the yard and not bother her neighbors, she said. The bees survived the winter, said Athow, who credits a course in northern beekeeping she took from the University of Minnesota for

SUMMIT STROLL ► 13

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12◀ SUMMIT STROLL

the knowledge she needs to maintain the hive throughout the year.

Since her first growing season brought the problem of squirrels and rabbits eating her vegetables, Athow decided this year to build cedar planters that sit on the ground and are enclosed in chicken wire. The planters include chives, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, lettuce, sorrel and pumpkin.

The garden is not enough to fulfill the family's vegetable-eating needs, so Athow also subscribes to a community-supported agriculture program.

Athow looked into getting a pig, "but my husband nixed that," she said. She also has considered getting a cow or goat, but for now plans to stick with bees and chickens as she considers her options for next year.

The Summit Avenue Garden Stroll will run from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Garden Stroll Tea will take place from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at 275 Summit Ave. Tickets are \$10 to tour the gardens and another \$10 to attend the tea, which will feature a master gardener to answer gardening questions as well as a display of Victorian dresses and hats. Tickets for both may be purchased at A. Johnson & Sons Florist, Kowalski's Market, Frattallone's Ace Hardware and the University Club.



Nelson Athow, 6, holds a strawberry plucked from his plot in the family garden.

The Summit Avenue Garden Stroll & Tea is a fundraiser for the sponsoring Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association, which works to preserve the historic, residential and urban park character of the avenue. Ten percent of the proceeds will be donated to CommonBond Communities, a provider of affordable housing with on-site services.

For information, visit www.sarpa.org.



Jeanne McLeod sits on a garden bench among salvia, verbena, spider wort and hostas in her front yard floral garden. The McLeod home is one of 10 that will be featured on the Summit Avenue Garden Stroll & Tea on Sunday, June 28.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

The gardens

The following homes along St. Paul's historic Summit Avenue will be participating in the Summit Avenue Garden Stroll & Tea on Sunday, June 28:

1959 Summit: The 1924 Tudor Villa boasts a new swimming pool, landscaping and a raised vegetable garden.

1873 Summit: The C.H. Johnston-designed home has an English garden with dozens of dahlias.

1845 Summit: The north-facing shade garden of this contemporary home has hostas, irises and a new vegetable garden.

1815 Summit: A Chilton stone-raised bed showcases annuals and daylilies. On the boulevard across the street is a new garden.

1490 Summit: The urban farm of Katey Athow and Greg Brown and their four chil-

dren includes seven egg-laying hens.

1459 Summit: A courtyard flower garden, a patio display, a variety of annuals and stone retaining walls combine in the yard of this 1933 Georgian Revival.

1415 Summit: This 1918 bungalow cottage has herb and vegetable gardens.

1180: The century-old English Tudor has small flowering trees, perennials and alley, woodland and herb gardens.

7 Heather Place: This duplex has an impressive garden overlooking the city.

513 Summit: Inspired by the manor gardens of Villandry in France, the rows of parterres fill a lot next to an elaborate 1891 Queen Anne.

275 Summit: The site for the tea is a Medieval Revival known as the Summit Manor Reception House. A master gardener will be available there, as will a display of Victorian dresses and hats.

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Partners Troy Smothers and Greg Egbert look on as daughters Madeline and Lauren Smothers, 9 and 6, and Lucy and Ellie Egbert, 5 and 8, play with their daddies' new toy, Lumberjack Logs.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER.

Rethinkin' Lincoln: Entrepreneurs market a sturdier version of classic Logs

BY LARRY ENGLUND

Turning an idea into a product that moves off store shelves is Viamago's stock in trade. The new company was founded by Highland Park neighbors Troy Smothers and Greg Egbert, and its first project is one of the founders' own.

"My uncle was watching his granddaughters play with Lincoln Logs," Smothers explained. "The girls were playing with big toy ponies, and they kept knocking over the logs, which didn't rest well on the carpet. He thought, 'I can build a better log,' so he went out to his garage and started working on prototypes."

Smothers and Egbert took the prototype and developed it into a product called Lumberjack Logs. The oversized building blocks make it easy for youngsters to build a sturdy cabin, barn, dollhouse or other structures that are large enough to accommodate a Barbie doll, Polly Pockets or G.I. Joe.

Lumberjack Logs can now be found at such local specialty toy shops as Peapods on Snelling Avenue and Creative Kidstuff on Grand Avenue, and they are being introduced nationally at the four-day American Specialty Toy Retail Association (ASTRA) convention that ends on June 17 at St. Paul's RiverCentre.

Lumberjack Logs are as sturdy as their name implies. The staff at Creative Kidstuff moved a completed barn, which is about 18 inches high, into the front window of the store and "they were impressed by how well it stayed together," according to store manager Barb Koziol.

With Viamago, Smothers and Egbert are hoping to build on their backgrounds in product and brand development. Smothers managed national sales for T-Mobile, and Egbert is an expert in brand strategy.

"We work with inventors or people with an idea for a product who don't know how to turn that idea into a viable product," Smothers said. "First, we evaluate the product or concept and analyze its viability. Then if we decide to go forward, we develop a brand and identity, a name and logo. We identify the target market and couple the brand and product strategy with a distribution plan that will hit the target market."

For Lumberjack Logs, Smothers and Egbert determined early on that there was no use

marketing the product to large chain stores like Target and Wal-Mart. "The product requires a niche specialty toy retailer," Smothers said.

Smothers and Egbert contacted local toy manufacturers and shops to help evaluate the concept and determine the price. At Creative Kidstuff, "parents come in looking for U.S.-made and Minnesota-made natural products," Koziol noted. "The fact that (Smothers) was able to come to us and tell us the story behind the product was huge. That credibility counts for a lot."

To manufacture the logs, roof gables and other pieces that come with Lumberjack Logs, Smothers contracted with a high-end cabinet manufacturer he knew. "With the downturn in the economy, their business was slow," he said. "I asked if they were interested, and the owner said, 'Absolutely.'"

The manufactured pieces are shipped in bulk to a fulfillment center, where they are sorted, examined for quality, boxed and then shipped to retailers. "Right now we're negotiating for a space in the University Avenue area for a fulfillment center," Smothers said. "We want to hire college kids from all the schools in the area. We're doing everything we can to keep costs low, even to the point of looking at how to eliminate the middleman when ordering lumber supplies." If they can buy direct from a lumber mill, he said, they can reduce material costs.

Lumberjack Logs are not cheap. The Barn lists for about \$170, while the Cabin lists for \$180. However, the partners also plan to introduce block sets for freestyle building at \$30 and \$60 apiece. "Our biggest challenge is whether consumers will recognize the cost of building in the U.S., which comes with a premium," Smothers said.

Prior to the ASTRA convention, Smothers and his partners were working hard to get Lumberjack Logs in the Twin Cities outlets that will be visited by conventioners. Smothers is confident that ASTRA members will be impressed by his product. About 100 different specialty toy stores will be represented at the convention. "We'd be thrilled if we got into half of them in our first year," Smothers said. "I'm in touch with stores nearly every other day. Based on the feedback we've gotten so far, retailers want to carry it."

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Seniors

Lust for life

High school teacher, defense plant inspector, salon owner or local elder about town, Engelson has kept herself engaged for all of 100 years

BY CAROLYN WILL

Edna Engelson worked in the beauty business for more than 50 years as the owner of Berke Electrolysis Salon in downtown St. Paul. The longtime Highland Park resident kept the salon going until she was almost 90. Twelve years later, she is still going strong and on June 15 celebrated her 100th birthday.

"My mom tells me the same thing: 'Never retire!' And I think the fact that she continued to work until she was almost 90 has helped her retain her faculties," said Engelson's son, Lanny Berke, 74. "My work as an engineer and safety consultant takes me all over the country as an expert witness for trial attorneys, and every time I tell my mom I think I want to retire, she says, 'Don't you dare!'"

Engelson's salon was in the old Bremer Building, and she only closed the business because the building was about to be torn down.

"Oh, I loved it!" she said of the salon business. "My former clients still call me."

Engelson was the last tenant to leave the old Bremer Building, according to Berke. "The building's owners kept trying to buy my mom's lease because she was the only one left, but she refused," he said. "For two or three years they had to keep security, keep the elevator running, and keep the lights and heat on just for her."

After retiring, Engelson started

exercising at the Jewish Community Center, and today she attends a workout class there every Tuesday and Thursday. She shows up 60 to 90 minutes early to visit with people coming into the center. She has made new friends in the process and it has kept her engaged both mentally and physically, according to Cynthia Mueller, the JCC's health and fitness director.

"Studies consistently show that regular exercise is important to one's physical and mental health," Mueller said. "There's so much to learn from Edna and others like her: Live each day like it's your last, love often and freely, tell your story, listen to the stories of others, learn from what life hands you, take a risk when you're afraid and, no matter what happens, keep on keepin' on."

"She's spunky," said JCC receptionist Anne Rickert of Engelson. "We call each other Miss America. She'll pass by my desk singing, 'I can't give you anything but love, baby.' She's always singing."

Engelson was born Edna Milavitz in Superior, Wisconsin, the second of eight children. One brother died of diphtheria at age 4, but she and her other six siblings all earned their college degrees.

"Our high school and the college were just blocks from our house, so we didn't need to travel far," she said. "My father, who was a kosher butcher, paid \$35 per semester for us to attend college. Can you imagine?"

Engelson taught high school Eng-

New centenarian Edna Engelson works out twice a week at the Jewish Community Center of St. Paul, here with the assistance of personal trainer Mark Fussy. PHOTO BRAD STAUFFER

"She's spunky," said JCC receptionist Anne Rickert of Engelson. "We call each other Miss America. She'll pass by my desk singing, 'I can't give you anything but love, baby.' She's always singing."

lish for several years following her graduation from college. "I still like to hear good English spoken," she said. "I used to correct people, but I try not to do that anymore."

When Engelson was 32, the U.S. entered World War II, and shortly thereafter she went to work as an airplane inspector in a defense plant. "I didn't enjoy that at all," she said. "I had to climb out on the wings of planes to inspect the parts, and I had a terrible fear of heights. I

could hardly move. So I was asked to inspect the cockpits."

Engelson has been married and widowed twice. Only one of her siblings, Seymore, is still living. "He's the baby in the family. He's 79," she said. She has two granddaughters, one of whom is an attorney in Phoenix and another who is an accountant at 3M, and many step-grandchildren.

Engelson said the biggest highlight of her youth was the day the first "flying machine" arrived in her hometown. "We were released from school early to see it land," she recalled. "We didn't call them airplanes at first. Remember the song, 'Come, Josephine, in my flying machine, going up, she goes, up she goes?'" she asked, referring to the 1910 song by Alfred Bryan and Fred Fisher.

Giving up driving her own car was one of the most difficult challenges of aging for Engelson. "It was 11 years ago, and my eyesight was failing," she said. "My son and his wife told me all kinds of frightening stories of what trouble I could get into, and I handed over my keys. But it was difficult. I always had nice cars, a Lincoln or a Cadillac."

Engelson lives alone in an apartment in Highland Park and relies on a driver from the JCC or a

friend to get her to appointments and take her shopping. "Edna has a great memory," said Lauren Kelly, a driver for the JCC. "I enjoy our conversations and consider her a great friend." Kelly introduced Engelson to his wife, and now they are great friends, too.

Engelson's diet consists of a little bit of everything. "I eat meat every day, and eat everything they tell you not to eat," she said. She has always followed a kosher diet, in keeping with her Jewish customs and drinks a cup of regular black coffee every morning. She also loves the ice cream they sell at a convenience store near her home. "They have those really delicious cones, big ones with five different ice cream flavors," she said.

And the beauty services Engelson dispensed for more than half a century at her salon are still important to her, only now she just enjoys being the recipient of those services.

"I just got back from my salon at Sibley Plaza, where I was given a free pedicure and manicure," she said. It was an early birthday present from the proprietor of T.T. Angel Nails, Engelson said, and a token of appreciation for her loyal patronage over the years. "I bring them so much business!" she said. "I tell everyone about them."



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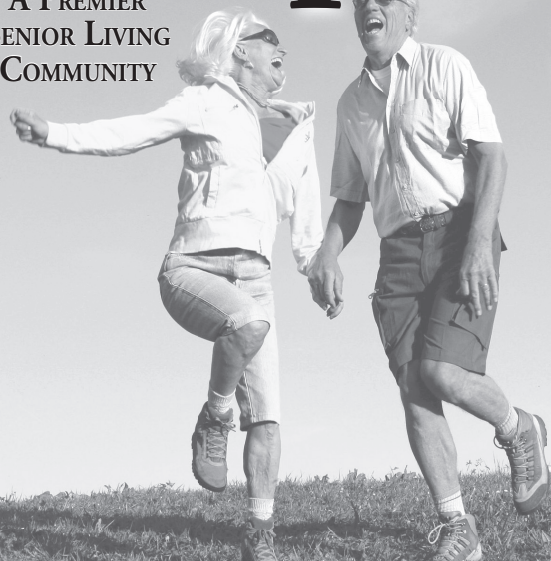


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Byron Wertz knows what's in store when he drives his 1924 Tin Lizzie from New York to Seattle to mark the 100th anniversary of the Model T—he also made the trip in 1984.

He's a Ford man Highland's Wertz to drive across the U.S. for Model T's centennial

BY BILL STIEGER

"As a vehicle, it was hardworking, common-place, heroic; and it often seemed to transmit those qualities to the person who rode in it."

—E.B. White, commenting on the Model T
in the *New Yorker*, 1936.

Essayist E. B. White once wrote that springtime in the heyday of Ford Motor Company's Model T was a "delirious season" in the days when "owning a car was still a major excitement." Though the heyday of the Model T is long past, Byron Wertz of Highland Park will enjoy another delirious season by driving his 1924 Tin Lizzie from New York to Seattle to mark the 100th anniversary of the Model T.

"I've been a car nut since I was 5 years old," said Wertz, 62, who is vice president of Telephone and Data Systems. "I was a car jockey in high school. I'd buy old cars, fix them up

and sell them. I was obsessed."

He still is. Wertz thumbed through a scrapbook filled with pictures of the autos he owns: lots of old Fords, a racer, a coupe from the '40s, a Cadillac the size of a barge.

"I don't tell people how many cars I own," said Wertz, who closed the scrapbook after the question was asked.

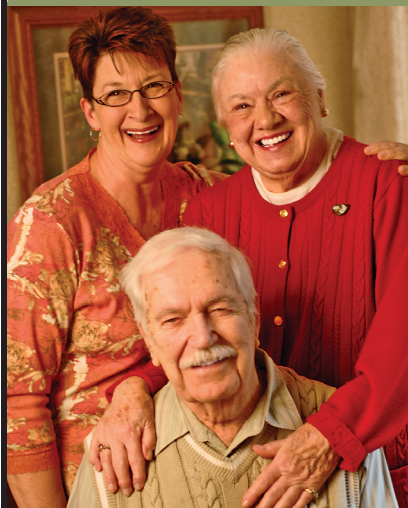
Wertz's Model T, which he purchased from a Forest Lake banker in 1967, is no restored vanity piece. The 85-year-old vehicle is in "original, unrestored" condition, which is how today's collectors like them.

"Anyone can buy an old car and restore it to where it's not really original," Wertz said. "This Touring Car has the wooden artillery wheels, and the cracked and faded upholstery. Outside of the parts used for its mechanical repairs, this is the same automobile it was in 1924."

MODEL T CENTENNIAL ► 17

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Wertz, left, and lifetime friend David Monahan will be averaging nearly 200 miles a day at a cruising speed of 26 mph for the monthlong, cross-country adventure.

16◀ MODEL T CENTENNIAL

Wertz and lifetime friend David Monahan will be part of a 55-vehicle caravan of members of the Model T Ford Club International who will depart on the monthlong road trip on June 14 following an inaugural ceremony at New York City Hall.

"It'll be a tough drive," Wertz said. "We'll be averaging nearly 200 miles a day at a cruising speed of 26 mph."

The nearly 4,000-mile trip will follow the route of the 1909 Ocean-to-Ocean Endurance Race, which was won by a Model T. An ecstatic Henry Ford greeted the drivers of his newly designed Model T at the finish line that year. This year's tour will not be a race, but a commemorative touring adventure. The participants mostly will be taking back roads all the way to Seattle.

Wertz and Monahan took a similar cross-country trip in 1984 for the 75th anniversary of the Model T. Wertz spoke about the arduous conditions encountered along the way.

"I'm glad I have such a great partner," he said. "David is the mechanical one. We burned up the valves of our engine just outside of Cleveland. David spent an entire night outside of our motel giving the engine a major overhaul. By the time morning came, David had the car ready to go."

Monahan, who owns marine repair shops in Hudson and near St. Cloud, has known Wertz since they attended Marshall High School in Minneapolis.

"We've been friends forever," Monahan said. "The trip will bring no great surprises, personality-wise. We know what to expect from each other, both good and bad. We know each other's quirks. I'm the mechanical guy and Byron's the organizer. I'm more laid back and he's the compulsive one. We seem to balance each other out. By the end of the trip, we almost don't have to talk. We find ourselves completing each other's thoughts."

The Model T was considered the "great equalizer," the first automobile that was af-

fordable—\$250 in 1924—to the average American. It made it possible for those living on farms and small towns to discover the life that existed over the horizon.

However, it is also one of the most eccentric and persnickety automobiles ever manufactured. The Model T is powered by a 20-horsepower, four-cylinder engine, with splash lubrication and a gravity-feed fuel tank located below the driver's seat. Climbing a steep hill with less than a full tank of gasoline can starve the carburetor. Owners learned they could avoid a stall by backing the car up a steep incline.

The Model T made its debut in October 1908. It was originally started by a hand crank that was inserted at the front of the car. An electric starter became standard in 1919. By the end of its reign in 1927, more than 15 million Model Ts had been manufactured by Ford.

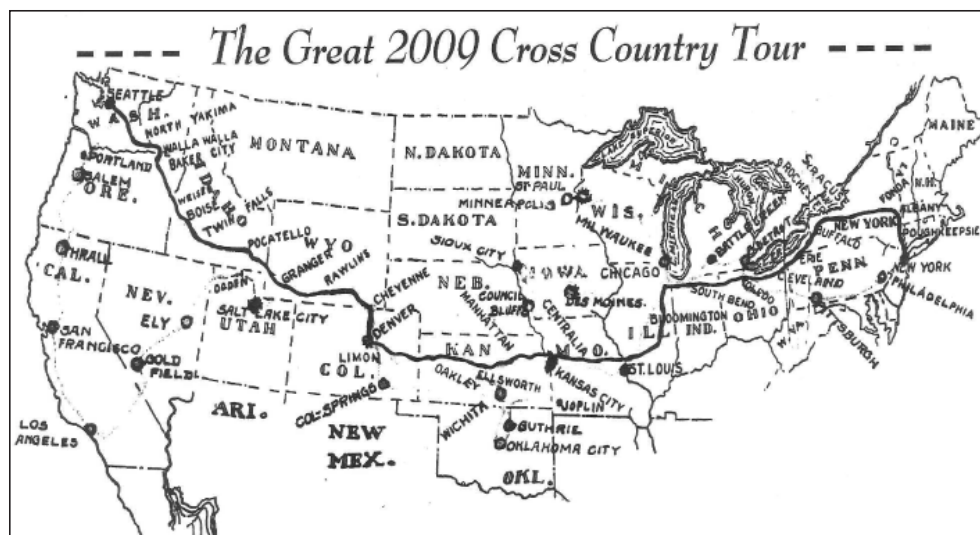
Due to the inevitable breakdowns, participants in the cross-country trip will be accompanied by a truck that will supply needed parts along the way. Wertz will be bringing along a spare engine just in case.

"Let's face it," he said. "These cars were not built to go 200 miles a day, despite a Model T having won the race in 1909. I think Henry Ford would be shocked to see so many of these old cars on such a long trip today."

When Wertz mentions Ford, there is an unmistakable spark of admiration in his eyes. And why not? Both lived a life of love for the automobile. After graduating from the University of Minnesota with a major in management, Wertz moved to Dearborn, Michigan, where he worked in management for Ford.

"I worked at Ford for eight years," he said, "and it was fabulous. But after I turned 30, I wanted to get back to St. Paul. I'd gotten my master's in the meantime, so I took a job as a professor at the College of St. Catherine, where I taught business management for two years before joining TDS."

"But, yeah, you might say I'm a Ford man."



The 2009 tour will follow the same ocean-to-ocean route as the 1909 race.

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Joanne Von Blon, 84, left, practices tai chi at the Summit Avenue monument with a group from the T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio on University Avenue that she helped found. PHOTOS BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Tai chi for the ages

Chinese exercise devotee shows no signs of slowing down

BY DENNIS KELLY

In the quiet of China's Jingshan Park, near the Forbidden City and the famous 2,000-year-old Terra Cotta Warriors, people young and old gather daily to practice tai chi. Considered one of the most valued treasures of Chinese culture, the exercises were derived from the philosophy of Taoism and were designed to develop optimum harmony between body and mind.

"China's a wonderful place to practice tai chi, but the monument area (on the west end of Summit Avenue) is also a perfectly splendid spot," said Joanne Von Blon, 84, of Minneapolis, who has been a tai chi devotee for more than 25 years. A visit to China in 1984 inspired Von Blon and her husband, Phillip, to take up the discipline.

"We knew it was a popular community exercise, and we thought it would be a great way to connect with local people," she said. "We were adventurous. Ronald Reagan was still commie-baiting the Chinese government, the Republic of China was participating in its first Olympics and here we come: free-wheeling Americans, bicycling through the Yangtze River Valley and Shanghai, stopping here and there to join outdoor tai chi sessions.

"The truth of it is, our tai chi was pretty rough," Von Blon said, shaking her head. "We probably looked foolish. Even so, we were invited to join right in. Everyone was very polite and welcoming."

Today, Von Blon is held in high regard for her proficiency in tai chi and has tutored hundreds of students at the T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio that she helped establish on Hampden and University avenues (www.tctaichi.com). The studio holds its regularly scheduled classes indoors, but on nice days students take their practice outside to local parks, including the monument area along Mississippi River Boulevard, Hidden Falls Park or Overlook Park on Summit Avenue.

The graceful, choreographed movements of tai chi require one to learn a solo form derived from martial art applications. The applications take a student through a complete, natural range of motions that align posture, promote circulation, and maintain joint flexibility



A closeup of Von Blon's hands during a tai chi practice session.

and balance.

"The learning is really self-paced, slow and easy," Von Blon said. "You can start at any age. It's wonderful to see the rejuvenation in seniors who thought they were too old to learn and practice a new exercise. It's also safe for people with disabilities. The movements engage every muscle group and train the body to use oxygen more efficiently. Plus, it's aerobic and good for the ticker."

The methods of tai chi, once considered a secret art, were originally shared only with Chinese family members. Today, it is taught all over the world in tai chi schools as well as in the workplace, hospitals and community centers. Baby boomers have caught wind of the art's reputation as low-impact training and have made it one of the world's fastest growing exercises. A recent survey by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association showed that more than 13 million Americans participate in yoga or tai chi, with annual growth in the double digits.

Tim and Lynn Dennis of Macalester-Groveland are both in their 50s and have been practicing tai chi for over a decade. "Tai chi, as a moving meditation, has become an island of calm in my life," said

Lynn, an educator and puppeteer. "I guess we're hooked."

Tim, an orthotist, added, "There's always so much to learn with tai chi, but it doesn't come all at once. It's a process, like peeling an onion."

Ann Schulman, 47, of Macalester-Groveland, is a playwright and recently took the path of tai chi to remedy a persistent arthritic condition. "The movements are like a natural joint lubricant," she said. "I've ditched the meds and have regained much of my long-lost flexibility. It's wonderful."

Von Blon said finding a good tai chi teacher is critically important, and for her there are none better than Ray Hayward and Paul Abdella at the T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio.

"They studied with renowned Chinese tai chi master T.T. Liang, who lived to be 102," she said. "These fellows offer an authentic experience. And they're just wonderful people."

The dividends of tai chi certainly seem to be paying off for Von Blon. Trim and energetic, she keeps a schedule that could wear out someone half her age.

"I've always been on the go," she said, citing her early years as the mother of two daughters, a book reviewer for a Minneapolis newspaper and a social activist. Today, along with her dedication to tai chi, Von Blon is involved in several arts and civic organizations, including Minnesota Public Radio, the Loft Literary Center and Grey Wolf Press.

Von Blon shows no sign of slowing down. "Americans are not good at aging," she said. "We try to mask the process with cosmetics or medication. The Chinese embrace tai chi as a practice that returns us to a childlike state where we become flexible and renewed, while benefiting from the wisdom of our years."

Free outdoor practice sessions of tai chi also are being led by accredited teachers at 9:00 a.m. every Tuesday in June, July and August at Hidden Falls Park in Highland. Call Carol Mockovak at 612-729-9040 or Vanjie Bratt at 612-724-1871.

Senior News

The Rossey and Richard Shaller Family Sholom East Campus on Otto and West 7th streets will hold its grand opening celebration from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28. Activities will include a dedication and ribbon-cutting, followed by tours, entertainment and refreshments. The campus includes the Shirley Chapman Sholom Home East offering both short-term rehabilitation and long-term care, Bentson Family Assisted Living Residence with a separate memory care unit, HUD-subsidized Weinberg Apartments, Johnson Center and Hospice Care Agency for end-of-life care, David Feinberg Vitality & Aquatics Center with a warm water therapy pool and state-of-the-art exercise equipment, and the Roitenberg Family Adult Day Center. Visit www.sholom.com or call 952-939-1646.

A conversation with Lori La Bey and Cathie Hartnett will be held at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, June 18, at the Wellington, 2235 Rockwood Ave. La Bey is the creative force behind "Come Play In My Playground" and "As the Cookie Crumbles." Hartnett is one of the "polichicks" on FM 107.1. They will share their experiences and what they learned in assisting their parents through health and life changes. Admission is free. To register, call 651-699-2664.

An AARP driver safety refresher class will be offered from 8:00 a.m. to noon Thursday, June 18, at the Ford plant, 966 S. Mississippi

River Blvd. The cost is \$12-\$14. The class is open to those who have taken the full course and qualify for a refresher every three years. Call Tracy Ausen 651-695-3502 to register.

The St. Paul Division of Parks and Recreation is offering a variety of recreational opportunities for senior citizens this summer. Offerings include a Downtown Walking Club from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays; a citywide picnic with outdoor games and live music from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, July 17, at Mears Park (\$4.00); and a trip to see *Funny Money* at the Old Log Theater from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thursday, August 13 (\$38, register by August 3). Call Mary Livingston at 651-266-6447.

The Thompson Park Activity Center, 1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul, will offer the following programs for senior adults: a Fit for Life Walking Club at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays; JAM Sessions from 9:00 to 3:00 p.m., with grilled hotdogs and fixings at noon, on June 24, July 22 and August 26 (\$3.00 for lunch); a trip to see *Singin' in the Rain* at the Ordway on Sunday, June 21; a Minnetonka cruise on Thursday, July 16; a trip to see *Tony 'N Tina's Wedding* at the Actor's Theatre on Thursday, July 30; and a trip to see *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat* at the Chanhassen on Wednesday, August 19. Call 652-403-8300 to register.

Volunteers

The Mendota Heights MOMS Club recently donated \$400 to the city of Mendota Heights to purchase trees for Hagstrom-King Park, a newer park in the city has very little natural shade. The nonprofit organization is part of the Moms Offering Moms Support (MOMS) organization, an affiliation with more than 2,000 chapters nationwide. Visit www.mendotaheightsmomsclub.me.

Mrs. Ramsey County applications are being sought. The pageant will be held next March in St. Cloud, with the winner receiving prizes valued at \$7,000 and a chance to represent the state at the Mrs. International Pageant in

July. The pageants include personal interview, aerobic wear and evening gown (no talent or swimsuit competition). The entry deadline is November 1. Call 952-432-6758.

Kathryn Anne Hannahan, 24, a graduate of Cretin-Derham Hall and Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, has joined the Peace Corps. She left for Bulgaria on May 20, where her work will include teaching English to secondary school students. A public information session on the Peace Corps will be held at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 21, at the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, 270 N. Kent St. Visit www.peacecorps.gov.

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Crime Report

The following calls were gathered from recent Community Watch reports by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. For weekly crime reports by neighborhood from the St. Paul Police Department, visit <http://stpaul.gov/index.asp?NID=2399>.

Highland Park

Robbery—A home on the 2200 block of Highland Parkway was broken into between 8:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 21.

—A resident was robbed at gunpoint in a home on the 2100 block of Eleanor Avenue at about 10:00 p.m. Sunday, May 24.

Burglary—A home on the 1200 block of Randolph Avenue was broken into on Saturday, May 9.

—A commercial burglary occurred on the 2500 block of West 7th Street at about 4:00 a.m. Sunday, May 10.

—A home on the 1600 block of Hartford Avenue was broken into at about 1:00 a.m. Wednesday, May 13.

—Three commercial burglaries occurred around the 700 block of South Cleveland Avenue between Thursday night and Friday morning, May 21-22.

—A home on the 2100 block of Lower St. Dennis was broken into on Friday, May 22.

Theft—A 22-year-old West St. Paul man was arrested at Montreal and Snelling avenues for receiving stolen property at about 6:00 p.m. Monday, May 4.

—A theft from auto occurred at Hidden Falls Park between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 21.

Miscellaneous—Ramsey County Sheriff's Water Patrol deputies arrested a 34-year-old

male for driving a boat while intoxicated at Watergate Marina at about 4:00 p.m. Saturday, May 23. His boat was impounded.

Lexington-Hamline

Assault—An aggravated assault occurred at Gordon Parks High School, 1212 University Ave., between noon and 2:00 p.m. Friday, June 5.

Arson—A fire was sent at Central High School's Griffin Stadium between 11:30 p.m. Thursday and 10:00 a.m. Friday, June 4-5.

Sex crime—A 52-year-old Coon Rapids man was arrested for indecent exposure at the Target store on Hamline Avenue at about 11:30 a.m. Thursday, May 21.

Miscellaneous—A man was arrested on the 200 block of North Griggs Street for kidnapping, domestic assault and violating sex offender registration requirements at about 1:00 a.m. Friday, May 22. The suspect reportedly tried to strangle his girlfriend. When she broke free and fled from the apartment, he chased her down and dragged her back into the building. A neighbor called police.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Two commercial burglaries occurred on the 2000 block of St. Clair Avenue between 5:00 p.m. Friday and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, May 8-9.

—A 39-year-old St. Paul woman and a 37-year-old St. Paul man were arrested at Grand and Prior avenues for burglary at about 2:00 p.m. Friday, May 22. The man was also booked for possession of burglary tools.

—A home on the 1800 block of Grand Avenue was broken into during the day on Fri-



Vandals sprayed graffiti on Highland Park's new restroom building on Antonio Drive during the weekend of May 16-17. To report graffiti in the city, call 651-266-8989.

day, May 22.

—A commercial burglary occurred on the 400 block of South Snelling Avenue on Sunday, May 24.

—A home on the 1900 block of Goodrich Avenue was burglarized on the evening of Tuesday, May 26.

—Police arrested a 46-year-old man at Summit Avenue and Wheeler Street for possession of burglary tools at about 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 27.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a knife occurred at Cleveland and Grand avenues at about 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 26.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A home on the 1900 block of Dayton Avenue was burglarized at about 8:30 a.m. Thursday, May 7.

—A home on the 1900 block of Marshall Avenue was broken into Monday, May 11.

—A burglary occurred on the 1800 block of Carroll Avenue on Wednesday, May 13.

—A home on the 2000 block of Dayton Avenue was burglarized between 11:30 a.m. Friday and 1:00 p.m. Saturday, June 5-6.

—A home on the 1600 block of Concordia Avenue was burglarized at about 5:30 p.m. Sunday, June 7.

—Two TVs and other electronics were taken from a home on the 1800 block of Roblyn Avenue between 7:00 p.m. Monday and 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 8-9. There was forced entry. The resident was home at the time.

Theft—A car was stolen on the 400 block of North Fairview Avenue on Thursday, May 7.

—A theft from auto occurred on the 2100 block of Roblyn Avenue at about 2:30 a.m.



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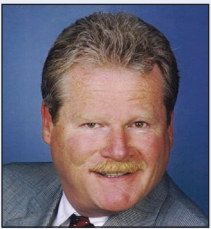
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Thursday, May 21.

—A woman's bag of prescription medicine was reported stolen while she was at Pawn America, 1636 University Ave., on Wednesday, June 3.

—Four lawn chairs and a new patio umbrella were stolen on the 100 block of North Wilder Street between 10:30 p.m. Friday and 7:30 a.m. Saturday, June 5-6.

Arson—An arson fire was reported at the University of St. Thomas at about 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 21.

—A laptop computer was stolen from a University of St. Thomas building on Cleveland Avenue north of Summit Avenue between noon and 2:00 p.m. Monday, June 8.

Miscellaneous—A 27-year-old Apple Valley woman and a 32-year-old Inver Grove Heights man were arrested for possession of a firearm by a felon and false information at St. Anthony and Snelling avenues at about 12:30 a.m. Thursday, May 7. The woman was also wanted on warrants for fraud and forgery.

—A 23-year-old St. Paul man was arrested for assault and leaving the scene of a car crash at Feronia and Lynnhurst avenues at about 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 26.

—Criminal damage to property occurred on the 1800 block of University Avenue between 4:00 p.m. Wednesday and 3:30 p.m. Thursday, June 3-4.

Summit Hill

Burglary—A commercial burglary occurred on the 1000 block of Osceola Avenue at about 2:30 a.m. Thursday, May 7.

—A residence on the 700 block of Grand Avenue was broken into on Friday, May 8.

—A home on the 800 block of Grand Avenue was broken into between Friday night and Saturday morning, May 22-23. The resident was home at the time.

—A commercial burglary occurred on the 1000 block of Grand Avenue at about 4:00 a.m. Friday, May 22.

—Police responded to a call on the 700 block of Fairmount Avenue about an attempted burglary in progress at about 3:00 a.m. Monday, June 8, and arrested a Stillwater man for criminal damage to property.

Summit-University

Robbery—A person was robbed at gunpoint on the 400 block of Marshall Avenue at about 4:30 a.m. Saturday, May 23.

Burglary—A home on the 700 block of Holly Avenue was broken into at about 4:00 a.m. Wednesday, May 27. The resident was home at the time.

—A home on the 100 block of Mackubin Street was burglarized on Thursday, May 21.

—A laptop computer and 42-inch television were taken from a home on the 400 block of Laurel Avenue between 11:00 p.m. Wednesday and 3:30 a.m. Thursday, June 3-4. The resident was home at the time.

—A home on the 700 block of Holly Avenue was burglarized at about 6:30 a.m. Thursday, June 4.

—An apartment on the 900 block of Ashland Avenue was burglarized between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Thursday, June 4. The resident was home at the time.

Theft—A yellow electric scooter was stolen on the 600 block of Ashland Avenue between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. Monday, June 8.

Sex crimes—A 45-year-old Summit-University man was arrested on the 300 block of North Dale Street for criminal sexual conduct at about 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 26.

—A rape was reported on the 200 block of North Lexington Parkway between 11:30 p.m. Monday and 12:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 8-9.

Weapons—Shots were fired on the 1000

block of Portland Avenue at about 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 3. Police recovered five bullet casings in the alley the next day.

West End

Robbery—A victim was robbed at gunpoint on the 500 block of West 7th Street at about 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 12.

Burglary—A home on the 100 block of South Western Avenue was burglarized on Sunday, May 10.

—A commercial burglary occurred on the 1400 block of West 7th Street on Friday, May 22.

—A commercial burglary occurred on the 500 block of West 7th Street at about 6:00 a.m. Saturday, May 23.

—The community room at the Crosby Pointe Apartments, 1115 Elway St., was burglarized between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Thursday, June 4.

Theft—A 47-year-old St. Paul man was arrested for assault and theft on the 600 block of West 7th Street at about 4:00 p.m. Sunday, May 31.

—Suspects shoplifted two bottles of liquor at Dannecker's, 793 Randolph Ave., at about 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 9.

Sex crime—A 38-year-old St. Paul man was arrested for sex offender registration and parole violations on the 400 block of Osceola Avenue around midnight Tuesday, May 26.

Assault—A 34-year-old Merriam Park man was arrested for assault on the 800 block of Jefferson Avenue at about 1:00 a.m. Saturday, May 30.

—An aggravated assault occurred at the Palace Recreation Center, 781 Palace Ave., between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. Thursday, June 4.

Miscellaneous—The window on the door was broken out at Solo Vino, 519 Selby Ave., between 4:00 and 6:00 a.m. Saturday, June 6.

Fire Calls

The following calls were gathered from recent reports by the St. Paul Fire Department.

Highland Park—A grill tipped over on a deck, causing a fire at 1:12 p.m. Friday, May 29, on the 1300 block of Randolph Avenue. Damage was estimated at \$1,500.

Macalester-Groveland—A fire was reported on a deck of a duplex on the 1400 block of St. Clair Avenue at around 1:00 a.m. Thursday, May 28. Damage was estimated at \$6,500.

—A 44-year-old man riding a motorcycle was struck by an automobile at around 3:00 p.m. Sunday, May 31, at Jefferson and Snelling avenues. He was taken to United Hospital.

Summit-University—A stabbing was reported in an apartment on the 600 block of Dayton Avenue at 9:16 p.m. Friday, May 15. The victim was taken to Regions Hospital.

—Arson was the cause of a fire to a home on the 800 block of Central Avenue at 11:56 p.m. Friday, May 15. The fire was reported by a neighbor. Damage was estimated at \$52,000.

—Paramedics responded to a shooting on the 100 block of North Victoria Street at 6:48 p.m. Friday, May 29. Two 19-year-old men were shot. They were taken to Regions Hospital.

—Firefighters were called to a fire in the kitchen of an apartment on the 600 block of Dayton Avenue at 9:49 a.m. Wednesday, June 3. The resident left the stove on from cooking the night before. He slept through the sounding smoke alarm and had to be rescued by firefighters. Damage was limited to the stove.


West End—Contractors struck an underground gas line on the 200 block of Otis Avenue at 7:39 a.m. Wednesday, June 3. Firefighters clamped the line and checked for gas in nearby buildings, which were clear.


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School Notes

Donna Harris will begin her tenure as the new president of Minnehaha Academy on July 22. She is currently the assistant superintendent and chief academic officer of Valley Christian Schools in California. She succeeds John Engstrom, who is leaving Minnehaha after 15 years as president to head up Seoul Foreign School in South Korea. Harris has a master's degree in education from San Jose State University and a doctorate in education from the University of San Francisco. She taught math for 11 years, and served as director of curriculum and instruction before being named assistant superintendent at Valley Christian Schools. Minnehaha operates schools at 3100 W. River Pkwy. (grades 9-12) and 4200 W. River Pkwy (preschool-8) in Minneapolis and at 10150 Xerxes Ave. S. (preschool-8) in Bloomington.

Highland Park Senior High freshmen Dena Coffman, Erica Dombro and Hannah Powers took first place in the senior group documentary category during the State History Day competition last month at the University of Minnesota. The three then advanced to the national competition in Washington, D.C., with their project, "Sir Edmund Hillary: Building a Legacy of Education and Sustainable Development." Fellow Highland students Zac Garber, Bridget Kranz, Max Fierke and Mitchel Stoltz received honorable mentions at the state event.



The Friends of Macalester College International Students Host Family Program is seeking families and individuals who are interested in forming friendships with international students for the upcoming academic year. This is not a homestay program; most hosts see their students once a month. Contact Nienke Wijnia at 651-696-6849 or nwijnia@macalester.edu, or visit www.macalester.edu/isp/hostfamily.html.

St. Thomas Academy placed third in the national U.S. Army Junior Open Air Rifle Championship (Sporter Team) at Fort Benning, Georgia, on May 14-16. STA senior Blake Bowersox placed second overall. Other individual finishes were senior Will Sullivan (15th), junior David Zimmermann (22nd) and sophomore Spencer Loufek (27th).

Groveland Park Elementary School transformed its gym into an assembly line last month as students worked together to feed starving children. Students, staff and parent volunteers joined Minnesota-based ImpactLives and high school students from Open School to assemble 30,000 meals for distribution to children in hospitals, orphanages and villages in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Children's Country Day School in Mendota Heights has earned national certification as a Nature Explore Classroom from the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. The classroom is only the second of its kind in Minnesota and 19th in the nation. It offers a nature art area, where children can build with natural materials, climb on natural structures and practice their creativity in music and movement.

STA vehicles shine at solar competition

St. Thomas Academy's Experimental Vehicle Team swept the 2009 Solar Bike-Rayce USA on Memorial Day weekend at Crowder College in Missouri. The team of 15 Cadets won the 15th running of the race, which challenges high school students, college students and adults to build solar bicycles and cars and race 100 kilometers.

The Cadets began building their solar car from the ground up in the fall of 2008. The car has a carbon fiber body and uses lithium polymer batteries, rather than traditional lead acid batteries. The car's only metal parts are in the suspension. It uses less than 1.7 square meters of solar arrays.

STAs two solar bikes also use lithium polymer batteries and 1.7 square meters of

solar arrays. Human power derived from pedaling offers the solar bikes an advantage over purely solar and electric-powered vehicles, particularly on cloudy days.

The Academy's three solar vehicles were among 15 entries that raced around the closed streets of Crowder College's campus under partly cloudy skies. Although the sun played hide-and-seek for most of the day, the Cadets were able to coach all three vehicles to victory in their individual classes. The team finished first overall, first and second in the bike division, first in the S-class car division, had the fastest lap, and won the sportsmanship award.

The high school division bike was piloted by seniors Rob Muellerleile and John DeMay and was monitored by senior Brennan Lee and sophomore Tom Grojean. The car was driven by senior Blake Fonfara and monitored by senior Tom Mealey.

Business Briefs

Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet, 2144 Ford Pkwy., will celebrate its grand opening from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, June 20. There will be free pet portraits, face painting, door prizes, and hot dogs and soda (while supplies last). There also will be appearances by the Ronald McDonald House labradoodle, Retrieve a Golden of Minnesota adoptions, animal communicator Teri Ann Lapsey, K-9 Nation Biscuit Book author Klecko and dog obedience trainer Katie K9.

Wellington Management will celebrate the grand opening of its Shadow Falls Rowhouses and Flats from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, in the model home at 213 Otis Ave. There will be a trivia contest of neighborhood lore and Town and Country golf facts, prizes, food and beverages. Opening weekend festivities will continue from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, June 27-28, with tours, prize drawings, refreshments and more. Shadow Falls includes six flats and six

rowhouses, all of which will be finished this summer. Visit www.shadow-falls.com.

Job search assistance will be sponsored by Goodwill-Easter Seals from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, June 24, at the Highland Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Call 651-695-3700.

Twin Cities RISE! will hold an open house at its new, consolidated St. Paul site at 633 University Ave. from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 17. The nonprofit organization focuses on training under- and unemployed individuals for placement in long-term, living-wage jobs. Call 651-603-8520 or visit www.twincitiesrise.org.

AspireChiropractic, 333 Grand Ave., will offer a free community health day on Wednesday June 17. There will be health information, massage and food, and new patients will receive an exam and first adjustment for a donation of \$25 to the Animal Humane Society. Call 651-294-2332.

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Food



Hot Dish By Morgan Smith

A taste of Friar's Point on St. Paul's Selby Ave.

A framed Chief's Award for Merit from the St. Paul Police Department hangs on the wall inside Lee's & Dee's Barbecue Express. The award thanks co-owner Lee Smith for helping to prevent a suicide in 2003 by bear-hugging a man to keep him from jumping off a St. Paul bridge. The commendation is somewhat ironic in that it is the St. Paul police who are largely responsible for the opening of the restaurant at 161 N. Victoria St.

"We were selling wings on the street and in St. Paul bars," recalled Dee Smith, Lee's business partner and wife of 37 years. "The police told us we had to get off the street. That's why we opened the restaurant 17 years ago."

Lee and Dee Smith moved to the Twin Cities in 1969. Using cooking techniques and recipes they brought with them from Friar's Point, Mississippi, they have garnered rave reviews for their catfish as well as two Best Barbecue in the Twin Cities awards from *City Pages*.

If their food doesn't take you back to the Mississippi of the Smiths' youth, the restaurant's décor will. With its old tin ceiling, two ceiling fans, bare fluorescent lights, four blue and gray booths and black and white linoleum tile floor, the ambience is right out of William Faulkner. Stick a sleeping blue tick hound beside the wooden screen door and jack up the temperature a few degrees, and you'd have the complete picture.

At 60, Lee Smith still cuts a formidable figure in the little window where diners place their orders. Because beef ribs are a little pricey these days, the menu currently features only pork ribs (\$21.99 for a full slab, \$10.99 for a half slab, \$10.99 for the rib dinner with toast, coleslaw and beans). The meat really does fall off the bone and comes swimming in a tasty, tangy barbecue sauce.

On my first visit to Lee's and Dee's, I ordered takeout for a dinner I was hosting for a neighbor and his family. I asked for two full slabs of ribs, a dozen crispy chicken wings (\$11.99 with a side of rice), a catfish dinner (\$10.25), some corn bread (99 cents a slice), an extra order of baked beans (\$3.50) and



Lee Smith pulls a slab of pork ribs from the barbecue pit behind his and his wife Dee's restaurant at 161 N. Victoria St. At right is a plate of their award-winning pork ribs.

PHOTOS BY JANET HOSTETTER

a couple of orders of French fries (\$1.50). There were six of us, and we could have easily fed another six hungry adults.

Not being particularly fond of cabbage, I had to take the word of my neighbors that the coleslaw was really good. The beans were fine, too, and the kids loved the fries. The corn bread was a little dry, but I'll blame that on the 30 minutes it took me to bring the food home.

The highlight for me was the catfish dinner. The cornmeal-battered fillets were flaky on the inside and a little crunchy on the outside. They were sweet-tasting—the equal of any of the catfish I've enjoyed on trips below the Mason-Dixon Line—and generous. In the single dinner I ordered, there was enough catfish for everyone who wanted some, plus lunch the next day.

My neighbor's wife was especially impressed by the chicken wings. They are served whole, not cut, and were juicy on the inside. Though I generally avoid chicken skin for health reasons, I couldn't resist gobbling up the crispy outsides of some of Lee's and Dee's wings. Next time I might try the hot wings (\$12.99 with fries).

My second visit to Lee's and Dee's came a couple of weeks later. Maybe it was because I had just returned from Venice, Italy, where I paid a whopping four euros (around \$5.50) for a can of Coke and eight euros (almost \$11) for a plate of



mediocre spaghetti. In any case, I was literally thrilled to discover a cold can of pop at Lee's and Dee's for just 75 cents and a barbecue pork sandwich with a generous portion of French fries for only \$5.99.

This time I dined inside so I could savor the food right out of the kitchen. Just like the catfish, the barbecue pork sandwich was as good as any I've had, and I've eaten a lot of them. The fries were also fantastic. I got a terrific lunch that would satisfy almost any appetite for around \$7.00.

Lee's and Dee's also serves cheeseburgers (\$5.25), chicken sandwiches (\$4.99), grilled cheese sandwiches (\$3.75) and—something I hope to try on my next visit—a Hot Links sandwich (\$3.75). All come with fries.

The restaurant is open year-round from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. During the summer, it is also open from 2:30 to 7:00 p.m. Sundays.

Tidbits

The "Summit Hill Special," a History Pub Crawl, will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, beginning at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Pub crawlers will take a trolley to some of the neighborhood's bars and restaurants and revel in the rich and varied stories behind Summit Hill's Victorian facades. The crawl is restricted to those age 21 and older. The cost

is \$20-\$25. Drinks are not included, but drink specials will be available at participating bars. Call 651-259-3015 or visit www.minnesota-historycenter.org.

Mississippi Market, 622 Selby Ave., will offer educational programs on "Countertop Fermented Foods" from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 20 (\$23-\$25); "Food Safety in Your

Kitchen and Beyond" from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 23 (\$18-\$20); "The Grocery Store Herbalist: Beating the Summer Heat" at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, June 27 (\$13-\$15); and "Shopping Co-op on a Budget" at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 30 (free). Call 651-310-9499.

Highlandfest Amber Ale 2009 was recently announced as the first-ever beer created for

Highland Park's annual summer festival. Crafted at Schell Brewery in New Ulm, the brew will be sold at Highland Fest on July 17-19. Beer connoisseurs will be able to enjoy the new ale in its own limited edition commemorative glass. The ale also will be available beginning this month at Tiffany Sports Lounge, the Highland Grill and the Groveland Tap. Visit www.highlandfest.com.



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District Council News

Highland Park

www.highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Community Development update—The Highland District Council's Community Development Committee met on June 3 with architect John Kohler and Pinehurst Avenue neighbors regarding plans for a new Walgreens store on Ford Parkway and Finn Street. The committee made several recommendations, including the use of decorative iron fencing, bike racks, sprinkling systems, flower boxes, right turns in and out only from Ford, the use of geothermal heating or solar panels, privacy fencing, speed bumps and security cameras. The committee will discuss Walgreens again at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 16, at the Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.

Transportation update—The HDC's Transportation Committee has elected Luba Hickey, Ginny Pease, Justin Richgels and Brent VanTassel as new members and Shosh Dworsky and Michael Shewmaker as alternates. New officers include chair Andrew Smith, vice chair Fay Hassie and temporary secretary Loren Sorenson.

Ford Dam deemed unsafe—The 92-year-old Ford Dam has been classified as a safety risk. The Army Corps of Engineers is worried that water could be seeping under the dam's foundation and cause it to fail. Officials say the concrete is crumbling and rebar has become exposed. The dam has been given a Level 2 safety ranking on a five-point scale, with one being the gravest threat. The Army Corps will continue testing the site and if it finds more issues, will have to fix the dam or replace it entirely, which would cost millions of dollars and shut down the Mississippi River waterway for years.

Deer hunt—The Highland District Council voted to support conducting another bow hunt in Crosby Park this fall to control the area's deer population. The board agreed that the bow hunt should be an annual event until further notice.

Mark your calendar—Transportation Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.; Highland Fest, July 17-19.

Macalester-Groveland

www.macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Jefferson Avenue bike route—A proposal for bicycle improvements on Jefferson Avenue will be discussed by the community council's Transportation Committee at 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 22, at the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St. Information will be provided by David Kuebler of the St. Paul Public Works Department, Steve Clark of Transit for Livable Communities and Don Muske, the Ward 3 representative to the St. Paul Bicycle Advisory Board. For information, contact Kuebler at david.kuebler@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

MacGrove Moves volunteers—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Summit Hill Association environment committees would like to thank all those who volunteered on a chilly Grand Old Day to provide information about MacGrove Moves. The booth was buzzing for most of the day and hundreds of water bottles and 10,000 reusable mesh bags donated by Rethink Recycling of Ramsey County were given away. MacGrove Moves log sheets may be picked up throughout the summer at the district councils' offices and

various locations along Grand Avenue, or they may be downloaded from the councils' websites. Completed log sheets will be entered into a drawing at the end of the summer for prizes donated by local businesses. Contact Karmann Peters at 651-695-4000 or karmann@macgrove.org.

Teen Battle of the Bands—The 15th annual Teen Battle of the Bands was a great success at Grand Old Day on June 7. The grand prize of 24 hours of recording time at McNally Smith College of Music was awarded to Zero's Heroes, a ska band from Highland Park High School.

KidsPark items needed—KidsPark, the community council's drop-in child-care program, has moved to its new location in Desnoyer Park and is looking for a few things to supplement what it already has. The wish list includes a high chair for the infant room, two covered trash containers and two walkie-talkies. For information, contact Karmann Peters at the council office or visit www.kidsparkdropin.org.

Native Garden Awards—Nominations are now being accepted for the second annual Native Garden Awards. Nominees must be residents of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood, the garden must be weed-free and well-maintained, the house number must be visible both on the street and the alley (if there is one), the garden must be accessible for verification purposes by Environment Committee volunteers, at least 50 percent of the garden must contain native plants and all city boulevard regulations must be followed. The garden awards will be determined by the end of August. For information, contact the council office.

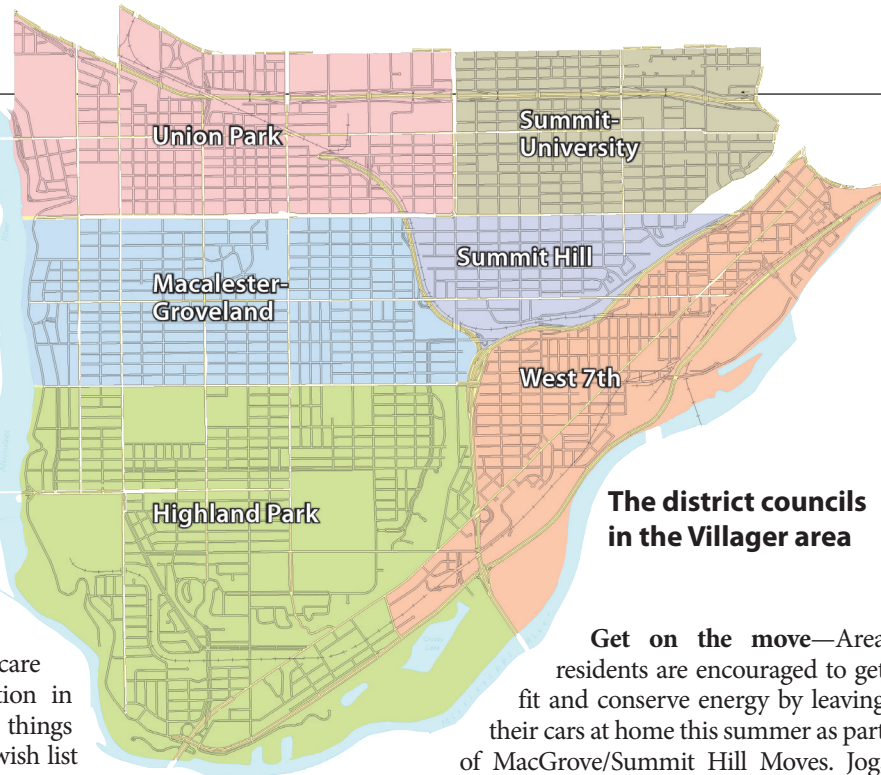
Garage sale volunteers—With a staff transition now under way at the Macalester-Groveland Community Council, volunteers are needed to help coordinate the neighborhood garage sale this August. To lend a hand, contact the office.

Upcoming meetings—Housing and Land Use Committee, 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St.; Environment Committee, 7:00 p.m. Thursday, June 18, Edgumbe; Transportation Committee, 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 22, Edgumbe.

Summit Hill

www.summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Sam Morgan Prairie replanting—Summit Hill volunteers will replant the Sam Morgan Prairie at the Linwood Recreation Center from 9:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 20. With money provided by the Summit Hill Association, a controlled burn of the prairie was conducted in April by the St. Paul Division of Parks and Recreation and the Minnesota Conservation Corps. Controlled burns revitalize prairies and promote the growth of native plants. The SHA has pledged to help restore the prairie to its former beauty and to maintain it as a natural habitat. The public is invited to stop by and lend a hand on June 20. Call the SHA for more information.



The district councils in the Villager area

Get on the move—Area residents are encouraged to get fit and conserve energy by leaving their cars at home this summer as part of MacGrove/Summit Hill Moves. Jog, roll or stroll log sheets are now available in the

Macalester-Groveland and Summit Hill district council offices, the Grand Avenue Business Association and many Grand Avenue merchants.

National Night Out—It is not too early to start planning for a neighborhood block party for National Night Out on Tuesday, August 4. The SHA office has lots of ideas for the event as well as for getting permits to block off city streets, requesting police and firefighter visits, and keeping neighborhood gatherings environmentally friendly.

Board meeting set—The SHA board of directors will hold its next meeting at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, July 9, at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave. For information, contact the SHA office or visit its website.

Union Park

www.unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Snelling Avenue safety—A Snelling Avenue pedestrian safety campaign will be launched at 4:30 p.m. Monday, June 22, at the southeast corner of Ashland and Snelling avenues. Participants will hear local dignitaries speak about the state's crosswalk law, see how many cars stop when they attempt to cross Snelling and, for the younger set, participate in a pedestrian safety game led by the St. Paul Fire Department. Police will issue warnings on Monday to motorists who violate the crosswalk law, but will be ticketing offenders for the rest of the week as part of a stepped-up pedestrian safety campaign focused on Snelling between Selby and Summit avenues. The campaign is being organized by St. Paul Smart Trips in conjunction with the Union Park District Council and Ward 4 City Council member Russ Stark's office.

Ice Cream Social—The UPDC's Parks and Recreation Committee will host a free ice cream social from noon to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, July 11, at the Merriam Park Recreation Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave.

Union Park news—The UPDC's board will hold its next meeting at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 1, in Concordia University's Library Technology Center, 1282 Concordia Ave.

"What's great about St. Paul?"

The Villager reader asks, Any Unusual Facts?

Yes! St. Paul is a hotbed for vast numbers of non-profit charitable organizations. From Dorothy Day to The Salvation Army to the Wilder Foundation, St. Paul citizens care.

For instance-What is that "Roaring Sound" you've heard in town since 1940?

It's the St. Paul Midway Lions Club founded to help those less fortunate, such as the sight and hearing impaired and those with diabetes. Did you know the bus for Lyngblomsten Care Center on Almond Avenue was donated by the Midway Lions? And that the club sponsors a blind baseball team?

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT TIP: The Lions Convention in Minneapolis on July 7 is putting on a 3-hour parade starting at 10 a.m. featuring members in native costumes and bands from 150 countries around the world. It starts at Washington & Nicollet Avenues and goes to Grant Street. Highly recommended!

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- Kids Club: Wednesday, 3:45 pm (school year)
- Healing Service First Sunday of Month

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The Kiosk

Wednesday/June 17

A FREE TOUR OF RICE PARK will be offered at 10:00 this morning. Meet at the information desk at Landmark Center. Call 651-292-3063 to reserve space.

“HOUSE BEAUTIFUL—Inside the Victorian Home” will be offered at 6:30 this evening at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. The tour will focus on the mansion’s furniture and decorative pieces. In 1872, Anna Ramsey went on a shopping spree in New York City to furnish the newly completed mansion and returned with nearly two railroad cars full of the most fashionable furnishings of her day. Almost all of the pieces are still on display at the Ramsey House. Admission is \$6.00-\$9.00. Call 651-296-8760.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, 1375 St. Paul Ave., will hold its 79th annual meeting at 7:00 this evening. The event will include information on the center’s accomplishments in 2008, recognition of the 25th anniversary of its Inclusion & Accessibility program and 80th anniversary of its Symphony Orchestra, a performance by an ensemble of the orchestra, and the election of board members and officers. A dessert reception will follow the program. Admission is free with a food shelf donation. Call 651-698-0751.

A DECADE OF PROTESTING WAR will be marked during a vigil at 5:00 this evening at the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge. A potluck dinner, music and storytelling will follow at 6:30 p.m. at St. Albert the Great Church, 2836 33rd Ave. S., Minneapolis. In 1999 a group of peace activists started the weekly vigil, which today focuses primarily on opposing U.S. policy in Iraq. Call the Twin Cities Peace Campaign at 612-522-1861 or Women Against Military Madness at 612-827-5364.

A BENEFIT FOR MIKE TOBIN, a local real estate agent who was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2008, will be held from 5:00 to 8:00 this evening at Fabulous Fern’s, 400 Selby Ave. The gathering will feature free appetizers, Happy Hour prices on drinks and a prize raffle. The requested donation is \$20. Donations to the Mike Tobin Benefit Fund also are being accepted by University Bank, 200 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103. Call 651-225-9414.

Thursday/June 18

THE ST. PAUL METRO LA LECHE League will meet at 7:00 this evening. All expectant and nursing mothers and their babies are welcome. For meeting location, call 651-645-8516.

GUILD INCORPORATED will hold an informational session on the work it does to help individuals with mental illness at 11:00 this morning at the Guild office, 130 S. Wabasha St., Suite 90. Other sessions will be held throughout the year. Call George Broostin at 651-925-8454 or email gbroostin@guildincorporated.org.

Friday/June 19

THE MINNESOTA STREET ROD Association’s “Back to the ‘50s” weekend will kick off with games, hula hoops, music and more from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. today on Landmark Plaza in downtown St. Paul. Free chicken wing samples will be given to



A Paint the Pavement event took place at the corner of Iglehart and Moore avenues in Merriam Park on June 13. The artwork was designed by Sandra Fjerkenstad-Budel and is intended to slow traffic, create a more colorful street and depict a sense of welcoming. At left, Greg Leifeld puts the final touches on a bird.

PHOTOS BY ANNE BRANDRUD

the first 100 people. The event will offer a small taste of the more than 11,000 street rods, classics and customs that will cover the State Fairgrounds from today through Sunday, June 21. Visit www.msra.com.

A CONCERT featuring the Eddies on the River will be held at 7:00 this evening at the Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul. Bring a blanket and a picnic and watch the sun go down over the prairie while listening to folk music celebrating life on the water. Donations will be taken. Call 651-455-4531.

Saturday/June 20

GEOCACHING WILL BE taught at 2:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling State Park. The public will learn how to use GPS units to participate in the Geocaching History Challenge. A limited number of units will be available. Call 612-725-2724.

A RIVER HISTORY WALKING TOUR will be offered at 10:30 this morning at the Sibley House Historic Site in Mendota. Walkers will hear about the history of “the Entry”—the juncture of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers—and its importance to the fur trade and development of Minnesota as a state. The cost is \$4.00-\$6.00. Dogs on leashes are welcome. Call 651-452-1596.

“YES, WE CAN THRIVE,” a garden party to honor the contributions of women, will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. today at the state Capitol grounds. Speaker of the House Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Senator Patricia Torres Rey, Ojibwa tribal leader Karen Diver and others will share what is being done in

public service to ensure women thrive in today’s world. Entertainment will include Japanese Taiko drumming, Rita Mustaphi Katha Dance Theater and singer Barbara McAfee. Free parking is available in the Bethesda Hospital ramp. Register at www.honoringwomenworldwide.org or call Nancy Stephan at 651-730-0900.

A HOPE FOR RECOVERY workshop will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota, 800 Transfer Road, Suite 31. Information on mental illnesses and practical coping strategies will be offered. To register, call 651-645-2948.

THE GREAT RAMSEY REUNION will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. Free activities include children’s games, crafts, ice cream, live music and sharing stories in the yard. Tours of the mansion will be available on the hour at the regular admission price of \$5.00-\$8.00. A welcoming ceremony will take place at noon, followed by a group photo on the front porch. Call 651-296-8760.

Sunday/June 21

MINNESOTA TREES will be identified with the aid of a naturalist during a hike at 3:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling State Park. Call 612-725-2724.

AN INTERPRETIVE BIKE RIDE will be offered at 1:00 this afternoon at beginning at the visitor center at Fort Snelling State Park. The approximately 9-mile ride will take in the sites of former waterfalls, Dakota

villages, military camps and railroads. The program is free, but reservations are required. Call 612-725-2724.

A BLACKSMITH FOR A DAY program will be offered from 1:00 to 4:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling. Participants will select a project, work the forge, shape the hot metal and bring the project home. The cost is \$30-\$33; \$30. Call 612-726-1171.

Monday/June 22

A SNELLING AVENUE PEDESTRIAN safety campaign will kick off at 4:30 this afternoon at the southeast corner of Ashland and Snelling avenues. Participants will demonstrate their support for pedestrian safety, hear local dignitaries speak about the state’s crosswalk law and attempt to cross Snelling to see how many cars will stop. A pedestrian safety game for kids will be led by the St. Paul Fire Department. Carrying signs with positive messages and wearing brightly colored costumes are recommended. Police will issue warnings on Monday to motorists who violate the crosswalk law, but will ticket offenders for the rest of the week as part of the safety campaign. Call 651-645-6887.

Tuesday/June 23

THE ROSH CHODESH Women’s Group will hold a luncheon meeting at noon today at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. The cost is \$5.00 and the public is welcome to attend. To register, stop at the JCC or call 651-698-0751 by June 22.

FETE DE LA ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE will take place from 6:30 to 9:00 this evening at the Sibley House Historic Site in Mendota. The 13th annual event will feature French-Canadian costumes, music and dance from the 1840s. Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy a free folk concert. A bonfire will cap the evening’s festivities. House tours will be available from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at regular admission fees. Call 651-452-1596.

A FREE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP for presidents, vice presidents, secretaries and treasurers of any organization will be offered from 6:45 to 8:00 this evening in Carolyn Hall at St. Mark’s Catholic Church on Dayton Avenue and Moore Street. Call 651-224-7102.

A FRENCH CONVERSATION CIRCLE is being offered 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Highland Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Participants will work together on developing their French language skills. Activities will include quizzes, dialogs, one-to-one conversation, reading and studying new words. All ages are welcome.

AN OPEN POETRY SESSION will be held during a conversational salon from 6:30 to 8:30 this evening at the Mad Hatter’s Tea House, 943 W. 7th St. The salon is free, but donations are requested for the program and treats. Call 651-227-3228.

RAMSEY COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES is launching the Permanent Families Recruitment project today to increase the number of local foster and adoptive parents, especially among minorities. The kickoff celebration will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 this evening at Wilder Center, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy. Call 612-455-1791.

25◀ THE KIOSK

Wednesday/June 24

THE MINNESOTA AIR NATIONAL Guard Museum will host an F/A-18 fly-in event today to give the public a chance to see the "Hornet" up close. The museum will be open from 2:00 to 5:00 this afternoon. Crew members will be available to explain the airplane and answer questions about one of the Navy and Marine Corps' primary fighter aircraft. Twenty vintage military aircraft also will be on display at the museum, which is located on the Minnesota Air National Guard Base at the international airport. The entrance is across from the Fort Snelling light-rail station. Call 612-713-2523 or visit www.mnangmuseum.org.

Thursday/June 25

GEOCACHING WILL BE taught at 10:00 this morning at Fort Snelling State Park. The public will learn how to use GPS units to participate in geocaching around the state. A limited number of units will be available. Call 612-725-2724.

A BENEFIT FOR THE FAMILY of John Clayton, a 1995 Cretin-Derham Hall graduate, will be held from 5:00 to 8:00 this evening in Steiner Hall at Nativity Church, 1900 Wellesley Ave. A pasta dinner will be catered by Buca di Beppo and there will be a silent auction. Admission is \$6.00-\$10. Clayton was killed in a car accident on April 15, leaving behind his wife, Lindsey, and three children. For cash or silent auction donations, contact Brenda Walter at Brenda.Walter@transamerica.com or 651-286-4756.

Friday/June 26

A NEIGHBORHOOD COFFEE HOUSE will be open for refreshments, music, board

games and conversation from 7:00 to 10:00 this evening at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 1807 Field Ave. Call 651-698-9443.

A "UNIVERSE IN THE PARK" program will be offered from 8:30 to 10:00 this evening at the Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul. Astronomers from the University of Minnesota will share their telescopes and knowledge of the heavens at this free event. Call 651-455-4531 to register.

Saturday/June 27

EXPLORE LAKE LIFE BY CANOE at 10:00 this morning at Fort Snelling State Park. A naturalist will lead an exploration of Snelling Lake to see what thrives there. A parent or guardian must accompany any children in a canoe. Call 612-725-2724.

A CIVIL WAR WALKING TOUR will be offered at 10:00 this morning at Fort Snelling. The tour will focus on the fort from 1858 to 1865 and will include the role President Lincoln played in the trials following the Dakota uprising and a walk to the memorial located where the Dakota were held over the deadly winter of 1862-63. The cost is \$4.00-\$6.00. Call 612-726-1171.

FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER is seeking volunteers to help maintain the rare oak savanna in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood from 9:30 to 11:30 this morning. Workers will help remove exotic species, such as sweet clover, buckthorn and garlic mustard from near 36th Street and West River Parkway. Contact Sue Rich at srich@fmr.org or 651-222-2193, ext. 14.

A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd. All donors will receive a free ticket to the museum. Call 1-800-448-3543.

MORNING ON THE FARM will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. today at the Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul. Visitors will help with typical morning chores, such as feeding the animals, tending new arrivals and even mucking a stall. Their hard work will be rewarded with a farm breakfast of eggs, bacon, pancakes with homemade syrup and hand-churned butter. The cost is \$10-\$12, or \$20-\$25 for families. Call 651-455-4531 by June 25 to register. Farm tours without breakfast will be offered at 11:00 a.m. at a cost of \$1.50-\$3.00.

Sunday/June 28

A HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR will be offered at 11:00 this morning at Fort Snelling State Park. Participants will learn about the history of the park, the Dakota concentration camp, Pike Island and more. Call 612-725-2724.

DANGEROUS PLANTS will be explored during a program at 2:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling State Park. A naturalist will point out which varieties should not be touched or eaten by humans. Call 612-725-2724.

AN UPPER POST WALKING TOUR will be offered at noon today at Fort Snelling. This tour starts in the Visitor Center, where a World War II map shows the Fort extending to include the National Cemetery. Then visitors will follow a guide on a 2-mile loop to the Upper Post, where many World War II-era buildings still stand, including the old barracks, headquarters and other structures. The cost is \$4.00-\$6.00. Call 612-726-1171.

Monday/June 29

A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will take place from 2:30 to 7:30 this evening at

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. Call 1-800-448-3543.

Tuesday/June 30

BUGS' NIGHT OUT will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 this evening on the pier at the Como Park Pavilion. Participants will dip into the lake with bug expert Brandon Burns to get a closer look at macroinvertebrates living in the water and learn about the effect pollution has on these tiny creatures. Each adult may bring one or two children ages 6-11 to the free event. To register, call 651-644-8888 or email elizabeth@capitolregionwd.org.

A CONVERSATION WITH A KICK! forum will be held from 8:00 to 9:30 this morning in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Macalester College. Panelists from Community Shares of Minnesota's member groups—Advocating Change Together, All Parks Alliance for Change, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, and Jewish Community Action—will share the successful methods they use for organizing their diverse constituencies, improving public policies and creating long-term positive change. Admission is free. To register, call 651-647-0440 ext. 202 or email staff@communitysharesmn.org.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 7:30 this evening at the north end of the Smith Avenue High Bridge. Visit www.stpaulhike.org.

A CONVERSATIONAL SALON will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 this evening at the Mad Hatter's Tea House, 943 W. 7th St. Senator John Marty will speak about health care. The salon is free, but donations are requested for the program and treats. Call 651-227-3228.

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On the Town

Four-part harmony

Atlantis Quartet's varied backgrounds play out in the versatility of their jazz

BY BILL STIEGER

Guitarist Zacc Harris moved to Minnesota “for the same reason everybody else does,” he said. “My fiancée is from here and her sisters lived here. So we moved here in 2005 from Carbondale, Illinois.” Harris said it was among the best decisions he’s ever made. “The Twin Cities area is a great place to work if you’re a musician,” he said.

Harris, a resident of Minneapolis’ Nokomis East neighborhood, is a member of the Atlantis Quartet. A jazz outfit whose songbook consists of 90 percent original compositions, the Atlantis Quartet will perform at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, June 20, at the Hat Trick Lounge in downtown St. Paul as part of the 11th annual Twin Cities Jazz Fest.

Harris and his mates—saxophonist Brandon Wozniak, bassist Chris Bates

and drummer Pete Hennig—are an improvisational quartet that can lean in any direction. They can blow up-tempo bop at Charlie Parker light speed, stretch out on a 7/8 tune in fine funk fashion, perform ballads a la John Coltrane, float like ECM Records’ most ethereal Euro-jazzers or go Brazilian in the manner of the Stan Getz Quartet.

Before landing in the Twin Cities, Harris led a peripatetic life. He spent a good deal of his childhood in Long Beach, California, then moved with his parents to Charlottesville, Virginia. There, he first encountered the guitar. “Nobody in my family played music,” he said, “so there was never an instrument around. But a friend of mine in high school got a guitar. He showed me the basics, and I soon became obsessed.”

Harris’ parents got him a guitar for his 17th birthday, and he played in a few rock ‘n’ roll bands in high school. Following



The Atlantis Quartet will perform on June 20 as part of the annual Twin Cities Jazz Fest.

graduation, he studied music at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

“I got lucky,” he said. “I started playing in a club with some musicians who were enrolled in the jazz program at the college. They encouraged me to do the same. So I had the

opportunity to be in a jazz group with regular gigs for five years, and I switched my music major to a focus on jazz performance.”

In high school, Harris was influenced by

ATLANTIS QUARTET ► 30

St. Paul swings to the sounds of 11th annual Jazz Fest

BY BILL STIEGER

After 10 years, the Twin Cities Jazz Festival was in danger of going the way of...well, jazz—or where many people thought jazz was going not too long ago. But like jazz, the Jazz Fest is back and in a big way, thanks to St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and the support of downtown St. Paul businesses.

The 11th annual festival will run from June 18-20 outdoors in Mears Park and indoors at a host of other venues in downtown St. Paul. Among the headliners are Allen Toussaint, Esperanza Spalding and the New Standards.

Toussaint, a New Orleans pianist, singer and composer, is the first member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to perform at the festival. His compositions have been recorded by musicians as diverse as Aaron Neville, Glenn Campbell, Elvis Costello, the Rolling Stones, Robert Plant and Alison Krauss.

Spalding, a versatile 24-year-old bassist from Portland, Oregon, was teaching at Boston’s Berklee College of Music when she was just 20. Her first CD, “Heads Up International,” draws on the styles of jazz, soul and world music.

The New Standards are Twin Cities musicians John Munson on bass, Chan Poling on piano and Steve Roehm on vibraphone. They cover a wide range of music, from nonstandards like “Androgynous” by the Replacements to “Hey Ya!” by OutKast.

A few months ago, the jazz festival was nearly cancelled. Given the economic tenor of the times, the festival’s board was having trouble raising money to pay the performers.

“We decided that we’d cancel the festival for a year, then regroup and find out what we could do to revive it,” said Jazz Fest spokesman Pat Courtemanche. “The festival’s director, Steve Heckler, told Joe Spencer, Mayor Coleman’s adviser on arts and culture, of the plan to cancel for 2009, but Joe wasn’t having any of it.”

Spencer and the mayor met with Lowertown business people and raised the necessary cash to keep the festival afloat.



The Twin Cities Jazz Fest returns to downtown St. Paul on June 18-20. Among the headline acts are (clockwise from top left) Portland, Oregon’s Esperanza Spalding, New Orleans’ Allan Toussaint and the Twin Cities’ own New Standards.

“They didn’t spend a dime of taxpayer money,” said Courtemanche of the mayor’s office. “They raised money through the donations of downtown businesses and festival sponsors.”

“We want to keep the festival going,” said Mike Fish, owner of the Hat Trick Lounge. “I put \$1,000 up front. Why not? The festival is good for downtown businesses and it’s good for the musicians. Everybody wins. Listen, everybody’s hurting these days, but cancelling the festival would just make things worse. So we’re happy to help out in any way we can.”

Twin Cities roots and soul singer Chastity Brown will open the Jazz Festival at 6:00 p.m. Thursday in Mears Park. All

of the concerts in Mears Park are free. A cover charge may apply for some of the indoor shows. The complete schedule follows. For more information, visit www.TwinCitiesJazzFestival.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

Mears Park, 5th and Sibley streets:

Chastity Brown, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Jazz Night Out:

Everything from straight-ahead jazz to salsa and blues will be featured from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at 15 different venues in downtown St. Paul. For \$15, jazz lovers can purchase a button good for admission to all clubs, free trolley rides between them and drink specials. The venues and their featured

performers include:

- American Burger Bar, Jim Anglo.
- The Liffey, Papa John Kolstad.
- The Artists’ Quarter, the Five.
- Mancini’s, the Mancini Players.
- Barrio, Solid Gold.
- Black Dog Cafe, the Fantastic Merlins.
- Rumours & Innuendo, Framework.
- The Bulldog, Erik Christenson.
- St. Paul Hotel Lobby Bar, JoAnn Funk.
- Camp Bar, Jazz Vocalists of Minnesota.
- Senor Wong, Tres Mundo with Viviana.
- Great Waters Brewing Co., John Penny.
- Station 4, Salsa del Soul.
- Hat Trick Lounge, Paula Berends, Jon Weber, Alex Han.
- Trattoria da Vinci, Bobby Schnitzer with Kenny Holmen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Mears Park:

- Dakota Combo, 4:00 p.m.
- Terrence Hughes and his Manfredo Fest Tribute Band, 5:15 p.m.
- Saxophonist Irv Williams, 6:45 p.m.
- Allen Toussaint, 8:30–10:00 p.m.

The Artists’ Quarter, 408 St. Peter St.:

- Paula Berends, 8:00 p.m.
- Jon Weber with Alex Han, 9:00 p.m.

Hat Trick Lounge, 134 E. 5th St.

- Joe Demko, 5:30 p.m.
- Pooch’s Playhouse, 7:00 p.m.
- Jack Brass Band, 8:30 p.m.
- Nikki and the RueMates, 10:00 p.m..

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Mears Park:

- Walker West Music Academy, noon.
- Klondike Kates, 1:30 p.m.
- Southside Aces, 2:30 p.m.
- The New Standards, 4:00 p.m.
- Paula Berends, 5:30 p.m.
- Alex Han with Jon Weber, 6:30 p.m.
- Esperanza Spalding, 8:30–10:00 p.m.

The Artists’ Quarter:

- Jon Weber with Alex Han, 9:00 p.m.

Hat Trick Lounge:

- Larry McDonough, 7:00 p.m.
- Atlantis Quartet, 8:30 p.m.
- George Avaloz, 10:00 p.m.
- Fat Kid Wednesdays, 11:30 p.m.

On the Town Briefly

Books

Common Good Books, 165 N. Western Ave., will present free readings by the following authors: Mary Hayes Grieco from *Be a Light: Illumined Essays for Times Like These* at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 18; David Housewright from *Jelly's Gold*, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 25. Call 651-225-8989.

The Midwest Antiquarian Booksellers Association's 19th annual Twin Cities Book Fair will be held on June 26 and 27 at the state fairgrounds. Rare and out-of-print books, first editions, maps and prints and fine bindings will be featured from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. Friday and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday. Admission at the main gate on Snelling Avenue is \$6.00 on Friday and \$5.00 on Saturday. Call 952-250-4225.

Dance

Ballet of the Dolls will reprise its controversial 1991 ballet *Romiette and Julio* from June 18-28, in part to explore how people's perspectives may or may not have changed over the past 18 years. A deconstruction of the Shakespearean tragedy, the ballet explores love, passion and the cruelty of judgment through the issues of AIDS, homophobia and same-sex marriage. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 7:00 p.m. Sunday at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE. in Minneapolis. Call 612-436-1129.

Exhibits

"Piece Process," functional art and sculpture by Chris Ahalt, Garrett Glaser, Mike Larson, Josie Lewis, Holly Vrieze Murray, Kyle Osvog, Chris Rand and Jason Wismar, is being displayed through August 1 at Vine Arts Center, 2637 27th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. A Meet & Greet and Show & Tell Potluck will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Friday, July 17. Call 612-728-5745.

"Titanic," a 14,000-square-foot display of more than 250 artifacts from the ill-fated ocean liner recovered from the bottom of the North Atlantic, is on view through January 3 at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Visitors are invited to assume the role of passengers, traveling back in time to April



1912, when the luxurious Titanic embarked on its maiden voyage. They will learn about the ship's construction, what life was like on board, the famous sinking and the world's reaction to it, and their respective passenger's fate. Tickets are \$23, \$18 for children ages 4-12 and seniors. Call 651-221-9444.

The College of Visual Arts, 173 N. Western Ave., is presenting its annual Alumni Exhibit through July 11. Call 651-757-4000.

Photographs by Highland Park pediatrician Dr. Stanley Leonard of the natural beauty and complexity of wildlife in Florida and Minnesota are on view through August 23 at the Bell Museum of Natural History, 17th and University avenues in Southeast Minneapolis. An opening reception will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, June 18. Admission is \$5.00, \$3.00 for students and seniors, or free for all on Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m. Call 612-624-7083.

"The Graphic Art of Maestro Rufino Tomayo," 22 examples of Tamayo's graphic works from the latter part of his career, is on view through July 10 at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, 405 21st Ave. S. in Minneapolis. "Bohemian Revolution," renegade works by members of the University of Minnesota's Student Print Club, will also be displayed. A public reception is scheduled from 6:00-8:30 p.m. Friday, June 19. Admission is free.

Some of the most out-of-the-box cremation urns ever created are on view through June 28 in the gallery at 2402 University Ave. Artists participating in "The Daring Urn Art Show" will speak, including Maya Rose on "Pottery Cremation Urns: The Ancient Coiling Method" at 7:00 p.m. Friday, June 19; James Harvieux on "Evoking Special Powers in Urn-Making" at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, June 20; Bradley Royce on "Transcendence in Urn-Making" at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, June 21; Dyann Myers on "The Influence of Classical

Michael Gruber stars as Don Lockwood in the Ordway Center's production of *Singin' in the Rain*. Directed by James Rocco, the musical features some of the Midwest's biggest talents, including Christina Saffran Ashford, Tony Vierling, Austene Van, Richard Ooms and Claudia Wilkens. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. Saturday and 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday through June 28. Tickets are \$49-\$75. Call 651-224-4222.

Music on My Urn Art" at 7:00 p.m.. Friday, June 26; Linda Crouch on "Art Urns: The Magical, Sacred & Inspired Process" at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, June 27; and Karlyn Eckman on "Earth-Friendly Scattering Urns" at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28. Call 612-207-7175.

"Visual Jazz," an exhibition of jazz-inspired art, will open with a reception from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, at the Grand Hand Gallery, 619 Grand Ave. Featured artists include Ta-coumba Aiken, Tom Ashworth, Kathy Braud, Andrea Canter, Joan Cox, Mary Elias, Barbara Evan, Chris Felter, Greg Foley, Barbara Galazzo, Ken Green, Don Griffin, Christopher Harrison, Nate Johannes, Robert Johnson, Seitu Jones, Bill Kellett, Eric Ketelsen, Peter Kramer, Linda Deg Lee, De Paola de Lerma, Doug Lew, Jon Neuse, Don Pulver, David Rickert, Tut Riddick, Eugenia Rogers, Richard Simonsen, Chuck Solberg, Tom Tyler and John Whiting. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served at the reception along with live jazz by saxophonist Irv Williams and pianist Peter Schimke. The art will remain on view through July 8. Call 651-312-1122.

"Nothing New," textile art by 28 local and national artists all made from recycled materials, will be displayed from June 19 through August 1 at the Textile Center, 3000 University Ave. SE. in Minneapolis. An opening reception will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 29. Admission is free. Call 612-436-0464.

Painter, photographer and graphic artist Steven David Clark will display his digitally enhanced landscapes from June 24 through August 27 at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. Admission is free.

Family

Red Balloon Bookshop, 891 Grand Ave., plays host to storytimes for babies at 10:15 a.m. Tuesday, toddlers at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday and preschoolers at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday. Featured in other free programs will be *Monkey with a Tool Belt* and *the Noisy Problem* author Chris Monroe at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 20; the Okee Dokee Brothers folk duo, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 27; a publication party for *The Immortal Fire* with author Anne Ursu, 2:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

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in Minnesota will be told by Duke Addicks on Sunday, June 21, through the stories “Death of the Conch Girl” and “The Little Girl in the Sky Who Never Moves.” Addicks will tell about the French era in Minnesota and the ransom of 28-year-old Louis Hennepin on Sunday, June 28. Both programs are free and begin at 2:00 p.m. at the John H. Stevens House in Minnehaha Park. Guided tours of the historic home are available between noon and 4:00 p.m. Sundays. Call 612-722-2220.

Film

Journey 12,460 feet below the North Atlantic and view the wreckage of the world’s most famous shipwreck in *Titanica*, being shown through January 3, 2010, in the Science Museum of Minnesota’s Omnitheater. The IMAX film features stunning images of the Titanic where it has rested since April 1912, when the luxury liner struck an iceberg and sank about 400 nautical miles southeast of Newfoundland. Detailed images of the wreck are juxtaposed with archival photos of the ship. Tickets are \$7.50, \$6.50 for children ages 4-12. Call 651-221-9444.

The blockbuster adventure *Iron Man* will be shown on June 19 as the first in a series of free screenings in the courtyard of St. Paul’s Central Library, 90 W. 4th St. Based on books, plays or comic strips, the series will continue with *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, June 26; and *Nick and Norah’s Infinite Playlist*, July 10. The programs will be cancelled in case of rain. Call 651-222-3242.

Stefan Braun, a documentary about the enigmatic gay man who served as furrier to the social elite in Tel Aviv, will be shown at 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 22, at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. The film is in Hebrew with English subtitles. Admission is \$9.00. Call 651-698-0751.

Music

“Summer at Northrop,” a series of free concerts from noon to 1:00 p.m. weekdays on Northrop Plaza at the University of Minnesota, will feature the pop rock band Summit Avenue on June 17; the hip hop of Kristoff Krane, June 18; De Visa musical troupe of Upsala, Sweden, June 19; the Café Accordion Orchestra, June 22; the pop rock of Lynhurst, June 23; Charanga Tropical, June 24; New Music Machine, June 25; Tony Hauser and the Brasilnutz, June 29; the Front Porch Swingin’ Liquor Pigs, June 30.

Hot banjo picking, stellar three-part harmonies, a driving beat and blustery electric guitar are the hallmarks of the Mayflies, who will perform free of charge from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 18, on the lawn of the Village of Mendota Heights at Highway 110 and Dodd Road.

Forty years on, former Blind Faith bandmates Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood are performing together again. Their 14-city concert tour stops at St. Paul’s Xcel Energy Center on Thursday, June 18. Tickets for the 8:00 p.m. show are \$75, \$100 and \$150. Call Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000.

Promoting their studio album, “Rise and Fall, Rage and Grace,” the Offspring will perform at 6:30 p.m. Friday, June 19, at Roy Wilkins Auditorium. Special guests are the Celtic punk band Dropkick Murphys and L.A.-bred Time Again. Reserved balcony and general-

admission floor seats are \$39.50 and \$42.50. Call 1-800-745-3000.

Twenty-four of the best young pianists in the world will be competing for \$25,000 and a grand piano in the 2009 Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition, scheduled from June 30 through July 7 in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The public is invited to attend any or all of the recitals. The repertoire will range from the old masters to contemporary composers. The music begins each day (but July 6) at noon and ends in the evening. Visit www.piano-e-competition.com.

The local eight-piece orchestra Salsa del Soul will kick off “Nine Nights of Music” on June 30. The series of free summer concerts is running at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays on the plaza outside of the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Instructors from Tapestry Folkdance Center will be there to teach the appropriate dance steps. Bring a lawn chair, pack a picnic supper or purchase food from the terrace grill. The museum galleries are also open to the public free of charge on Tuesdays. Call 651-259-3000.

Theater

The Enemy: Time, a short play written by Tennessee Williams in 1952, is being performed through June 28 at Gremlin Theatre, 2400 University Ave. The world premiere production is a dense half-hour drama directed by Jef Hall-Flavin and starring Peter Christian Hansen as Phil Beam, a fading Hollywood neer-do-well who falls victim to his past indiscretions. Williams (1911-1983) will be feted prior to each show with a Southern social featuring live music and refreshments. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. June 19-22 and 27-28. Tickets are \$20 with discounts for seniors and theater-goers under age 30 and those with limited income. Call 651-228-7008.

Two masterworks about love and courtship are being performed in repertory by the Skylark Opera. A disinherited nephew, his effervescent fiancée and wealthy elderly uncle make the sparks fly in Gaetano Donizetti’s comic opera *Don Pasquale*, starring Rod Nelman and Robb Asklof. Sigmund Romberg’s lush score propels the action-packed Hammerstein-Harbach operetta *The Desert Song*, starring Norah Long and Craig Verm. *The Desert Song* will be performed at 8:00 p.m. June 18 and 3:00 p.m. June 17, 20 and 21, and *Don Pasquale* at 8:00 p.m. June 19 and 20, all at Concordia University’s Pearson Theatre, 312 N. Hamline Ave. Tickets are \$43 for one show, \$75 for two, with discounts for seniors and students. For reservations, call 651-209-6689.

A civil union it isn’t. *Tony ’n’ Timothy’s Wedding* is an interactive comedy that celebrates marriage with all the madness of an Italian-American ceremony, just without the bride. The Actors Theatre of Minnesota production is playing at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 5:00 and 8:30 p.m. Saturday, and 4:00 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday from June 17-21 at the Lowry Theatre, 16 W. 5th St. Tickets are \$47.50 to \$69.50 and include an Italian buffet, champagne toast, wedding cake, live music and dancing. Call 612-673-0404.

Kumbayah: The Juneteenth Story, a celebration of the human spirit rising out of an ugly period in U.S. history, will be performed June 18-20 at Landmark Center. The play by Minnesotan

Rose McGee tells of how African-American slaves in Texas, officially freed from bondage since President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, respond to the “news” on June 19, 1865—more than two months after the end of the Civil War. Show times are 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Thursday; 10:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Friday; and 7:00 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$10, \$7.00 for seniors and children. Call 651-649-5473.

“Sisterstories,” four new one-act musicals written for and performed by sisters and professional singers Christina Baldwin and Jennifer Baldwin Peden, will be presented June 18-28 at the Playwrights’ Center, 2301 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis. *Fruit of the Family Tree*, *Looking Glass Lake*, *So this Duck Walks into a Psychiatrist’s Office...* and *Persephone’s Sister* will all be performed at 8:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and Monday and at 2:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$25, \$23 for seniors and students, or whatever you can afford on June 22. Call 1-800-838-3006.

Take a wild romp through France, compliments of the University of Minnesota Showboat Players. *Is There a Doctor in the House?*, an adaptation of Moliere’s classic comedy, *The Imaginary Invalid*, will be performed afternoons and evenings from June 19 through August 29 aboard the Centennial Showboat docked at Harriet Island. Tickets are \$15-\$25. Call 651-227-1100.

Shakespeare & Company returns June 27 for a summer of classical theater on the outdoor stage at Century College, 3300 Century Ave. N. in White Bear Lake. Running in repertory through August 2 will be three comedies—Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Much Ado About Nothing* and Moliere’s *The Imaginary Invalid*. Show times are 7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 6:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for seniors, free for children under 12. Call 651-779-5818.

Et cetera

The Minnesota Street Rod Association’s Back to the ’50s weekend returns June 19-21 to the state fairgrounds with more than 11,000 street rods, classics and custom cars from 1964 and earlier. The event will run from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Saturday and 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Sunday. Also featured will be a Cruise-N-Arts Craft Fair, car auction, Saturday activities for children and live music by the Hitz and the Front Fenders on Friday evening and the Castaways and the Trashmen on Saturday evening. Admission is \$10, free to children under age 12 accompanied by an adult.

Sample Night Live, a monthly cross-section of contemporary Twin Cities entertainment, returns on Wednesday, July 1, to the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Twin Cities burlesque star Foxy Tann will emcee the program. G-rated Act I, which begins at 7:00 p.m., will feature the Christine Rosholt jazz quartet, the improvisation of Comedy Sportz, classical composer Chris Granias and pianist Rebecca Thoennes, dance by the Eclectic Edge Ensemble and jazz artists the Penguins. Unrated Act II will commence at 8:15 p.m. with a preview of the film *Ninjo*, acoustic musician Joe Gillaspie, magician Rudy Coby, spoken-word artist Michelle Perdue, the burlesque of Le Cirque Rouge and the band Economy Team. Tickets are \$20, \$10 for students and seniors, \$5.00 for children ages 5-10. Visit www.samplenightlive.com.

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Painter renders the essence of his subjects, whether they are pro athletes or a certain woman

BY BOB GILBERT

Robert Blehert painted a portrait of his childhood idol, Harmon Killebrew, five years ago and presented it to the Minnesota Twins. The Twins' front office liked it so much they displayed it at the Metrodome as part of a 40th anniversary celebration of the team's 1965 World Series appearance.

Since then, Blehert has completed a series of portraits of other Minnesota sports heroes. Fifteen thousand copies of his Johan Santana poster were handed out to Twins fans as a promotion in 2006. Sixty thousand copies of his Adrian Peterson portrait were distributed to Vikings fans at a preseason game last August. His portrait of Kevin Garnett, Latrell Sprewell and Sam Cassell together was sold as a Minnesota Timberwolves' 20th anniversary souvenir.

Blehert grew up in Summit Hill, attended Linwood Elementary School and Ramsey Junior High School and graduated from Highland Park High School in 1972. He now lives in Washington state, but is coming home to Minnesota this month for a series

of events promoting his portraiture.

His collection of Minnesota athlete portraits will be displayed from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, as part of a Twins pregame autograph party at the Metrodome. Auctioned off at that event will be his rendition of Twins sluggers Joe Mauer and Justin Morneau looking as if they've just sent a fastball over the centerfield wall. Proceeds from the autographed portrait will go to the Twins Community Fund.

"When it comes to sports painting, it's all about the action and the athlete," Blehert said. "There's passion, excitement and aesthetics in sports that rise above everyday life. You have to be emotionally present to experience it because there's so much intensity to it. That's why I find it so exciting to capture it in art."

Blehert has been painting portraits for 25 years. Early on, he aspired to classical realism, but over the years his style has evolved into a looser, more impressionistic form that focuses less on detail and more on feelings with wider brush strokes and brighter colors.

"There's always a message in art, whether it's abstract art or graphic art or commercial art," Blehert



St. Paul-bred artist Robert Blehert and his rendition of the "M&M Boys": Twins Mauer and Morneau.

said, "and for me the message is as important as the technique. Certainly, the technique has to be good, but if you don't focus on what you're trying to say and what excited you in the first place, you lose the whole thing."

Blehert's latest endeavor takes impressionism to a new level. With his Flowers of You series, he renders a woman's essence in flowers. Visit his website at www.flowersofyou.com and you'll see his floral impressions of Oprah Winfrey, Michelle Obama and Marilyn Monroe, among others.

In a Flowers of You sitting, Blehert will meet his subject and after talking to her for a few minutes paint her portrait. But instead of detailing her physical features, he renders her aura in flowers and colors.



"The method is totally intuitive," he said. "A woman's physical appearance has nothing to do with it. I just perceive the person within and paint. It stems from a desire to reach for something deeper in my art. I just feel something and try and communicate it on canvass by letting spontaneity rule."

On Sunday, June 21, Blehert will be offering Flowers of You sittings at Legacy Fine Art and Gifts, 1209 Grand Ave. Women may just drop in beginning at noon, and he will do a floral painting of her right on the spot. Blehert will also be available at Legacy for portrait sittings by appointment on June 22-24.

While some of Blehert's paintings have fetched as much as \$15,000, for Flowers of You portraits he charges \$70 for an 8-by-10 and \$95 for an 11-by-14. The work is done in acrylic on canvass, and each one takes him less than 30 minutes to complete.

Betsy Carter, owner of Legacy Fine Art and Gifts, first met Blehert when he wandered into her store looking for a place to show his work. She said the first time she saw his Killebrew portrait, it made her smile. She felt he had captured the soft-spoken Hall of Famer's essence.

"I just think a very cool energy comes through his art," Carter said.



Atlantis Quartet guitarist Zacc Harris.

27◀ ATLANTIS QUARTET

blues and rock guitarists with an improvisational bent, such as Dicky Betts of the Allman Brothers. In college, he said, "I went right from the blues into jazz. I was never into the so-called fusion music that at one time was so popular. I'd have to say that the guitarist who had the most influence on me is Wes Montgomery."

You can hear Montgomery's influence in Harris' playing. He has the flowing lines, the mellow tones, the feel for the blues and the articulation needed to play that style.

Since its formation in 2006, the Atlantis Quartet has performed at all the top Twin Cities jazz venues, including the Artists' Quarter, the Dakota, the Times, the Kitty Kat Klub and the Turf Club. The group has

also made forays into rock clubs, such as the Uptown Bar and Bunker's.

The Atlantis Quartet's first CD, "Again Too Soon," was praised by the now-defunct *The Pulse* newspaper for its "strong compositions and insanely serious chops." *Jazz Improv Magazine* critic Clive Griffin wrote that it is "abundantly clear that the Atlantis Quartet are highly skilled musicians who have invested themselves heavily to develop their individual approaches.... They sound genuinely inspired, enjoying the music they are making together."

"I think what helps us play together so well is that none of us is the leader," Harris said. "Each of us contributes original music for the group to play. The group is not just one musician's concept."

"Zacc is a really great, versatile guitarist," said his bandmate Bates,

who has played bass with many of the top jazz musicians in the Twin Cities. "He writes great tunes. He's imaginative, and he's a real workhorse when it comes to doing what needs to be done to play this music at a high level. Everyone in the group contributes toward us having a loose but intense sound."

Following the festival, Twin Cities jazz aficionados may catch the Atlantis Quartet at the Turf Club's Clown Lounge on June 22 and at the Artists' Quarter on July 8.

According to Harris, the group is planning to release another full-length recording before the end of the year.

"After that, I'm hoping we'll go on the road, playing at jazz clubs across the U.S.," he said. "And you never know, we may end up doing a tour of Europe."



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Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

The mudder of all sprints: Pollard triumphs in rain

The final day of the Minnesota State High School Track and Field Meet was better suited for a duck than a sprinter, but you'd never know it from the performance of Highland Park's Troy Pollard. The senior put an exclamation point on a terrific spring when he set a personal best in winning the 400-meter title on June 6.

"I always go into races with a specific time in mind," Pollard said. "That day I thought I'd be in the high 49s."

If that had happened, Pollard would have finished fourth or fifth. Instead, he ran a rip-snorting 48.71 to win the state title by half a second over Stillwater junior Frank Falzone. And he did it despite getting off to a slow start. "I slipped slightly when I took off," Pollard said. "But I made up the time quickly."

With 100 yards to go, Pollard looked up to find himself slightly ahead. "The last 100 is where races are won," he said. "A lot of times, I have the lead with 200 to go. This time it took a little longer."

Pollard had topped the field in the triple jump the day before. His two state titles capped a stellar year for the Scots' three-sport athlete. Though he had played both football and basketball for Highland as a freshman and sophomore, he transferred to Arlington for his junior year. When that didn't work out, he returned to Highland for his senior year, became a two-way player in football and earned all-conference honors in basketball. And he did all that despite having to rise at 5:45 a.m. on weekdays to catch a 6:40 a.m. bus to school.

"I'm sleeping in quite a bit these days," Pollard said with a laugh. "I have some catching up to do."

This spring, Pollard had to switch from the teamwork required in football and basketball to the solo workouts that go with track and field. "It's a tough adjustment for me because I like to stay loose before I compete," he said. "There's nobody for me to talk to before a race or a jump."

At the St. Paul City Conference meet, Pollard won the long jump, triple jump and 400-meter run. He also was part of the Scots' conference champion 4-by-200-meter relay team, helping Highland Park beat second-place Central by 35 points for the boys' team title.

At the state meet, Pollard hopped, skipped and jumped 45 feet, 11 inches, to claim the triple-jump crown on Friday before romping in the rain in the 400-meter run on Saturday. His approach to the two titles could not have been more different.

WRIGHT CALL ► 34



Junior middleweight Donny Tierney takes five on the ropes at the Rice Street Gym. He won his pro boxing debut in April and expects to return to the ring next month. Sparring partner Mike Kelly stands behind him. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Tierney takes boxing skills to next level

BY BRIAN JOHNSON

Growing up in the Highland Park area, Donny Tierney liked to play sports with his cousins Joe, Allen and Jason. He pretty much had no choice.

"You had to be an athlete in our family," Tierney said. "Everybody is. Even if you didn't like basketball, you played it because everybody else did."

Tierney, 26, recalls playing baseball with cousin Joe when they were kids. At one point, he was jealous because young Joe got to play "coach's pitch" with the bigger kids, while he had to play T-ball.

With Allen and Jason, Tierney strapped on the boxing gloves and pitched haymakers. The three boys took turns mixing it up like miniature Sugar Ray Leonards. Allen, a year older, usually got the better of those matches.

"Allen would bomb on both of us," Tierney said. "It was kind of crazy

back then."

Fast forward to 2009. His cousin Joe (Mauer) is a two-time American League batting champion and all-star catcher for the Minnesota Twins. And cousins Jason and Allen (Litzau) are accomplished professional boxers with a combined record of 37 wins, 6 losses and 3 draws.

In April, Tierney became a professional athlete in his own right when he made his pro boxing debut at Target Center. He expects to return to the ring in mid-July, possibly on the undercard of a Jason Litzau-Wilton Hilario bout. Tierney was scheduled to fight Yancy Cuellar of Fargo in a four-rounder on June 20, but all bouts were postponed due to an injury to Hilario.

Tierney, who sported a perfect 9-0 amateur boxing record, had a tough challenge in his pro debut. His opponent was brawler Zach Schumach, whose approach to the sweet science was neither sweet nor scientific that day.

"I didn't know what I was getting myself into," Tierney said of his first pro fight. "I was kind of nervous walking out, but then I heard the crowd and everyone cheering."

Schumach, who has a background in mixed martial arts, was also making his pro boxing debut. He surged forward at the bell with reckless abandon, determined to stick his head in Tierney's chest and flail away.

At one point, one of Schumach's wild punches connected squarely with Tierney's chin, sending the St. Paul fighter to the canvas. "He hit me with a good shot; it rattled my brain," said Tierney, a junior middleweight at 154 pounds.

Fueled by the cheering throng, Tierney got up, cleared his head, and regained his composure. In the end, his superior boxing skills gave him a unanimous four-round decision. But it

BOXER TIERNEY ► 32

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wasn't easy.

"He was elbowing me and butting me. I had bruises all up and down my shoulders," Tierney said. "He came into my locker room (after the fight) and said he was actually trying to get disqualified because his nose was broken in the first round and he didn't want to quit."

Frank Newton, Tierney's uncle and trainer, said he warned his nephew that Schumach was "going to come out with everything he can throw." He advised Tierney to use his reach to keep Schumach on the outside.

Tierney "did some impressive things, but it was scary for a while," said Newton, a former boxer with 28 professional fights. "When he got dropped, I said, 'Oh, no.' But I think he did fine. He has a long road ahead, but he has all the tools. It just depends on how seriously he takes it."

Tierney took the plunge in pro boxing after a long layoff from the sport. "I don't know why I wanted to get out of it," he said. "I just got out."

Earlier this year, a local promoter offered Tierney a chance to get back in.

"He knew who my family was. I was back in the gym and he said he could get me a fight, so I hooked up with him," Tierney said.

Like most young professional boxers, Tierney isn't getting rich. However, with the support from his fans, including a strong contingent from Joe and Stan's Bar on West 7th Street where Tierney works on weekends, he did all right for himself in his debut.

Tierney sold \$7,000 worth of tickets for the April 18 fight. That's a pretty good deal for the boxer because he gets a cut from every ticket he sells. Tickets for the July card will also be on sale at the



Donny Tierney spars at the Rice Street Gym. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

bar, he said.

The money is coming in handy. A couple of months ago, Tierney was laid off from his full-time job at a local car dealership.

Still, he's keeping a positive attitude, hoping to find full-time work even as he trains hard for his boxing career. His regimen includes regular sparring sessions with top amateur and professional prospects, including Jason Litzau.

Shortly after the Schumach fight, Tierney spent time with Joe and Jake Mauer in Florida, getting some sun while nursing the bumps and bruises. Joe was on the disabled list at the time, and the visit may have kindled some memories of the old days.

"At my Grandma and Grandpa Tierney's (in Merriam Park), we'd play in their yard. Me and Joe versus Jake and

Bill (Mauer). We'd hit it over the roof and Bill would be playing outfield and say we were out," Tierney recalled with a laugh. "But there was no way he caught that ball."

Tierney, a 2001 graduate of Highland Park Senior High, likes talking about those boyhood days, but he turns serious when discussing his budding pro boxing career. He is dedicating his fights to the memory of a high school buddy, James Wosika, who was killed in Iraq in January 2007.

Tierney is now concentrating on taking his skills to the next level and maybe even contending for a title someday.

"That's far-fetched now, but I want to do it as long as I can," he said. "I want to succeed in it. I know I have a lot of work to do, but I have a good fan base behind me and that helps."

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Redhawks take 2nd in 1st state softball trip

By BILL WAGNER

Minnehaha Academy managed to get two-thirds of the way to the Class AA title in its first trip to the state softball tournament on June 4-5 at Caswell Park in Mankato. The Redhawks defeated Mound-Westonka and Pipestone before being clobbered in the championship round by highly favored Hermantown.

Though the loss was a disappointment, the Redhawks could hold their heads high after finishing the year with a 23-6 record and claiming the state runner-up trophy. Minnehaha coach Mike DiNardo said his players could console themselves with the fact that the superior team had won.

"They were better," he said of Hermantown. "We needed to play a perfect game just to have a chance at beating them."

Still, DiNardo did not want to diminish what was a spectacular spring for Minnehaha. For most of the season, the Redhawks looked to be a very good team. They finished in a three-way tie for first place in the tough Tri-Metro Conference and had to work their way through a rugged section in the post-season.

"We were just happy to be in the state tournament," said DiNardo, who was in his 11th season as coach. "I'm so proud of these kids. This team has been fun to coach. We were a team that played with poise. Very seldom did we get rattled."

The high-powered Redhawks entered state having scored 215 runs on 240 hits and sporting a team batting average of

.326. They also had 123 stolen bases.

Before facing Hermantown, Minnehaha did what it did all season—find a way to win. Senior pitcher Emily Engdahl, who hurled every inning at state for the Redhawks, was outstanding in posting complete-game wins over Mound-Westonka (2-1) and Pipestone (3-1). Engdahl entered state with 126 strikeouts and a 1.22 ERA, and allowed no earned runs in that 14-inning stretch, throwing a five-hitter against the White Hawks and a seven-hitter versus the Arrows.

"Emily mixed up her pitches well," DiNardo said. "She was able to keep the hitters off-stride and allow our defense to do its job." The Redhawks committed only one error in each of those two victories.

Minnehaha scored three runs in the first inning to cement the Mound-Westonka win, including an RBI double by senior catcher AnnaMarie Martino and an RBI single by Engdahl. The defense also did its part. In the next inning, a Mound-Westonka scoring threat was squelched when senior shortstop Elizabeth Mrozek threw out a runner at first on a difficult play.

Against Pipestone, three first-inning runs were all the Redhawks would need. Martino led the charge by singling and stealing second. Engdahl then singled and rounded first too far in an effort to force a defensive play on her. Martino came home to score and Engdahl reached second. Then Engdahl scored on a single by Mrozek, who promptly stole second. Mrozek went to third on a

groundout and scored on a wild pitch. It may not have been pretty, but it was effective.

That game also featured a great diving catch in center field by junior Analisa Ballinger that kept Pipestone off the board in the sixth.

In the final, Hermantown pitching sensation Megan Mullen kept the Redhawks off the scoreboard by striking out 11 and allowing only two hits. Her teammates, meanwhile, scored once in the bottom of the first and added another four in the fourth en route to a 7-0 victory. It was the second consecutive and 16th overall appearance at state for Hermantown (27-3), including previous titles in 1991 and 2002.

Martino, one of the steadiest Redhawks throughout the season, looked back on how the team had overcome adversity to reach state. "It was good to see all our hard work pay off," she said.

A key gut-check for the team came between games of the Section 4AA final against St. Anthony on May 28, she said. Minnehaha had already lost 6-4 in the first game against the Huskies, and needed to win the second game to get to state.

"Our heads weren't into it in that first game," Martino said, "but then we came together and won that second game (4-3)."

Mrozek, who entered the tournament batting .444 with 41 RBI, was named all-state by the *Pioneer Press*. Engdahl and Martino received all-state honorable mentions and were named to the all-tournament team.

Sports Shorts

Ben Nelson, a Central High School graduate, will join the outfield for Concordia University-St. Paul's baseball team in 2010. Nelson earned three varsity letters on the diamond for the Minutemen while helping the team to a 10-2 conference record as a junior and a 9-3 conference mark this spring. He earned all-conference honorable mention honors for the past two years. As a senior, he hit .405 with three home runs and five doubles, drove in 18 runs and scored 21 runs.

PAM-o-rama Tours will be offered this summer by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. Each tour will highlight a different area. The series will kick off with a bicycle tour of Minneapolis from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday, June 20, leaving from the Freewheel Bike Center, 2834 10th Ave. S., on the Midtown Greenway (below street level) behind the Midtown Exchange. There also will be tours of the Gibbs Farm on July 11, a canoe trip down the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers on August 8, a bus visit to Owatonna on August 15, and walking tours of Fort Snelling's Upper Post on September 26 and St. Paul fantasy homes of the 1920s on October 10. The cost is \$15 per tour (\$22 for the Owatonna trip). Call 651-293-9047 or visit www.mnpreservation.org.

In the state girls' golf tournament, Visitation finished fifth in Class AA on June 3-4 at Ridges at Sand Creek in Jordan. The Blazers finished with a total of 746 for its top four golfers over the two-day event. Minnewaska took first with a 610. Senior Kelly Reagan led Visitation, which was making its fifth tournament appearance, with a 175 (85 and 90) for 30th place. Junior Bre Herzog was tied for 36th place with a 179 (89, 90). Senior Kathryn Stoffels of Minnehaha Academy tied for 40th with a 180 (94, 86). In the Class AAA tournament, senior Lisa Springer of Cretin-Derham Hall was the top local finisher, tying for 47th with a 185 (96, 89) on June 2-3 at Bunker Hills in Coon Rapids.

In the state boys' golf tournament, sophomore Michael Roedl of Minnehaha Academy tied for ninth place in the Class AA event on June 3-4 at Sand Creek. He had rounds of 76 and 77 for a 153. In Class AAA, junior Genki Hirayama of Highland Park tied for 24th with a 155 (80, 75) at Bunker Hills.

The Henry Sibley doubles team of senior Michael Lunka and freshman Matt Schull won the Class AA consolation title in the boys' state tennis tournament on June 2-5 at the Baseline Tennis Center at the University of Minnesota. The duo lost

the opening round to a team from Hopkins, but then defeated squads from Rochester Mayo and Alexandria to get to the consolation championship. There they defeated junior Peter Stadum and sophomore Quinn Foley of Mahtomedi 6-2, 1-6, 6-3 for the trophy. Lunka and Schull were last year's runners-up and joined Stadum and Foley as the only two complete teams to return this year.

In the state boys' track meet, senior Troy Pollard of Highland Park won gold in the 400-meter dash and triple jump during Class AA competition on June 5-6 at Hamline University. He and sophomore Myint Maung, who took bronze in the 100-meter dash, led the Scots to a sixth-place finish overall. Central sophomore Andrew Lewis finished fourth in the 100 and classmate Andrew Lewis was fifth in the 200. Cretin-Derham Hall junior Gus Gehlen took bronze in the high jump.

In the state girls' track meet, freshman Erica Dombro won gold in the 400-meter dash in the Class AA competition on June 5-6 at Hamline University. Cretin-Derham Hall senior Laura Docherty placed fourth in the 3,200-meter run.

Central High School students Alexandra Millett, Theairra Taylor, Lenora Wilson and Mychael Felix were among the 10 finalists for the 33rd annual Winfield Awards that were presented on June 7 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront Hotel. The top male and female winner will receive \$1,000. The other eight will received \$400 to further their education.

Summer youth trips are being offered by the cities of Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and South St. Paul for kids ages 6 and older, unless otherwise noted. The schedule includes a trip to see the Minnesota Twins play the Pittsburgh Pirates on Thursday, June 18 (\$19, includes hot dog and pop); a trip to the Edina Aquatic Center on Thursday, June 25, for ages 7 and older (\$15); a trip to the Minnesota Zoo and IMAX Theater on Thursday, July 9 (\$23); a trip to the Apple Valley Family Aquatic Center on Thursday, July 16, for those 7 and older (\$15); a trip to Valleyfair on Thursday, July 23, for those 10 and older (\$29); a trip to Cascade Bay on Thursday, July 30, for ages 8 and older (\$16); and swimming at the West St. Paul Pool from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Thursday, August 6 (\$8.00). Transportation is included, except for the West St. Paul pool. Kids should bring a bag lunch or money for concessions. Call Mendota Heights at 651-452-1850, West St. Paul at 651-552-4150 or South St. Paul at 651-306-3690.

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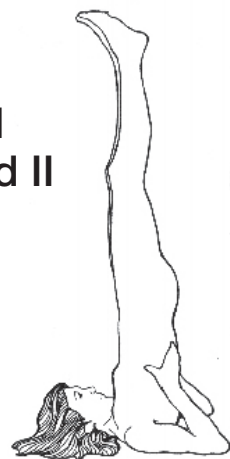


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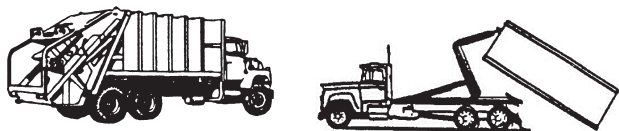
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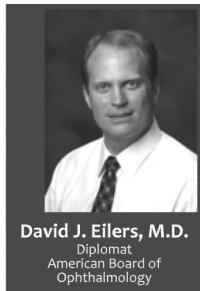
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Ophthalmology**Recent CDH grad organizes diabetes walk on West 7th**

The inaugural Walk for Diabetes will be held at 3:00 p.m. Saturday, July 18, along West 7th Street in conjunction with the 10th annual Lightning Run, the largest charitable motorcycle ride in the Midwest.

The walk is being coordinated by Rachel Tacke, a recent honors graduate of Cretin-Derham Hall. Tacke did a class report on juvenile (Type 1) diabetes in her freshman year and just seven months later was diagnosed with the disorder. Her daily life now includes six to eight finger pricks a day, along with four insulin injections, not to mention the constant fear of what will happen to her next.

"I guess all things happen for a reason," said Tacke, who will be a premed student at the University of St. Thomas

this fall. "I truly believe God has given me this condition so that I'll use it to help others."

Walkers will travel part of the same route as the more than 2,000 motorcyclists who rally annually in support of diabetes research. The 2.2-mile walk will begin at Mancini's Char House, 531 W. 7th St., and end at the Summit Brewing Company, 910 Montreal Circle, where the Lightning Run festivities will be taking place. A shuttle will take walkers back to the starting point. Those who cannot walk are invited to pull up a chair along West 7th to watch the parade of cyclists and walkers.

The registration fee is \$10. Walkers who raise at least \$25 will receive a wristband to participate in the Lightning Run activities taking place on July

17-18 at Summit Brewing, including live music, live and silent auctions, a motorcycle show, a raffle for a \$27,000 Harley-Davidson Street Glide motorcycle and appearances by media personalities Dave Dahl, Joe Southeray, Kellie Sipes and Brian Zepp. Prizes will also be awarded for pledges exceeding \$50. For more information on the event, visit www.LightningRun.com.

Walkers are invited to form their own team or to join one for the event. Registration begins at 2:30 p.m. on July 18 at Mancini's. Proceeds will support the University of Minnesota Schulze Diabetes Institute.

For information on the walk, contact LuAnn or Rachel Tacke at thetackes@usfamily.net or visit www.firstgiving.com/LightningRun.

31◀ WRIGHT CALL

"I don't practice the triple jump much," he said. "It's all fairly instinctive stuff." For the 400, however, Pollard said he checks out his competition beforehand, examines the surface of the track and envisions a running time.

"I'm still learning a lot about track. I haven't been doing it very long," said Pollard, whose older sister, Sade, is a former state high school sprint champion now attending Concordia University. "I started last year running for the USA Junior Team and enjoyed it very much. It's good competition."

Before the state meet, Pollard was leaning toward attending Wayne State College in Nebraska to play football and run track. "I just talked to the Wayne State football coach," he said. "He said they were interested in me as a kick returner and wide receiver. I like that idea."

The Wayne State Wildcats, members of the Division II Northern Sun Conference, still have the inside edge. However, since the state track meet, Pollard said he has fielded several calls from other college representatives who are interested in signing a sprinter who, in horseracing terms, is a good mudder.

"Let's just say it wasn't like this before (the state meet)," said Pollard of his newfound popularity among college recruiters.

Purple prattle

OK, the professional hockey and basketball seasons have just ended. The major league baseball season is only two months old, but your favorite ball club has already fallen by the wayside. It's time now for the traditional June swoon. What's next on the sports horizon? Why, professional football, of course.

The Minnesota Vikings are still a month away from training camp, but fans who are starved for Purple prattle are still getting their fix. The question is, is this the kind of publicity an NFL team wants?

First of all, there is the ongoing Brett Favre saga. Will he or won't he leave his Mississippi ranch to play for the squad that was once his biggest rival? Should the Vikings risk paying \$10 million per year to the NFL's 21st-best quarterback in 2008? Does it mean anything that Favre's family has reserved hotel rooms in Green Bay for the first weekend in November, when the Vikings happen to be scheduled to make a visit? Stay tuned for more developments.

The Favre story may be silly, but it's kind of fun. However, there is nothing humorous about the other Vikings story that is dominating the news these days.

Last year in midseason, it was revealed that Vikings defensive linemen Pat Williams and Kevin Williams had tested positive for a substance that is banned in the NFL. There were complications too numerous to mention here, but the league wanted to impose four-game suspensions. The players naturally disagreed. Since then, the whole mess has been dumped in the lap of the Hennepin County District Court, which will probably rule on the matter before the season begins in September.

While we're waiting for the legal process to play out, the Williamses went public last week with complaints that the NFL has been picking on them with up to three "random" tests a month. Under an NFL policy to which the NFL Players Association agreed a few years ago, the pair are subject to



State champion sprinter Troy Pollard of Highland Park displays his form during an earlier and dryer meet this season. MIKAEL CARLSON

"ongoing reasonable-cause testing" because they failed a prior drug test.

You can argue this hullabaloo is partially the fault of a league and a sport that caters to oversized players. You can argue we're a society in which drugs are so rampant that keeping track of what's legal and what isn't is more than a professional athlete can be expected to handle. But when all is said and done, some compromise will be reached, no doubt, and life in the trenches will go on for the Williamses and the Vikings. The fact is, the Williamses would have been better off taking the advice of Twins outfielder Michael Cuddyer, who once said that he checks with the Major League Baseball Players Association anytime he takes a new drug.

Let me state it another way: Several years ago I was meeting a friend for dinner at O'Garra's. I parked across the street behind what was then Liberty (now Associated) Bank. Since it was night and the bank was closed, I figured it was OK. After dinner I returned to my car to find a ticket. The fine was \$200. I took my case to court, where the judge patiently informed me that day or night, open or closed, it's illegal to park in a handicapped zone without the proper credentials. And ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Dave Wright can be reached at dwright53@msn.com.

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