



Wally Wescott, left, and son Kurt display the Hi-lex Gnomes and other St. Paul Winter Carnival memorabilia outside of Wescott Station Antiques on West 7th Street. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Drips destined to never be dropped

Carnival marks 70th year of popular Hi-lex Gnomes

BY DAVE PAGE

The Hi-lex Gnomes will celebrate a couple of anniversaries during this year's St. Paul Winter Carnival. First, it's the 70th anniversary of the creation of the iconic teardrop-shaped costumes by Asa and Gene Eldridge, founders of the Hi-lex Company. In 1939, the Eldridges constructed about a dozen gnomes from chicken wire and papier-mâché. Their employees wore the costumes in the 1940 Winter Carnival's King Boreas Grande Day Parade and the gnomes have been a part of the festivities ever since. That makes them one of the oldest units in the yearly parade, which will step out at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 24.

Second, it is the 60th anniversary of the Boy Scouts from Troop 13 donning the gnome costumes for the parade. Scoutmaster Bill Wald, who was a gnome himself more than 20 years ago and has or-

CARNIVAL GNOMES ►4

Election reforms target absentee ballot process

Officials seek to expand early voting while centralizing counting of ballots

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Following an election marked by record high voter turnouts and a surprisingly high number of rejected absentee ballots, local officials are now seeking reforms that would expand the opportunities for absentee voting but streamline the process for both voters and election judges.

The proposed reforms, which have the support of the Minnesota Association of County Officers, the Association of Metropolitan County Officers and the Minnesota League of Cities, were outlined earlier this month by Ramsey County elections manager Joe Mansky at a hearing before the Minnesota Senate's State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

Minnesota elections have long been considered among the best in the nation, with high percentages of eligible voters and few voting glitches. That may have changed with the November 4 general election when the statewide recount in the U.S. Senate race between Norm Coleman and Al Franken revealed more than a few problems. The biggest problem in that election, according to Mansky and Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, was the number of rejected absentee ballots.

About 300,000 of the 2.4 million votes cast in the U.S. Senate race were by absentee ballot, according to Ritchie. About 12,000 of those absentee ballots were rejected by precinct election judges for failing to meet one of four requirements, Ritchie said. However, 1,350 of those absentee ballots were wrongly rejected and, if not for the recount, would never have been counted, he added. As it is, 400 of them have never been counted due to challenges by the Coleman and Franken campaigns, and they will never be counted unless the voters who cast them choose to file a lawsuit, Ritchie said.

A total of 30,786 voters cast absentee ballots in the general election in Ramsey County, Mansky said, an increase of 31 percent from the 2004 presidential election. Mansky attributed the increase to an aging population and the encouragement of the Obama and McCain campaigns to vote early.

Under current state law, Minnesotans may not vote by absentee ballot unless they will be away from their precinct on election day or

ELECTION REFORM ►2

Panel reports what went wrong during GOP convention

BY JANE MCCLURE

The 2008 Republican National Convention (RNC) was generally a success, according to a recently released report, though it did raise concerns over the level of law enforcement presence, the arrest and detention of journalists, and the use of pepper spray and other crowd-controlling measures during the event.

Prepared by a seven-member panel chaired by former federal prosecutors Tom Heffelfinger and Andy Luger, the 82-page report was released on January 14 and was reviewed by the St. Paul City Council the same day. It may be read on the city's website at www.stpaul.gov/RNCreport.

The report was commissioned last fall in the wake of mounting criticism of convention security measures and the conduct of law enforcement officers before and during the RNC. Mayor Chris Coleman said the report will not only be beneficial for St. Paul, but for the next city hosting a national political convention.

"People have worked hard to understand what happened during those four days," Coleman said. Though "there were a lot of things we did right," he said that city officials need to understand what went wrong.

Inside the Xcel, the convention went smoothly. Outside was another story. More than 800 people were arrested during the four-day event, including more than 80 journalists. The arrests were accompanied by incidents in which protesters were sprayed with mace and pepper spray or shot with projectiles. At least two people have threatened to sue over what they claim was law enforcement misconduct. The St. Paul Police Department has received three internal affairs complaints related to the RNC.

RNC REPORT ►2

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1◀ ELECTION REFORM

are otherwise unable to get to the polls due to illness, disability, religious observance or service as an election judge in another precinct. Ritchie, Mansky and election officials across the state favor doing away with this limitation. Even now, Mansky said, a voter's reason for voting absentee "is virtually always accepted at face value, because the law otherwise would make liars out of some voters." Mansky does not think voters should be placed in that position.

In addition to eliminating the need to state a reason for absentee voting, election officials across the state are proposing that Minnesota:

- Allow voters to cast their ballots early by mail or in person at regional voting centers. "Early voting should last at least a week and end on the Saturday before election day," Mansky said.
- Allow more opportunities for voting in the evenings and on weekends.
- Allow voters who are overseas or in the military to e-mail their completed ballots to their county of residence. "Currently, we e-mail the ballots to these voters, but they must use the regular mail to return them," Mansky

said. "We're proposing that the Legislature eliminate the need (for these voters) to have a witness and instead create an authentication process that entails the use of a personal identification number selected by the voter and provided to the election official when the voter applies for the ballot."

Under current state law, precinct election judges decide whether or not to accept an absentee ballot. An absentee ballot is acceptable if the voter's name and address on the return envelope are the same as those on the absentee ballot application; the voter's signature on the return envelope matches the signature of the individual who applied for the ballot; the voter is registered and eligible to vote in the precinct or includes a properly completed voter registration application with their returned ballot; and the voter has not already voted in that election either in person or by absentee ballot.

To avoid the problems of precinct election judges wrongly rejecting absentee ballots and to further streamline the early voting process, local election officials are proposing the following:

- Permit those voting early and in person to place their ballot directly into a ballot counter.

• Allow counties and cities to process and count all ballots cast early at a central location.

• Make it possible for voters to check their voter registration status and the status of their mailed-in ballots online.

In the weeks ahead, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners is expected to consider whether to include the above proposals on its legislative agenda for the 2009 session. Similar proposals were approved by the Legislature two years ago, according to Ritchie, but were vetoed by Governor Tim Pawlenty.

Conservative political organizations have generally been wary of initiatives that make it easier to vote. One such group is Minnesota Majority, which has lobbied for the elimination of same-day voter registration because of the opportunity for voter fraud, according to its president, Jeffrey Davis.

Davis said his organization would like the state to require voters to show a photo ID at the polls in order to vote or to register to vote. Minnesota Majority also would like election officials to routinely verify a person's eligibility to vote by cross-checking that person's voter registration records with records of the voter's address, criminal status and U.S. citizenship.

However, Davis said his group has no ob-

jection to many of the proposals outlined by Mansky, depending on how they are implemented. "We're mostly interested in making sure the electoral process is as transparent as possible," he said. "My instinct is that early voting would make that more of a challenge. Recruiting and training election judges is difficult now."

State Senator Katie Sieben (DFL-Newport), who chairs the Elections Subcommittee of the State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee, said several voting reform bills are now in the works. "I've drafted a bill to allow early voting at regional voting centers in cities and counties," she said. "I'm also writing a bill to allow no-excuse absentee voting, though the voter would still have to request the ballot."

Senator Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), who chairs the Government Operations Committee, will be introducing a bill to institute an automatic runoff election, instead of a statewide recount, when the vote totals of the leading candidates are within a half percentage point of each other, according to Sieben. "And Senator Terri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka) is drafting a bill to move the primary election from September to June," she said.

1◀ RNC REPORT

The council chambers were packed with spectators, many of whom repeatedly heckled the speakers and council. At one point, council president Kathy Lantry threatened to shut down the meeting if the audience did not "knock it off." Some council members expressed an interest in holding a public forum on the report's findings, but no date has been set.

Police Chief John Harrington said nothing he heard at the meeting came as a surprise. The Police Department is conducting its own internal review of police activities during the RNC and is expected to release its findings by mid-month.

Some audience members objected to Luger's and Heffelfinger's efforts to differentiate between peaceful protesters and anarchists. "If there was a loser in this convention, it was the people whose voices were not heard," said Luger. According to him, the message of the peaceful protesters was lost in news coverage of the anarchists' behavior.

One of the findings in the report

was that St. Paul's compact downtown created challenges not faced by previous host sites that were surrounded by parking lots. The city's smaller size also necessitated having the Police Department call on help from 120 other agencies, which led to management coordination and communication problems. The report called St. Paul's situation "cumbersome and at times unworkable." Mobile police force caravans experienced communication problems and what the report described as a "slow and disjointed response."

Another finding was that the threat of violence by anarchists was real. Heffelfinger said anarchists committed "serious acts" of violence and property damage in and around downtown. One incident that was cited was when anarchists dropped sand bags and a street sign off of the Marion Street Bridge onto vehicles traveling on I-94. One of the vehicles damaged was a bus of delegates from Washington State.

St. Paul took what Luger described as "unprecedented" steps to accommodate those who wanted to exercise their right to free speech,



Mounted police attempt to disperse a group of protesters during the Republican National Convention. PHOTO BY LARRY ENGLUND

issuing a dozen parade permits and setting up a free speech area.

However, the panel found fault with the city for not better educating the public about the potential for violence and law enforcement's likely response to that violence. Before the convention, the public was told there would be a "very soft and light" police presence, Luger said. When it became hard and heavy,

"people felt betrayed," he said.

The panel also criticized law enforcement officers for using pepper spray and mace too freely. A device used to shoot paint ball-like marking devices was also used, which drew criticism from the panel.

The panel also noted that protective police gear obscured the badge numbers of officers and the identification of which city, county or state

departments they were from.

In addressing the arrest and detention of journalists, Luger and Heffelfinger said a protocol for members of the media to follow should have been developed and agreed upon by law enforcement and media representatives before the convention.

The panel deliberated for more than two days while preparing the report. Panel members looked at everything from public safety planning to police conduct during convention. In preparing the report, panel members also held public forums, conducted more than 50 interviews and reviewed numerous voice mails and e-mails. Heffelfinger and Luger praised citizens and law enforcement officers for speaking candidly about their observations and making recommendations for what should have been done differently.

The panel also reviewed thousands of video clips and still photos. Heffelfinger quipped that the only people who outnumbered the police and protesters during the convention seemed to be people with cameras.

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District judge turns back challenge to instant runoff voting

IRV opponents say they will appeal ruling to higher court

By KEVIN DRISCOLL

Hennepin County District Court Judge George McGunnigle ruled last week in favor of defendants FairVote Minnesota and the city of Minneapolis in a lawsuit filed by the Minnesota Voters Alliance that was intended to block the implementation of instant runoff voting in Minneapolis.

Minneapolis voters approved a 2006 referendum to use IRV in city elections by the fall of 2009. The Minnesota Voters Alliance subsequently sued, arguing that IRV is unconstitutional.

In his 29-page ruling, McGunnigle said the city's plans for implementing IRV may go forward. "The court finds that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that IRV causes any citizen to be deprived of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the Constitution and laws," he wrote.

Minnesota Voters Alliance executive director Andy Cilek said his organization will appeal the decision. "We're preparing to file an accelerated review to the Minnesota Supreme Court which, if accepted, would bypass the Court of Appeals," he said. "We feel strongly that we will win in the state Supreme Court, (but) we're certainly interested in taking this to the federal level if necessary."

IRV would eliminate the need for a primary election when more than two candidates file

for one office. Instead, all candidates would appear on the general election ballot where voters would rank them in order of preference (i.e., first choice, second choice, third choice, etc.)

With IRV, if no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated and the ballots of the voters who picked that candidate first are redistributed to their second choices. If this redistribution does not produce a candidate with a majority of the votes, the candidate with the next fewest votes is eliminated and the ballots of the voters who picked that candidate first or second, as the case may be, are redistributed to their second or third choices. This process of elimination continues until a candidate receives a majority.

IRV proponents claim that in addition to eliminating primaries that invariably attract a low percentage of voters, IRV has the potential to eliminate the "spoiler effect" by allowing the votes of weak independent or third-party candidates to be redistributed to the preferred major-party candidate. Proponents say that IRV could help strong third-party or independent candidates get elected. According to them, it would also ensure that the winning candidate has the support of a majority of voters.

According to Mike Beach of the Minnesota Voters Alliance, ranking multiple candidates equates to what the Minnesota Supreme Court in the 1915 *Brown v. Smallwood* case called "more than a single expression of choice," which the court ruled is unconstitutional.

ELECTION '09



That court, Beach said, ruled that preferential voting diminishes the right of an elector to give an effective vote for the candidate of his choosing unimpaired by the second, third and fourth choices of other voters.

FairVote Minnesota executive director Jeanne Massey was pleased with McGunnigle's ruling and said her organization will respond to any appeal to a state court. "We believe we will prevail there because of Judge McGunnigle's unqualified ruling on each of the issues raised by the plaintiffs," Massey said. "It's a very strong ruling."

Minneapolis' efforts to implement IRV have been hampered by the lawsuit and by the difficulty in finding reliable software to execute multiple rounds of balloting, according to Cindy Reichert, the city's director of elections. "We're pleased that the district court ruling confirms our position and allows us to move

forward," Reichert said. "But it's important to keep in mind that this is just one step in a long process that is likely to continue for some time (given) the other party's right to appeal."

"In the end, any decisions related to the implementation of IRV in 2009 will be made by the City Council," Reichert said. "In the coming days, city staff and elected officials will be having conversations about the next steps for discussion and decisions. The city is committed to implementing IRV, but our first priority is to ensure we're moving ahead responsibly so we can continue to ensure Minneapolis conducts fair and accurate elections."

The final disposition of the lawsuit is also expected to affect the Better Ballot Campaign's efforts to implement IRV in St. Paul city elections. Last spring, that group submitted the requisite number of signatures to put the proposal before St. Paul voters in the 2008 general election. However, the St. Paul City Council balked when City Attorney John Choi issued an opinion that IRV is more likely than not to be determined by a reviewing court to be in violation of the Minnesota Constitution.

Last week, St. Paul City Council president Kathy Lantry said, "I've asked the City Attorney's office to take a look at the decision handed down (by Judge McGunnigle) and give me their thoughts on how the case was decided. We've heard that it's likely the plaintiffs will appeal the decision to the Minnesota Supreme Court. Our resolution stated that we would take the matter up again once the case is finally decided. I don't think we're at that point yet."

St. Thomas advisory committee OKs design for wider Finn Street

By JANE MCCLURE

A plan for widening and repaving Finn Street between Summit and Grand Avenues was approved last week by the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC). The project is part of the Cretin-Goodrich Residential Street Vitality Program that the city of St. Paul has scheduled for 2009.

The city typically rebuilds streets like Finn to a width of 32 feet. However, that one block of Finn will be rebuilt to a width of 36 feet to accommodate two-way traffic, parking on both sides of the street and a center turn lane. According to Jeff Bednar, an engineer with SRF Consulting Group, the design will

allow the street to be easily reconfigured in the future if traffic volume warrants it. The University of St. Thomas has long-term plans for further redevelopment on the blocks on either side of Finn.

The St. Thomas campus was expanded several years ago to include those two blocks. At the time, St. Thomas officials suggested closing Finn to all motorized traffic. However, that was vehemently opposed by nearby residents who regularly use the street.

WSNAC member Marc Manderscheid argued for banning parking on at least one side of Finn Street to improve traffic flow and safety, especially in the winter when snow piles up and narrows the roadway. Between 12 and 18 vehicles can park on that stretch of

Finn at any one time, according to St. Thomas vice president Doug Hennes, and a total parking ban would result in more motorists traversing adjacent residential streets looking for a place to park. Instead, WSNAC succeeded in pushing through a ban on parking at the corner of Finn and Summit to improve visibility.

St. Thomas has 120 underground parking spaces below the new McNeely Hall on the block east of Finn with plans to expand that to 250 or 300 spaces. The college's conditional use permit with the city calls for a total of 590 underground parking spaces on the two blocks.

Another portion of this summer's Cretin-Goodrich street repaving project is Goodrich

between Cretin and Mississippi River Boulevard. Part of that street is currently paved in bricks. The city's Department of Public Works has told residents that if the bricks are to be retained, the entire two-block stretch needs to be rebuilt with bricks.

Fifteen of the 17 homeowners on those two blocks have asked the city to rebuild the street with bricks at an additional cost to them and the city. However, the City Council will have the final say on that. The city typically pays 75 percent of the cost of street reconstruction, with the property owners picking up the remaining 25 percent. According to Public Works officials, repaving Goodrich with bricks on these two blocks will cost the city an additional \$180,000.

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1 ◀ CARNIVAL GNOMES

ganized the parade unit for the past 15 years, said Hi-lex officials first asked Troop 13 from St. Columba's Catholic Church if they'd like to wear the costumes in 1948. That was the year the heavier papier-mâché gnomes were retired in favor of around three dozen lighter and more durable plastic costumes, making them easier for the Scouts to handle. The Scouts first marched in the 1949 Winter Carnival and have done so each year since.

However, neither of the two milestones would have been reached if it weren't for Rosalie Wescott, the unsung patroness of the gnomes.

By 2000, KIK Corporation of Toronto had acquired the formerly St. Paul-based Hi-lex. In October of that year, a company vice president visited the warehouse in Eagan and told the employees there to get rid of the gnomes. Martin Nistler, an employee and former member of Troop 13, tried to explain the historic significance of the outfits, but the vice president would have none of it.

"Martin and another employee asked if they could take the gnomes," Wald said, "and the vice president said, 'I don't care. Just get them out of here.'"

Nistler and the other employee managed to save the two large gnomes—called "Hi" and "Lex"—and nine of the smaller ones, called "the Drips." The rest of the gnomes were destroyed.

The two men each kept a Drip and offered the other gnomes to Wally Wescott, who runs Wescott Station Antiques at West 7th and Chestnut streets. "I planned to sell them," Wescott said, "but then my wife (Rosalie) said she thought they'd been in the parade every year, including the year before. So I told her I'd put them in storage until we found out."

Meanwhile, Wald's sister-in-law phoned St. Paul Pioneer Press columnist Don Boxmeyer, who wrote a piece about the prospects for a gnome-less 2001 Winter Carnival parade. Boxmeyer's column, which described the gnomes as large "white-wrapped Hershey's kisses," was instrumental in keeping the gnomes in the parade, according to Wald. Boxmeyer died on August 10 of last year.

Another former Troop 13 Scout then contacted KIK Corporation CEO David Cynamon, who apologized for the destruction of the rest of the gnomes. He sent a \$1,000 check to the Winter Carnival and pledged to make an annual \$500 company donation to Troop 13. The troop uses the money to pay for transportation to summer camp every year.

Once Wescott learned that his wife was correct, he vowed never to sell the gnomes. He contacted Wald to say the few he had would



Kurt Wescott hangs a sign identifying the Hi-lex Gnomes and their ownership by Wescott Station Antiques. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

be available for the 2001 parade. Every year since then, Troop 13 picks up the gnomes before the parade and returns them afterward.

Before 2001, when there were more gnomes than Scouts, Wald asked the kids to bring along their friends to march in the parade. Though the numbers are now reversed, almost all the Scouts in Troop 13 get a chance to participate in the parade. It takes four Scouts to carry the two banners that are part of the parade unit: one that announces the gnomes and another that thanks Wescott Station. And though the Drips can manage on their own, someone has to stop and two tugs to start walking again—because it's hard to see out of the costumes.

Every year since his dad acquired the gnomes, son Kurt Wescott has spent hours erecting a Winter Carnival display in the shop's windows. "Lots of people stop by to look," Kurt said. The Winter Carnival items in the window, including one of the Drips, are not for sale, but lots of other carnival memorabilia inside the store are, he said.

Wally Wescott recalled a couple of men

CARNIVAL GNOMES ▶ 5



The Hi-lex Gnomes march in the 1949 St. Paul Winter Carnival parade with the help of Boy Scouts from Troop 13. MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO

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Winter Carnival highlights

St. Paul will once again play host to “The Coolest Celebration on Earth” when the 123rd Winter Carnival makes its 11-day run from January 22 to February 1. Here are some of this year’s carnival highlights:

Thursday, January 22—Ice carving competitions (through January 25) in Rice Park, Royal Coronation at St. Paul RiverCentre, WinterSkate Ice Rink (throughout the carnival) near Landmark Center, Royal Coronation at St. Paul RiverCentre.

Friday, January 23—Snow sculpting competition (through January 25) at the State Fairgrounds, Mixed Curling Bonspiel (through January 25) at the St. Paul Curling Club, Senior Coronation at the Paul & Sheila Wellstone Center, Fire & Ice Pee Wee Hockey Tournament (through January 25) at the State Fair Coliseum, Winter Carnival Blues Festival at Roy Wilkins Auditorium.

Saturday, January 24—Securian Frozen 5K and Half Marathon at 6th & Jackson streets, Winter Carnival Disc Sports Festival (also January 25) at Como Park, Midwest Gymnastics Winter Carnival Classic (also January 25) at St. Paul RiverCentre, Vulcan Coming Out Party at Mears Park, Orchid Show (also January 25) at the McNeely Conservatory, Winter on the Hill (also January 25, 31 and February 1) at the James J. Hill House, Proex Photo Contest (through January 31) at the Central Library, Grande Day Parade in downtown St. Paul, Klondike Kates Cabaret at the Holiday Inn East.

Sunday, January 25—Vulcans Fun Day in the Snow at the State Fairgrounds, Keep Movin’ at the Como Park Golf Course and Ski Hill, art tour at the state Capitol.

Monday, January 26—Showcase St. Paul Educational Program (through January 28) at the Science Museum of Minnesota.



Thursday, January 29—New reality show in Rice Park.

Friday, January 30—Candlelight tours and reading of the Royal Legend (also January 31) at the Central Library, Winter Carnival Memorabilia Exhibit (also January 31) at the Science Museum, AZ Gallery Kids Art Contest (also January 31) at 308 Prince St., Family Day (also January 31) at Landmark Center, Inflatable Snow Slide (also January 31) at Rice Park, World’s Toughest Rodeo (also January 31) at Xcel Energy Center.

Saturday, January 31—Family Day Green Events (also February 1) at Lake Phalen, “Fire on Ice” ice racing competition (also February 1) at Lake Phalen, Saintly City Cat Show (also February 1) at St. Paul RiverCentre, Torchlight Parade in downtown St. Paul, Vulcan overthrow of King Boreas near the steps of the Central Library, laser light show in Rice Park.

Sunday, February 1—Live remote broadcast of WCCO Radio at Tom Reid’s Hockey City Pub.

Most carnival events are free or offer a discount with a carnival button. Buttons come in four different designs and cost \$5.00 each. They are available at Cub Foods, Super-America, Snyders and other local retailers.

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4◀ CARNIVAL GNOMES

who stopped by last year. One of them asked how much the Drip cost.

“I told him it wasn’t for sale,” Wescott said. “Everything’s for sale,” his buddy said. I told them that if they handed me a check for \$10,000, I’d just hand it back. The guy grabbed my hand and said, ‘Good for you. I’m glad they’re not for sale. I’m a former Drip myself.’”

According to the Wescotts, lots of former Drips stop by the shop to reminisce about how cold it was or wasn’t inside the costume. Wald insists the costumes are plenty warm. “Every time someone wears a jacket inside, they come out sweating,” he said.

Wald remembers just one parade that

Troop 13 backed out of—a Torchlight Parade. “We used to do both parades,” he said, “but the year the ice palace was at Phalen Park they wanted us to park blocks away, walk to the parade route and then wait around for the parade to start. It was minus 20. We went home and haven’t done a Torchlight Parade since, but we’ve never missed a Grande Day Parade.”

Beth Pinkney, the new president and CEO of the carnival-sponsoring St. Paul Festival and Heritage Foundation, said this year’s Grande Day Parade will feature 150 units. The parade will step off at East 4th Street and Broadway Avenue and make its way down 4th, turn at Washington Avenue at Rice Park, and end at 5th Street and Cedar Avenue. For information, visit www.winter-carnival.com.

St. Paul requires site plan review for any new homes or duplexes

BY JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted on January 14 to require a city site plan review for any new single-family homes and duplexes built on empty lots in town. The council also asked the St. Paul Planning Commission to study potential design guidelines and recommend new regulations for such construction.

The ordinance and study were requested by City Council members Melvin Carter III, Dave Thune, Russ Stark and Lee Helgen, whose wards have been especially hard hit by mortgage foreclosures in recent years. Vacant and condemned homes are being torn down and replaced with new housing that is too large for their respective lots or otherwise

incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood, the City Council members said.

“They’re just as ugly as can be,” said council member Dan Bostrom of some of the new homes built in his East Side ward. “They just don’t fit into the surrounding neighborhood.”

A manufactured home was recently placed sideways on a 40-foot lot on Geranium Avenue on the city’s North End, according to Helgen. The side of the house facing Geranium has no windows or doors, just a blank wall. New houses need doors and windows facing the street as well as setbacks that match other houses in the area, Helgen said.

Until now, new single-family homes and duplexes in St. Paul did not need a site plan review unless a variance was sought to the city’s zoning regulations.

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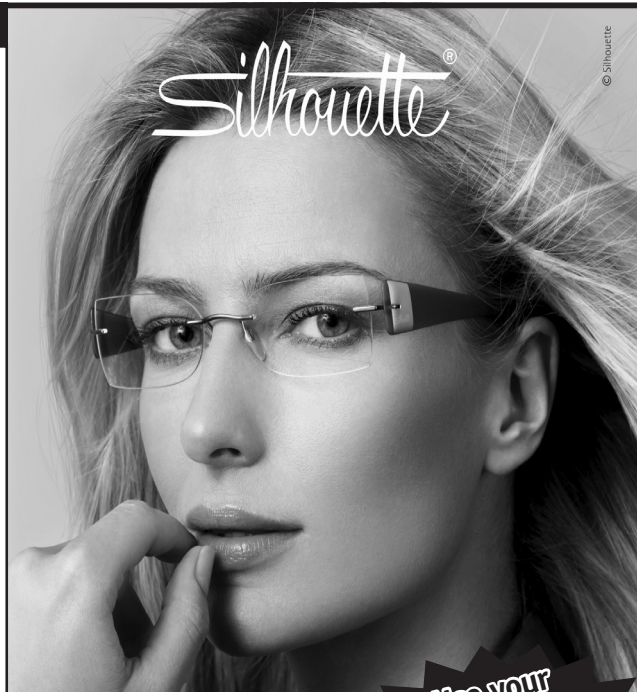
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Boosters pitch plan to improve youth ballfields at Dunning

By JANE MCCLURE

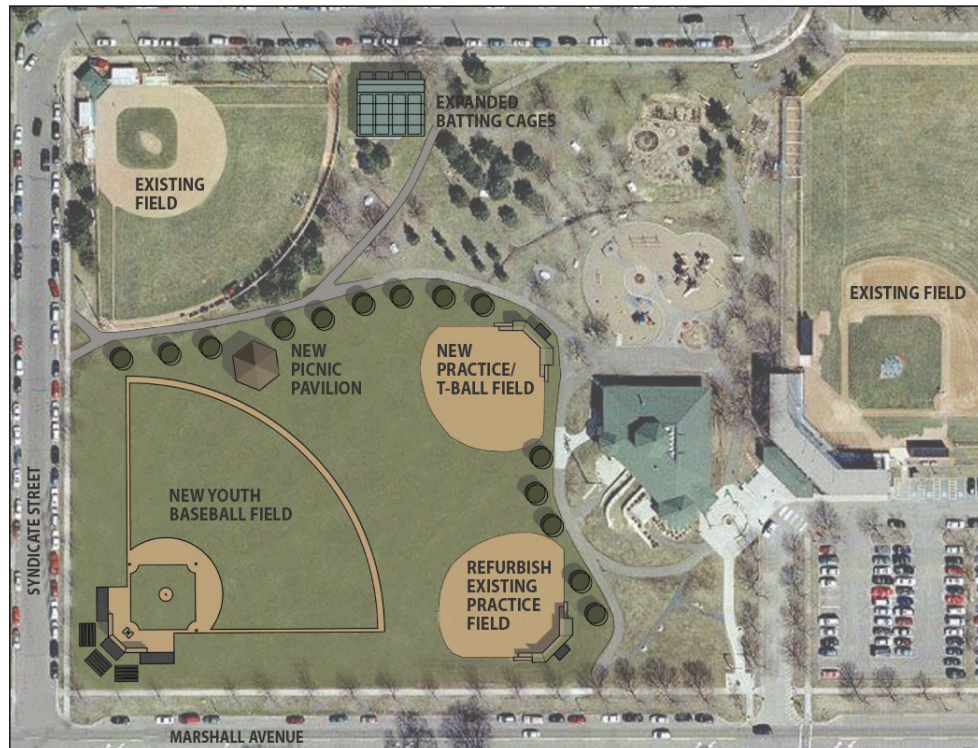
A proposal by booster club members to develop a new baseball field, practice/T-ball field and small picnic pavilion on the west half of Dunning Field will be reviewed by the Lexington-Hamline Community Council at 7:00 p.m. Monday, January 26, at the council offices, 1216 Selby Ave.

The new baseball field would be located at the northeast corner of Syndicate Street and Marshall Avenue, on an open area that is currently used for pickup baseball and soccer games. The picnic pavilion would be north of the new field and the practice/T-ball field would be just west of the Dunning Recreation Center. The proposal would also provide spectator seating on the slopes by Syndicate and Marshall, expanded batting cages, landscaping around the fields, and refurbishing of the existing practice field and driveway off of Marshall.

No city funds are being sought for the project. The Dunning Boosters hope to raise the money from outside grants and are working with the St. Paul Division of Parks and Recreation and the nonprofit group Friends of St. Paul Baseball. If funding can be obtained, work would start this summer and be complete in 2010.

The field plans have raised question for Lexington-Hamline residents as well as members of the Union Park District Council. UPDC members said on January 7 they want more details about the proposal and how it would affect other users of the west end of Dunning, which currently includes three ballfields, batting cages, open space and play equipment.

"People aren't necessarily for or against the proposal, but they'd like more information," said Barb Gunther, a Lexington-Hamline resident who serves on the district council.



The Dunning Boosters are proposing a new youth baseball field, practice/T-ball field and picnic pavilion on the northeast corner of Syndicate Street and Marshall Avenue.

Though many neighborhood children play organized ball at Dunning, she said there are also families who would like to have open space where kids can play without participating on a team. The corner where the new baseball field and hillside seating would go is currently used as a sledding hill.

"It just seems like a disproportionate amount of space there is dedicated to baseball," said UPDC member Mike Madden.

Jim Kelley, president of the Dunning Boosters, said there still would be open field space under the proposal and spectator seating would not totally eliminate the sledding hill.

He said the boosters are open to working with neighbors on the plans. "It's not our intent to kick anyone out," he said.

The booster club was formed in 1979 with three youth baseball teams serving ages 10-15. Now more than 300 kids play ball at Dunning. The club is affiliated with Little League Baseball serving kids ages 8-12 and the Minnesota Twins' Reviving Baseball in Inner-Cities (RBI) program for young people up to age 18. The club also oversees the Midway summer baseball program.

Kelley said the revamped fields would enable the boosters to establish T-ball for kids

ages 6-7 and add a fall baseball league for kids ages 10-13. It also would enable Dunning to serve as a host site for the RBI program.

One question that UPDC and Lexington-Hamline Community Council (LHCC) members would like to see addressed is the status of the Dunning Management Committee, a group composed of representatives from the LHCC, Dunning Boosters, Youth Express and Farm in the City. The committee was set up in 1978 after the LHCC successfully sued the city to demand a say in programming at Dunning. The agreement gave the committee control of the 7.5-acre area of Dunning west of Griggs Street. The city still controls the 11.5-acre area to the east, which is primarily used for adult softball and baseball.

The committee used to meet quarterly with city staff to schedule the Dunning facilities, with most of the focus on the rec center building. However, the committee has not met since the building was closed by the city a year ago. It is now leased to the nonprofit youth arts organization Arts-Us. Some district council members said they would like to see the management committee once again have more of a say in the use of Dunning.

Kelley said the boosters notified the district council of its plans last year, at a time when the UPDC was going through a staff change. The LHCC was also contacted. "We'd like to have been able to discuss our plans with them sooner, but we're willing to address issues now," he said.

The booster club has also shared its plans with other field users, including Higher Ground Academy, Concordia University and Central High School.

According to Kelley, the intent is to make sure no one is left without field space. "We have a lot of different field spaces and uses in what is a fairly small area," he said.

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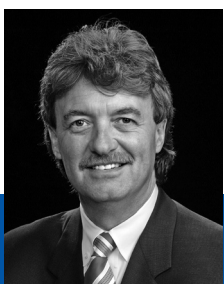
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Neighbors wary of Pride in Living's plan for new affordable housing on West 7th

Agency assures local residents of quality of apartments, tenants

BY JANE MCCLURE

More than 40 people turned out for a January 12 meeting of the Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee. Most of them were there to voice their opposition to Project for Pride in Living's plan to build a 44-unit apartment building at West 7th and Springfield streets, near the base of the Snelling Avenue hill. Most objections to the project centered on housing density, traffic and parking. Some also questioned whether the project would bring more crime to the neighborhood.

PPL plans to purchase and demolish six properties—three homes on Benson Avenue and two homes and the former Movie Station video rental business on West 7th. In their place, PPL would erect a three-story apartment building. The L-shaped structure would include 11 one-bedroom units, 22 two-bedroom units, and 11 three-bedroom units.

PPL is a 36-year-old nonprofit agency that helps families become self-sufficient through housing, job training, education and other services. Providing stable housing is at the core of PPL's mission, according to executive director Steve Cramer.

PPL, which served more than 12,000 people last year, owns or manages more than 800 housing units in St. Paul, Minneapolis, New Hope, Robbinsdale and St. Louis Park. More than 200 of those units are supportive housing where tenants are offered case management and other services.

Ten of the units in the Highland building would be supportive housing, offering rent assistance and services for families who have been homeless for long periods of time. PPL is still raising money for the project. It also needs a zoning variance from the city for lot size. A minimum lot size of two acres is required for that many units, and the property is 1.3 acres.

PPL is also seeking Low-Income

Housing Tax Credits from the city and the state to help pay for the \$1.5 million project. Those would be awarded by the St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, and by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. Last year the HRA provided \$100,000 to help PPL secure land for the project but declined to issue the housing tax credits until PPL had discussed the project with the neighborhood.

Construction could start as early as 2010 with occupancy in 2011. The development would pay \$27,000 per year in property taxes plus assessments.

Benson Avenue resident Randy Siegel told the HDC committee that he would welcome PPL to the neighborhood. "Would you rather see people in affordable housing and trying to make something of themselves or living in the street?" he asked.

Because the property is in an area where the side streets are not connected to the city's storm sewers, PPL plans to provide a system of swales and rain gardens, with some runoff reused for irrigation and other runoff diverted to storm sewers along West 7th. PPL would also pay to rebuild the streets adjacent to the project.

Benson Avenue resident Randy Siegel told the HDC committee that he would welcome PPL to the neighborhood and he encouraged others to do the same. Though he was heckled for his comments, he added, "Would you rather see people in affordable housing and trying to make something of themselves or living in the street?"

"In the street," one audience member replied.

Edgumbe Road resident Pat Fabio advised PPL officials that "If a neighborhood objects, you shouldn't subject (your tenants) to a hostile environment."

"I think your obligation is to turn this down," Hillcrest Avenue resident Marshall Johnson told the HDC committee.

PPL officials offered to give local residents tours of their other housing, and a handful of them signed up. "If we're so fearful about this coming in, the least we can do is sign up and visit one of their properties," said Juno Avenue resident Hal Clapp. He criticized opponents of the project for fear-mongering and some members of the HDC for speaking out against the project. "People in positions of power in this room are acting like children," he said.

Cramer challenged the assumptions some opponents had about prospective PPL tenants. Most of them will pay rent that, while affordable, isn't wholly subsidized, he said. To qualify for the housing, tenants may not make more than 50 to 60 percent of the Twin Cities area's median income, or no more than \$45,000 per year. "If this is like our other projects, people will be employed," Cramer said. "They won't make a lot of money, but they'll be employed."

All tenants in the building would have to undergo PPL's standard background check. Those not in the program for long-term homeless families would also need to have good credit and rental histories.

The HDC committee made no recommendation on the project. Instead it requested more information on the management of other PPL properties and on parking, traffic and housing density. Some local residents expressed concern that the neighborhood already has too much multi-family housing.

HDC board member Bill Poulos said the HDC should work to bring more businesses and jobs to the area rather than more housing. "My concern is that we're getting a lot of density—not just low-income people, but people in general," he said.

Several opponents of the project criticized local land use plans that call for multi-family housing on the PPL site. HDC committee chair Shawn Bartsh, who worked on both the Shepard-Davern Small Area Plan and the District 15 Plan, noted that the PPL site was rezoned for multi-family housing because it is on a bus line.

Rezoning recommended for new senior housing

BY JANE MCCLURE

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet are one step closer to building a new senior housing and health care facility at the southwest corner of Randolph and Fairview avenues. The St. Paul Planning Commission on January 16 recommended rezoning the property from single-family to multi-family residential and granted the project a conditional use permit to accommodate skilled care nursing and assisted living services.

The St. Paul City Council will vote on the rezoning request following a public hearing in February. Any zoning change will not affect the zoning of the adjacent College of St. Catherine campus, which will remain single-family residential.

The proposed housing and health care facility is a collaboration between the Sisters of St. Joseph and Presby-

terian Homes and Services. The sisters will continue to own the land and will share ownership of the buildings with Presbyterian Homes, which will also manage the facility and its services. Presbyterian Homes owns and manages a variety of senior housing, hospital and health care facilities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

The new four-story complex will replace the five-story Bethany Convent and will be connected to the sisters' adjacent Carondelet Center, chapel and Provincial House. The plan is to set the new buildings back from Fairview Avenue to save as many trees as possible and allow for additional landscaping. Construction could begin as early as summer and be completed by 2011.

The new complex will provide up to 152 independent-living apartments, 52 assisted-living apartments and 40 care center suites. Member of the Sisters of St. Joseph will be given first priority in

living there, but about 30 percent of the units are expected to be available to the general public.

A variety of medical services will be available for residents of the facility and the surrounding neighborhoods. Congregate dining and classes and activities in spiritual and educational development will also be offered.

According to project planners, the new complex is not expected to generate much additional traffic. The plans submitted to the city call for 204 off-street parking spaces, including 142 in a parking garage. The city requires a total of 108 off-street parking spaces for residents and employees of a facility of that nature.

City staff recommended approval of both the zoning change and the conditional use permit, as did the Highland District Council. City staff approval of the site plan for the project is still pending.

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Viewpoint

Minnesota's new unsettling reality

BY DANE SMITH

The Minnesota Budget Trends Study Commission recently issued a solid, credible, even compelling analysis of the current condition of the state's economy and the state's long-term budget challenges.

Chaired by former finance commissioner Jay Kiedrowski and former human services commissioner Kevin Goodno, the commission was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2007 to study the implications of demographic trends for future state budgets, including expected revenue collections and expected spending for state government services and local services supported by state revenue.

The 15-member commission consisted of five members appointed by the governor, five appointed by the Senate's Subcommittee on Committees, four appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

The report did not write a prescription for resolving Minnesota's current budget crisis—that wasn't the purpose of the commission—but it's hard to see how the commission's recommendations can be adopted while clinging to the no-new-taxes orthodoxy that has prevailed in Minnesota over the past decade. The most important features of the commission's report are these:

- Official recognition that our state's economy in recent years has underperformed in comparison to the rest of the nation—a new and unsettling reality for Minnesota.
- Demographic trends clearly indicate that there will soon be a much higher proportion of our citizens in both the dawn and twilight of their lives. And that segment of the population is much more dependent on both public investment (schools and other early-childhood needs) and economic security safeguards (health care and other support for seniors).
- Inflation should be figured into all state budget forecasts so that budget decisions can be made based on more accurate fiscal assumptions.
- The commission recognized the volatility inherent in Minnesota's revenue system, but it did not recommend further reductions in state income taxes or a sweeping overhaul of the tax system.
- Budget and cash-flow reserves must be restored to the state treasury. With a projected shortfall of more than \$5 billion over the next two years, it's unrealistic to expect that near-term restoration can occur without some combination of spending cuts and revenue increases.
- Shifts and other accounting gimmicks, which have been used in the past to balance state budgets in lieu of spending cuts and revenue increases, must be avoided.

But perhaps the most important language in the report can be found in its very first paragraph, which gives credit to private and public investment for having created and sustained Minnesota's prosperity and quality of life: "Prudent and adequate investments in education, infrastructure and technology have fueled enhanced productivity, innovation and global competitiveness. Overall, Minnesota's economic growth rate has outpaced the national average and the state has led in many social and economic indicators."

It's mostly our once amply funded public sector that has provided vital educational and infrastructure investments. We had relatively higher taxes for many decades, but also one of the best and smartest work forces in the nation and public works systems and public higher-education facilities that were the envy of other states. At the same time, we had relatively more generous economic security safeguards for the elderly and low-income and working-class families, expanding their purchasing power and relative prosperity.

The experiment with tax cuts for high-income earners, a no-new-taxes dogma in the face of ongoing budget crises, and disinvestment in our public sector have not produced the economic growth that was predicted. In fact, the opposite is true and Minnesota is now slipping as measured by both economic and quality-of-life indicators.

Dane Smith, a resident of Highland Park, is the president of Growth & Justice, a nonpartisan organization that advocates for fair taxation and smart public investments as the foundation for a just society.



With early voting, it could be over before the fat lady even warms up.

Inbox

The many sides of Mary Jane

To the editor:

Re: "Death of a perennial candidate" (January 7 *Villager*): I shamelessly took advantage of Mary Jane Rachner's reputation as a crank and filed against her in the 1984 Republican primary election for the District 4 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. I thought that an unknown candidate like me might be preferable to a known "zany" like her. Little did I know. Mary Jane got the votes and became the nominee. As a Republican, I was something of a ringer and Mary Jane deserved to win. During the course of that campaign, I got to know Mary Jane and realized that it was wrong to think of her as a "little old lady in tennis shoes."

We competed again in a St. Paul School Board election. I saw another side of Mary Jane that time, too. When the School Board candidates gathered for an Urban League forum, the genuine pleasure with which the people greeted Mary Jane was due to the fact that in her spare time she volunteered as a tutor for disadvantaged school children. Of course, Mary Jane would not have uttered a word like "disadvantaged." She would have used plain English.

Mary Jane once used a large, fake spider as a campaign prop to tease those who reacted to her as if she were crazy and they had "A-Rachner-phobia." I heard her impeccable objection to a proposed diversity curriculum: "Diversity is a fact. You don't teach diversity. You might try to teach tolerance." Yet Mary Jane sounded like the very apostle of intolerance all too often with her own flagrant homophobic prejudices, which were "principles" in her mind.

It was many years later that I learned about her automobile crash in the 1970s, which must have had lasting aftereffects. To recover as much as she did, and to persevere in spite of it and all the ridicule she received because of her eccentricities, was a testament to her determination and strength of character.

Mary Jane wasn't easy to pigeonhole politically. She changed at one point from a scripted "drug war" advocate to a reformist in opposing prohibition. When Minneapolis police



Mary Jane Rachner in 1985.

killed an elderly African-American couple in a mistaken-address drug raid, Mary Jane went to the victims' funerals. She told me there were few people there. She believed the entire city should have attended.

After her years of go-it-alone politicking, her election to the Ramsey County Board of Soil and Water Commissioners gave her the chance to savor an electoral triumph. In the quirky ranks of perennial candidates, a few are one-time winners turned perpetual losers, such as Harold Stassen and Dick Franson. Most of the others only encounter contempt or indifference. But fate capped Mary Jane's career with the reward she had longed for—election, at last, to a position of trust and service. Good for her!

*Oliver Steinberg
St. Anthony Park*

IRV fails constitutionality test

To the editor:

Troy Trooien argues that it is somehow wrong for a winning candidate to have more votes against than for (*Villager* Inbox, January 7), as is often the case in our system of plurality elections. This argument is not only misguided, but irrelevant.

Seemingly, the proponents of instant runoff voting (IRV) have found a solution to a non-problem. It does not and should not matter what the winning candidate's margin of victory is. Fifty-two percent, 66 percent, 103 percent—if the IRV backroom math is applied long enough, any result is possible. That is one of the reasons why preferential voting schemes were ruled unconstitutional in Minnesota.

The other tired old argument IRV advocates suggest is that we can just go shotgun an election, eliminating caucuses and primaries. This is foolish. It would drastically diminish interest and participation in the important, long and, yes, occasionally unpleasant process of sorting out our candidates.

I support empowering the voter with clarity, rules and a process that treat each vote and voter equally, with an understanding of, confidence in and reliance upon the counting methods and results. One voter, one vote, counted fairly and equally. IRV fails this test.

*Mike Beach
Merriam Park*

Renewable fuels won't solve looming energy crisis

By ROLF E. WESTGARD

In its latest annual energy outlook, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts that U.S. wind turbines will supply 101 billion kilowatt hours (bkwh) of electricity to the country's electrical power grids in the year 2020. That's just 2.14 percent of the total U.S. electric power supply of 4,723 bkwh projected for 2020. Undeterred, the Minnesota Legislature has passed SF0004, the Renewable Energy Standard Bill, which requires our largest utility, Xcel Energy, to get 25 percent of its energy from wind turbines in 2020, or 10 times the wind contribution estimated by the EIA.

There's a reason for the EIA analysts' caution. Unlike conventional fuels for electrical power—coal, natural gas and nuclear power—wind power is erratic and intermittent. It will turn itself on and off whether the electric grid needs it or not. Denmark's electric grid is widely reported to get 20-30 percent of its power from wind energy. It doesn't. Denmark's 5,300 wind turbines are capable of producing 20 percent of Denmark's total electric demand, but when they do, Denmark has to look around for somebody to buy it, since the grid can't

use most of the wind power at the time it's generated.

Hundreds of giant corn-to-ethyl-alcohol stills now dot the Midwest landscape. They use 4/10ths of a bushel of corn to produce one gallon of ethanol, which currently sells for \$1.65. The raw corn for this gallon of ethanol costs \$1.65, and that doesn't include the costs of production and transportation.

Even with a 30- to 35-cent benefit from selling byproduct animal feed, ethanol production doesn't pencil out. This is a major reason why VeraSun, our largest ethanol producer, recently declared bankruptcy. And the wholesale price of gasoline, which has 30 percent more energy than ethanol, is currently \$1.09 per gallon. For ethanol to account for 20 percent of our gasoline supply, we'd need our entire 10 billion bushel corn crop.

Another frequently overlooked issue is the time required to bring a major new fuel to the world's energy supply. Until the mid-19th century, wood burning powered the world. Coal gradually surpassed wood in the first part of the 20th century. Oil was discovered in the 1860s, but it was a century before it surpassed coal as our largest energy fuel. The world has invested trillions of dollars

in the infrastructure to mine, process, and deliver coal and petroleum. As professor Vaclav Smil of the University of Manitoba recently put it, "It is delusional to think that the U.S. can install in 10 years the wind and solar generating capacity equivalent to that of thermal power plants that took nearly 60 years to construct."

There's a role in our energy supply for alternative sources like wind and biofuels. However, the assumption that they'll make a major contribution in the near-term is distracting us from hard choices involving conservation and lifestyle changes.

We do have a looming energy crisis. Coal is a growing environmental problem, and oil supplies may well peak in the near future. We need to improve energy-efficiency with upgraded buildings, high-mileage vehicles and electric public transportation. However, well-intentioned statements that we can repower our electricity generation in a decade with alternative fuels are delusions we cannot afford to harbor.

A resident of Macalester-Groveland, Rolf Westgard is a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Geological Society of America.

8◀ INBOX

Bike boulevard fits city's plan

To the editor:

I was amused by two letters to the editor in the recent *Villager* regarding the proposed bicycle boulevard on Highland Parkway. I attended and spoke at several meetings of the Highland District Council (HDC), and it was evident from almost the beginning that being open-minded is not a requirement to serve.

Letter writer Roger Maulik and the HDC committee have been vocal from the beginning that in their view the Highland Parkway route is unsafe for cyclists. If safety is the primary concern, then the Highland Parkway route should pose no problems whatsoever. The bicycle boulevard does not change parking or access for those who live on Highland Parkway. The proposal does include lowering the speed limit from the current 30 mph to 25 mph and adding signs indicating that the route gives priority to cyclists. This provides a safe east-west cycling route and should redirect some vehicular traffic away from the parkway to other streets like Ford Parkway.

Mr. Maulik suggests adding striped bike lanes as an alternative. Cyclists would certainly welcome that, but given the width of the streets, that would probably require banning on-street parking, something I'm sure Mr. Maulik and the HDC committee would take issue with.

Letter writer Chuck Lennon feels that cyclists are a "blight" and generally law-breaking scofflaws. This topic has been debated before, and while there are certainly bicyclists who do not obey traffic laws,

there are certainly more drivers who ignore them as well. May I suggest that Mr. Lennon go sit on a street corner in Stillwater some summer weekend and watch and especially listen to the other two-wheel machines that roll through the streets. Unlike motorcyclists, bicyclists don't make noise and don't pollute. We pay taxes and have the same rights to use the roadways.

I hope that Pat Harris and the rest of the St. Paul City Council can look at the big-picture advantages of having a bicycle boulevard on Highland Parkway. It adds to the increased cycling infrastructure that the city is looking and planning for, connects to the extensive bicycling trails in Minneapolis, and provides a safe venue for cyclists from all over the metropolitan area to travel through our beautiful neighborhoods. Voting for this project would exhibit both leadership and a willingness to consider the needs of the entire city over the objections of a few.

*Kevin MacAfee
Macalester-Groveland*

Standing with Israel

To the editor:

As one of the delegates on the Minnesota trade mission to Israel last month, I know that the carefully planned mission is succeeding in building Minnesota trade and business with Israel. This benefits all Minnesotans.

INBOX ▶ 10

VILLAGER

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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It's winter in Minnesota: Smile and your lips might crack

BY BILL STIEGER

A friend of mine was cross-country skiing the other day when he called me from his cell phone to extol the benefits of exercising outdoors during the winter. Between laborious exhalations, he spoke of the breathtaking view from his perch atop a hill at the local golf course and offered to outfit me with his extra pair of skis.

"Sure," I said, "I'll be right there, as soon as I learn to play the piano. Are you kidding? I'm freezing right here in my own living room!"

"But you'll feel so much warmer when you get home after skiing," he said.

We all know the type: the Minnesotan, often of Scandinavian descent, who revels in spending a weekend in January camped on a frozen lake, who loves to compete in snowshoe marathons, who on a dare will don a swimsuit and jump through a hole in the ice.

Not me. I am utterly bereft of the Aryan heartiness required for winter jollity. Unlike my Nordic brethren, I don't feel exhilaration upon the endurance of misery. I take no pleasure in seeing snow snaking across a highway in a polar wind. Frozen stars winking in an inky black sky do not warm my soul.

The miseries of winter are endless. The season unfolds in a string of infirmities. December begins with a near-tubercular cough, and the aptly named "crud" hangs on through the holidays. Influenza follows in January, forcing you to spend at least one night camped out in a sleeping bag beside the bathroom toilet. Coughing,



Nobody told Jack Fenlon (right) and Nick Tucci about the miseries of winter. Along with a horde of other hearty Minnesotans, the 7-year-olds scored with an afternoon of fun during Frost Fest last Saturday at the Groveland Recreation Center. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

hacking, sneezing—you hear it constantly in Minnesota whenever you're in a crowd. Your child comes home from school with viruses that your doctor cannot treat. The parched air chaps your lips and makes them bleed if you do ever happen to smile. In winter, no good humor goes unpunished.

Then, of course, there are the seasonal

miseries inflicted by the automobile: the starter that ululates in descending tempo as your car battery expires, the tires that go flat in subzero temps, the two-handed gyrations and high-pitched screeches of scraping ice off a windshield. Your mechanic begins to call you by your first name, and he's even got your credit card number memorized.

And there's the shoveling, shoveling, shoveling. Or the snowblowing, snowblowing, snowblowing. The former will blow out a disc in your back or burst your aorta. The latter will chew up your arm if you're not careful clearing out the blades. Whichever method you use to remove the snow, the ice will remain on your sidewalk and steps. So keep your letter carrier in your prayers lest you find yourself subpoenaed by the U.S. Postal Service.

Winter invariably involves the discovery of an empty bank account. Even those who are fortunate enough to remain employed can be overwhelmed by heating bills or credit cards maxed out by holiday giving. The aforementioned automobile expenses, the hats, mittens, gloves, boots and thermal underwear that somehow vanish and need restocking every December...well, I've heard of "pay to play," but "pay to stay miserable" presses up against the few principles I try to live by.

At the outset of every winter, I'm reminded of the wisdom of bears. Do you think they hibernate through the season because of the cold? Of course not. They're born wearing bearskin coats. No, they hibernate because of all the work that's involved in surviving winter. It isn't worth the effort.

Bears merely slow their metabolism and while away the winter without getting hungry. Smart thinking in my book. While the bears are sleeping in comfort, I'm out in my garage coughing and sneezing while foraging for the jumper cables. Little do I know that my girlfriend's car isn't going to start this morning either.

9◀ INBOX

Unlike the radical regimes supporting terrorists, both the U.S. and Israel are democracies allowing freedom of speech where hateful lies compete with truths for the public's attention. Israel's sworn enemies are tyrants denying freedom of speech and the press and fanatics who use people as human shields for hidden offensive weapons. They also train children as homicidal terrorist martyrs, opposing peace at any cost.

While Israel, a country smaller than New Jersey, works to defend itself from daily Hamas rocket and mortar attacks against civilians, a perverted propaganda machine spews lies to support those dedicated to Israel's destruction. Hamas receives oil money to support propaganda and terrorists. Israel has only friends of the truth. Israel takes great risk to notify thousands of Gaza civilians to evacuate before they are about to strike a terrorist military target. Hamas does no such thing when intentionally attacking Israeli civilians daily.

President Obama has wisely recognized that Israel must defend her right to exist and protect her children, just as he would protect his children. I proudly stand with Israel, fighting for a secure two-state solution and a sustainable peace in the Middle East.

Brian H. Davis
Highland Park

Partisanship and the Bush years

To the editor:

Since we're looking back at the last eight years, I'd like to reflect on some of the most memorable moments of the hyper-partisans who never failed to use an issue to further their own political agenda. Every misstep by the U.S. in Iraq was highlighted, while every suicide bombing of the innocent was ignored. I don't recall seeing anyone taking to the streets to protest suicide bombing.

Who could forget Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's insistence in early 2007 that the war in Iraq was lost, placing our brave soldiers in even greater harm's way by encouraging the enemy to fight even harder. I wonder what FDR would've done about a senator who made this type of statement during World War II. When General Petraeus testified before Congress in 2007, Senator Hillary Clinton had the audacity to insult him by telling him his progress report requires "a willing suspension of disbelief."

Now we know that the general was right; his surge strategy worked. Yet the hyper-partisans still won't give any credit to the troops who sacrificed so much. Read David Bellavia's book, *House to House*, about the battle for Fallujah and tell

me our troops didn't make a huge difference. Even the I-35W bridge collapse brought new opportunity for the hyper-partisans, who quickly seized on the tragedy for their own political advantage. The final NTSB report proved them all wrong, of course.

I could go on, but would it really matter to the hyper-partisans who are so blinded by their own hate and rage?

Walter J. Huemmer
Highland Park

Let us respect all human life

To the editor:

The Nazi Holocaust was the worst thing that was ever allowed to happen in history. In Germany, physicians were led into participating in the "final solution" of the mass extermination of Jews. One of the earliest steps toward this mass extermination was euthanasia performed on vulnerable infants and children with severe disabilities. The euthanasia was justified on the grounds that the children's quality of life was limited. The circle of people considered to be unworthy of life was gradually expanded to include criminals, homosexuals and finally people of the Jewish faith.

How did it happen? Why couldn't someone or some nation have prevented it? Were people afraid to speak out for fear of being persecuted themselves? The Holocaust was a horrific part of history and remains painful to this day.

What is happening currently with the abortion of unborn children is painful to me. From 1973 to 2007, the state Department of Health reported 530,314 abortions in Minnesota. During that same time, the U.S. recorded 49,523,945 abortions. That is one baby aborted every 26 seconds, or 3,304 babies every day.

How did it get to this point? How can we as Americans sit by and allow this to happen? Has the propaganda that everyone has the "freedom to choose," even if it means the death of so many babies, become acceptable within our culture? Are we afraid to speak out of fear of being persecuted?

This is not a political issue. It is about respect for all human life. It doesn't matter if we are a baby in the womb, a 1-day-old baby, handicapped, elderly, learning-disabled or an Alzheimer's patient. We must not be afraid to respect each and every human life.

The babies who are being aborted cannot speak for themselves. We must speak for them. We must tell our U.S. representatives, senators and President Barack Obama to not support the Freedom of Choice Act. This act would remove all limitations on abortion, even the modest restraints and

regulations on abortion that we currently have. Partial-birth abortion would again be legal. The parental notification law would no longer be in effect. Girls of any age would be able to obtain an abortion without the consent of their parents. Those babies who are born alive after an abortion would not be guaranteed care or protection. Your tax dollars could be used to help fund abortion.

Why don't we use our tax dollars to help give mothers the freedom to choose life by getting them care during their pregnancy, assisting them with food stamps, housing, education and child care or helping them make other choices such as adoption? Let us as a nation make sure that all are given the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Katie Dauer
Highland Park

The kindness of Clo-Spin

To the editor:

I have been a patron of Clo-Spin Cleaners on St. Clair Avenue for eight months, and I have never had a bad experience at this establishment. Rather, I should say that I have had nothing but good experiences. The management is always friendly and accommodating, keeping the equipment up to date and in fine working order. The best thing, though, is my fellow patrons.

A few months ago I had to leave in between loads and realized that I had left my laundry money sitting on top of my machine. Upon returning, I found that someone had placed a box over the money to dissuade anyone from taking it. Just the other night I found that I had left some nice clothes and, returning the next day, found them waiting for me. It's experiences like these that revive my faith in humanity and make me proud to be a member of the St. Paul community.

Thank you, Clo-Spin Cleaners and fellow patrons.

Tyson Nimmick
Summit Hill

Do write, won't you?

The *Villager* welcomes letters to the editors. In fact, the more the merrier. To be considered for publication, however, letters must be signed and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Please send your letter to the *Villager* at 757 S. Snelling Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116, e-mail letters@myvillager.com or fax it to 651-699-6501.

MPR, Met Council agree to hear each other out on light-rail noise

By JANE McCLURE

Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) officials and members of the Central Corridor light-rail project staff are trying to get on the same frequency regarding noise and vibration mitigation. However, whether the two sides can reach an agreement and not jeopardize the \$914 million light-rail project remains to be seen.

An agreement to work together on the noise and vibration issues over the next month was announced on January 14 during the Metropolitan Council's Corridor Management Committee meeting. Earlier that day, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman met with MPR and Metropolitan Council representatives to see if the two sides could work something out.

Last month, MPR threatened to sue over the light-rail project, saying that noise and vibrations from the light-rail trains would have an adverse impact on its Cedar Avenue broadcasting complex. The rhetoric became so heated that at one point MPR threatened to move out of downtown St. Paul if the light-rail project proceeds as planned.

The threat of a lawsuit sparked a war of words, with Met Council chairman Peter Bell, rail advocates and elected officials on one side and MPR and its advocates on another. MPR has waged a high-profile campaign on its stations and website to raise concerns about the potential negative impact from light-rail trains running past its facility. Central Corridor project staff have been hearing from MPR supporters from as far away as Japan.

In December, Bell posted a letter on the Met Council's website pointing out that Cedar Avenue is the best option for light rail in downtown St. Paul. He cited the many years of study and noted that making changes to the project at this late point would delay the start of construction by at least a year.

On January 14, Bell sounded a more conciliatory tone. "I think MPR has raised some valid and legitimate concerns," he said. Bell believes measures can be taken that would

address MPR's concerns.

However, MPR president Bill Kling remains unconvinced. He made it clear that if necessary MPR would take measures to protect its facilities and mission. He also made it clear that participation in the month-long process does not commit MPR to accept the results.

The ongoing debate, as well as a request from the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), has already pushed back the rail project's timeline. Plans to send a final environmental impact statement draft to the FTA on January 12 have been postponed at the agency's request. "They said it would behoove the project to bolster our document on noise and vibration issues," said Central Corridor project manager Mark Fuhrman.

The FTA would also like more time to review design features and conduct a financial analysis. The delays have postponed a federal decision on final design from July to September. Fuhrman said construction of the rail line would not start until the fall of 2010 and not that summer. The line is still expected to be completed in 2014 as planned.

Although a fall construction start may not be ideal Fuhrman indicated it was better than losing an entire season.

Much of the Corridor Management Committee's time on January 14 was spent discussing how to mitigate noise and vibration from the light-rail trains. Reducing vibration would have to be done as the line is built. Rail tracks can be placed on a floating slab built on top of large metal coils. Insulation made from shredded tires can also be used with floating-slab technology, or rubber and metal resilient fasteners could be placed on the track to mitigate vibrations.

Mitigating noise may come down to simply not sounding the trains' bells and horns. MPR already deals with emergency vehicles from a nearby fire station whose sirens register at 100 decibels. The bells from the nearby Church of St. Louis and Central Presbyterian Church are 83 decibels. A light-rail train horn is 95 decibels and its bell is 79 decibels.

Met Council plan puts faster buses on Snelling, West 7th

The Metropolitan Council voted on January 14 to adopt its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan, which attempts to address the region's transportation needs by the year 2030. Several new transitways are included in the plan, include light rail, commuter rail, dedicated busways, and rapid transit bus routes. The 200-page document also calls for more bus routes, bus and car pool lanes, bus routes on highway shoulders, and toll roads. A key proposal is to conduct a study by 2010 of ways to better move people through the area's major transportation corridors.

Locally, the 2030 plan calls for studies of rapid transit bus routes on nine arterial streets, including West 7th Street and Snelling Avenue. The routes, which would provide faster and higher-frequency bus service, can

be implemented more quickly and more cost-effectively than light rail or dedicated busways, the report noted.

The plan would put one rapid transit bus route on Snelling Avenue from Rosedale to Ford Parkway, then through Highland Village and over the Ford Bridge to the Hiawatha light-rail line. The West 7th rapid transit bus route would be just one segment of a line between Maplewood Mall and I-494 and eventually on to Eden Prairie.

The plan also calls for more north-south bus routes to serve the planned Central Corridor light-rail line, including a proposed route on Lexington Parkway. City officials believe the connection to the Central Corridor warrants trying that route again. Lexington had a bus route in the 1990s, but it was cut due to low ridership.

For more information on the 2030 transportation plan, visit www.metrocouncil.org.

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City officials strive for less painful ways to balance budget

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul officials are hoping to have a better idea by January 28 of what will and what won't have to be cut to balance the city's 2009 budget. Suggestions made last week by City Council members and city staff ranged from eliminating 2009 street paving projects to encouraging city employees to retire early or take unpaid leaves.

"We have to assume we're going to take a cut in aid from the state and that it's going to be substantial," said City Council president Kathy Lantry.

Minnesota officials indicated late last year that the state deficit for the 2009-2011 biennium could be \$4.8 billion. Members of the city's legislative delegation have since informed the City Council that the actual deficit could be closer to \$7 billion. City officials should know shortly. Governor Tim Pawlenty is scheduled to unveil his proposed state budget by the end of January, and a new financial forecast for Minnesota is expected in early February.

"There'll probably be permanent adjustments to the aid we get from the state," said city finance director Margaret Kelly. "All indications are that it's going to get worse."

City departments are already drawing up plans to cut spending by as much as 20 percent, as ordered by Mayor Chris Coleman in

December. Department heads are also looking at restructuring their operations for the long term. St. Paul has about 3,300 employees, and about 80 percent of the city's expenses are in personnel, so staff cuts are inevitable. City officials are also considering a package of incentives to encourage employees to retire.

About 180 city workers could retire now and receive full pensions, Kelly said, but she does not expect more than 55 of them to accept the retirement package. "It's probably a tough time to suggest retirement," Kelly said, noting the many people who have seen their savings eroded over the past year by the stock market's downturn. In a typical year, 80 to 100 city employees retire, she said, but in 2008 fewer than 50 did.

The retirement incentives are still being discussed, but could include a lump sum payment or the payment of health care costs. The package would only be available for a short time. Employees would have to decide to accept it by early February and retire by the end of February.

Despite the city hiring freeze imposed by Coleman last month, the positions of retirees may still be filled, Kelly said. However, city departments also may realign job duties or fill positions at a lower salary.

The city's labor unions have been "very receptive" to the idea of retirement incentives,

according to Angie Nalezny, the head of human resources for the city.

Coleman has frozen the salaries of the city's approximately 70 nonunion employees, including himself and his appointees. Coleman is also encouraging the City Council to freeze its salaries and the salaries of its staff.

The City Council is also considering slashing spending on capital improvements. Earlier this month, the council gave preliminary approval to a winter bond sale for such projects as the 2009 residential street-paving program, the 2009 Capital Improvement Budget and the new fire station now under construction at West 7th Street and Randolph Avenue. However, it is possible that part of the bond sale could be canceled.

"Are there capital projects that can be delayed or stopped?" asked Ward 2 City Council member Dave Thune. "If it comes down to closing a rec center versus fixing a street, I know which way I'd go."

It isn't clear what impact canceling the bond sale would have. Most of the projects approved for 2008-2009 have either been completed or are under way. One street repaving project that could be on the chopping block is the Cretin-Goodrich project in the northwest corner of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood.

The City Council has asked the mayor to clamp down on spending on supplies, equip-

ment, leases and consulting contracts. Currently, Coleman must sign off on any city purchases of \$5,000 or more. Some council members would like to see that threshold lowered to \$1,000. The council has asked for lists of city purchases planned for 2009 to see what can be postponed.

Then there is the issue of unfunded mandates from the state. According to Lantry, the Minnesota League of Cities is preparing a presentation for state lawmakers to show them how much the programs that are mandated by state law are costing cities. St. Paul City Council members said it is likely the city's 2009 legislative agenda will be amended to ask for the repeal of some state mandates.

One state-mandated expense that is being targeted by the City Council is the requirement to publish notices of meeting minutes, new ordinances, public hearings and other information in a legal newspaper. Cities, counties and school districts have tried for years to get that law changed to allow for publication on the Internet. However, their efforts have been opposed by data practices advocates and the Minnesota Newspaper Association.

That single state requirement cost the city of St. Paul more than \$50,000 last year. "That may not sound like much in the larger scheme of things," Thune said, "but to me it's another job position that could be saved."

St. Paul police get passing grade, ideas for improvement

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul has a good Police Department that has yet to reach its full potential, according to a report presented to the St. Paul City Council on January 14 by Ohio-based Berkshire Advisors. The report suggested that the Police Department needs to be committed to providing more community policing services through its work with neighborhood groups and block clubs. The report will now go to police administration and union representatives for their review.

The report comes when the city is in a hiring freeze and budget cuts loom on the horizon. The 14 new officers who were to be added to the force in 2009 have been placed on hold. Also shelved was a proposal to promote about half a dozen officers to sergeant to enhance department management.

Mayor Chris Coleman and Police Chief John Harrington praised the report. "Given the tight budget times we're working in, we

need this assessment," Harrington said.

Coleman said it was crucial to gain an outsider's perspective on the city's police operations. He added that St. Paul also must recommit itself to community policing.

Dave Titus, head of the Police Federation, said he looked forward to reviewing the report in more detail. "If we can save some money here and there, make the streets safer and make things safer for cops on the street—great," he said.

Along with the need to spend more time on community policing, the report focused on departmental management. It expressed concern that the department lacks a firm hand and cited the need to set clear performance goals and expectations, and to provide more training for managers.

Other recommendations in the report include the following:

- Dropping the city's mounted patrol or cutting it back to summers only.
- Trimming the canine unit by redeploying



The mounted patrol at National Night Out.

nine of 21 positions.

- Adding a crime data analyst to each of the three police districts.
- Moving officers to a new unit that would focus on "career criminals."
- Making changes to the Police-Civilian Internal Affairs Commission, whose effectiveness was criticized in the report. Recom-

mendations included having the commission report to the mayor's office, not allowing police to be voting members and allowing the commission to appoint independent investigators as needed.

- Setting up problem-oriented policing units in each of the city's three police districts.
- Increasing the amount of proactive time an officer has to about one-third of his or her schedule. The report said that would counter concerns that officers tend to be more reactive, running from call to call rather than working to prevent problems from occurring.

• Eliminating two-person patrol cars. However, that would mean adding squad cars at a time when the city is looking at cutting costs.

The Police Department has added 75 officers in the past three years and now has about 600 sworn officers. However, the management and communications structures have not kept up with that growth, according to the report, nor have investments in squad cars and equipment.

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News Briefs

City debates early closing for restaurants serving wine, beer

The St. Paul City Council will continue its public hearing on Wednesday, January 21, on whether to require restaurants with wine and beer licenses to close no later than 1:00 a.m. Restaurants with full liquor licenses are allowed to close as late as 2:00 a.m. under state law.

According to Christine Rozek of the city's Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI), the change is needed because several restaurants have been using their wine and beer licenses to operate as de facto nightclubs. The city has revoked some of those licenses, and last year it prohibited restaurants with wine and beer licenses from offering large-scale entertainment.

The city requires businesses with wine and beer licenses to demonstrate that at least 60 percent of their annual revenue comes from food sales.

City Council member Lee Helgen said that a handful of restaurant owners in his Ward 5 have "lied over and over again" about meeting the city's requirement to serve food with beer or wine orders. "We have places that have operated as nightclubs on the cheap," he said. According to him, the result has created neighborhood nuisances.

Ward 3 City Council member Pat Harris said he wants the earlier closing time applied only to new wine and beer licenses. Businesses that are not causing problems should not be penalized, he said. However, Ward 4 council member Russ Stark questioned whether that would be fair to new license holders.

Planet Ink fined for piercing without parental consent

The St. Paul City Council voted on January 7 to fine a University Avenue tattoo parlor \$700 for allowing a 14-year-old girl to have her tongue pierced without parental consent. Jennifer Cobb, the owner of Planet Ink at 1449 University Ave., had asked the city to waive the fine, citing economic hardship. "Nobody right now is doing very good," she said.

The piercing came to light in November 2007 when the father of the 14-year-old complained to St. Paul police that his daughter had come home with her tongue pierced. Police and city licensing staff investigated and found that parental consent had not been obtained.

The independent contractor who pierced the girl's tongue subsequently pled guilty to a misdemeanor. Body piercing of a person under age 18 without the written consent of a parent or guardian violates state law. The independent contractor paid a \$300 fine and served 16 days in jail.

According to Cobb, the independent contractor no longer works at Planet Ink and Cobb now performs all body piercing at the business. "I love kids, kids of all ages, and I wouldn't allow this to happen," she said.

Though the illegal piercing was carried out by an independent contractor, the business owner still bears responsibility, according to Assistant City Attorney Rachel Tierney. "We don't license the artist; we license the location," she said.

Replacement work slated for Griggs St. pedestrian bridge

The Metropolitan Council has approved \$1 million for the replacement of the pedestrian bridge over I-94 at Griggs Street.

The Met Council's Transportation Committee and Transportation Advisory Board had recommended replacing the bridge, which was torn down late last year after the Minnesota Department of Transportation discovered that concrete on the bottom of the bridge was falling off and weakening the structure.

Bids for the bridge replacement will be accepted in February with construction anticipated later this year. A Met Council report indicates that the intent is to have the project completed before school resumes in September.

The pedestrian bridge was used extensively by students of Concordia University and Central High School and by residents of the Skyline Towers on their way to and from the Dunning Recreation Center.

Union Park wants progress made on Ayd Mill bike trail

The Union Park District Council (UPDC) passed a resolution on January 4 calling for the city to move forward with the construction of a 1.5-mile off-street bicycle trail along Ayd Mill Road.

The city risks losing the \$1.1 million federal grant for the project that is set to expire in March. The city obtained a one-year extension on the grant last year, and UPDC member Mike Madden questioned whether a second extension would be granted. The federal grant was matched three years ago with \$1.2 million from the city.

The bicycle trail has been on the drawing board for several years. The city would like a long-term lease to build the trail just east of the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks that parallel Ayd Mill Road on land owned by the railroad. However, Canadian Pacific officials are concerned about bicyclists traveling too close to the tracks.

The UPDC would like to see the trail moved onto city-owned land west of the railroad tracks. The city has objected to moving the trail in the past for fear it would hamper linking it to other bike trails and make it more difficult to rebuild Ayd Mill Road.

License conditions amended for Blue Door in Merriam Park

The St. Paul City Council on January 14 voted to amend the license conditions for the Blue Door Pub at 1811 Selby Ave. The conditions were imposed last September when the Merriam Park restaurant opened.

The City Council voted to extend last call for food, wine and beer at the Blue Door from midnight to 12:30 a.m. However, all patrons must be out of the pub by 1:00 a.m. The council also forbade the pub from offering any specials or price reductions on wine or beer after 10:00 p.m.

As is standard for restaurants in St. Paul, the Blue Door may only serve wine and beer in conjunction with food, and it must show that at least 60 percent of its gross revenue each year is from food. The Blue Door also must post signs telling patrons that when exiting, they need to show respect for neighbors.

St. Paul Smart Trips works to prevent slippery sidewalks

St. Paul Smart Trips has launched a campaign in conjunction with the city of St. Paul to keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice for pedestrians and those with disabilities by enlisting neighbors to leave door hangers at properties where snow and ice have not been cleared. The door hangers are being distributed through most of the city's district councils. They stress the importance of clearing sidewalks and provide information about local ordinances and resources for snow removal.

For more information, including a print-it-yourself door hanger, visit <http://www.smarttrips.org/sidewalks>. If the door hanger fails to do the trick, sidewalks in need of shoveling may be reported by calling 651-266-8989 or e-mailing snowshovel@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and John Wadell.

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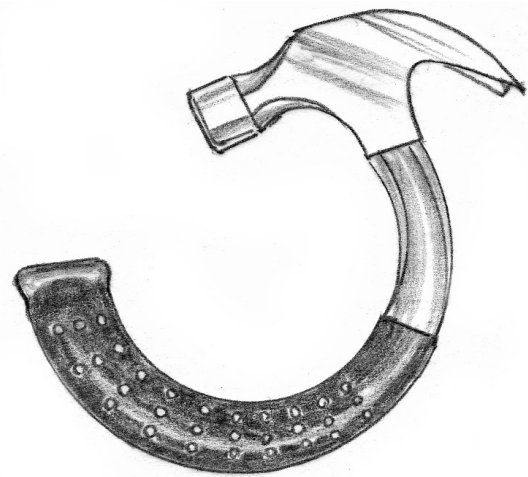
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Education

Nice fit for Longfellow

Merriam Park school to adopt the classical method of instruction

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

HOping to reverse the steady decline in its enrollment over the past seven years, Longfellow Elementary School will introduce the classical method of instruction next fall beginning with its kindergarten and 1st grade classes.

"The classical approach is perfect for our humanities curriculum," said Mark Vandersteen, the principal of Longfellow, a magnet school at 318 Moore St. that has emphasized the humanities in its curriculum since 1970. "Part of it involves introducing Latin to a group of academic disciplines, including history, literature, philosophy, the arts and foreign languages and cultures."

"We decided to add the classical method after learning it was one of the suggestions made by parents in the Homecroft community last year," said Denise Rodriguez, a Longfellow Spanish teacher for the past 21 years and a member of its Site Council and School Revitalization Committee.

The St. Paul Public Schools closed Homecroft Elementary School in Highland Park last June. Longfellow's enrollment has dropped 47 percent since 2001-02, from 412 to 220 students in grades K-6. Longfellow's building has the capacity to accommodate 550 students.

The classical method "is a positive fit for the school," said Longfellow Site Council co-chair Bob Muellner, the parent of a Longfellow 3rd-grader. "Adding Latin gives a lift to the little ones for the future learning

of languages as well as scientific and other terms."

"We already have Spanish classes," Vandersteen said. "With Latin, we'll be introducing the basis for several other languages, including French and Italian, not to mention the language of biology, medicine and philosophy. In kindergarten and 1st grade, the kids will begin to hear Latin words and their connections to English words. They likely won't understand them at first, but that's OK. They'll remember them down the road."

That is the essence of a classical education: As students move up through the grades, they revisit already learned material with a new perspective.

The classical method has three basic components—grammar, logic and rhetoric. "In the context of classical instruction, those words describe much more than what most people think of," Vandersteen said. "Grammar is the foundation or basic materials of any subject. It is the collection of its parts and the mechanics of how they work. So in math, for example, it is the numbers, symbols and functions."

In the grammar stage of a classical education, students in the earliest grades are deluged with information in all subjects at a time in their lives when they can readily memorize lots of facts and repeat them even if they don't necessarily understand them.

The second stage, logic, is the organization of those facts into a whole to understand their relationships. "This is when students begin



Longfellow kindergartners Nathalia Schmall, left, and Malee Yang point out their home town on a globe for teacher Patti Nelson. Next fall as 1st-graders, they and the school's incoming kindergartners will be getting their lessons according to the classical method of instruction. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

to question why and how things fit together," Vandersteen said, to develop analytical skills by connecting themes, ideas and causes. While students in the grammar stage may have memorized the dates and events of the Civil War, in the logic stage they learn about the causes of the war and how it relates to other conflicts, such as the American Revolution and the Spanish Civil War.

In the third stage, rhetoric, students learn to use what they learned in the earlier stages to solve problems, formulate their own ideas and express opinions with clarity.

The classical model of education has been popular at Nova Classical Academy, a public charter school in Highland Park that opened in 2003 for grades K-6. Nova currently serves more than 400 students in grades K-8 with plans to expand to 9th grade next fall, according to Brian Bloomfield, Nova's director of curriculum and instruction.

Located in the former St. Gregory's Church and School at 1668

Montreal Ave., Nova has added satellite classrooms on the school grounds in recent years as it searches for a new site on which to expand. "We're looking at two different options," Bloomfield said, "finding a short-term site for a split campus or a long-term site for a K-12 school."

Longfellow has been losing about 25 students a year since the 2001-02 school year. For the past two years, it has also failed to make adequate yearly progress as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. If in student testing this year it fails to meet those standards again, the school will be placed in the "needs corrective action" category.

Longfellow has initiated several programs in its efforts to avoid corrective action. "We've received new, separate state funding for our Alternative Delivery of Special Services program," Vandersteen said. The idea, he said, is to "identify children with special education needs through early intervention, rather than waiting two years under the traditional model. We're seeing real

progress in grades K-3."

Longfellow is also participating in an Americorps program that has college student volunteers tutoring children in grades 1 and 2 in reading and helping students in grades 4-6 prepare for the state's Basic Skills Test. Members of St. Mary's Episcopal and Olivet Congregational churches in Merriam Park also volunteer as math and reading tutors at the school.

According to Vandersteen, it may take five or six years to expand the classical model to every grade at Longfellow. "Throughout the phase-in, we want families on the site council and the various planning committees to be thoroughly involved in determining how quickly to introduce each step," he said.

With the classical method of instruction, "we're looking to establish an extra level of rigor and expectation," Vandersteen said. "In the classical method, the child is ultimately responsible for her or his education. We're excited about bringing it to Longfellow."

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School sanctuary

East African culture meets Western education at Dugsi

By BOB GILBERT

Dugsi Academy, a K-8 charter school whose student body is nearly entirely Somali, will take its first step in the process of becoming a full-fledged high school when it adds 9th grade for the 2009-2010 school year.

Located in the Griggs Midway Building at University and Fairview avenues, the school has as its mission to help its students integrate into the fabric of American society while honoring the East African traditions of their foreign-born parents.

Forty percent of Dugsi's 225-member student body was born either in Somalia or in refugee camps as a result of the civil war that has been waged within that nation since 1991. The remaining 60 percent were born here of immigrant parents, most of whom never finished high school themselves.

Dugsi means "school" in Somali, but the word has other connotations as well. "Dugsi is a very good word," said Abdulkadir Osman, the school's executive director. "It also means a sanctuary from fear and hardship."

Osman said budget cuts have elimi-



Amina Said, 11, listens intently during class at Dugsi Academy on University Avenue. Behind her is classmate Zakaria Osman, 10. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

nated many bilingual translators in traditional public schools. However, Somali-speaking parents can communicate directly with their children's teachers at Dugsi, which enable them to play a more active role in their children's education. Some students at the school have

bilingual parents, but the majority speak Somali exclusively. Ninety-five percent of the students come from low-income families for whom English is their second language.

DUGSI ACADEMY ► 17



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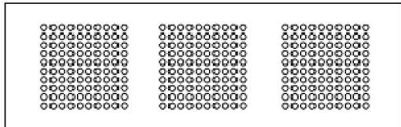
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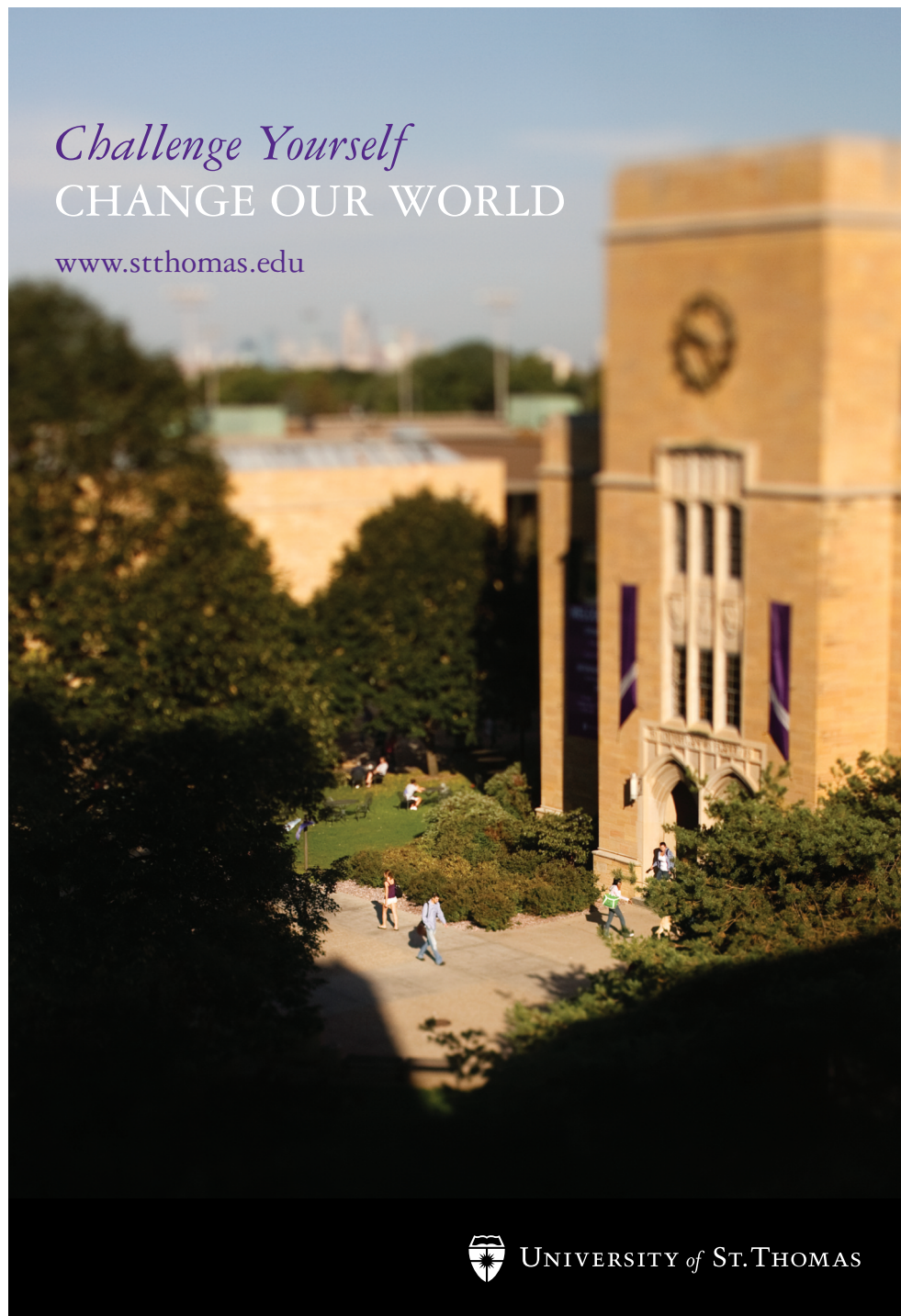


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Linda Lilja and her Highland Elementary kindergartners.

Highland Elementary raises \$1,100 for malaria relief

A suggestion by one of the youngest students at Highland Park Elementary School snowballed into a major fundraiser this winter that could end up saving more than 100 children on the other side of the world.

The school raised just over \$1,100 for the Malaria No More campaign by holding a garage sale just before the holidays. Kindergartner Tess Albert-Stauning suggested the event after reporting on the plight of African children during the school's weekly "Tuesday News Day" session, which invites students to bring up and discuss current events.

Kindergarten teacher Linda Lilja said the sale took off as students got into the fundraising spirit. Donations were still being collected in early January, and a pizza party was planned for the class that brought in the most money. At the time, it appeared the kindergartners had a slight lead over the 3rd-graders, who were being led by Tess' sister, Emily.

Lilja said the money will be used to purchase mosquito nets at \$10 apiece to protect children from contracting malaria, a disease that results in 3,000 deaths in Africa every day. For more information, visit malaria.no.org.

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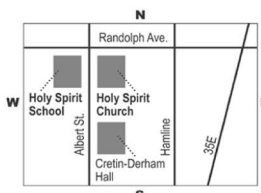
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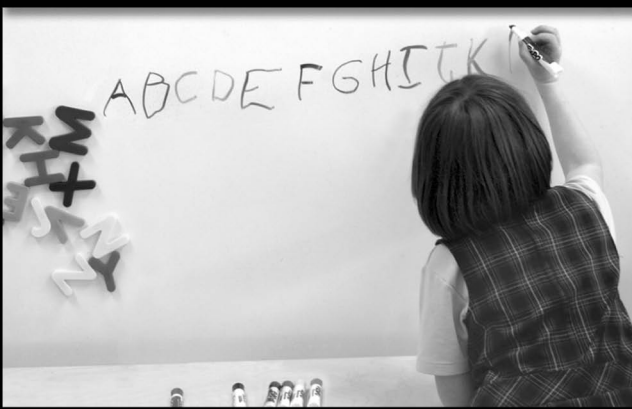
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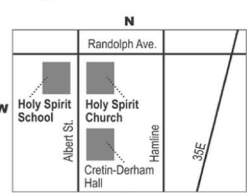
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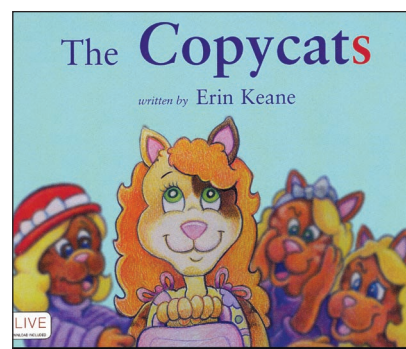
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School Notes

Roosevelt Community Education, 4029 28th Ave. S., Minneapolis, is offering the following: a film class focusing on French masters of suspense, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays, February 10-24 (\$32.50); a woodworking class for women, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, February 18-March 25 (\$61); a class on looking 10 years younger, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays, January 26-March 16 (\$59); a class on the 1934 truckers' strike in Minneapolis, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 10 (\$5.00); and a history class on crooks and crime fighters, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 24 (\$5.00). Call 612-668-4828.

Erin Keane of Highland Park has published a children's book, *The Copycats*. Now a sophomore at Cretin - Derham Hall, Keane wrote the story in a 7th-grade English class at Nativity School. It tells about a young girl who discovers the virtue of being herself. Visit www.tatepublishing.com.



A Grape Stomp Challenge will be held on Saturday, February 7 to raise money for the second phase of the playground project at the Rondo Education Center, 560 Concordia Ave. The center has been awarded a \$75,000 grant from the city of St. Paul's Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) program and needs to raise money to match it. The principals from the three schools in the building will join a surprise guest for a lively grape stomp that will take place during a "fun-raiser" at 6:30 p.m. at the Children's Museum, 10 W. 7th St. The adults-only evening will include live and silent auctions, live music, beverages and appetizers. Admission is free. Call Maggie O'Reilly at 651-221-0058 or Anne Hartnett at 651-227-2237.

The West 7th Community Center, 265 Oneida St., is offering scholarships for adult learners who are residents of St. Paul's West 7th neighborhood. The funds come from money that remained after the closing of the Oneida Education Center that once operated in the West 7th area. The St. Paul Foundation is currently managing the fund. Individual grants of up to \$1,200 will be made to those chosen by the selection committee. Grants must be used toward a postsecondary education, training certificate or degree program or for expenses that will enable the adult learner to further his or her education. Contact Jane Gregerson at 651-298-5493, extension 215.

15◀ DUGSI ACADEMY

The school takes care to respect its students' background and culture. Female students wear a *hijab*, a traditional Somali head scarf, along with long-sleeve shirts. All students are allowed time to pray during the course of the school day. School lunch is served *halal*, the Muslim version of kosher.

Dugsi primarily educates students from neighborhoods near downtown Minneapolis and the Midway area of St. Paul, but some come from as far away as Blaine, Edina and Richfield. The school also addresses the needs of the greater Somali community by offering adult education in such subject areas as nutrition, reading and health.

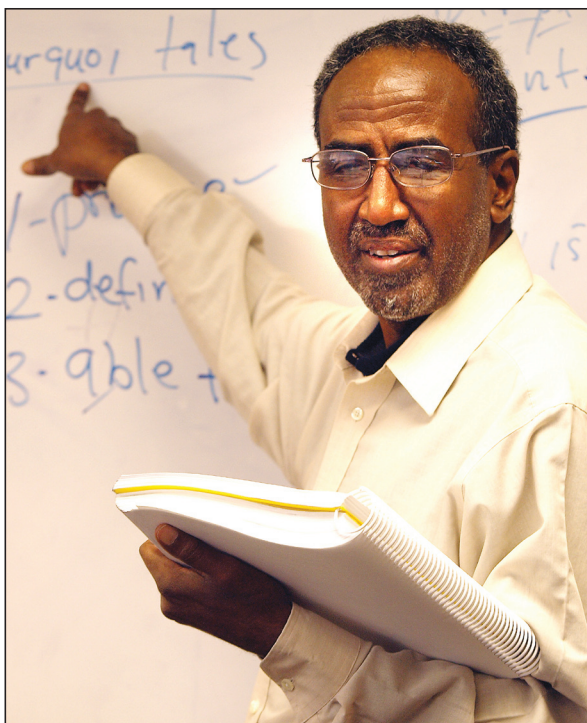
The tuition-free school receives funding from the state and the faculty, which is half Somali and half American, teaches a curriculum that meets Minnesota Department of Education benchmarks. Academic coordinator Virginia Heesch said the school earned a passing grade last year on the Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement test by concentrating its curriculum on phonics and giving each student an extra 30 minutes of reading time each day.

"We focus on what our students have to learn to become fluent in English," Heesch said, "but we're not just an ESL (English as a Second Language) school. We also have a special education component and a gifted and talented program. Our East African students have the same needs as any other culture."

The school also teaches world languages, like Arabic, which is widely spoken in East Africa. "For our students, Arabic is not hard," Osman said. "They go to Islamic schools on weekends in order to maintain their culture and their Muslim religion. Kids connected to those weekend schools are fluent in Arabic already."

About half of the 10 million Somali people have fled their homeland since the civil war broke out 18 years ago. Somali immigrants began arriving in the Twin Cities in 1993. Minnesota now has a population of around 60,000 Somalis. Dugsi is one of three Somali charter schools in the state. The others are in Minneapolis and Rochester.

According to Osman, the reason so many Somali came here is because Minnesota welcomed them. "The only negative thing about living here is the cold," he said. "As a people, we're used to living in the desert. But the



Instructor Khalif Warssme leads a reading class at Dugsi Academy. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

people and government here have been very accommodating and they allow us every opportunity.

"When Somalis come from other states, people ask, 'How did you get this opportunity?' I tell them keep in mind that we're in Minnesota."

Dugsi is sponsored by Pillsbury United Communities, a Minneapolis nonprofit organization that sponsors 14 charter schools in all. It helps the schools with their missions, reviews board minutes and monitors their curricula and finances.

"We recently brought in other charter school administrators to do a peer review of Dugsi," said Chandon Smith Baker, Pillsbury's vice president of strategic partnerships. "As a result, we renewed our sponsorship of Dugsi for another three-year period."

"We also did a one-on-one student review where we interviewed students in private," she said. "I remember vividly the responsibility and sense of pride the students had in their school. Their idea of citizenship can certainly be a model for other schools."

Dugsi opened in 2005 with grades K-5 and has been adding a grade each year since. The academy currently leases 30,000 square feet of space at Griggs Midway, leaving room for further expansion.

"The parents of our students want us to continue what we're doing here and that's why our plan is to add another grade each year through high school," Heesch said.

For information, visit dugsiacademy.org.

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Twin Cities Academy is a charter school on the move

BY CAROLYN WILL

Twin Cities Academy, a popular West End charter middle school and high school, is experiencing growing pains once again and will soon be moving into its third building in 10 years. Come September, the school will be located in the building currently occupied by Trinity Catholic School at 835 E. 5th St. Trinity, which has experienced a drop in enrollment, will move into a smaller building two blocks away.

The new school building for Twin Cities Academy will be twice the size of its current building at 426 Osceola Ave. Since adding a high school two years ago, space has been tight for the school's current enrollment of 290 students.

"We sometimes call it the Hallway High School," said principal Liz Wynne, referring to the tight quarters. "We're moving to have breathing room."

Wynne has been at the helm of Twin Cities Academy since it opened with grades 6-8 in 1999 in the former St. James School building at 426 View St. The academy added a high school in



Brandie Bass, left, Neal Bauer and Anna Eastep get creative during art class at Twin Cities Academy, 426 Osceola Ave. The "blossoming" charter school will move to larger quarters this fall. PHOTOS BY ANNE BRANDRUD

2006 when it moved three blocks to the larger St. Francis School building on Osceola Avenue. The high school began with grades 9-10 and a grade has been added each year since.

The tuition-free charter school, which is sponsored by the St. Paul Public Schools, now serves grades 6-12 and is bulging at the seams. It has a typical waiting list of 25-30 students for the middle school grades.

"We're blossoming," Wynne said. "I prefer not to think of it as 'success,' because that sounds like we've reached the end, but we're attracting more and more people. We like to think we're delivering a quality product that includes discipline in academics, and discipline in behavior. We hold all our stakeholders accountable."

TWIN CITIES ACADEMY ► 19



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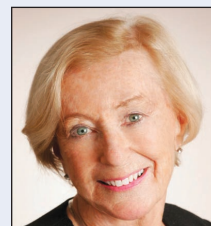
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18◀ TWIN CITIES ACADEMY

Accountability at Twin Cities Academy includes having parents sign a contract promising that they will give at least 50 hours of volunteer service to the school each academic year. "We can't do this alone," Wynne said.

At Twin Cities Academy the students and staff all wear uniforms: khaki pants or skirts and navy or white polo shirts for the students, and khaki pants or skirts and maroon, green or black polo shirts for the adults.

Sue Bauer of Macalester-Groveland sent her older daughter to Twin Cities Academy for middle school and now has her 6th-grade daughter enrolled there. "I was sold on the academics, the small class sizes, the feeling that everyone was going to be held accountable," she said. "And it's rigorous, with the core classes taught every day."

Twin Cities Academy is moving about four miles away, but despite the added travel time, Bauer said her family has no hesitation in their commitment to stay with the school.

The average class size at Twin Cities Academy is 24 students in the middle school and 28 in the high school. With 66,000 square feet of space in the new building, the school will have room to grow. Still, Wynne said the academy plans to cap enrollment at 225 students in the middle school and 300 in the high school.

"We believe in order to grow your student, you have to know your student," she said. "No one falls through the cracks here."

In addition to allowing Twin Cities Academy to accept more students, Wynne said the new building will allow the school to add science labs and a language lab. Currently, the high school students go off campus for science classes.

Though she admits that the move may cause some current students to leave the school because of the greater distance, Wynne hopes the neighborhood surrounding the new location will draw in new families. The building is on a bus route and is only blocks from Metro State University.

Trinity Catholic School principal Sandra Krekeler said the success of charter schools like Twin Cities Academy is part of the reason her school has seen declining enrollment. Trinity's enrollment in grades preK-8 peaked in 1992-93 at 400. Today, it stands at 101.

When the school opened in 1882, it provided an education for the Irish, German and Polish immigrants of the time.



Students read in Twin Cities Academy's cafeteria, which doubles as a study hall.

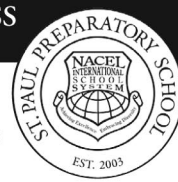
"Today, Trinity again reflects the new immigrants," Krekeler said. "We have a population made up of Latino, Hmong, Vietnamese, Indian, Belizean, Ugandan, African American and biracial students."

Trinity will move down the street to the building that previously housed the Church of St. John's parish school. St. Michael's Academy, a K-8 Catholic immersion school, currently occupies the lower level. Trinity will occupy the second level and have the use of the library and a few more rooms on the main level.

Students enrolling at Twin Cities Academy are accepted according to a lottery system. The school will hold its next open house at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 27. The enrollment deadline is February 28. For information, visit www.tca.k12.mn.us.

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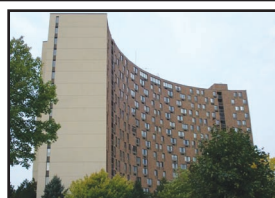
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School Notes

Nova Classical Academy, 1668 Montreal Ave., will host the following: a community education night for adults on Plato's "Myth of the Cave" from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 21; enrollment events from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturdays, January 24 and February 21, and from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 5; school day tours for parents at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays through Thursdays; and Student Shadow Days from 9:00 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays for grades 6-9. The K-8 school is adding ninth grade this fall. Call 651-227-8622 or visit www.novaclassical.org.

A **workshop for parents** on "Raising Bicultural and Biracial Children: Is Being Bicultural an Asset or a Liability?" will be offered at 5:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22, in Room A-241 at Henry Sibley High School, 1897 Delaware Ave., Mendota Heights. Admission is free. Call 651-681-2351.

The **College of St. Catherine** Alumnae Association will hold its 44th annual Conversation with Books at 7:00 p.m. Monday, January 26, in the college's Coeur de Catherine student center. The cost is \$12 by January 23 and \$15 at the door. Call 651-690-6666.

Holy Spirit Catholic School, 515 S. Albert St., will host a kindergarten roundup at 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28. Visit www.holy-spirit.org/school. For a personal tour, call 651-698-7233.

Highland Park Senior High School, 1015 S. Snelling Ave., will host its annual band showcase, Benstock, from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. Friday, January 30. Highland students will be performing in garage-style bands. Admission is \$5.00, or \$2.00 with the donation of two non-perishable food items. A karaoke contest also will be held and prizes will be awarded.

St. Paul College, 317 Marshall Ave., is offering a continuing education class on beginning Russian on Mondays, February 2 through March 23. The fee is \$70. Call 651-846-1783.

Pianist Mary Louise Knutson will present "Making Sense of Jazz," a one-hour lecture and concert, at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 31, in the recital hall at St. Joseph's School of Music, 450 N. Syndicate St. Knutson's debut jazz trio CD, "Call Me When You Get There," charted in the Top 50 in the U.S. and Canada for eight consecutive weeks and earned her the award for top new jazz instrumentalist of the year from KWJL Radio in California in 2001. In 2006, she was nominated for both

jazz artist of the year and pianist of the year by the Minnesota Music Awards. Admission is free. Call 651-690-4364.

Free, two-part computer classes on using Microsoft Word will be offered at the Central Library, 90 W. 4th St., from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays, February 3-10, and again on February 17-24. Call 651-266-7000, extension 5, to register.

St. Paul College will offer the following job and career classes: "How to Make Money Doing Voiceovers in TV and Radio" from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesdays, February 4-11 (\$64); and "Interviewing Skills" from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday, February 7 (\$64). The continuing education classes will be held at the UAW-Ford-MnSCU Training Center on Ford Parkway in Highland Village. For information or to register, call 651-846-1783.

A **jazz and wine benefit** for St. Thomas More School will be held on Friday, February 6, at the Summit Avenue home of pianist and composer Steven C. Anderson and his wife Diane. Live piano music, hors d'oeuvres, scotch tasting and craft beers will be on tap from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. The cost is \$45 per person. Checks may be made payable to St. Thomas More Catholic School. Call 651-224-4836.

Highland Park Elementary School, 1700 Saunders Ave., will hold an open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, February 12. Families are invited to tour the classrooms and visit with staff about the school's International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. Call 651-293-8770.

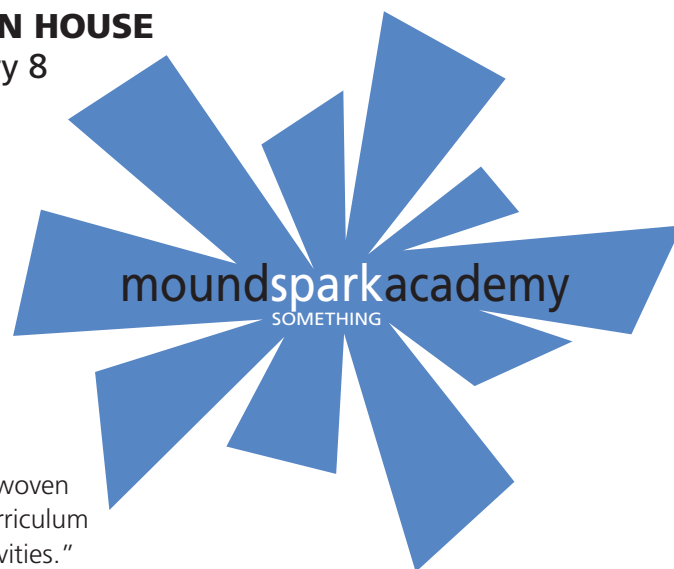
Sunny Hollow Montessori, 636 S. Mississippi River Blvd., is now enrolling students for the 2009-10 school year. Sunny Hollow serves children ages 33 months to 12 years. Call 651-690-2307 or visit www.sunnyhollow.com.

Twin Cities Experimental College (EXCO) is now taking registration for winter classes at www.EXCOtc.org. To volunteer to teach a class, contact David Boehnke at dboehnke@gmail.com or 651-315-4222. To share ideas or become an organizer, e-mail excotc@gmail.com or call 651-696-8010.

Jenny Nguyen of Highland Park Elementary School was a winner in the 15th annual Lillian Wright Awards for Creative Writing. Her story, "The Stolen Sapphire," was among the best prose written by a student in grade 5 or 6. The story is also featured in the COMPAS Writers & Artists in the Schools anthology *What the Lone Wolf Dreams*.

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Sunday, February 8
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.



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Food

Cafe serves up American comfort with a side of exotic Kathmandu

A restaurant has operated in the storefront at 2012 Ford Pkwy. for almost six decades. Lee's Highland Kitchen, Faricy's in the Village and the Village Bistro have all occupied that space in the Highland Shopping Center over the years.

"There's always been a lot of support from the neighborhood for a restaurant here," said Naveen Shrestha, co-owner with Deb Narusiewicz of the Highland Cafe and Bakery, the location's latest iteration. "People come in all the time and talk about Lee's, Faricy's and the Village Bistro. Jim Shepherd, one of the former owners, still comes in to eat and people say, 'Hi, Jim!'"

Like Heather Stevens of Carmelo's, Jill Wilson of 128 Cafe and Pat Kallemeyn of Saji Ya, Narusiewicz is a restaurant server turned restaurant owner. And Shrestha's journey to restaurant ownership is almost identical to that of Barun Bajracharya of Cat-Man-Do on Grand Avenue. Both men are natives of Kathmandu, immigrated to the U.S. hoping to enjoy a better life, and lived for a time in the American South before moving to the Twin Cities on the advice of friends. Bajracharya found a job at Everest on Grand before opening his Nepalese-Tibetan-Indian fusion restaurant, while Shrestha washed dishes at Keys restaurant on Raymond Avenue prior to opening the Highland Cafe and Bakery.

At Keys, Shrestha worked under co-owner Barbara Hunn, who taught him how to cook and run a restaurant. According to Hunn, Shrestha was "smart and very interested in getting ahead," traits that helped him secure the position of kitchen manager at Keys before purchasing the former Village Bistro in 2007.



Hot Dish By Morgan Smith

Shrestha and Narusiewicz have kept the Village Bistro's comfortable booths as well as its focus on American comfort food. However, from the beginning Shrestha's dream has been to serve traditional Nepalese cuisine—the kind of food his mother cooked. With the encouragement of his patrons, Shrestha has incorporated "A Little Taste of Kathmandu" into the Highland Cafe menu. In fact, the Nepalese dishes have proven to be so popular that Shrestha and Narusiewicz recently opened the Himalayan Restaurant at 2401 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis.

On a recent visit to the Highland Cafe, I lost the coin flip and my dinner partner got to order the chicken curry (\$10.50). I went with the chicken fried steak special (\$7.95). As a consolation, I also ordered the Kathmandu momo appetizers (vegetarian or with meat, \$8.50)—10 steamed dumplings served with a tomato-cilantro dipping sauce. Our server told us the momos would be the best appetizer we've ever had, and he wasn't far off. They were very good, as was the dipping sauce.

Even though he tends to be more of a red curry fan, my friend loved the Highland Cafe's yellow curry. It came with plenty of chunks of white chicken meat.

The chicken fried steak, though it wasn't the thick, juicy slab of truck-stop fare that



Co-owner Deb Narusiewicz displays some of the desserts available at the Highland Cafe and Bakery. At right are the cafe's steak salad and turkey and wild rice soup.

over-the-road travelers will occasionally find, was a lot better than some I've had. Given the bakery component of the restaurant, it's no wonder that the bread that came with my meal was the best part. Highland Cafe and Bakery makes all of its own baked goods from scratch, as well as all of its soups and sauces.

Partly because we had just had fights with our respective girlfriends, my friend and I both ordered dessert. I had the strawberry rhubarb pie (\$3.95) served warm with ice cream. He had the chocolate cherry cake (\$4.25) with ice cream. They were gut-busting portions, but so tasty that we ate every bite.

Several days later, I had occasion to have lunch at the Highland Cafe and Bakery with another friend. We both ordered soup. She had navy bean (\$3.85) and I tried the tomato basil (\$3.95). The bean soup was "as good as mom used to make," according to my friend. Her mother, incidentally, was a wonderful cook and one who didn't scrimp on the ham. As for the tomato basil, it wasn't the typical creamy concoction I'm used to. More like a vegetable soup, it had a slightly spicy flavor—definitely a winner.

For lunch entrées, I ordered the Swedish meatballs on pasta special (\$9.25) and she ordered the grilled tuna melt (\$7.25). I liked the meatballs and pasta a lot more than the chicken fried steak, and she raved about the tuna melt. Once again, the breads were a hit.

The following weekend, I was helping some friends move back into the neighborhood. I suggested we try breakfast at the Highland Cafe and Bakery. My friends ordered the pancakes (two for \$4.50) and the basic egg combo (two eggs and two pancakes, \$6.25, with meat, \$9.20). I ordered the eggs Benedict with hash browns (\$8.75) and a cinnamon roll (\$1.95).

Referring to the pancakes, my friend bor-



rowed a line from "Father O'Blivion," the song by Frank Zappa: "They're so light and fluffy brown, not the finest in the town." However, he admitted, his derivative ditty reflected more on the price than the taste of the pancakes. And he raved about the Italian sausage that came with the flapjacks.

I wasn't blown away by the eggs Benedict, but I did enjoy the cinnamon roll. The next time I'm in Highland Village, I plan to check out the Highland Cafe and Bakery's specials on day-old baked goods.

Having been to the restaurant three times and having had three different servers, I can honestly say the Highland Cafe has the most consistently friendly service of any restaurant I've patronized in quite some time. The servers were prompt and friendly without being overly familiar. They made us feel as though we were guests rather than customers. That's an attitude that clearly comes from the top and reflects well on Shrestha and Narusiewicz.

Shrestha does most of the cooking at the Highland Cafe, and he admits that keeping up with two restaurants is a lot of work. "But you have to follow your dream," he said.



The Nepalese-inspired momos, samosas and chicken curry at the Highland Cafe.

PHOTOS BY JANET HOSTETTER

Tidbits

"A Cause to Cook for a Cure: Ciao!" will be hosted by the Greg Marzolf Jr. Foundation at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, January 24, at the Town and Country Club, 300 N. Mississippi River Blvd. The evening is a benefit for people with muscular dystrophy and will celebrate the life of Greg Marzolf Jr., a Highland Park resident and Cretin-Derham Hall graduate who died from the effects of the disease in 2000 at the age of 20. Italian food and refreshments will be served. The cost is \$30, which includes

appetizers and a pasta bar. For tickets, call the Greg Marzolf Jr. Foundation at 651-699-3961 or visit www.gregmarzolfjr.org.

TeaSource, 752 S. Cleveland Ave., will offer a class on what makes a tea rare from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22. Participants will learn how the shop classifies its teas and will sample exotic teas with limited production from a variety of tea estates. The cost is \$15. Call 651-690-9822.

The International Institute of Minnesota, 1694 Como Ave., will serve up "Midwinter Feast—An International Dining Experience" at 6:00 p.m. Friday, February 6. For \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door, participants will get an appetizer, an entrée with side dish and a dessert, each from a different country. There also will be live music, and international wine and beer will be available for purchase. E-mail Vicki McKenna at vmckenna@iimn.org or visit www.iimn.org.

Cretin-Derham Hall, 550 S. Albert St., will host its seventh annual Empty Bowls event during lunch (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) and dinner (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.) on Wednesday, February 11. For a donation, guests may select a ceramic bowl made by local artisans and art students and will be served a meal of soup and bread. A silent auction also will be held. Proceeds will benefit Heifer International, which provides livestock and seed to families in developing countries. Call 651-690-2443.

District Council News

Highland Park

www.highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

HDC board update—The Highland District Council's board of directors approved an operating budget for 2009 at its January 8 meeting. St. Paul district council coordinator Diane Wanner also spoke at the meeting about upcoming training for district council staff, board members and members of the public who may be interested in running for the board. The first training session will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 7, and is free to attend. Contact Wanner at 651-266-8572 or diane.wanner@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Community Development update—The HDC's Community Development Committee met on January 12 to discuss Project for Pride in Living's proposed housing project on West 7th Street at the bottom of the Snelling Avenue hill. The committee asked for additional information before taking a vote. PPL offered to take a group on a tour of its properties to show how they are managed and maintained. Those who are interested in taking the tour should contact the HDC office.

Neighborhood Honor Roll—The annual St. Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll ceremony will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, January 23, in the Binz Refectory on the University of St. Thomas' south campus. The ceremony will honor outstanding volunteers from every district council in the city. Speakers will include Mayor Chris Coleman, City Council president Kathy Lantry and Humphrey Institute Senior Fellow Harry Boyte. The cost is \$10 and includes hors d'oeuvres and musical entertainment. For information, call the HDC office.

Upcoming meetings—HDC board planning session to help establish 2009 goals, 9:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, January 24, Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.; Transportation Committee meeting to discuss a stop sign for Woodlawn Avenue and Highland Parkway and handicap parking on Field Avenue, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 28, Hillcrest; HDC board meeting with Ramsey County commissioner Raphael Ortega and a representative from the County Assessor's Office, 7:00 p.m. Thursday, February 5, Hillcrest.

Save the dates—The Highland and Macalester-Groveland Home Improvement Fair will be held on Saturday, April 4, at Cretin-Derham Hall. For information on having a display at

the fair, call the Macalester-Groveland Community Council office at 651-695-4000. To be a sponsor, call the HDC office.

Summit-University

www.Summit-U.com • 651-228-1855

Shutting the door on foreclosures

The city of St. Paul is taking aggressive action to halt foreclosures, including making sure all residents are aware of the city's foreclosure prevention resources. Magnetic signs will soon be affixed to more than 400 St. Paul Public Works vehicles to help promote the city's foreclosure prevention hotline (651-266-6626). In addition, homeowners will be receiving information in water bills and property tax statements. St. Paul is also partnering with the Minnesota Home Ownership Center to host educational workshops and is training city employees to recognize potential signs of foreclosure so they can distribute prevention materials as needed.

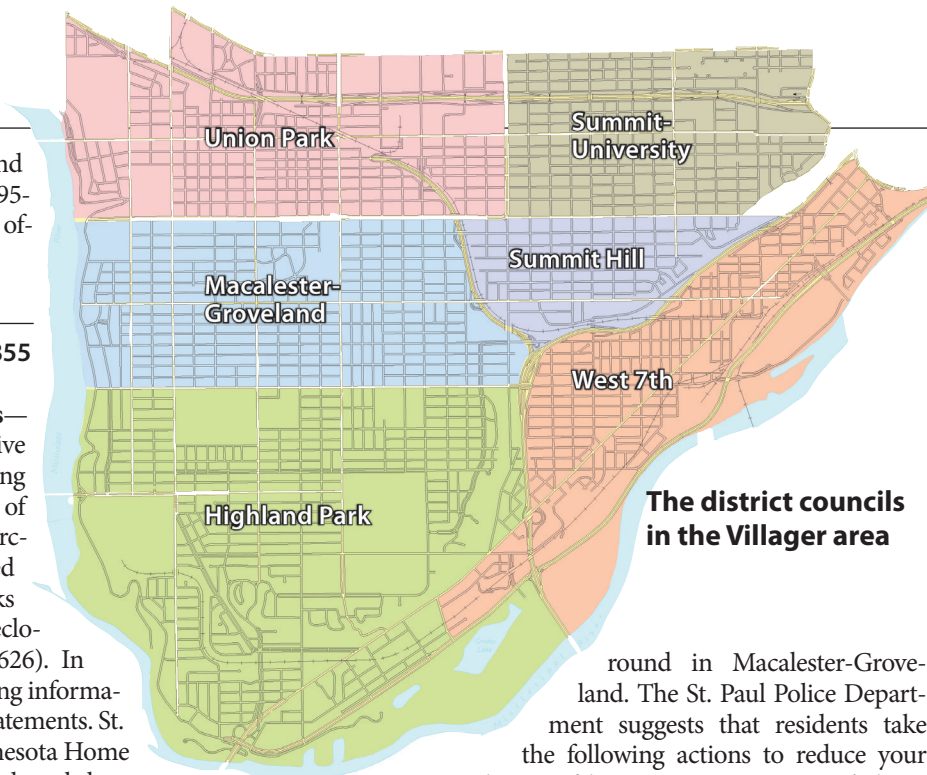
Service showcased—Webster Magnet School, 707 Holly Ave., will showcase its new emphasis as an academic service-learning school program from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22. Participants will discover how Webster students have been serving the neighborhood and what they have been learning along the way. The showcase will include an opportunity for families and neighborhood residents to participate in a service project of their own. Call 651-293-8625.

Stay in the loop—To learn about upcoming Summit-University Planning Council meetings or sign up for electronic news updates, visit the SUPC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

www.macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Crime prevention tips—A significant number of thefts from parked automobiles and unsecured garages occur year-



round in Macalester-Groveland. The St. Paul Police Department suggests that residents take the following actions to reduce your chance of becoming a victim: Don't leave objects of value in plain view, consider covering open windows in garages, place valuables in the car trunk prior to reaching your destination, lock car doors when you are away, close and lock garage doors, provide extra security for particularly vulnerable targets like bicycles and power tools, alert police to suspicious people loitering in alleys or near cars or garages, and record the serial number of purchased items to aid in their recovery. For additional crime prevention tips, contact the community council office.

Beautification Committee—Macalester-Groveland residents who like gardening are invited to join the community council's Beautification Committee. The committee conducts annual spring and fall plant shares and organizes the annual Alley Garden Awards in addition to managing other beautification projects in the neighborhood. Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month from March through October. For information, contact Afton Martens at the council office.

Upcoming meetings—Housing and Land Use Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28, Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St.

Dr. R.J. Fischbach: the Leading Edge in Local Dentistry

You'll have reason to smile more radiantly than ever with the advanced dentistry techniques now being employed in Highland Park by Dr. R.J. Fischbach and his staff.

Dr. Fischbach's is one of only 3% of all dental offices in the nation that are using the latest CEREC CAD/CAM technology. The dental restorations Dr. Fischbach and his staff perform can now be done in a single appointment.

CEREC stands for Chairside Economical Restorations of Esthetic Ceramics. CAD/CAM stands for Computer Aided Design/Computer Assisted Modeling. CAD/CAM dentistry is the process by which the dentist first takes an infrared picture of your teeth. The picture is transmitted directly to a computer where the teeth are designed right in front of your eyes, eliminating entirely the need for uncomfortable impressions and temporary restorations. The computer then sends the designed teeth by wireless technology to a milling machine, which grinds the fillings, crowns or veneers.

The finished restorations are widely regarded by dentists nationwide as the most aesthetic, comfortable and long-lasting, and they are far superior to composite, silver or gold restorations.

Dental patients today are increasingly asking for metal-free restorations. Dr. Fischbach and his staff employ many alternative materials in CAD/CAM technology, including Leucite, Ceramic, Zirconia, Glass Ceramic, Feldspar Ceramic, Fine Grain Translucent Porcelain, and Yttrium-Stabilized Zirconium. The wide range of materials allows Dr. Fischbach's staff to select the one that is best suited for you. Most other dentists use a technique that fits all patients with just one material.

CAD/CAM dentistry was originally developed for making single crowns. This technology can now be used to make bridges, inlays and onlays (fillings), veneers and even gold crowns. These all can be done without impressions and if not fabricated at the appointment, can be



Staff member Tammy explains CEREC

fabricated in a day or two. CAD/CAM technology also allows Dr. Fischbach's staff to save teeth that most other dentists would extract.

Dr. Fischbach and his staff are in the business of saving teeth, re-establishing function and perfecting glowing smiles. They are also in the business of educating their patients. Dr. Fischbach's office has movies of almost every dental treatment available. The short movies can be burned to a CD and given to you to take home and review with family members before any decision is made. The explanations of the various treatments are also available on Dr. Fischbach's website at

www.fischbachdentistry.com.

Dr. Fischbach, Dr. Susan Olson and their staff of 10 participate in almost all insurance Preferred Provider Organizations in order to help you control the cost of dentistry.

To learn more about what the leading edge in local dentistry can offer you, Dr. Fischbach and his staff invite your inquiries anytime.



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www.FischbachDentistry.com

651-698-0848

The Kiosk

Wednesday/January 21

“HOUSE BEAUTIFUL: Inside the Victorian Home” is the topic of a tour at 7:00 this evening at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. On this evening’s 75-minute tour, visitors will view the furniture and decorative pieces that have remained in the home from the time when it was completed until the last family descendant died in 1964. Admission is \$7.00-\$10. Call 651-296-8760.

SCENIC ST. PAUL will hold a Brown Bag luncheon at noon today in Room 40 on the lower level of the City Hall/Courthouse, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd. The event will include the premiere of a video depicting all of St. Paul’s 561 billboards, along with a discussion on the future of outdoor advertising in St. Paul. Cookies and beverages will be provided.

Friday/January 23

GASLIGHT TOURS will leave at 6:30, 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. today and tomorrow and on January 30-31 at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Visitors will see gaslights lit and a gas fireplace from the 1890s, as well as the early carbon filament electric light bulbs that were just becoming popular when the home was completed in 1891. Cider will be served, organist Larry Wilson will perform on the restored pipe organ, and soprano Beverly Ferriere will sing popular songs of the era. The cost is \$6.00-\$10. Call 651-297-2555

Saturday/January 24

WINTER ON THE HILL TOURS will be offered from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. today and from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, and on January 31-February 1, at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The tours will focus on the Hill family’s involvement with the Winter Carnival and how they and other St. Paul residents celebrated Minnesota’s winters. The cost is \$5.00-\$8.00, with \$1.00 off with a 2009 carnival button. Call 651-297-2555.

A SNOWSHOE ADVENTURE will be offered at 1:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling State Park. Visitors will learn the safe and fun ways of snowshoeing and how people throughout history have used snowshoes. The program is free. Call 612-725-2724.

A TRADITIONAL ROAST DUCK dinner will be served at 5:00 this evening in the second-floor auditorium of the landmark CSPS Hall, 383 Michigan St. The cost is \$22 per person. Reservations are required. Call Doreen at 952-941-0426.

A SOIRÉE TOUR will be offered at 6:00 this evening at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. During the house tour, a costumed guide will escort visitors to all three floors of the mansion. Afterward, tour-goers are invited to dine at the Forepaugh’s Restaurant located across the street. The cost is \$6.00-\$9.00 (dinner is extra). Call 651-296-8760.

Sunday/January 25

FREE BLOOD-SUGAR TESTS for diabetes will be available today to anyone age 18 and older. The tests will be administered by the University of Minnesota School of Pharmacy from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. and from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Fairmount Avenue



Horace Mann Elementary School principal Jim Litwin leans over to make better eye contact with Avery Hackbarth, 2, and her mom, Lisa Paschke, during St. Paul’s Parent Information Fair on January 10 at St. Paul RiverCentre. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

United Methodist Church, 1523 Fairmount Ave. For information, call 651-699-1335.

POND LIFE THROUGH THE ICE will be investigated at 1:00 this afternoon at Fort Snelling State Park. Visitors are urged to dress warmly and learn how aquatic insects survive when lakes are frozen over. The program is free, but a state parking permit is required. Call 612-725-2724.

AN OPEN HOUSE regarding experiences in Israel for Jewish young adults ages 17-26 will be held at 1:00 this afternoon at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. The event is free and open to the public. Contact Erez Frankel at 651-255-4753 or efrankel@stpauljcc.org.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 2:30 this afternoon at Joseph’s Grill, 140 S. Wabasha St., for a hike into downtown St. Paul to view the Winter Carnival ice carvings. Call 651-646-6421.

Monday/January 26

“THE COLORS OF A RIVER,” a free presentation on the history of pollution and the Upper Mississippi River, will be offered by John Anfinson of the National Park Service from 7:00 to 8:30 this evening at Augsburg College. Call Friends of the Mississippi River at 651-222-2193, ext. 14.

Tuesday/January 27

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 11:30 this morning at Highland Village Center on Ford Parkway and Finn Street for a hike along the river. The group also will meet at 7:30 this evening at Jefferson Avenue and Victoria Street for a residential hike. Call 651-646-6421.

A WORKSHOP on marketing a book will be offered by the National Writers Union-Twin Cities at 1:00 this afternoon at the East Lake Library, 2727 E. Lake St., Minneapolis. Veteran book publicist Dorothy Molstad and Merriam Park author Kate Havelin will share marketing strategies. Visit www.nwu-tc.org.

LEARN TO USE one of the Highland Library’s laptop computers during a free session from 2:00 to 4:00 this afternoon in the theater meeting room at the Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Call 651-695-3700 to register.

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. An open discussion will be held. The salon is free, but donations are encouraged for the program and treats. Call 651-227-3228.

Wednesday/January 28

A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at St. Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave. Call 1-800-448-3543 for an appointment.

Thursday/January 29

“AUTISM AND THE COMMUNITY—A Mother’s Perspective” will be presented by Peggy Regan at 7:00 this evening at St. Peter’s Catholic Church, 1405 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Mendota. Reagan is the mother of five and involved in building a care model for autism at the University of Minnesota. Refreshments start at 6:45 p.m. A free-will offering will be collected. Call Lucy Johnson at 651-224-7102.

THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE Business Association will meet from 7:30 to 9:30 this morning at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Ave., to discuss alternatives to eliminating street parking on University Avenue due to the Central Corridor light-rail line. Current plans call for the elimination of 85 percent of the on-street parking on University Avenue. Contact Linda Winsor at 651-641-0334.

A DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION will be held by the Highland Business Association, Snelling-Selby Business Association and St. Paul Sunrise Rotary Club from 5:30 to 9:00 this evening at the St. Paul Pool and Yacht Club, 1600 Lilydale Road, Lilydale. The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for others. Call 651-699-9042.

Friday/January 30

A CIVIL WAR TOUR will be offered from 7:00 to 9:00 this evening at the state Capitol. Visitors will see a costumed character dressed as a new Union Army recruit as well as tattered regimental flags, statues of famous officers from the state, a reproduction cavalry shell jacket, and paintings commemorating Minnesota regiments. The cost is \$5.00-\$8.00. Call 651-296-2881.

Saturday/January 31

THE SAINTLY CITY CAT CLUB will hold its 33rd annual Championship and Household Pet Cat Show from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. today and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. tomorrow in the Roy Wilkins Exhibition Hall at St. Paul RiverCentre. More than 200 cats from the United States and Canada will compete for prizes. Admission is \$3.00-\$4.00, with a \$1.00 discount with carnival button. For information on entering a cat, call Linda Mae Baker at 651-455-8043.

SPOON CARVING in the Scandinavian tradition will be taught at 9:00 this morning at the Dodge Nature Center in West St. Paul. Participants will harvest buckthorn and carve it into spoons. Beginners and experienced carvers are welcome. All materials will be included. The cost is \$45. Bring a lunch. Call 651-455-4531.

LEARN TO SNOWSHOE at 10:00 this morning at Fort Snelling State Park. Visitors will learn the history of snowshoes and then take a guided snowshoe walk. Bring your own snowshoes or borrow a pair from the park. The program is free, but a parking permit is required. To register, call 612-725-2724.

A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. today in Howley Hall at Holy Spirit Church, 515 S. Albert St. Call 1-800-448-3543 for an appointment.

Sunday/February 1

A SUPERBOWL PARTY will be sponsored by the Temple of Aaron’s Men’s Club at 4:30 this afternoon at the synagogue, 616 S. Mississippi River Blvd. Watch the game in high definition and enjoy food and drinks. The party is open to the public, both men and women. The cost is \$8.00-\$10 for adults and \$5.00 for children. Call 651-698-8874.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 2:30 this afternoon by Wendy’s Liquor, 1545 W. 7th St., for a hike in the Shepard Road area. Call 651-646-6421.

Tuesday/February 3

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will hold its annual meeting at 7:30 this evening at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. The public is welcome to attend. Call 651-646-6421 or visit www.stpaulhike.org.

Wednesday/February 4

THE SUMMIT HILL MOMS (Moms Offering Moms Support) Club will meet at 9:30 this morning. Mothers and children who live in the 55105, 55104 (south of I-94) and 55102 ZIP codes east of Snelling Avenue are welcome. For location or other information, call 651-699-8522.

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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Robbery—Two men were robbed at gunpoint on the 1300 block of Maynard Drive East at just after midnight Wednesday, January 7.

Assault—Police arrested a 52-year-old Vadnais Heights man for assaulting a man with a crowbar at Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue at about 5:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve. Passersby witnessed the assault and called police.

Theft—A package of children's toys was stolen from the steps of a residence on the 1700 block of Highland Parkway between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday, December 22.

—A theft from auto occurred at Crosby Park at about 2:30 p.m. Monday, December 29.

Sex crime—Police responded to a report of a man in Highland Village panhandling and asking children if they wanted candy at about 5:30 p.m. Thursday, December 18. Police arrested the man on the 600 block of South Cleveland Avenue on a warrant for sex offender registration violations.

Weapons—Shots were fired on the 900 block of St. Paul Avenue at about 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 31.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—Genesis, 1170 Selby Ave., and Custom Clothing, 1172 Selby Ave., were burglarized between 8:00 p.m. Tuesday and 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, December 30-31.

—Bally's Fitness, 1166 University Ave., was burglarized between 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and 7:30 a.m. Thursday, December 31-January 1.

Miscellaneous—Police arrested a woman for child neglect at the SuperTarget on University and Hamline avenues at about 10:00 p.m. Thursday, December 18. She had left her three children, ages 2-7, alone in an unlocked, unheated vehicle in the parking lot. The temperature was 9 degrees at the time.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—Wells Fargo Bank, 1827 Grand Ave., was robbed at gunpoint at about 7:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 30. Two employees were opening the auto bank building when the suspect forced them inside and demanded money. One teller gave the man money from her own purse and he fled north. The suspect was described as a black male, 20s to early 30s, around 5-foot-11, wearing a black jacket, black shoes, black gloves and a black ski mask with a white covering over his eyes and mouth. The same suspect is believed to have been involved in five other bank robberies in the Twin Cities since last August.

Burglary—Tea Garden, 1692 Grand Ave., was burglarized at about 6:00 a.m. Monday, December 29. A male suspect entered the business through the front door.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A house on the 1600 block of Concordia Avenue was broken into between 8:00 p.m. Friday and 10:00 a.m. Sunday, December 26-28. Three stained-glass windows were stolen.

—Rebel Ink Baby, 1593 Selby Ave., was broken into between 6:00 p.m. Monday and 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 5-6.

Theft—A car was stolen on the 1800 block of Feronia Avenue between 2:30 and 11:00 p.m. Friday, December 26.

—A theft from auto occurred on the 400 block of North Snelling Avenue at about 5:30 p.m. Monday, December 29.

—A resident on the 400 block of Lynnhurst Avenue reported a theft on Mon-

day, December 29.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—Cash was stolen from Feist Animal Hospital, 1430 Marshall Ave., during a burglary between 7:00 p.m. Sunday and 9:00 a.m. Monday, January 4-5.

—AAA Midway Storage, 1400 Selby Ave., was burglarized at about 5:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 6. The glass entry door was smashed.

Theft—Metal chains valued at \$350 were stolen from a trailer behind Cub Foods, 1440 University Ave, between Saturday and Tuesday, December 27-30.

Summit Hill

Burglary—A laptop computer was taken from a home on the 900 block of Lombard Avenue at about 6:30 a.m. Saturday, January 3. The homeowners were there at the time.

Summit-University

Robbery—A man was robbed at gunpoint at Hague Avenue and Oxford Street at about midnight Tuesday, December 23. The suspects stole the victim's backpack and fled on foot.

—A 28-year-old man was arrested for robbery on the 300 block of Farrington Street at about 3:30 a.m. Sunday, December 28. He and other suspects had robbed a man about a half hour earlier at Farrington and Fuller Avenue. The victim sustained a broken ankle in the struggle and was taken to Regions Hospital.

Burglary—A laptop computer was stolen from a home on the 900 block of Hague Avenue between 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Friday, December 26.

—Chicago Submarine, 612 Selby Ave., was broken into between 10:00 p.m. Tuesday and 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, December 30-31.

Assault—A 28-year-old Summit-University man was arrested for aggravated domestic assault at Mackubin Street and Dayton Avenue at about 10:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve. He had assaulted his girlfriend with a box cutter on Selby Avenue and fled on foot, but police caught him nearby. The victim's head injuries were not life-threatening.

West End

Robbery—A home invasion and assault occurred on the 1000 block of Pleasant Avenue at about 3:30 a.m. Sunday, December 28.

Burglary—A home on the 400 block of Michigan Street was broken into at about 4:00 p.m. Saturday, December 27.

—A home on the 300 block of Goodrich Avenue was broken into on Monday, December 29.

—Still Smokin', 666 W. 7th St., was broken into between 4:00 and 4:30 a.m. Thursday, January 1. An attempted theft from auto occurred nearby and another business on the block was also burglarized around that time.

—A safe was stolen from Fresh Grounds Cafe, 1362 W. 7th St., sometime before 6:00 a.m. Friday, January 2.

—An 18-year-old West End man was arrested for burglary at about 12:30 a.m. Sunday, January 4. A neighbor called police at just before midnight on Saturday to say that she heard glass breaking and saw a man at the Liquor Barrel store, 665 W. 7th St. A police dog tracked the suspect to a house on the 400 block of Michigan Street and he was arrested.

Theft—Police arrested a 36-year-old West End man for theft near the Palace Recreation Center, 781 Palace Ave., at about 10:30 a.m. Sunday, December 14. The suspect was seen casing houses. Stolen mail was found in the man's jacket.

—Coins were stolen from a washing machine in the laundry room of an apartment building on the 1500 block of West 7th Street between midnight and 1:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 7. The machine's coin box was damaged in the theft.

On the Town

The gale of November 1905

Author relates the fury of deadly Lake Superior storm

BY BOB GILBERT

The blizzard that swept across the Upper Midwest from November 27-30, 1905, is remembered as one of the worst storms in history for the havoc it wrought on Great Lakes shipping. Of the 30 large vessels caught out on Lake Superior during the wintry blast, more than half a dozen either sank or ran aground, and a total of 35 of their crew members perished.

With below-zero temperatures and wind gusts of 70 mph, the Thanksgiving storm of 1905 was even more ferocious than the infamous gale of November 10, 1975, that sent the Edmund Fitzgerald and its crew of 29 to the bottom of Lake Superior, according to Curt Brown, author of the new book, *So Terrible A Storm: A Tale of Fury on Lake Superior*.

"In Minnesota we love hot dish, the state high school hockey tournament and talking about the weather," said Brown, a reporter for the *StarTribune* and resident of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood of St. Paul. "For me, that storm had the most fascinating narrative, especially because of the randomness of those who lived and those who died."

Brown, 48, was inspired to write the book following a tour of the Split Rock Lighthouse on the North Shore six years ago. "I don't remember if it was the brochure or the tour guide," he said. "But somewhere I learned that Congress appropriated \$75,000 to build the lighthouse after the great storm of 1905. That sparked my curiosity, which turned into a full-blown obsession, which turned into this book."

Weather forecasters in 1905 worked without the benefit of Doppler radar, but Duluth meteorologist Herbert Richardson was able to notify ship captains in advance that a big storm was imminent. With an Alberta clipper blowing in from the west and warm air coming up from the south, Richardson posted warning flags all along Duluth's docks.

However, many ship captains decided to risk a voyage anyway. Shipping on the Great Lakes had been interrupted by an unusually large number of storms that year according to Brown, and some of the captains may have felt pressured to make one more run before winter set in.

All 30 ships caught out on Lake Superior

were damaged, Brown said, but he largely focuses on four of them: The Madeira, the Mataafa, the Crescent City and the Ira H. Owen. Researching their stories required all of the investigative skills that Brown has honed in his three decades as a newspaper reporter. No other books have been written about the storm, and if any eye witnesses to its fury were still living, Brown did not find them.

Initially, Brown said, he considered writing the book as fiction, sewing the historical facts together with the aid of his own imagination.

However, he said, there were enough "aha!" moments in his research to convince him to hew to the rigors of a true history.

Brown pieced his 300-page manuscript together from the archives of the Minnesota History Center, the Wisconsin Superior Library, Bowling Green University and the website www.boatnerd.com. He also drew on the published accounts of former *Duluth News Tribune* reporter Mary McFadden, who

served as his guardian angel throughout the project. Her in-depth coverage of the storm in 1905 served as a benchmark for his own research, Brown said.

That research involved sending postcards to every resident of Ohio named Humble to locate the kin of Mataafa captain Richard Humble. One day while watching his son's soccer game, Brown got a telephone call from Maryjane Honner of Sterling, Michigan, a great niece of Thomas Honner, captain of the

Ira H. Owen. She shared family stories with Brown and told him how he could contact Captain Honner's grandson, a Virginia architect who sent Brown the program from his grandfather's funeral and copies of the letters of condolence his grandmother received from other sea captains.

"Some of the family trees (of the crew members caught in the storm) have been cut off," Brown said, "and so to breathe a little life into families that no longer exist was a little haunting."

So Terrible a Storm delves into the social and economic history of Duluth and the men and women who had a hand in making it the second busiest harbor in the U.S. in 1905 behind New York City. And that was in just a nine-month season. Back then, iron ore, lumber and grain were the major exports from the twin ports of Duluth and Superior and ships arrived and departed every half hour.

In his book, Brown tells of the 10,000 Duluth citizens who ventured out in that frigid November storm to witness the drama as the Mataafa ran aground on a shoal 700 feet off shore. Huddled beside bonfires, they watched helplessly for hours as the tempest battered the ore carrier. Three of the Mataafa's crew perished when they either jumped or were washed overboard. Six others froze to death on the ship. Fourteen were eventually rescued.

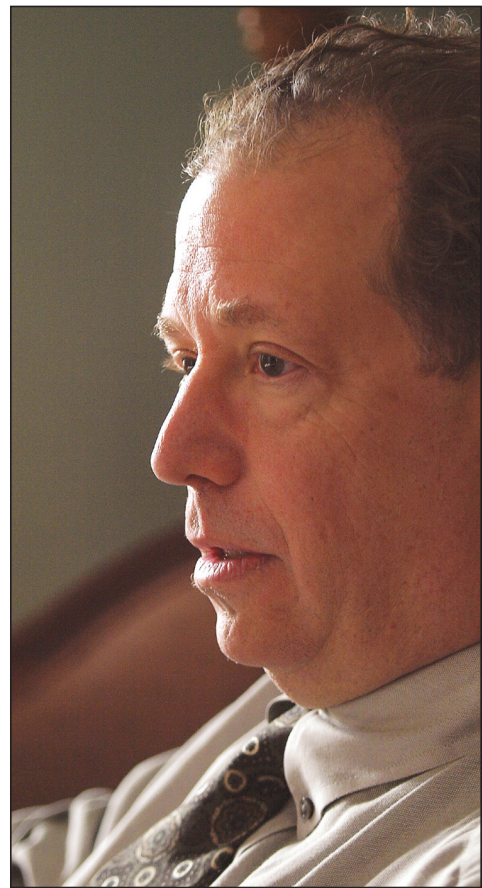
The Ira H. Owen was hauling barley to Buffalo when it and its entire crew of 19 were lost in the storm near Wisconsin's Apostle Islands.

The 436-foot Madeira was wrecked immediately below where Split Rock Lighthouse now stands. Seaman Fred Benson timed it perfectly. He jumped off the boat as

With a load of barley in its hold, the Ira H. Owen foundered in the 1905 storm on Lake Superior and its entire crew of 19 were killed, including Oliver Campbell, whose great nephew Al Campbell of Kalamazoo, Michigan, sent Curt Brown this photo of the crew.



Mataafa captain Dick Humble



So Terrible a Storm author Curt Brown.

it crashed against the rocks and scampered up the cliff, then threw a rope down to nine of his stranded shipmates. They all survived, though another mate was swept into the raging lake when the barge split in two.

A mile up the lake from Duluth, the Crescent City ran aground between two cliffs. Had it landed 50 feet to the right or left, it would have splintered against the rocks. As it was, the crew was able to run a ladder from the ship's deck down to the cliff and escape.

Brown grew up in Glencoe, Illinois, on the shores of Lake Michigan. He studied history and journalism at Macalester College, and following his graduation in 1982, went to work for the Fergus Falls *Daily Journal*, covering news coming out of the state Capitol. He was later hired as a sportswriter for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and for the past 20 years has been a news reporter for the *StarTribune*.

"Compared to what I'm used to writing, this book was like a flower budding in the springtime," Brown said. "I could say whatever I felt and make it as long as I wanted. In one part, I got to compare the two piers that stretch out (into Lake Superior) at Duluth to a sleepwalker's arms. That's something that would never get past my editors at the *StarTribune*."

Brown will discuss the 1905 storm and his new book during a free program that begins at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 27, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. (For reservations, call 651-259-3015.) The author will also read from his book in a free program at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 10, at Barnes & Noble in Har Mar Mall.

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On the Town *Briefly*

Books

Poet Nikki Giovanni will discuss her new collection, *Bicycle*, with "Talking Volumes" host Kerri Miller at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22, at the Fitzgerald Theater, 10 E. Exchange St. For tickets, priced at \$20, call 651-290-1221.

The Central Library History Book Club will discuss Doris Kearns Goodwin's book, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, on January 22. The club meets at noon on the fourth Thursday of each month in the fourth floor Community Room of the library, 90 W. 4th St. Admission is free and open to all. Call 651-266-7000, extension 5.

The Fireside Literary Series returns with free readings by newly published Minnesota authors at 7:00 p.m. Thursdays at the Hamline-Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. The schedule includes John Coy and Julie Schumacher from their young adult novels, *Box Out* and *Black Box*, respectively, on January 22; and poet and memoirist David Mura from his debut novel, *Famous Suicides of the Japanese Empire*, February 5. Coffee and cookies will be served. Call 651-222-3242.

"Soap Boxing," the monthly poetry slam featuring St. Paul's best spoken-word artists, will return at 8:00 p.m. Monday, February 2, to the Artists' Quarter, 408 St. Peter St. Special guest is underground hip hop artist Dessa of Doomtree, a poet, writer and professor at St. Paul's McNally Smith College of Music. Admission is \$5.00, or free to those who compete. Call 612-207-7991.

Exhibits

"Nature: Provocations, Reflections, Abstractions," a variety of works by the 16 members of the Rain Collective are being displayed through February 28 at the Vine Arts Center, 2637 27th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Call 612-728-5745.

"Jews Of Color: In Color," photos of small Jewish communities around the world that challenge stereotypes of the Jewish people are on view through February at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. Call 651-698-0751.



"Eastman Johnson: Paintings and Drawings of the Lake Superior Ojibwe," 40 oils, charcoals and pastel works by the 19th-century artist, will be displayed from January 31 through May 10 at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. A native of Maine, Johnson studied art in Europe before journeying to the area around Lake Superior in 1856. There he created numerous drawings and paintings of the native people. Admission is \$10, \$8.00 for seniors and students and \$5.00 for children ages 6-17. Film clips and conversation on "American Indians/American Movies" will be offered by cultural historian Elise Marubio at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 10. Call 651-259-3000.

"The Green House: New Designs in Sustainable Architecture," photos and drawings of 22 single- and multi-family residences that document a new brand of sustainable building, are on view through March 8 at the HGA Gallery in Rapson Hall at the University of Minnesota, 89 Church St. SE. in Minneapolis. Admission is free.

"Restful Places," an exhibit of finely crafted cremation urns and objects, is being displayed through March 29 at the American Association of Woodturners Gallery in Landmark Center. The funerary works range from the comedic to the reverential and from the sophisticated to the colorful. Admission is free. Call 651-484-9094.

The College of Visual Arts, 173 N. Western Ave., will open a juried student exhibition with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22. A roundtable discussion with the jurors will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, January 29. The exhibit will remain on view through February 14. Call 651-757-4080.

Works by 11 Metropolitan State University art instructors will be displayed from January 29 through February 27 in the Metro State library, 645 E. 7th St. From paintings and drawings to film and the spoken word, the show features the talents of Ed Bok Lee, James Byrne, Joseph Flores, G.E. Patterson, Patricia Hoolihan, Alison McGhee, David

Means, Suzanne Nielsen, Erica Spitzer Rasmussen, Anne Sugnet and Pamela Valfer. An opening reception will be held from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 29. The gallery is open from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

"Front, Back & Between," prints, artist's books, fine press works and other endeavors by members of the Minnesota Center for Books Arts cooperative, will be displayed from January 23 through March 8 at the MCBA, 1011 Washington Ave. S. in Minneapolis. An opening reception will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Friday, January 23. Artists Georgia A. Greeley, Richard Stephens, M.C. Hyland and C.B. Sherlock will discuss their methods at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 31. Admission is free. Call 612-215-2520.

Film

Party Girl (1995), a coming of age comedy about a free-spirited young woman who takes a job as a library clerk to prove to her librarian godmother that she is a responsible adult, will be shown on Thursday, January 22, at the University of St. Thomas. Parker Posey stars. The screening begins at 4:00 p.m. in Room 108 of the O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library. Admission is free. Refreshments will be served.

Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk, a new film from the makers of *Everest* that ventures down the Colorado River by raft to highlight a looming global water crisis, is being shown daily through June 11 at the Science Museum of Minnesota's Omnitheater. The Colorado, the source of water for 25 million Americans, is at its lowest level in 85 years. Trip leaders Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Wade Davis note the ways in which the river has changed since they last traversed its white water and what the changes mean for water worldwide. Tickets are \$7.50, \$6.50 for students and seniors. Call 651-221-9444.

Dance

Wil Swanson and his Minnesota troupe will premiere "moving through the thin air of nothingness" on January 22-25 at the Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Ave. S.

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in Minneapolis. An exploration of movement through a forest of projected light and photography, Swanson's choreography will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8:00 p.m. Friday, 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. Saturday and 7:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$22. Call 612-340-1725.

Beginning square dance lessons are being offered at 6:15 p.m. Mondays through June 8 at the West 7th Community Center, 265 Oneida St. Couples, families and singles are welcome to attend. No registration is necessary. Admission is \$3.00. Call 651-298-5493.

James Sewell Ballet, the company of St. Paul-bred dancer and choreographer James Sewell, will present new works by Nicolas Lincoln, Penelope Freeh, Morgan Thorson and Sally Rousse on January 29 through February 1. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday at the Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$26. Call 612-340-1725.

Music

Urban Hillbilly Quartet leader Erik Brandt will celebrate the release of his new solo CD, "Sometimes," with a concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 22, at Ginkgo Coffee-house, 721 N. Snelling Ave. The recording is a collection of 10 original songs that Brandt produced with Miklos Szula, one of a cast of Hungarian musicians whom he met during his 2007-08 sojourn in Budapest. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, \$8.00 with student ID. Call 651-645-2647.

The easy-listening trio Friendz will perform at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 22 and 29, at the Black Dog Cafe, 4th and Broadway streets. Admission is \$5.00.

The Grammy Award-winning hard rock band Slipknot kicks off its "All Hope Is Gone" tour at 7:00 p.m. Friday, January 23, at the Xcel Energy Center. Special guests Coheed, Cambria and Trivium will round out the bill. Tickets at \$39 and \$45 are available at the Xcel or by calling 651-989-5151.

The early-music Rose Ensemble will perform from noon to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 28, in the third floor Magazine Room at St. Paul's Central Library, 90 W. 4th St. Admission is free. Call 651-266-7000.

A flamenco guitar extravaganza featuring six of the area's finest practitioners will be presented on Saturday, January 31, by the Minnesota Guitar Society. Ben Abrahamson, Scott Mateo Davies, Dave Elrod, Tony Hauser, Trevor May and Michael Ziegahn will perform alone, in duets and all together. The music will begin at 8:00 p.m. in Sundin Hall at Hamline University, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Tickets are \$22, \$17 for students and seniors. Call 612-677-1151 or visit Cadenza Music on Snelling and Selby avenues.

Zeitgeist will hold an open rehearsal for its upcoming Playing It Close to Home concert at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, February 1, in Studio Z, 275 E. 4th St. Works by Jeffrey Brooks, Libby Larsen, Carei Thomas, Janika Vandervelde and David Wolff are on tap. Admission is \$5.00. Call 651-755-1600.

Dvorak's Carnival Overture, music from the *Indiana Jones* films, and Copland's Lincoln Portrait narrated by University of Minnesota associate professor Kirt Wilson will highlight a free concert on Sunday, February 1, by the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. The music begins at 3:00 p.m. at St. Matthew's Church, 490 Hall Ave. The program will also feature a fanfare that Bernstein wrote for JFK's inauguration in 1961, a performance by student musicians and dancers from the West Side Neighborhood House, and works by Leroy Anderson, Todd Levin and Christopher Rouse.

The Hill House Chamber Players will be joined by flutist Linda Chatterton and violinists Catherine Schubilske and Helen

Chang in concerts at 7:30 p.m. Monday, February 2 and 9, in the art gallery of the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The program includes Four Duets for violin and cello by Reinhold Gliere, The Turning of the Year for flute and guitar by Jeffrey Van, Sonata for flute, viola and guitar by Joseph Kreutzer, and String Quintet by Mozart. Tickets at \$16 including refreshments and tours of the historic mansion. For reservations, call 651-297-2555.

The annual all-day winter Sacred Harp shape-note singing festival returns on Saturday, February 7. The event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Park House, 2120 Park Ave S. in Minneapolis. Shape-note singing is an American folk tradition of singing hymns and gospel songs from books using shaped noteheads to indicate position in the scale. All are welcome to sing. No experience is necessary. Admission is free, but donations will be taken. A potluck dinner will be served at noon. Child care will be provided, but children are also welcome in the singing room. Call 651-457-7762.

Theater

Playwright Kevin Kling's meditation on love and loss and a Minnesota winter, *The Ice Fishing Play* is being performed through February 1 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Sitting alone in his icehouse in the middle of a frozen lake waiting to catch the big one, Ron is inundated with memories of his past and visions of his present. Sarah Gioia directs the cast of seven. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$20. Call 612-333-3010.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, playwright Jeffrey Hatcher's fresh take on the Robert Louis Stevenson tale about a split personality, is being staged through February 8 at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th Place. The drama unfolds around two distinct persons who share a single body—Dr. Henry Jekyll, a scientist who avoids intimacy; and Mr. Edward Hyde, a sexual predator with an overpowering need to fall in love. The play stars Steve Hendrickson, Alan Sorenson, Peter Christian Hansen, Jean Salo and Stephen D'Ambrose. Director David Mann and actors J. C. Cutler, Hendrickson and Emily Gunyou Halaas will discuss the show in a free program at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28, at the Merriam Park Branch Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. For reservations, call 651-291-7005.

Charles Gounod's Faust will be performed by the Minnesota Opera from January 24 through February 1 at the Ordway. Based on Goethe's classic tale of an aging man who makes a deal with the devil to regain his youth, it will be sung in French with English translations projected above the stage. Paul Groves, Kyle Ketelsen, Judith Howarth and Lucas Meachem star. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, February 1. Tickets are \$20 to \$150. Call 612-333-6669.

Hitchcock Blonde, Terry Johnson's cinematic thriller about obsession, desire and the psyche of director Alfred Hitchcock, will open on January 30 at the Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The spine-tingling mystery unfolds at a villa in the Greek isles where a British film professor and his young assistant sift through the decayed remains of a long lost Hitchcock movie. Meanwhile, in 1950s Hollywood, Hitchcock himself is auditioning an unknown blonde to be the body-double for his infamous *Psycho* shower scene. Directed by Joel Sass, the play stars Heidi Bakke, J.C. Cutler, Mikki Daniels, Eric Knutson, Tom Sherohman, Craig Anderson and Antoneete Trussoni. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday through March 8. Tickets



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EVENT DETAILS

Take a Tour for Roses

Saturday, February 7, 2009

1:00pm - 3:00pm

Call the community nearest you today to schedule your appointment for a tour, and let us know how we can help you meet the needs of a senior in your life.



Scarlett Thompson and Stacia Rice star in *The Miracle Worker*, William Gibson's drama about deaf, mute and blind Helen Keller of Tuscumbia, Alabama, and the teacher who rescued her from a dark and tortured existence. Produced in collaboration with the Torch Theatre, it is playing through February 21 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$25-\$30, \$22-\$28 for seniors and \$10 for students. Several shows will be interpreted for the deaf. Hands-on activities for children on the life of Keller will be offered beginning at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, January 24. For reservations, call 651-292-4323.

are \$28-\$36 with discounts for students and seniors. Call 612-822-7063.

Forks of Ivy, a full-length drama by Cass Erickson, will be given a staged reading at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, January 30 and 31, at the Lowry Lab Theater, 350 St. Peter St. A coproduction of the Theater Space Project and the Lex-Ham Community Theater, the play tells of an aging patriarch in the mountains of southern Appalachia who questions his faith following the accidental death of his son. Admission is free, though donations will be taken.

“Full Circle Plus,” an evening of one-act plays, will be presented on January 30, 31 and February 1 by the students of Visitation School and St. Thomas Academy. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 4:00 p.m. Sunday in DeSales Auditorium at Visitation, 2455 Visitation Drive in Mendota Height. Admission is \$10, \$5.00 for students and seniors. Call 651-454-4570.

Family

A storytime for toddlers and their families involving music, songs, chants, finger play and movement will be offered at 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays, January 21 and 28, at the East Lake Library, 2727 E. Lake St. in Minneapolis. The half-hour sessions are conducted by Musikgarten of Minnehaha Falls. For information, call 612-630-6550.

Red Balloon Bookshop, 891 Grand Ave., plays host to storytimes for babies at 10:15 a.m. Tuesdays, toddlers at 11:00 a.m. Tuesdays and preschoolers at 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays. Featured in other free programs will be author-illustrator Mo Willems and *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed* at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22; alphabet story and craft with artist Ellen Ferrari, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 24; scenes from SteppingStone Theatre's *Ruby! The Story of Ruby Bridges*, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 31. Call 651-224-8320.

The Gruffalo, a monstrously fun musical adaptation of the award-winning picture book, is being performed through February 22 at the Children's Theatre, 2400 3rd Ave. S. in Minneapolis. It tells of Mouse, who sets off on an adventure through the deep, dark woods, scaring hungry animals away with tall stories of a terrifying beast. For show times and tickets, priced from \$20-\$35, \$14-\$29 for children and seniors, call 612-874-0400.

“Saturday Live!” free entertainment for children at 11:15 a.m. Saturdays at St. Paul's Central Library, 90 W. 4th St., will feature magician Star Michaelina on January 24; the music, puppets and stories of Safari Greg on January 31; and “Land of 10,000 Lakes: Minnesota's 150-year Connection to Water,” a puppet show in Spanish and English by In the Heart of the Beast, February 7.

The Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., will show family movies at 2:00 p.m. Saturdays, January 24, February 7 and 12. Bring pillows to sit on. Refreshments will be provided. Call 651-642-0385.

“All About Groundhogs,” an interactive program for 2- and 3-year-olds and their families, will be offered from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Thursday, February 5, at the Bell Museum of Natural History, 17th and University avenues in Southeast Minneapolis. Meet a groundhog, sing groundhog songs, practice hibernating like a groundhog and find out how groundhogs can tell us when spring is coming. The program is free with museum admission (\$5.00, \$3.00 for children). To register, call 612-624-9050.

Et cetera

“Global Hotdish” will be presented at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 24, in 3M Auditorium at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Emceed by T. Mychael Rambo, the 90-minute variety show will feature organ grinder Angelo Rulli; the Wacky Chickens with Lloyd Brandt and Rosie Cole; the circus antics of Lucy Lawton, Alondra Kingman and Gabriel Cole-Brandt; the Misora Taiko drummers; the dance and puppetry of Zorongo Flamenco; storyteller Beth Gilleland; and Dan Newton and the Cafe Accordion Orchestra. Admission is \$12, \$5.00 for children ages 6-17.

“Sample Night Live,” a monthly preview of a dozen performing arts events, returns on Wednesday, February 4, to the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. The show opens at 7:00 p.m. with a G-rated segment. The unrated portion begins at 8:15 p.m. Among its 12 acts will be the History Theatre, Teatro del Pueblo, Theatre of Fools, magician Tom Bealke, comedian Eric Nigg, the Minneapolis sextet Absent Arch, the Irish dance troupe Rinca na Chroi and previews of the films *We Killed Alice* and *Scrap*. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for students and seniors and \$5.00 for children ages 5-10. Call 612-825-8949.

Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Buzzing about hockey at SPA

There were so many high school games played over the holidays that I suppose I can't be blamed for missing one of the best. However, those who did make it to the St. Paul Academy boys' hockey game on January 3 were rewarded by witnessing one of the state's oldest prep hockey programs accomplish something that hadn't occurred in a long, long time.

That night, the Spartans team, which includes players from Mounds Park Academy, took the ice at the citadel of prep hockey known as Blake School and came away with a 3-0 victory. The heroes that night were Wyatt Wenzel, who scored a pair of goals, and goalie Steven Estep, who turned away all 40 shots—including a couple of them on breakaways.

SPA's victory over the perennial Tri-Metro Conference powerhouse qualifies as news on its own merits. But when you consider that the last time the Spartans beat Blake not a single one of the current SPA players was even born, the win earns a spot as one of the most noteworthy achievements of the prep season.

"We've been checking the record books ever since that game," said Mike Brown, who serves as SPA's co-athletic director and unofficial historian of Spartan lore. "We think that it's been 20 years, but it might be longer than that."

Regular readers of the *Villager* may recall that SPA coach Craig Norwich was cautiously optimistic when his team started practice two months ago. "It's a good nucleus of kids," he said in this paper's annual high school hockey preview. "If we can stay healthy, we should show improvement over last season."

And how. The hockey season is now half over and the Spartans, who were 8-3-1 as of January 13, already had more wins than last year, when they finished with a 7-15 record.

"I didn't even know it until the kids told me," Norwich said of the long winless streak against Blake. "I just told the kids they needed to read Ken Dryden's book, *The Game*. Dryden said the hardest thing to do is to come down from a big win and get ready for the next game."

That was something Norwich learned in his youth playing in Edina, where winning was a way of life—and something to be enjoyed just for the moment. By the next day, it was back to business and getting ready for the next battle. By the time he moved to Wisconsin and later to the NHL with Montreal, Norwich was well-schooled in that mindset. He is still trying to instill the same concept in his troops, but it isn't as easy as it sounds. "Some of our guys aren't used to the idea," Norwich admitted, "but we're learning."

Five days after the big win over the Bears, the Spartans were struggling, needing three third-period goals to outlast Prairie Centre, an outfit that combines players from Long

WRIGHT CALL ► 31

Flashing gold 'n' red

Highly rated Sibley boys show they can draw a crowd

BY BILL WAGNER

The Henry Sibley boys' basketball game on January 9 provided proof positive that the Warriors have moved into the big time. A school-record crowd of 2,800 packed the Sibley gym that evening to watch the Warriors, the second-ranked team in the state in Class AAAA, take on top-ranked and undefeated Hopkins, perceived by many as the best prep basketball team in Minnesota in years.

The Warriors lost 77-66 to fall to 8-2 on the season, but the score was not nearly as revealing as the event itself. Both schools had sold advance tickets leading up to the game and what the huge crowd said is that Sibley, which finished second to Minnetonka in last year's state tournament, has arrived as a state power. This is the second straight year that the Warriors have been among the state's top 10 teams and they have earned every bit of that respect.

The Sibley-Hopkins game was a matchup of two teams laden with Division I college prospects, and after a sluggish first half, the Warriors were able to make a pretty good run at the Royals. Problem was, Hopkins always seemed to have an answer at the right time.

Hopkins coach Ken Novak was impressed with the play of Sibley—especially the way the Warriors hit the boards—and was worried about the second-half run the Warriors made.

After the game Novak mentioned to his players that the two teams could meet again this year at state. "If we don't get better, Sibley will beat us," he told them. "They know that they have some things to work on and we know that we have some things to work on, but this was a great basketball game."

Sibley coach Tom Dasovich, who once played for Novak, said the game proved that the Warriors can play with the state's best. "Our guys are confident, even though we lost," he said. "To get the experience of playing in a game like that is really valuable. We were nervous at first, but we settled down and gave them a battle."

Despite the loss, the Warriors appear to be steaming ahead toward a return trip to state. Four nights after losing to Hopkins, Sibley blew out North St. Paul to go up 2-0 in the Classic Suburban Conference. And just before the Hopkins game, the Warriors also blasted a



Sibley senior Jameal North sprints down court past fallen teammate Mike Bruesewitz after making a steal. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

talented Tartan club.

"We held (the Titans) to 15 points in the first half at their place," Dasovich said. "That was the first time all year that we've had that kind of defense on the court."

By most accounts, this year's Sibley team is even better than the one that suffered a tough loss in the state finals last year. The Warriors led Minnetonka by 13 points at the end of the first half in the state title match, only to squander it in the second half. It was the first-ever trip to state for Sibley.

This year, the Warrior lineup is punctuated with the one-two punch of 6-foot-8 seniors Mike Bruesewitz and Chris Halvorsen, who are considered the best forward combination in the state. Bruesewitz, who will play at Wisconsin next season, was averaging more than 20 points and 11 rebounds a game through early January. Halvorsen, who is headed to Valparaiso, was averaging more than 13 points and two steals a game.

Senior guard Maurice Hernandez is

averaging more than 15 points a game and makes the opposition pay if it doubles up on Halvorsen or Bruesewitz. "He's hitting 40 percent on three-pointers," Dasovich said about Hernandez. "He's one of the top three-point threats in the state."

At center is 7-foot junior Jake Kreuser, a work in progress who has logged nearly six points, five rebounds and three blocks a game. His presence in the middle makes it almost impossible for most teams to mount an inside attack.

Senior point guard Francis Bungue has done a good job setting up the offense and has been averaging four points, four assists and two steals a game. His backup is senior Jameal North.

Another talented Sibley player off the bench is junior Mike Rostampour, who is expected to be the team's next outstanding forward. He contributed six points off the bench against Hopkins.

As one might expect, opposing

SIBLEY HOOPS ► 31



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A lot of teams have been trying to chase down Minnehaha Academy this winter. Here Sarah Peterson, right, eludes Visitation's Clare Robinson on a fast break during the Redhawks' 69-20 win on January 9. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Redhawk girls are on the road to another stellar hoop season

BY BILL WAGNER

If the Minnehaha Academy girls' basketball team returns to the state tournament this winter, nobody will be able to say that the Redhawks did it the easy way. Minnehaha had posted an 11-1 overall record and was 4-0 in the Tri-Metro Conference through January 11 while playing all of those games on the road.

Generally when a school plays such a lopsided schedule, it's because it's having its gym rebuilt. In Minnehaha's case, it was simply the result of quirky scheduling.

"It was just a fluke thing," said Redhawks coach Josh Thurow, "but we've been doing all right, and we're ready to play some home games now."

Despite all of those early contests on the road (Minnehaha didn't play its first home game until January 3), the Redhawks have been ranked among the top 10 teams in the metro area. But then, the club has been making a habit of being at or near the top of its conference and section. If the Redhawks make it to state this season, it will be the third time in Thurow's five years as coach.

Home games or not, Thurow said there's only one way his team wants to get better. "You can learn from winning and you can learn from losing," Thurow said. "We prefer to learn from winning."

This is also a team with a special motivation. Last year, Minnehaha took a 26-3 record into the state Class AAA tournament and lost to Rogers in the third-place game. Though the team lost three players from that squad, Thurow said this year's team seems to have a little feistier edge to it. "That isn't to slight anybody on last year's team," he said. "It's just that this is a different group of players."

The Redhawks entered the second half of the season with plenty of momentum. In the two games prior to ending their stretch on the road, Minnehaha defeated Braham 67-48 in nonconference action and trounced Visitation 69-20. This year the Redhawks have outscored their opponents by an average of 21 points. Their only blemish was a 41-48 loss to Maple Grove in late December.

"We're an uptempo team that applies a full-court pressure," Thurow said. "Offensively, we can score with either an inside or outside game. With three of our top four scorers back from last year, I'm excited about what this team can achieve. Going into the season, we knew we'd be OK."

One of the Hawks' question marks at the outset of the year was the status of junior point guard Rachel Hansen, an impact player who has been a starter since 8th grade. She suffered a serious knee injury in last year's state tournament that required reconstructive surgery, but has shown that she is fully recovered. "She's probably better than she was before," Thurow said.

Hansen, who is approaching 1,000 career points, is averaging 15 points a game. She was on fire against Braham on January 10 when she poured in 33, and she consistently provides her teammates with a spark. Against New Life Academy last month, for example, the Redhawks were trailing by two points at the half, but Hansen hit two three-pointers to start off the second half and Minnehaha never looked back.

Senior forward Sarah Peterson, who has been averaging 13 points per contest, is a key element in the Hawks' smothering press. She had five of Minnehaha's 21 steals in just the first half of a lopsided win over St. Anthony. Peterson also is a strong rebounder and provides a handful of assists per game.

Sophomore center Katelyn Adams, who is now in her second year as a starter, uses her 6-foot-4 frame to score 10 points per game and block a lot of shots. Her offensive touch is developing nicely and Thurow said she also does a good job of protecting the hoop at the back end of the press.

Senior forward AnnaMarie Martino averages nine points a game, shoots 75 percent from the free-throw line and is adept at dishing off the ball. "I think this has been her best year," Thurow said. "She's one of our best passers, if not the best."

The other starter is senior guard Liz Mrozek, who contributes several assists per game along with lightning-fast defensive skills and outstanding ball-handling.

The Redhawks also have a lot of talent coming off the bench in sophomore guard Jana Halstensgard, senior forward Britta Monson, and junior forwards Sarah Scholl and Analisa Ballinger.

Still, Minnehaha has some mountains to climb before reaching state. Hill-Murray looms as the top threat in the section. However, Thurow first wants to secure the conference title, which has belonged to DeLaSalle for the last two years. The Redhawks and the Islanders were set to play each other for the first time this season on January 20 at Minnehaha.

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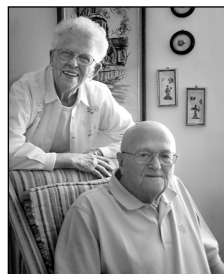


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29◀ WRIGHT CALL

Prairie, Grey Eagle, Melrose and Sauk Centre—none of them hockey meccas.

When Mike Foley coached SPA in the 1970s, the Spartans were considered one of the state's best hockey programs. However, by the end of the decade Foley had left and the Spartans' fortunes slid. They have been mid-level members—at best—for most of their tenure in the Tri-Metro Conference. In recent years, Blake and Breck have taken turns at the top of the heap, with the rest of the league scrapping for third place.

Thanks to Wenzel, a junior who scored 16 goals in the first dozen games of this season, and Michael Falvey, who potted 11 in the same time frame, things are now looking up for SPA. The Spartans definitely have more offense than in past years, which has allowed Norwich to shift a couple of forwards to help senior Jacob Rice on defense. And as is often the case when a team starts to taste success, flowers have started to pop up everywhere. For example, Mason White, one of five freshmen on SPA's roster, got tossed into the Blake game and fared very well.

"Last year we played a lot of games where we'd be tied 2-2 after two periods, but we'd wear down," Norwich said. "Now we have some depth." That has not only translated into victories, but into perhaps the best compliment of them all: Spartan hockey is the talk of the hallways on the Randolph Avenue campus.

Where it goes from here is anybody's guess. Breck burst the Spartans' balloon with a 9-1 victory on January 13, and Johnson and Como Park have joined the Tri-Metro Conference for hockey, expanding the league to seven teams and making life more complicated. But things certainly have changed at SPA.

"The kids are feeling good days," Norwich said. "There's a buzz around the school about the team."

Matt Birk to enter CAA Hall of Fame

Matt Birk may not know where he's going to play football next season. His current employer, Zygi Wilf, hasn't indicated whether the Minnesota Vikings will offer the 32-year-old center a contract for 2009. If

not, Birk will likely find other suitors because 300-pound Pro Bowl-caliber centers with 11 years of NFL experience aren't easy to find.

But Birk does know one thing already. On Monday, February 23, he will become the latest inductee into the Catholic Athletic Association's Hall of Fame. Birk, who played grade school football at Nativity before moving on to Cretin-Derham Hall and Harvard University, will be honored that night at a dinner at the Mendakota Country Club in Mendota Heights. Tickets are \$100 a couple, with all proceeds going to support CAA programs. For tickets, call CAA athletic director Mark Courtney at 651-227-1741 or e-mail Tim Doran at tim@stpatricksguild.com.

RIP, R.V.

There were really three sides to Ron Vannelli. First was the convivial fellow you'd meet on the street, the guy who always had a smile on his face and was happy to talk.

Second was the fellow who lived and breathed hockey, siring five players, all of whom played hockey at the college level. (Tom, who played at SPA and the University of Minnesota, and brother Greg, who played for St. Thomas Academy and the College of St. Thomas, now co-coach the STA pucksters.) The legacy eventually spread to Vannelli's grandsons, one of whom played for the Golden Gophers earlier this decade.

Third was the strict but fair taskmaster who was one of the game's best prep and college hockey referees in the 1960s and '70s. It's a rare occasion when a coach looks out on the ice before a game and is pleased to see who's officiating. Vannelli was one of those refs because he didn't care who won the game. He knew the rules backwards and forwards called them just as he saw them.

Vannelli died on January 11 at the age of 80. Though he had been ill for several years, his presence was always felt around the game he loved. Less than two weeks before his death, he was at a game watching a family member play. He'll be missed, but always remembered by those who knew him.

(Reach Dave Wright at dwright53@msn.com.)

Sports Shorts

National Hockey League alumni from Minnesota, including Don Beaupre, Brian Bellows, Dwight Bialowas, Brian Bonin, Jack Carlson, Tom Chorske, Joe Dziedzic, Jim Korn, Reed Larson, Chris McAlpine, Craig Norwich and Tim Young, will take on the coaches of the Highland Central Hockey Association (HCHA) in a game at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, February 7, at Charles M. Schulz Arena, 800 S. Snelling Ave. The exhibition game is the centerpiece of an HCHA benefit on February 7-8 that will include a silent auction and the fourth annual Mite Jamboree, a round-robin hockey competition for 16 teams. Admission to the alumni game is \$5.00. The HCHA is hoping to raise \$6,000 to help pay for ice time, uniforms and player scholarships. For information or to contribute an item for the auction, call Molly Barrett at 651-245-3288.

The Midwest Gymnastics 2009 Winter Carnival Classic for girls' Junior Olympic levels 4-10 will be held on Saturday and Sunday, January 24-25, at St. Paul RiverCentre. Admission is \$8.00-\$13 for a day or \$11-\$21 for the weekend, with \$2.00 and \$5.00 discounts for those with a Winter Carnival button. Children age 4 and younger will be admitted free. Visit www.midwestgymnastics.com or call 651-482-9616.

The Minnesota Thunder has announced the application process for its annual player combine at the National Sports Center in Blaine on Monday through Thursday, February 16-19. The cost is \$195 for commuters and \$295 for others. The Thunder will reimburse players who sign a 2009 contract. The application deadline is January 23. To register, e-mail Trina Kramer at combine@mnthunder.com.


29◀ SIBLEY HOOPS

coaches are envious when they look over Sibley's lineup. One of them is Woodbury coach Scott Swansson, whose team put up a good fight but lost to Sibley in the section semifinal last season. "Sibley and Hopkins are the two top teams in the state and I think it's quite clear," Swansson said. "But Sibley this year is a year older and more experienced."

Swansson said he likes the way Bruesewitz makes his teammates around him better. "I wish we had him," he said. "If we did, we'd be re-

ally, really good. He's a banger who can score and kick the ball back out, which would be great because we have some good shooters. But I think the guy who gets overlooked is Hernandez. He can knock 'em down."


Long-time Mounds View coach Zig Kauls, who knows boys' basketball inside and out, agreed that the battle for the state title will likely come down to Hopkins and Sibley. "I don't think you're going to find any other Class AAAA school with the kind of athletes those two schools have," he said.



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Summer in the Cities

It might seem like months away—and it is—but local summer camps for kids are already accepting registration for programs in academics, music, art, theater, sports and more. The *Villager* will be highlighting those programs being offered locally with our Summer in the Cities special section in the February 4 issue. Nearly 28,000 youngsters under age 18 reside in the neighborhoods served by the *Villager*, and their parents will once again be looking to our annual guide to summer camps for enriching programs for their children. Make yours one of them and reap the results!



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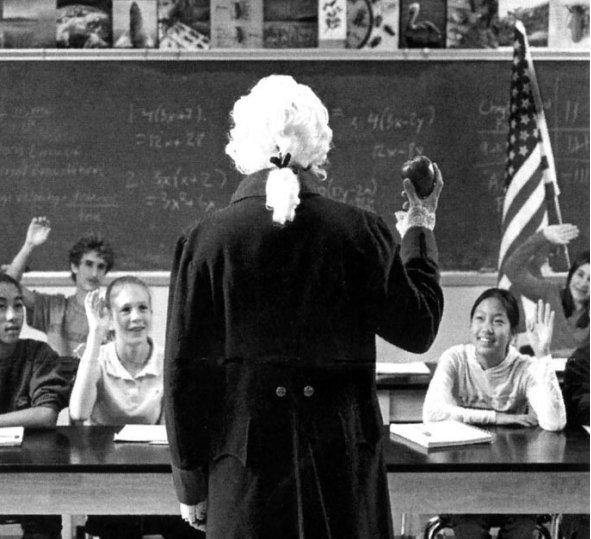
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A New Year's message to our readers and advertisers

It has been, as you well know, a challenging year for business. But doing business, as we do, with the vast majority of fellow small, independent operations in this area, we can say with certainty that there was plenty of both bad news *and* good news from the front lines of local commerce in 2008.

To be sure, the economic downturn has taken its toll, and will no doubt continue to do so. Yet it does not seem to have affected other businesses at all. For many of those business owners, the challenges that 2008 presented meant maximizing their use of local advertising in those media that reach the vast majority of their potential customers and offer the best return on their marketing dollar.

In a word: results.

It's for that reason, more than any other, that the *Villager*, more than other newspapers we could name, has weathered the continuing storm. And believe us, in an era when other newspapers are showing substantial declines, we're grateful for that.

Not that we don't think we've earned it. Over the years, our substantial investment in making the *Villager* a vital, freely distributed medium for both local news and advertising has borne fruit. It's our avid local readership, after all, and not mere advertising space, that we're selling. That readership of more than 130,000 people—up from 110,000 in 2007—represents 100 percent of the homes and businesses in this prime market area, and translates into greater reach for advertising messages, as well as higher retention value when each issue is retained and referred to until the subsequent one arrives two weeks later.

I'd like to extend my thanks and that of our entire staff for having helped the *Villager* continue to thrive over the years. We appreciate the relationship that we've developed and what your loyalty as readers and advertisers allows us to deliver to the people in the neighborhoods we serve.



Michael Mischke, Publisher



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