

Scouts buy historic site for urban base camp

Purchase part of \$7.25M plan to use fort property

By Kevin Driscoll

Fort Snelling's old drill hall has been through several incarnations in its 104-year history, but local Scouting officials are hoping that the next one will be the most long-lived.

Beginning in the fall of 2010, the refurbished building will house an urban base camp for the Northern Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Expected to be the first of its kind in the nation, the camp will be designed for kids who grow up never having seen the woods, said John Andrews, the council's executive director.

The Northern Star Council, which has service centers in St. Paul and Golden Valley, is the second largest of the 300 Boy Scout councils in the United States. It operates eight camps in central Minnesota and western Wisconsin, but it takes anywhere from 45 minutes to a couple of hours to reach them.

"Our camps are generally in remote areas because they provide better settings for what we teach about nature,"



Northern Star Council chief executive John Andrews stands near the entrance to an immense barn-like structure at Fort Snelling that local Scouts have purchased for an urban base camp. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Andrews said. "We decided to add an urban setting where kids can learn how to use mass transit to get around, among other things. They can jump on the (Hiawatha) light-rail line and be dropped off at the front door."

The drill hall, which is also known as Building 201, is located just south of Highway 55 near Fort Snelling. It was constructed in 1904 as an indoor facility

BASE CAMP ►2

Local businesses fear federal law may spell end of handmade toys

Alliance members seek delay in deadline for more stringent tests

By Jane McClure

A federal law intended to keep children safe could unintentionally put the makers of handmade toys and the stores that sell them out of business. Toy manufacturers such as Beka Natural Wooden Products on Selby Avenue and retail stores such as Peapods on Snelling Avenue and Wonderment on Grand Avenue are facing a February 9 deadline to comply with a law that requires more stringent testing of the materials used to make toys and other products for children under age 12. The owners of such businesses are now pushing Congress to either extend the deadline or amend the law.

"This will have a detrimental effect on our small suppliers," said Peapods co-owner Dan Marshall, who hosted a press conference at his store on December 23 to draw attention to the plight of those who make and sell handmade toys. "We've tried for 10 years to bring natural toys and baby products to St. Paul." Now, he said, those products may have to dramatically increase in price or not be sold at all.

Toy makers, toy sellers and toy importers around the nation have joined together to form the Handmade Toy Alliance to advocate changes or a delay in enforcing the law. Their suggestions include fewer testing requirements, exemptions from testing and changes in labeling requirements.

"These are real people, making real products, who know what goes into their products," Marshall said.

The federal law was passed after high levels of lead were found in 2007 in paints, plastics and other material used to make toys in China. The discovery led to a series of recalls of numerous toys and the passage of the Consumer Products

HANDMADE TOYS ►6

\$4.8 billion deficit has area legislators bracing for big cuts

Across-the-board cuts of 14 percent are predicted even with a tax increase

By Kevin Driscoll

The Minnesota Legislature's 134 representatives and 67 senators return to the Capitol this week facing a projected state deficit of \$4.8 billion for the biennium

that begins on July 1. Deciding which departmental budgets to cut or which taxes to increase to address that shortfall will dominate debate during the new session, according to Senator Dick Cohen (DFL-District 64), chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

As far as Cohen is concerned, "there's really not much else happening," he said.

Governor Tim Pawlenty will unveil his proposed budget for 2009-2011 by January 27. Cohen would not predict which programs would be cut or which taxes increased to ad-

dress the deficit. "That will have to be worked out by the Legislature and governor," he said. "But this time will be much more difficult than 2003 (when the state had to address a \$4.56 billion deficit) because there's no more one-time money. I don't know how anyone gets past this without considering some form of tax increase."

Even with a tax increase, Cohen believes that state budgets will have to be cut 13 to 14 percent across the board to make up for the shortfall. "If K-12 education, which takes up

about 40 percent of the state budget, is held harmless, then those cuts could total about 17 percent in all the other agencies," he said.

"We're going to have to operate somewhat on the premise that, with the new administration in Washington, the stimulus package they're working on will allow for some help to Minnesota," Cohen said. "But I don't expect the states to be held completely harmless in this economic environment."

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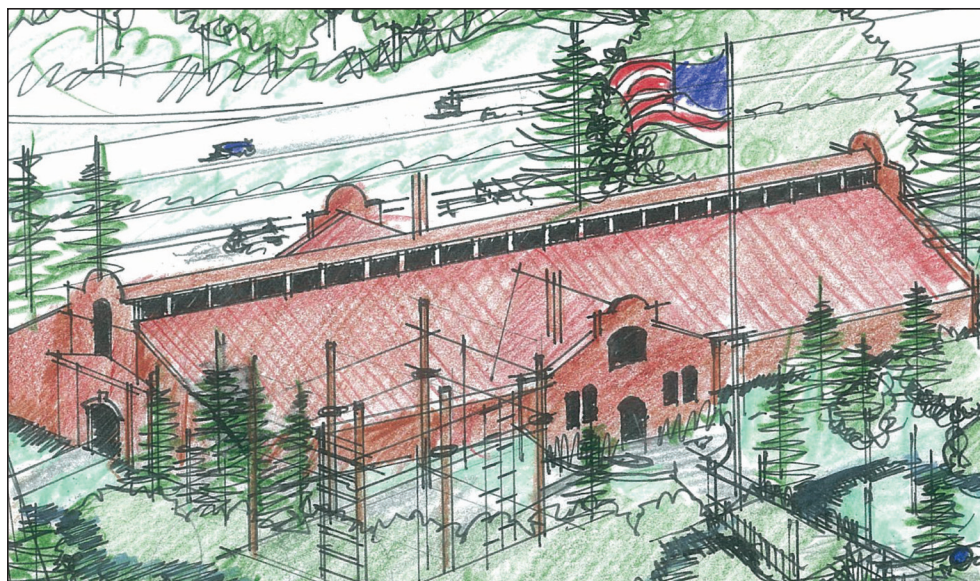


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Artist's conceptual renderings of the Northern Star Council's proposed base camp, which will be located just south of Highway 55 near Fort Snelling. The council hopes to open the camp in 2010, which will mark the 100th year of Scouting in the United States.



1 ◀ BASE CAMP

to train horses to pull artillery in World War I. It was later used for U.S. Cavalry dressage practice, a processing center for soldiers going overseas in World War II, and a materials testing facility for the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

The building was purchased in 2000 by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, which has been trying to unload it ever since. A plan to convert it into a practice facility for the Minnesota Wild never materialized. A proposal to turn the building into a skateboard park also failed and ended up costing the Park Board \$900,000 in litigation fees.

In October 2007, the Park Board signed a purchase agreement with the Boy Scouts, but it took more than a year to complete the sale because of title issues, Andrews said. "We closed on the purchase on November 26," he said. "Construction will begin next fall and we'll open a year after that."

The cost of the building and the 3-acre par-

cel of land on which it sits was \$2.25 million. Renovation of the building (another \$2.5 million) and the purchase of a 3.5-acre vacant lot that will provide parking for 191 cars (\$2.5 million) will bring the total to \$7.25 million.

"The building has been vacant for more than 25 years," Andrews said. "It's little more than just a huge, empty, brick shell. There's nothing usable inside."

All of the windows and doors will have to be replaced. "We'll also have to work on the roof, install a heating plant, expand on the minimal electricity and put in an actual floor," he said. "It's just a dirt floor now."

All of the renovation work will have to be approved by the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office.

Andrews said the base camp will be used as a bridge to the council's other camps—"a starting point for greater adventures." He said the site is ideal because of its proximity to historic Fort Snelling, which offers a window into early frontier life; Fort Snelling State Park,



Boy Scout executive John Andrews surveys the interior of the former drill hall at Fort Snelling, which the Northern Star Council bought for \$2.25 million. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

where Scouts will be able to canoe and swim; and extensive hiking, biking and ski trails.

The 32,000-square-foot building will house a wide variety of programs and activities, including an outreach center for at-risk youths, after-school programming, park programs, and culturally specific programs for Southeast Asian, Latino and African American kids. The building will also house a leadership center, climbing walls, an indoor rope course, an indoor archery range and, in the future, offices for the council's administration.

"We'll have some unique courses, such as learning how to use GPS (global positioning systems) and geo-caching for treasure hunts," Andrews said. "We'll partner with schools for other programs as well."

Andrews said the base camp will have about 100,000 kids moving through it each year. They will be served by 120 year-round staff, 500 seasonal staff and about 24,000 volunteers.

The base camp will be open to all groups that want to use it. "We'll be operating it as a public facility," Andrews said, "renting it out to other organizations."

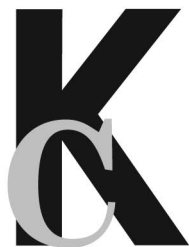
The Northern Star Council hopes to open the camp in October 2010, which will mark the 100th year of Scouting in the U.S. Donations are still being raised for building renovation and purchasing the second parcel of land. For information, visit www.northernstarbsa.org or contact John Andrews at 651-254-9140 or jandrews@northernstarbsa.org.

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St. Paul sets priorities for stimulus spending

By JANE MCCLURE

Renovation of the Highland National Golf Course clubhouse, parking improvements along the proposed Central Corridor light-rail line and street reconstruction are among St. Paul's proposals for a federal economic stimulus package. The list of 31 potential projects, totaling more than \$170 million, was compiled by Mayor Chris Coleman and sent to President-elect Barack Obama's administration and Minnesota's Congressional delegation in mid-December. The mayor worked with city department heads to prepare the list.

"These projects will generate significant numbers of jobs in St. Paul and will serve to strengthen our local economy, metro area and the nation as a whole," Coleman wrote in a letter to elected officials. "Now more than ever, we look to Washington for leaders who will advocate for Main Street needs and give us the means to create jobs and reverse this economic downturn."

Obama's plans for economic recovery include building and maintaining public infrastructure as a means to create new jobs. His plans are still being formed, but some reports

indicate that up to \$775 billion could be provided nationally over a two-year period as part of the economic stimulus package. Despite the many unknowns, cities, counties, states and other units of government have been scrambling to compile their requests.

Obama's economic stimulus package could give St. Paul its only chance of seeing any large-scale capital investment during these difficult economic times. The city faces the prospect of severe cuts in state aid and will reopen its 2009 budget discussions on January 14. City officials and citizen volunteers are also set to begin reviewing projects for the 2010-2011 Capital Improvement Budget this month. However, the capital budget could be dramatically scaled back in an effort to cut costs.

Most of the St. Paul projects lining up for economic stimulus funding have been on the drawing board for several years and could be started fairly quickly, said Ward 5 City Council member Lee Helgen, who chairs the City Council's Ad Hoc Legislative Committee. Renovation of the Highland National clubhouse, for example, has been discussed for more than a decade. The building, which dates from the 1930s, is in deteriorated condi-

tion and is not accessible to disabled people. The \$2.5 million renovation would allow St. Paul Parks and Recreation to increase its use by the public and generate more revenue.

The city's largest request is for \$40 million to pay for long-delayed improvements to Cleveland Circle, the vacant city-owned parking area on Kellogg Boulevard and West 7th Street across from the Xcel Energy Center. The first phase of improvements calls for a public ice facility that would be shared by the Minnesota Wild. New commercial space would also be built. The project could create as many as 200 temporary construction jobs and up to 200 permanent jobs after it is up and running.

Two proposed projects center on the planned Central Corridor light-rail line. A \$10 million request would be used to build underground parking as part of the light-rail route that would extend through the block bounded by 4th, Cedar, 5th and Minnesota streets. Another \$500,000 request would replace on-street parking on University Avenue that would be lost due to the construction of the light-rail line.

Other city requests include \$10 million to purchase and rehabilitate homes, \$4.5 million



Two of the city's 31 projects seeking stimulus funding center on the Central Corridor light-rail line. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

for job training, more than \$14 million to improve facilities at Como Park, \$2.4 million to construct an emergency operations center as part of the new Fire Station 1 going up at West 7th Street and Randolph Avenue, \$3.5 million to rebuild a 2.5-mile section of Water Street between Harriet Island and the Lilydale Pool and Yacht Club, \$2.1 million to reconstruct Western Avenue between Selby and University avenues, \$1 million to reconstruct Jefferson Avenue from Lexington Parkway to West 7th Street, and \$3.1 million to reconstruct Randolph Avenue from Brimhall Street to I-35E.

City, county adopt budgets knowing more cuts will be needed

By JANE MCCLURE

With a state budget deficit of \$4.8 billion for the 2009-2011 biennium looming, St. Paul and Ramsey County officials are bracing for another round of budget cuts this winter. Last month Mayor Chris Coleman enacted a hiring freeze and put on hold what few initiatives were in St. Paul's city budget for 2009. Coleman has also asked all city department heads to prepare plans for trimming up to 20 percent of their budgets for the coming year.

The mayor's actions have scotched plans for hiring 14 new police officers and one new firefighter. They have dashed hopes for adding morning hours at several of the city's public library branches. The mayor's actions mean no staff will be added at the new Jimmy Lee Recreation Center and Oxford Pool. The city won't get its new bicycle-pedestrian coordinator, nor will it appoint additional staff to assist with the 2010 U.S. Census. Also scrapped is St. Paul's Civic Organizations Partnership Program that for years has funded the Youth Service Bureau, Southern Minnesota Regional

Legal Services and a host of other programs.

Governor Tim Pawlenty on December 19 gave local governmental officials a taste of what's to come when he announced \$426 million in cuts to balance the state's current 2007-2009 budget, including a reduction of \$110 million in Local Government Aid to Minnesota cities and counties. St. Paul lost \$5.7 million, Minneapolis \$13.1 million, Ramsey County \$4.3 million and Hennepin County \$10.6 million. This was money that many local governments had already spent. According to Coleman, St. Paul will have to borrow money to meet its basic obligations.

St. Paul and Ramsey County officials agreed it has been difficult adopting budgets for 2009 when there is so much uncertainty on the state level. Pawlenty is not expected to unveil his state budget for 2009-2011 until January 26, and it is likely to require some difficult choices. Spending cuts are inevitable. Under state law, cities, counties and school districts had to set their maximum property tax levies for 2009 last September.

The St. Paul City Council adopted its budget for 2009 on December 17. It totals \$633

million for all city departments and the public libraries—a 5.9 percent increase over 2008. The budget is supported by an 8 percent increase in property taxes—from \$80.5 million in 2008 to \$87 million in 2009. The city will also levy \$2.1 million for St. Paul Port Authority operations.

The St. Paul School Board voted on December 16 to increase its property tax levy by 3.9 percent—from \$102.9 million in 2008 to \$106.9 million in 2009. The school district will not adopt a budget for the 2009-10 school year until sometime this spring. Its total budget for 2008-09 is \$628.1 million.

The Ramsey County Board voted 6-1 on December 16 to adopt a budget of \$588.9 million for 2009, up 3.2 percent over 2008. The county's property tax levy for 2009 is \$253 million, up 4.5 percent over 2008. The county is also levying \$19.9 million for its Regional Rail Authority, the same amount it levied for rail in 2008.

Commissioner Janice Rettman cast the lone vote against the 2009 budget. She thinks the County Board should be making more budget cuts now rather than waiting to see how

the state addresses its budget deficit.

The City Council's vote on the 2009 budget for St. Paul was unanimous, although frustration was evident in the last-minute scramble to make spending cuts. "This feels like we got oatmeal for breakfast when we were expecting Lucky Charms," said Ward 5 City Council member Lee Helgen.

The City Council and mayor agreed to put about \$4.2 million in a contingency fund. The council also allocated \$2.6 million to fill holes in the 2008 budget caused by cost overruns, especially in employee overtime and benefits.

According to City Council President Kathy Lantry, St. Paul officials are doing all they can to cut the budget with as little pain as possible. In recent weeks, the City Council has discussed everything from diverting more Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization funds to capital projects outside the program to scaling back or even canceling the Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget process for 2010-2011.

"I think people had no idea of how bad things could get," said Ward 3 City Council member Pat Harris.

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Phasing in of New Minnesota Miracle tops schools' agenda

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Given the state of Minnesota's projected \$4.8 billion budget deficit for the coming biennium, the St. Paul Public Schools may be hoping for a miracle this spring. The so-called New Minnesota Miracle, a plan to completely revamp the state's formula for funding K-12 public education, tops the school district's wish list for the Minnesota Legislature's 2009 session.

Introduced last session by state Representative Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) and state Senator Terri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka), the New Minnesota Miracle includes a \$1.7 billion annual increase in state funding for K-12 education phased in over three years beginning in 2010. The state is currently spending about \$13.9 billion for K-12 education over two years.

The New Minnesota Miracle would increase the state's base funding from \$5,175 to \$7,500 per pupil per year and end the practice of providing less state aid for elementary versus secondary students. It would also enhance compensatory aid for English language

learners, fully fund all-day kindergarten and the state's portion of special education costs, give school districts more flexibility in funding early childhood programs, account for enrollment declines in every geographic region of the state, and require that school districts spend at least 1.5 percent of their basic revenue on research and innovation to improve academic performance.

"We've had to cut \$96 million from our budgets over the past six years," said Michelle Walker, the St. Paul Public Schools' chief accountability officer. "And we project having to cut another \$106 million over the next six years if the state's funding structure continues as is."

The St. Paul Public Schools has a total budget of \$628.1 million for the current school year. Over the past six years, its general fund budget has increased from \$412.8 million to \$476.4 million. However, decreases in student enrollment of about 4,500, or 10 percent over that same period, has resulted in a continual decrease in state per pupil aid, according to the district's chief financial officer, Lois Rockney. That has made it all the more difficult for

the district to address increases in staff salaries and the costs of student transportation, building utilities and employee health care, Rockney said.

The St. Paul Public Schools is facing a deficit of at least \$15 million for the 2009-10 school year, Rockney said. However, that estimate was made last August, and Rockney expects the shortfall will be much higher.

Among the largest outside supporters of the New Minnesota Miracle is Parents United for Public Schools, a six-year-old, statewide organization of about 4,000 parents and other citizens, according to executive director Mary Cecconi. "We're advocating for a stable public school funding system that doesn't rely on local levies passing or not," Cecconi said.

"While we're not hoping for outright increases in state education funding this legislative session," Walker said, "we are hoping that changes in the state funding formula will eventually add some money to the district's budget as the New Minnesota Miracle is phased in."

According to Walker, the St. Paul Public Schools will also ask the Legislature this ses-

sion to raise the age at which students may drop out of school from 16 to 18 years. "The Legislature turned us down last year, with some representatives expressing concerns about the cost of two more years for students," she said. "But we're saying that, with the lack of a high school diploma, dropouts get poorer-paying jobs with no health care or end up on welfare or even in prison, all of which costs a lot more than keeping them in school."

According to Rockney, about 11 percent of high school students across the district drop out each year. "From 2005 to 2007, about 250 students aged 16 and 17 dropped out per year," she said. However, she noted, some of those students may have transferred to other schools outside the district.

The St. Paul Public Schools will also ask the Legislature to allow immigrant children who don't begin attending a local school before the 10th grade to remain in area learning centers until age 23. "Right now, they're funded to age 21, when they have to leave," Walker said. "Many still don't have the necessary skills, or even speak English well enough, to go out on their own."

City still hoping for happy new legislative year

BY JANE MCCLURE

Ways to assist neighborhoods struggling with the home mortgage foreclosure crisis, the preservation and restoration of Local Government Aid (LGA) and funding for construction of and parking mitigation for the Central Corridor light-rail line are the centerpieces of the city of St. Paul's 2009 legislative agenda. The St. Paul City Council adopted the wish list last month and will likely modify it as the Minnesota Legislature's session progresses.

Ward 5 City Council member Lee Helgen, who chairs the council's Ad Hoc Legislative Committee, said the agenda reflects a cross-section of the city's goals, including initiatives tied to transportation, public safety, capital investment, workforce development, education and economic stability. "This reflects what's important to us as a city," he said.

Still, Helgen and other council members conceded that getting their agenda items approved during the 2009 session will be very difficult given the state's projected \$4.85 billion deficit for 2009-2011.

Some items on the city's legislative agenda are familiar ones. St. Paul is continuing to advocate for 25 mph speed limits on residential streets, incentives to keep Ford Motor Com-

pany's Twin Cities Assembly Plant operating, and funds for regional parks and jobs for teenagers.

Other parts of the agenda reflect changing times. The city is advocating for statewide funding to address the mortgage foreclosure crisis and for such programs as the Targeted Neighborhood Revitalization Program, which provides money for cities with large numbers of vacant and dilapidated buildings.

St. Paul is asking that the state make changes to the LGA formula to restore previous cuts and to consider inflation in the cost of providing city services. And the city is advocating for the repeal of levy limits that are scheduled for taxes payable in 2010 and 2011, or at least that the levy limits not be extended beyond 2011.

The city also is seeking state assistance to pay off the remaining debt on the Xcel Energy Center. Other Minnesota cities that have sought funding for convention centers have been given grants, said Wendy Underwood, who works in intergovernmental relations for St. Paul. "We're the only city with a loan," she said. St. Paul has repaid \$8.25 million of the \$48 million owed for the Xcel.

The city is not bringing forward any new bonding requests since 2009 is not a state bonding year. However, it is asking that all of the bonding projects vetoed by Governor Tim

Pawlenty in 2008 be restored. St. Paul was the only Minnesota city that had every one of its bonding requests vetoed last year. The requests included \$11 million for Como Zoo projects and \$5 million for a proposed Asian Pacific Cultural Center at the former Hamm's Brewery site.

The city is requesting that the state approve planning money for a proposal to renovate Midway Stadium and add adjacent soccer fields. It also is supporting a request from the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation for \$3.8 million in improvements to the Upper Landing.

Two capital funding requests are tied to the planned Central Corridor light-rail project. One is for \$10 million for the state to fulfill its obligation to pay for 10 percent of the light-rail line's construction costs. The other is for funds to pay for streetscape improvements, parking mitigation and other costs related to the light-rail project.

The City Council is in agreement on most issues regarding its legislative agenda. One bone of contention is a request to extend the use of Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds to cover city capital costs for another five years, a move that is opposed by members of the Neighborhood STAR board. The proposed extension was adopted by the council with Helgen in opposition. He said



St. Paul's legislative wish list includes state help in paying off the remaining debt on the Xcel Energy Center. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

the city needs to see how sales tax and other revenue sources are considered in the broader budget discussions at the Capitol this session. Other council members said that while they would rather see the STAR dollars allocated to neighborhood projects, the city needs to retain its options to address its finances. The STAR money comes from the city's extra half percent sales tax.

1 ◀ LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Pawlenty's priorities in drawing up his budget recommendations for the coming biennium include "K-12 education, public safety and the military and veterans," said Pawlenty spokesman Brian McClung.

In late December, Pawlenty addressed a \$426.4 million shortfall in the state's current biennial budget by cutting \$271.4 million in spending and using the \$155 million remain-

ing in the state's budget reserve. The spending cuts included \$110 million in Local Government Aid to cities and counties, \$73 million in human services, \$40 million in higher education and \$40 million in unspent funds in various state agencies.

"In his (upcoming) State of the State Address, Governor Pawlenty will be outlining several reform initiatives," McClung said. "Minnesota, like more than 40 other states facing budget deficits, is not immune to the

impact of the economic collapse. Families and businesses across the country are tightening their belts, and government needs to do the same. In this crisis environment, leaders have an opportunity to take a fundamental look at how government operates and provides services.

Given the state's tight budget, legislators in the *Villager* area say they will focus on policy initiatives during the 2009 session.

Representative Rick Hansen (DFL-District

39A) said he expects the state's projected deficit to grow by another \$1 billion by February, when the next state budget forecast is due. So during the coming session, he said, "I'll be focusing on policy initiatives and the work of the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council (LOHC)."

Hansen is one of two House members on the 12-member LOHC, which was set up to decide which projects will benefit from the

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Ramsey County's wish is to escape '09 session without any major cuts

By JANE McCLURE

Ramsey County's wish for the 2009 session of the Minnesota Legislature is relatively modest. "We're hoping to come out of the session without major cuts," said county commissioner Victoria Reinhardt.

Ramsey County officials are urging state lawmakers to refrain from cutting funding for essential services. They are also asking the state to continue supporting county programs that provide alternatives for juvenile offenders, job training and other services to non-custodial parents who are unable to pay child support, and early intervention for teenage offenders and at-risk youths.

The county will be lobbying the state to do the following this session:

- Continue to support programs that serve children, vulnerable adults and low-income people. "When the economy is in a downturn, the demand for human services, especially for costly services to address emergency needs, grows," the county's legislative agenda states.
- Support programs that promote parental involvement in the support of their children, including help in collecting child support payments from noncustodial parents. In 2007, counties across Minnesota helped more than 250,000 custodial parents collect child support. That was done even though federal funds to help with child support collections were cut. If the state does not replace the federal funds, Ramsey County may be forced to add \$729,000 annually to its property tax levy.

The county is also asking the state not to stop funding home visits by public health nurses to at-risk families. According to county officials, the program provides long-term savings in preventing more costly problems in the areas of public health, public safety and

corrections.

- Address the growing cost of corrections. In-patient medical care for those in Ramsey County detention costs \$1 million per year. Participation in the Medicaid reimbursement program for eligible inmates would cover half of this cost, but the state has chosen not to participate in the reimbursement program.

The county is asking the state to reimburse the costs of housing inmates with sentences of less than 180 days whom the state places in county facilities. Currently, it costs about \$89 per day to house an inmate. Compensation from the state averages \$9.00 per day. That adds up to an additional cost of \$657,000 per year for the county.

The county is also seeking adequate funds to cover the cost of holding sex offenders who are going through the civil commitment process. For the upcoming biennium, that cost is estimated at \$417,000.

- Develop principles and policies for the equitable distribution of revenue generated by the new 3/8 of 1 percent sales tax approved by voters in November. That sales tax is expected to generate up to \$275 million annually. Thirty-three percent of the money is designated for wildlife habitat, 33 percent for clean-water projects, 14.25 percent for parks and trails, and 19.75 percent for the arts and historic preservation. However, it is not clear how that money would be divvied up among the state parks, Metropolitan Regional Parks and other parks and trails in the state.

- Continue to reform health care through the State Healthcare Improvement Plan (SHIP). The 2008 Legislature provided \$47 million for SHIP, which supports programs that promote healthy lifestyles and prevent costly chronic diseases, according to county officials. The county is also urging the state to continue to support health insurance for

4◀ SESSION PREVIEW

voter-approved constitutional amendment that raised the state sales tax by 3/8 of 1 percent for the next 25 years. The additional sales tax is expected to generate up to \$275 million annually. Thirty-three percent of that money is designated for wildlife habitat, 33 percent for clean-water projects, 14.25 percent for parks and trails and 19.75 percent for the arts and historic preservation.

"Collection of the additional sales tax doesn't begin until July 1, and we won't be getting any receipts until September 1," Hansen said. "But we have to have a list of recommendations by April 1."

Representative Erin Murphy (DFL-District 64A) said that during the session she will be pushing for a simplification of the policies for MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance. She is drafting legislation "to streamline eligibility and access to all of our health programs by easing enrollment procedures," she said. "We have to show that there are ways of dealing with cost issues other than simply cutting people off." Murphy said she will also introduce legislation to deny payment from state health programs to hospitals for rectifying medical errors.

Representative Carlos Mariani (DFL-District 65B), who chairs the House's K-12 Education Policy Committee and sits on its K-12 Education Finance Committee, said he will be pushing for changes in how the state measures student progress in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. "The current measures are point-in-time tests at various grade levels," Mariani said. "In the coming year, we'll be moving toward a growth model for assessing individual kids' progress as they move through the grades."

According to Mariani, "the big issue this year will be the Grad Test that all 12th-graders have to pass to graduate. It's a very tough test

embedded in the (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) that essentially renders the rest of high school learning moot. Under the current situation, 40 percent of high school seniors across the state will not graduate in 2010, including 83 percent of African-Americans. That would be a disaster."

Mariani's plan is to phase out the Grad Test over two or three years, cut the standard "only slightly" and allow for retesting. "What I want over the long haul is an eventual end to (those kinds of tests) and to align the ones we do give with postsecondary entrance requirements while building in more support for students, such as tutoring," he said.

As far as the state deficit is concerned, Mariani said he hopes the Legislature and Governor Pawlenty are "strategic about which taxes are increased and which cuts are made. When taking the long view, cutting education will not help solve any problems. We also need to make college more accessible to get the talents of young people into the economy as quickly as possible."

"I realize there can't be any more money for schools, but I hope (school funding) is not cut," said Representative Jim Davnie (DFL-District 62A). Davnie supports the New Minnesota Miracle, a plan to revise the state's K-12 funding formula to help school districts "avoid the constant ups and downs each year and having to ask voters in levy referendums for extra money," he said.

The New Minnesota Miracle is "something that can be phased in over three years," Davnie said, "but to do that, we need to at least get the structure set up during the coming session. The budget situation will make it tough to pass (the New Minnesota Miracle) year because it'll need some startup money. But the best way out of a recession is to grow out of it, and to do that we need to strengthen education and thereby strengthen our workforce."



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1 ◀ HANDMADE TOYS

Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) last August.

Marshall said that though toy sellers and toy makers support the sale and manufacturing of safe products, the testing requirements are too onerous and too costly. They question why natural materials such as wood, wool, cotton and silk have to be tested piece by piece.

"The CPSIA was written to protect children from carelessly mass-produced products," Marshall said, "but it didn't take into consideration high-quality small manufacturers from Minnesota and around the world."

The federal law bans lead in children's products, bans the resale of recalled toys and requires that toys be labeled with batch numbers so recalled toys can be more easily identified.

"If this law were applied to food, almost every farmer at the Farmers' Market would be out of business," Marshall said. He noted that federal food safety laws have exemptions for small producers. According to him, toy makers and sellers want the same treatment.

Wonderment co-owner Lisa MacMartin said her store saw a marked increase in business after high lead levels were found in toys made in China. "People see our toys as a safe alternative," she said.

MacMartin said it is "so ironic, when you think about it," that stores that sell natural products and want to keep children safe will have more difficulty finding products that meet their standards if the law is not changed or delayed.

Stores like Wonderment are already hearing from European suppliers who have indicated they will no longer sell their toys in the United States rather than comply with the more stringent laws. MacMartin said her store risks losing products that cannot

be found elsewhere.

Representatives of Beka were unable to attend the press conference, but commented in writing that the 30-year-old firm not only has had to pay hundreds of dollars to have its wood tested, but has had to spend more to redo safety labels after the wrong style of lettering was used.

"We'd have to test every piece of fabric, every snap, every zipper, even if those items were previously tested," said Tanya Westerman, who makes baby slings and pouches under the name Kangaroo Korner.

Toy makers at the press conference said they have looked into what they would need to do to comply with the new law, but have found the requirements too costly. Toy makers who sew costumes or baby products must have every piece of every item tested, including every color of a particular fabric.

Tanya Westerman, who makes baby slings and pouches under the name Kangaroo Korner, said her business would have to close rather than meet the costly testing requirements. "We'd have to test every piece of fabric, every snap, every zipper, even if those items were previously tested," she said.

The Handmade Toy Alliance has gotten the attention of several members of Congress, including Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, who serves on the Senate Commerce Committee that wrote the CPSIA. Klobuchar's staff indicated that she is looking into the issue.



Beka Inc. president Jamie Kreisman sorted wood in his workshop at 542 Selby Ave. in this 2002 file photo. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

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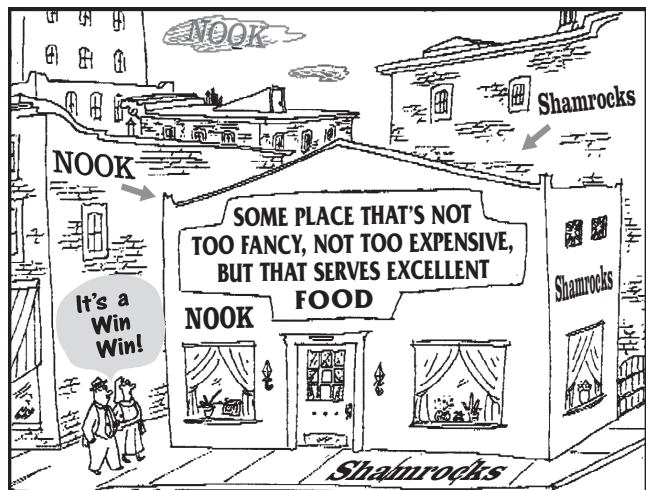


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News Briefs

Council approves 16 STAR grants for cultural projects

The second round of 2008 Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grants was approved on December 23 by the St. Paul City Council. Sixteen grants totaling \$437,730 were approved. Of that amount, \$281,615 will be spent downtown and \$156,115 in the rest of the city. The money, which comes from the city's extra half-percent sales tax, is allocated to cultural groups to pay for operations and special projects.

Among the local groups receiving grants are the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company for its *Chutzpah A Go-Go* (\$39,000), the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation for an interpretive center at the old grain terminal head house on the Mississippi River (\$21,000) and the Women of Nations American Indian theater (\$36,000).

The City Council turned down a \$3 million request for improvements to the Ordway Center. The Cultural STAR board had recommended funding the project over a 10-year period, with a \$340,296 allocation this time around. The request was made by the Arts Partnership, a consortium of the Ordway, the Minnesota Opera, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Schubert Club. Council members were concerned that such a large request would come to dominate the Cultural STAR fund for a long time.

The council also approved \$5,500 in Neighborhood Development Program (NDP) funds for safety and other improvements to the Edgumbe Recreation Center, as requested by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. NDP funds are allocated by ward through each City Council member's office for small-scale brick and mortar projects.

City scales back increase in business license fees

St. Paul bars and restaurants will only see a 3.5 percent fee increase for city licenses and permits in 2009, not the 5 percent increase that was built into this year's city budget. The City Council approved the lower fee increase on December 17 following several weeks of debate.

Casting the lone vote against the increase was Ward 3 council member Pat Harris, who contended that the 2006 study that was used to justify the fee increase was flawed and that further study was needed. He also questioned raising fees across the board rather than looking at the actual cost of city services the license and permit fees are intended to cover.

Other City Council members said a fee hike was necessary to cover enforcement costs after more than a decade of not raising license and permit fees for many types of businesses. Last year a fee increase of 5 percent was enacted with the understanding that another 5 percent increase would be adopted for 2009.

But at a public hearing in November, several bar and restaurant owners pleaded for a smaller increase or no increase at all, saying that tough times are making it difficult for them to stay in business. That prompted Ward 6 council member Dan Bostrom to suggest that the city look at a smaller increase.

The 5 percent increase would have raised about \$150,000 in revenue for the city. The smaller increase left a \$41,000 budget hole that had to be filled from the general fund.



Private First Class Eric Winsor of Macalester-Groveland introduces Highland Catholic 1st-graders Henry Larson, left, Rosa Broadhead and Therese Welch to the Iraqi national flag and currency during a recent visit. Winsor's unit was among a host of U.S. troops overseas to benefit from the more than 100 packages of goods sent this fall by Highland Catholic students. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Renters get protection when facing foreclosure

The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously on December 23 to approve an ordinance to protect the rights of tenants whose residences are foreclosed on.

The regulatory changes were brought forward by council member Melvin Carter III, whose Ward 1 includes neighborhoods that have been hit especially hard by the mortgage foreclosure crisis. Carter said he has heard from a growing number of tenants who have suddenly found themselves out on the street due to foreclosures or contract-for-deed cancellations. In several cases, the tenants did not know that their landlords had lost their properties until the lenders showed up to take possession.

Carter called the situation "terrible," adding that the displaced tenants may have been paying rent to landlords who did not use the money to pay their mortgages.

The new ordinance sets out specific procedures under which landlords must notify current and prospective tenants about notices of mortgage foreclosure or deed cancellations. Another regulation revokes the certificates of occupancy for property owners who fail to advise their tenants of a contract for deed cancellation or a mortgage foreclosure.

The new regulations will take effect in late January.

Work to begin in 2011 on new Lafayette Bridge

The Minnesota Department of Transportation will begin the long-awaited construction of a new Lafayette Bridge over the Mississippi River in 2011, according to state Senator Jim Metzen and state Representative Rick Hansen. The bridge will include a bike/pedestrian lane, a dedicated bus lane, and footings for light rail which could be added in the future.

"We've been waiting a long time to get this done, but the good news today is that it's going to be done right," said Metzen, who serves as president of the Minnesota Senate. "The current Lafayette Bridge has served us for decades, but it's clearly time for a better way to cross the river and it sounds like MnDOT is committed to doing it right."

The new bridge, which is expected

to take between two and three years to complete, will include a revamping of the intersection at East 7th Street, in hopes of eliminating the current bottleneck and speeding the commute for those traveling between Dakota County and downtown St. Paul or onto I-94. While there are not formal plans for light rail on the new bridge at this time, Metzen and Hansen included language in the 2008 Transportation Policy legislation that became law ensuring that the new bridge will be rail-ready. It is hoped that after completion of the Central Corridor light-rail line linking downtown Minneapolis with downtown St. Paul, a rail line could be added in the Highway 52/Robert Street corridor.

"This news really is like a holiday gift to those working folks who rely on the Lafayette Bridge to get to work and get home every day," Hansen said. "It was important that we got last year's transportation bill passed and were able to override the governor's veto to keep this project on schedule and avoid further delays. The new bridge sounds like it will be a model of safe and efficient transportation whether you choose to cross the Mississippi in a car, a train, a bus, on a bike or on foot."

County compost sites now accepting Christmas trees

Ramsey County residents may dispose of their Christmas trees and other greenery for free by bringing them to one of three county compost sites this winter. All tree bags, stands, tinsel and ornaments must be removed prior to drop-off.

County compost sites open during the winter include the Midway site at 2013 Pierce Butler Route, the Frank & Sims site at 1150 Sims Ave at the White Bear Township site at 5800 Sherwood Road. The sites are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sunday on the following weekends: January 10-11, February 14-15 and March 14-15.

Those looking to dispose of artificial trees, wreaths or garland may post the items on www.TwinCitiesFreeMarket.org, an online service for residents who want to give or receive free, reusable goods for the home, garage and garden.

For more information, call 651-633-3279 or visit www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph.

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Viewpoint

Death of a perennial candidate

BY MICHAEL MISCHKE

I still remember it as one of the stranger requests a political candidate has ever made of me. Running as an “independent conservative” in the 1984 general election for the 4th District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives held by DFLer Bruce Vento, Maryjane Reagan—previously known as Mary Jane Rachner—dropped by the *Villager* office to place an ad for her campaign. She handed me the ad copy that she had typed up under the headline, “An Open Letter to the Citizens of St. Paul.” She also produced a photograph of herself, beaming in the embrace of President Ronald Reagan. She told me she had paid \$1,000 for the privilege of having the photo taken with the president when he was in town earlier that year.

“There’s just one thing I’d ask you to do,” she said. “Can you do something to hide my turkey neck?”

She suggested the addition of a “big but tasteful bow” beneath her chin. I dutifully complied by cutting a bow out of plain white paper with a scissors and taping it to the photo.

“That’s it!” she exclaimed. And that’s the way the photo ran in her *Villager* ad.

I was reminded of Reagan’s—Maryjane’s, that is—famously forthright quirkiness this week when I got the news that she had died. (Inexplicably, an obituary never appeared.)

Her body was found by a neighbor on the kitchen floor of Reagan’s Highland Park home on the morning of December 16. The death certificate listed the cause as simply “sudden death,” though cardiac arrest is suspected, according to her neighbor and physician, Dr. Jim Giefer. Divorced twice and living alone, Reagan was 87.



Reagan, Reagan and the “big but tasteful bow.”

Reagan had been called many things during her years as a perennial candidate for public office, but until 1996 “winner” was never one of them. That’s the year Ramsey County voters overwhelmingly elected her to the obscure position of Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor, “probably to get me off the streets,” she said at the time. The victory ended a marathon unsuccessful run for elective office for Reagan. Her first campaign was for the St. Paul School Board in 1972, a race she once referred to as “my respectable campaign.” Her political ambitions were put on hold two years later when she was involved in a serious car accident. The crash broke nearly every bone in her body.

Reagan returned to the campaign trail after Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980. She was so enamored of the president that she changed her name two years later in his honor. Since then she had run for everything from City Council to president, with races for School Board, mayor, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate thrown in for good measure.

“My purpose was never to win the race,” Reagan once said of her numerous bids for public office. “You can’t do that unless you have the dollars and important people backing you. But every election year I’d look over the field and see what looked like an avenue for my beliefs.”

Those beliefs shifted over the years, from being what she once referred to as a “smart-ass liberal” who worked for the Democratic Party and protested the Vietnam War to an arch-conservative known for her outspoken stands against abortion and homosexuality. And never one to mince her words, Reagan managed over the years to offend the sensibilities of just about everyone—on the left and right.

Reagan was well aware of her reputation as a crank motivated by nothing more than a desire to attract attention to herself, but it never seemed to bother her. “If you assume that people act only on selfish motives, you’re not going to understand me,” she once told the *Villager*. “My attitude is not, am I going to be rich and famous? It is, what can I do in my last years of productive life to make a difference?”



Inbox

Pride and embarrassment

To the editor:

The December 17 issue of the *Villager* made me both embarrassed and proud to live in St. Paul.

One of the cover stories detailed more massive property tax increases throughout the city despite plummeting home values and a recession. When will our elected officials realize that government needs to improve efficiency during a bad economy just like homeowners and businesses do? Our leaders in St. Paul seem to lack even a basic understanding of real-world economics and the negative impact unreasonable taxes have on people’s lives and overall development in a metropolitan area. Delaying pet projects like heated ice rinks and bike paths, as well as the consolidation of many government handout programs, would improve the efficiency of our city government and provide relief for overburdened taxpayers.

Reading the story about the efforts of Bill Rosenbloom and Bob Julen in bringing a St. Paul police hub to Sibley Plaza made me proud to live in St. Paul. First, thank you Mr. Rosenbloom, Mr. Julen and everyone else involved for making this project happen. As a new homeowner in Highland Park, I very much appreciate your work. Rosenbloom and Julen prove that common sense and a pioneering spirit go a long way in achieving a goal.

It’s disturbing that our city government could not be more helpful in funding this project. Shouldn’t police protection be one of the top priorities of city government? Not only is it time for St. Paul government to improve efficiency, it’s time for it to re-examine priorities and put the basic needs of the people before unnecessary projects.

Adam Czech
Highland Park

Broaden bike boulevard study

To the editor:

Unfortunately, I was misquoted in the December 17 *Villager* regarding my position on the Highland bike boulevard. The article indicated that I “spoke in favor of the test, but raised questions about how the city would conduct it.” As I stated in my presentation before the Highland District Council, our group of concerned residents is absolutely against the single, take-it-or-leave-it option that the city is proposing.

What makes sense and what we have offered is to form a citizen committee to work with the city on a comprehensive study that would test all of the available options. The city’s

plan limits the test to Highland Parkway with no other feasible options. And the city plan has no opportunity for citizen input. That is unacceptable.

If there is to be a test, it will first have to include the determination of a need for a new bike facility with analytical data justifying that need. The city plan has never defined a need for a new bike facility. Bicyclists have always used all of the streets of Highland safely and with no problems. Our committee would insist that proven, safe, striped bike lanes be included as a possible option. In addition we would insist on comparable striping and signage, etc., on all of the possible routes (i.e., Ford Parkway, Jefferson Avenue, Montreal Avenue and Shepard Road). Those are all viable options and must be included in any test.

The city has only put forth the Highland Parkway bicycle boulevard. We don’t accept that, and the Highland District Council rightly voted against it as flawed and unsafe. If it is determined that we need a new bike facility, it should be well-thought-out, community-supported and in compliance with all of the best practices as defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The current test proposal fails each of these criteria.

Roger Maulik
Highland Park

IRV honors the will of voters

To the editor:

In a guest editorial on instant runoff voting (IRV), Andy Cilek took issue with the concept of majority rule by telling us that it is not required, it is not desirable and the majority determined by IRV is “contrived” (*Villager*, December 17).

We elected Governor Jesse Ventura despite the fact that for every voter who supported him, there were nearly two who voted for someone else. By Cilek’s peculiar “less is more” logic, this is better than getting the support of at least half the voters. If you factor in the shamefully low turnout of primary elections, we have neither a “representative republic” nor the “majority rule democracy” for which Cilek seems to have contempt. It’s true that a majority winner is not required by law, but that doesn’t automatically make minority rule the intention of the authors of our constitution. Nor does it make majority rule a bad idea.

Cilek claims that the majority produced by IRV is contrived because some ballots may not be included in a second count. If these are the ballots of voters who chose the candidate who came in last and refused to indicate a second

8◀ INBOX

choice, such ballots are no longer considered when determining the winner because the voter chose not to participate once his preferred candidate was eliminated. This is exactly what happens in our current voting system when a voter decides not to vote in the general election because his preferred candidate was eliminated in the primary. In no way does this undermine the legitimacy of the majority.

Cilek argues that IRV is not constitutional because a distant "cousin" of IRV—the Bucklin method—was found unconstitutional in 1915. What Cilek forgets to mention is that the Bucklin method is one in which second choices are added to the first choices. Thus, there may be more votes than voters, which clearly violates the "one voter, one vote" principle. IRV does not share this fault. IRV substitutes second choices (rather than adding them) and has been ruled constitutional everywhere it has been challenged.

Let's not lose sight of the bigger picture. Supporters of IRV like it because it gives us more choices. By eliminating the poorly attended primary and letting all candidates stand in the general election, IRV allows our elections to better indicate the will of the voters. Isn't that what elections are supposed to be about?

*Troy Trooien
Payne-Phalen*

Put bicyclists in their place

To the editor:

Minnesota has thousands of miles of paved bicycle trails and more rails to trails than any other state. Many metro areas like the Twin Cities add hundreds of miles to that total, and almost all of these miles are bicycle-only trails. But now the bicyclist "community" seeks to overtake two of Highland Park's most beautiful boulevards.

Not so fast. These law-breaking, stop-sign-blowing Lance Armstrongs need to be relegated to the paved trails that we taxpayers have already provided for them. We in Mendota Heights are well aware of this blight, as swarms of these bicycling creatures regularly overtake Delaware Avenue and Dodd Road. This group needs to be referred to their rightful thoroughfares.

*Chuck Lennon
Mendota Heights*

A good clean solution

Dear editor,

Neighbors Against the Burner would like to thank the *Villager* for its consistent reporting of the potential building of a garbage burner in the middle of our beautiful city. We appreciate that you printed so many letters to the editor on both sides of the issue. NAB would also like to thank the thousands of citizens who joined the effort to prevent the burning of garbage and support the 500 well-paying union jobs at Rock-Tenn's Midway paper recycling plant.

We ordinary citizens were up against a \$4.5 million state grant, the incinerator and garbage industry, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and public officials at all levels of government. Many of you donated money, passed out flyers, came to public meetings, wore T-shirts and buttons and put signs in your yards and window. You just plain spoke up, saying, "No! We don't want to burn garbage in the Twin Cities or anywhere else on the planet!"

With so many working together, in June the Midtown Eco Energy burner in Minneapolis was pronounced dead by the MPCA. Then in

November the St. Paul City Council voted unanimously to support an off-site anaerobic digestion facility for Rock-Tenn that will produce methane that, when cleaned up, will be put directly into the natural gas pipeline. Rock-Tenn will go from burning 75 percent No. 6 fuel oil, which is known to be almost as polluting as burning garbage, to burning possibly 90 percent natural gas.

Yes, we all want to get off of fossil fuels, but until anaerobic digesters become the norm, along with wind, solar and geothermal power, fuel cells and who knows what is on the horizon, this is a good, clean solution.

St. Paul City Council member Russ Stark said at the City Council meeting, "We hope to see a lot less of those green signs now." Problem is, this process took so long that most of the Neighbors Against the Burner signs are frozen in the ground. Neighbors, when they can get the signs out, are asked not to throw them in the garbage to be ground up and burned. We have plans to reuse and recycle them. We also need the stakes, which cost \$1.00 apiece. Contact us at www.neighborsagainsttheburner.org, and you can drop them off or we will pick them up.

*Nancy Hone, Coordinator
Neighbors Against the Burner*

Tackling the state deficit

To the editor:

Early in December, state finance officials informed state lawmakers that Minnesota is facing a record \$4.8 billion budget shortfall because of the recent economic downturn. Forty-one other states are confronting similar multibillion-dollar deficits as state revenues from income and sales taxes and other funding sources have fallen off sharply.

According to state economist Tom Stinson, Minnesota lost 30,000 jobs in the last 12 months, and estimates indicate another 77,000 jobs will be lost in 2009. These extraordinary economic circumstances will require lawmakers to work together to resolve the budget deficit responsibly. We must take quick and decisive action to rebuild our struggling economy.

The decisions ahead will be the most difficult we have faced in recent memory. Minnesota will not emerge from this recession overnight, but I am confident that with a steady hand and a thoughtful approach we can make our state stronger than ever before.

As always, I will be relying heavily on the input of constituents throughout the legislative session. They may contact me with their concerns, questions and suggestions as we work together to resolve these unprecedented economic challenges. I can be reached by calling 651-296-6828 or e-mailing rep.rick.hansen@house.mn.

*Rick Hansen, State Representative
District 39A*

Truth about taxes

Dear editor:

Is it any wonder that property owners find truth in taxes hard to handle (*Villager*, December 17)? The real truth in property taxes is that total spending drives taxes; assessed value does not. If all property valuations are cut in half and spending remains constant, property taxes will remain unchanged. If all valuations are doubled and spending remains constant, property taxes will remain unchanged. However, if all valuations remain constant and spending

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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INBOX ▶ 10

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9◀ INBOX

is doubled, property taxes will double.

Who knows how much a government truly needs to spend from one year to the next? How much of tax monies should justifiably be reallocated by law each year to limit the need for continual spending increases? Perhaps total taxes taken by all governments, at all levels, should be limited to a fixed percent of income. Fifty percent seems high. Thirty-three percent might be sustainable. Where are we today?

*Stephen Miller
Merriam Park*

Where politics takes precedence

To the editor:

With forecasts of tax revenue shortfalls and reductions in Local Government Aid from the state, the city of Minneapolis has the time and money to pursue instant runoff voting (*Villager*, December 17)? Buying new voting machines, paying to train employees to learn the system and hiring more consultants—all while the city may be cutting more important city services?

Don't tell me we don't have any money!

*Gary Fischbach
Highland Park*

The rights of dogs

To the editor:

Regarding the article, "A cop's best friend: Tale of St. Paul's storied K-9 unit" (*Villager*, December 17): If humans want to have a police state, do it without the forced participation of another species, whether it is dogs or horses. The domestication of many different animals has had catastrophic consequences on the planet. Of course, once an animal is domesticated, it is our responsibility to care for it, but that does not entitle those in power to use animals to force their will and enforce their laws. A dog will do anything for the handler it loves, but that does not mean everything you ask the dog to do is appropriate.

Poet and writer Alice Walker probably said the most profound thing I have ever heard: "Animals exist for their own reasons." They are not here on the planet for us. Dogs

do not exist to enforce our beliefs in who owns what or who has the right to go here or there. Keep dogs out of it. It is not another species' job to protect our stuff or our agenda.

Dogs have a right to live free from our systems of control. They are not our slaves. We do not own them. We have no right to teach them to be aggressive or to endanger them.

*Frank Erickson
Standish, Minneapolis*

In praise of Widmer's

To the editor:

Widmer's Super Market at 1936 St. Clair Ave. is an unsung neighborhood hero. Each week I see Midge Hernandez there "shopping" as carefully as she would for her own family. Widmer's delivers food to hundreds of people for whom shopping has become impossible. I also appreciate the heroic quality of meat I am able to serve my family. In this challenging economic environment, an extraordinary meal is a gift to those at our table. In 32 years of shopping at Widmer's I have never been disappointed. I say thank you to the staff at Widmer's for treating my family like your own.

*Cathy Plessner
Macalester-Groveland*

Pawlenty's purpose in Israel

To the editor:

The timing of Governor Pawlenty's \$37,000 taxpayer-funded trip to Israel could not have been worse. As a multi-billion-dollar deficit appears imminent, Pawlenty chooses to spend state tax dollars in an apparent effort to "promote trade" with the country of Israel.

Who were the 37 "business leaders" in the trade delegation and what was their specific purpose? Will Pawlenty and his group seize this opportunity to expose the severe mistreatment of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who have been victims of terror by the Israeli government? Will Pawlenty bring to light the atrocities brought on the Palestinians by Israeli authorities via the total blockade they now live under?

*Tim J. Goar
Mound*

*Matthew J. Connolly
Midway*

Why not choose life?

To the editor:

You've read about the man charged with punching a woman in the womb for pay in order to kill his friend's unborn child. Every weekday, I see mothers enter abortion clinics where professionals are paid to mortally wound their unborn child. This is totally against a woman's nature. Womanhood entails a special call to motherhood and to nurture life. Abortion is an inhumane act that occurs despite the presence of adoptive parents and life care centers. With this kind of love and assistance available, why not choose life?

Requiem for an administration

To the editor:

As President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney depart the White House, can we identify the single worst time during their eight years in office? I will pass over most of the ill-considered public statements, such as Bush's warning to Iraqi insurgents to "bring it on," his "heckuva job Brownie," the "mission accomplished" speech on the carrier Abraham Lincoln, and Cheney's 2005 comment that the Iraqi insurgency was in its "last throes."

There were the images of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, where prisoners were held for years without charge. There was the State of the Union speech when Bush claimed that Saddam was seeking yellow-cake uranium from Niger when he already had 550 tons of it with no means of enriching or using it.

Colin Powell's bogus United Nations speech about WMDs and Bush's unjust firing of federal prosecutors were also among the low points. Even lower was the treatment of our veterans at Walter Reed Hospital. The administration's incompetent response to Hurricane Katrina is another strong contender.

However, I suggest the title go to the unjustified \$1 trillion Iraq War, coupled with the \$1 trillion tax cut skewed to the wealthy. The human and economic impact of that combination will be felt for many years.

*Rolf E. Westgard
Macalester-Groveland*

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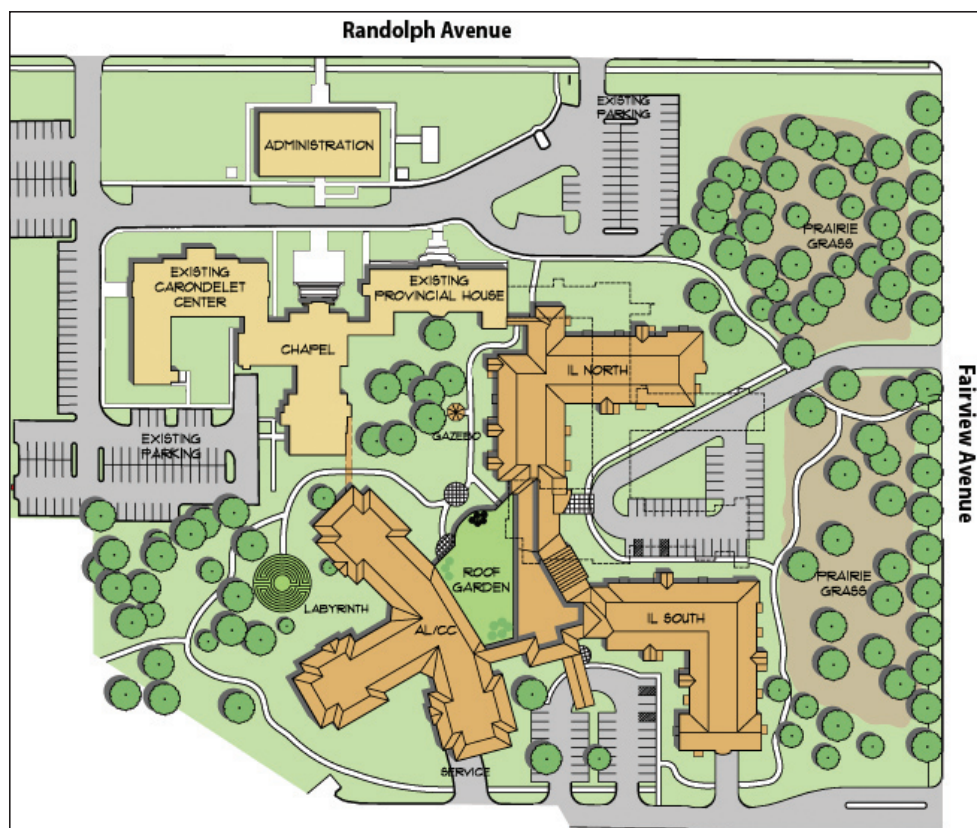
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The Sisters of St. Joseph are proposing a new senior housing and health care complex on Randolph and Fairview avenues. The new construction is shown in darker brown.

Sisters seek rezoning for planned senior housing, wellness facility

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ) will take its plans for a new senior housing and health care facility to the St. Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee on January 8. The commission is being asked to rezone the property at the southwest corner of Fairview and Randolph avenues from single-family to multi-family use. A conditional use permit also is required to allow for skilled care nursing and assisted living services.

The housing complex, which would serve the sisters as well as the general public, would be built in partnership with Presbyterian Homes & Services. The plans call for 244 units of housing as well as a wellness center offering medical services, spiritual and educational programs, physical therapy and congregational dining. About half of the housing units would be for independent living. The others would offer a range of services, including assisted living and skilled care nursing. There would also be a secure memory care center as well as facilities for guests.

The project has already received a favorable recommendation from the Highland District Council's Community Development Committee. About two dozen people attended the committee's meeting on December 8 to discuss the proposal. Most of the questions raised at the meeting centered on noise and traffic, as well as how construction would be managed to ease the impact on neighbors and on the adjacent College of St. Catherine and St. Paul Academy and Summit School campuses.

If all goes as planned, construction could start as soon as this summer. Though applications for residency are not yet being accepted, the partners in the project say they have already received dozens of calls from prospective residents.

First priority for housing would be given to members of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The new complex would replace the sisters' existing Bethany Convent, which has become increasingly costly to operate.

"Everything about (Bethany) is wrong," said Sister Joan Mitchell, a member of the CSJ leadership team. Bethany, which was built in the 1950s, does not meet current nursing home standards and retaining its state license has become more challenging due to the building's age and design.

The new four-story complex would be built in two phases. The first section would be completed in the fall of 2010. Bethany would then be torn down and the second phase built and opened in 2011. Up to 128 independent-living apartments, 52 assisted-living apartments and 40 care center suites would be included in the project's first phase, and 24 independent-living apartments in the second phase.

The existing Carondelet Center, chapel and provincial house will remain, though a future use for the provincial house has not been decided yet. CSJ houses about 135 people in its buildings now.

The sisters have been looking at ways to renovate or replace Bethany Convent for the past seven years. They conducted a study in 2004 and looked at facilities across the country before deciding to partner with Presbyterian Homes & Services, and its affiliate, Senior Housing Partners. The sisters will continue to own the property and will share in the ownership of the complex. Presbyterian Homes will provide management services.

The new complex will be designed to complement the site's existing 1920s buildings, with brick and stone accents. InSite Architects is designing the complex.

An integrated service center would be located at the center for the complex, said architect Kirk Velett. The service center would include a water therapy area, a roof garden, game and music rooms, a chapel, a small library, a dining area and a theater. A greenhouse and conservatory, rooftop solar panels and rain gardens will also be included, Velett said.

The complex will also include educational space that could be used by students from St. Catherine, especially those enrolled in the college's new School of Health.

The complex will offer comprehensive medical services for older adults and local residents could take advantage of services offered through the wellness center, said Allen Black of Senior Housing Partners.

The project calls for combining the current two driveways off of Fairview Avenue into one. The new drive would be shared with the college.

Surface parking would be available, as well as 140 underground parking spaces. Residents and their guests would also be able to use the neighboring O'Shaughnessy parking lot.

Information and updates on the project will be available at www.csjstpaul.org.

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St. Paul discusses new policy for adding art to public projects

By JANE MCCLURE

Future capital improvement projects in St. Paul would require a public art component under an administrative code change now being discussed by City Council members. The public art policy could be adopted in time to be incorporated into St. Paul's 2010-2011 Capital Improvement Budget. The policy would affect projects that are being submitted prior to the January 12 CIB deadline.

The City Council is considering a proposal that would dedicate 1 percent of a capital project's budget to public art. The policy also would set aside funds for maintenance of public art. Public art for a project would be selected with input from a neighborhood design advisory committee. The policy would include a waiver for projects where public art may not be appropriate.

Last month, members of the St. Paul Planning Commission questioned whether the city should be spending its resources on public art during difficult economic times. Some commissioners suggested laying over the

public art policy until the economy improves. Others said the policy was unclear and should be redrafted.

"To me, it's muddy as to what this all means," said commissioner Barb Wendl.

"I think it could be a good policy, but it may have implications we won't see until it's implemented," said commissioner Jim Bellus.

Joe Spencer of Mayor Chris Coleman's policy staff said the administration is mindful of the budget issues being raised. However, he said, the policy would standardize measures the city is already taking to incorporate public art into its projects. The ordinance would only affect city-owned and -operated facilities and capital improvements. It would not affect private projects unless the development included a publicly funded amenity, such as a park.

City staff are now looking into whether there are capital funds, such as federal Community Development Block Grants or certain types of bonds, where public art is not an eligible expense.

"Obviously the timing couldn't be worse," said Christine Podas-Larson, president of Public Art St. Paul, "but we need to look at

our city as a creative city and how we better incorporate art into public projects."

The ordinance has been in the works since December 2004 when the City Council adopted a resolution sponsored by council members Dave Thune and Pat Harris calling for Public Art St. Paul to draft a new public art policy for the city. St. Paul's current public art policy was adopted almost 20 years ago, but has no clear process or funding method, Podas-Larson said. It also fails to spell out the city's policy on accepting gifts of public art or paying to maintain them.

Ward 5 City Council member Lee Helgen, who has been involved in drafting the public art policy, said the ordinance will not add significantly to the cost of future capital projects. He believes better projects will result from incorporating art into the project's design at the beginning, rather than having art tacked on as a project nears completion.

Spencer said some of the city's recent capital projects could have benefited from a stronger public art element, such as the Rondo Library and the Western District Police Station. The library's art was added toward the end of the

project and funds ran out to add public art at the police station.

Still, planning commissioners are concerned that developers might think twice about a project if they are required to include public art in exchange for public funding. One concern was how the policy could affect public art proposed for the Central Corridor light-rail line and plans to redevelop Ford Motor Company's Twin Cities Assembly Plant.

Others question the ordinance's reference to permanent as well as temporary artwork, in addition to the performing arts. Spencer said the city is checking to see if temporary art is an eligible expense with some funding sources.

Much of the Planning Commission's skepticism has been directed at creating neighborhood advisory committees to plan for public art. Commissioner Michael Marguiles, an attorney who works with developers, said allowing too many people to weigh in can have some unattractive consequences.

"It can be socialist art at its worst," he said. "You get art by committee and you can end up with some really bad art."

Price tag set in city's long-running fight to buy fuel tank site

Future use of Exxon Mobil property remains uncertain

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul city officials are hoping to reach a deal by mid-January to acquire 37 acres of land for the Victoria Park development at West 7th Street and Otto Avenue. A court-appointed panel decided on December 12 that the land, which is owned by Exxon Mobil Corporation, is worth \$7 million. The city and Exxon Mobil have 40 days in which to appeal the panel's ruling.

"This has really been a long time coming," said Ward 2 City Council member Dave Thune, "but we're hopeful it will be wrapped up soon. The community has been waiting for years for something to happen."

Exxon Mobil's attorney was unavailable for comment.

The land in question was used for decades as a fuel tank farm, one of three along

the Mississippi River bluff in that part of the West End. A former Texaco tank farm became part of the St. Paul Port Authority's Crosby Lake Business Park. A second tank farm, owned by Koch/Flint Hills, became the first phase of Victoria Park, a proposed 65-acre "urban village." More than 800 housing units were originally proposed for the site, but those plans have changed due to a faltering housing market.

The Sholom Community Alliance senior housing complex and a new Mississippi Market co-op are currently going up on part of the former Koch site. The city is also reviewing plans by a private developer for more multi-family housing there, though Thune said nothing has been finalized yet.

City officials are not saying what could ultimately go up on the Exxon Mobil property. Any changes from Victoria Park's master plan would require review and approval at the neighborhood, Planning Commission and City Council levels. The area is zoned for tra-

ditional neighborhoods development, which is meant to promote denser, mixed uses.

West 7th/Fort Road Federation executive director Ed Johnson said setting a value for the Exxon Mobil property was an important step, but there are still many unknowns about how the property will ultimately be redeveloped.

Federation board member Leonard Schwartz said the vacant Exxon Mobil property next to the site where housing was planned was a deterrent to sales even when the housing market was strong. "People didn't know what was going to happen next door and it discouraged them," he said.

The Koch and Exxon Mobil fuel tank farms were shut down in 1995. Although Koch cleaned up and sold its land to the city several years ago, Exxon Mobil refused to sell its property to the city for residential use. Oil company officials worried that they could be held liable for future environmental problems linked to the fuel tank farm and offered

to sell or even give away the land for uses other than residential. However, the city and Victoria Park's lead developer, Brighton Development Corporation, stuck to their plan to build housing on the property.

The dispute over the land's use wended its way through the courts over the past four years as the city tried to acquire the property through condemnation. Both sides presented evidence detailing the extent of needed soil cleanup and potential public health risks. The city has filed papers with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency indicating that housing can be built on the site without putting the public's health at risk.

In 2006, Ramsey County District Court Judge Judith Tilsen ruled in the city's favor and indicated that the city should be able to purchase the property at a price lower than Exxon Mobil was willing to sell for. Exxon Mobil appealed the ruling, but lost the appeal in 2007. That triggered the effort to negotiate a purchase price and end the legal fight.

OPTIMISM AND REAL ESTATE

Maybe it's time to buy that first house.

By **RON LIEBER**
The New York Times

(Dec. 2008) - Five or 10 years from now, when the financial crisis has ended and housing prices are up smartly once more, we will look in the rearview mirror and realize that we missed a golden age for first-time home buyers.

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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—A man was robbed on Maynard Drive just after midnight on Wednesday, December 17. Two suspects punched and kicked him and stole his wallet. They fled east on Stewart Avenue in a newer model, brown, four-door sedan. The victim suffered minor injuries to his throat, nose and knee. The suspects were described as two black males in their 20s, of medium build, and around 5-foot-10.

Burglary—A home on the 1700 block of Field Avenue was burglarized between 2:00 p.m. Sunday and 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 21-23. The front door was kicked in.

—A home on the 1500 block of Scheffer Avenue was broken into between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday, December 22.

Theft—The rear driver's side window was broken out and Christmas gifts and a purse were stolen from a vehicle parked on Hillcrest Avenue and Kenneth Street at about 6:00 p.m. Friday, December 12. The owner had left her car unattended for about three minutes.

—A package delivered by UPS containing two digital cameras was stolen from the doorstep of a home on the 1800 block of Highland Parkway between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 16.

Sex crime—A man exposed himself at Champps St. Paul, 2401 W. 7th St., at about 6:00 p.m. Thursday, December 11.

Miscellaneous—A Prior Lake man protesting at Planned Parenthood, 1965 Ford Pkwy., was cited for disorderly conduct and aggressive solicitation at about 9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 11.

Lexington-Hamline

Theft—A computer was stolen from the lobby of Carty Heights Apartments, 412 Dunlap St., between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 12.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Kane Education Law office, 1654 Grand Ave., was broken into between 5:00 p.m. Thursday and 9:30 a.m. Friday, December 4-5.

—Matt's Pro Guitar, 247 S. Snelling Ave., was burglarized at about 8:30 p.m. Saturday, December 6. A pry bar was used to open the basement door and enter a common area of the building.

—Laura Jeffrey Academy, 1550 Summit Ave., was broken into between 8:30 p.m. Monday and 7:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 15-16.

—Design Center, 2040 St. Clair Ave., was broken into at about 10:30 p.m. Thursday, December 18.

—Greggie's Small Engine Repair, 472 S. Griggs St., was burglarized between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 23. The front door was forced opened.

Theft—A theft from auto occurred between 2:00 and 2:30 p.m. Saturday, December 13, on Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard.

Assault—A male juvenile was arrested for assault at about 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 16, at Ramsey Junior High School, 1700 Summit Ave. He threw a book at a teacher, hitting her in the head.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A garage on the 400 block of Roy Street was burglarized between November 15 and December 13.

Theft—A theft from auto occurred at Snelling and University avenues at about 9:30 a.m. Monday, December 15.

—A locked bicycle was stolen outside of the

Spruce Tree Center, 1600 University Ave., at noon Wednesday, December 17.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—Video equipment was taken from Yellow Taxi, 1463 Marshall Ave., between 7:00 p.m. Wednesday and 10:30 a.m. Thursday, December 17-18.

—A male suspect stole a gray purse and a black messenger bag from a home on the 1400 block of Carroll Avenue at about 5:30 a.m. Saturday, December 20. The suspect entered the unlocked house while the residents were there and fled on foot.

Summit Hill

Robbery—A person was robbed at Chatsworth Street and Grand Avenue at about 6:30 p.m. Thursday, December 18.

Theft—A safe was stolen at Bruegger's Bagels, 800 Grand Ave., between December 6-10.

Assault—Police cited a West End man for fifth-degree assault and disorderly conduct after he fought with bouncers at the Wild Onion, 788 Grand Ave., at about 2:30 a.m. Sunday, December 14. About three hours earlier, an Edina man was arrested for obstruction after he struggled with bouncers at the same bar and then fought with police when they tried to handcuff him.

Summit-University

Burglary—A home on the 900 block of Iglehart Avenue was broken into between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 4.

—A television was stolen from a home on the 800 block of Iglehart Avenue between 11:00 a.m. Tuesday and 2:30 a.m. Wednesday, December 16-17.

—Christmas presents and a computer were taken from an apartment on the 300 block of Laurel Avenue that was broken into between 12:30 and 7:00 p.m. Sunday, December 21.

Theft—A case of artwork was stolen from a vehicle as the victim was loading art after a show at Selby and Western avenues at about 1:00 p.m. Sunday, December 7.

—A laptop computer was stolen from a classroom at St. Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave., between December 11-17.

Assault—An assault occurred at Dayton Avenue and Grotto Street at about 7:30 p.m. Monday, December 8. Police saw two suspects exchange something with a man who came up to their car window. When police attempted to talk with the suspects in the car, the driver sped off, dragging one of the officers. The man was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, fleeing police and drug possession. The passenger was arrested for drug possession and a warrant for DUI.

—A 54-year-old male was assaulted during a reported carjacking at 6:25 p.m. Saturday, December 13, on the 300 block of North Lexington Parkway. He was transported to Regions Hospital.

Weapons—A suspect pointed a gun at a bus driver at Selby Avenue and Dale Street at about 8:30 p.m. Saturday, December 6.

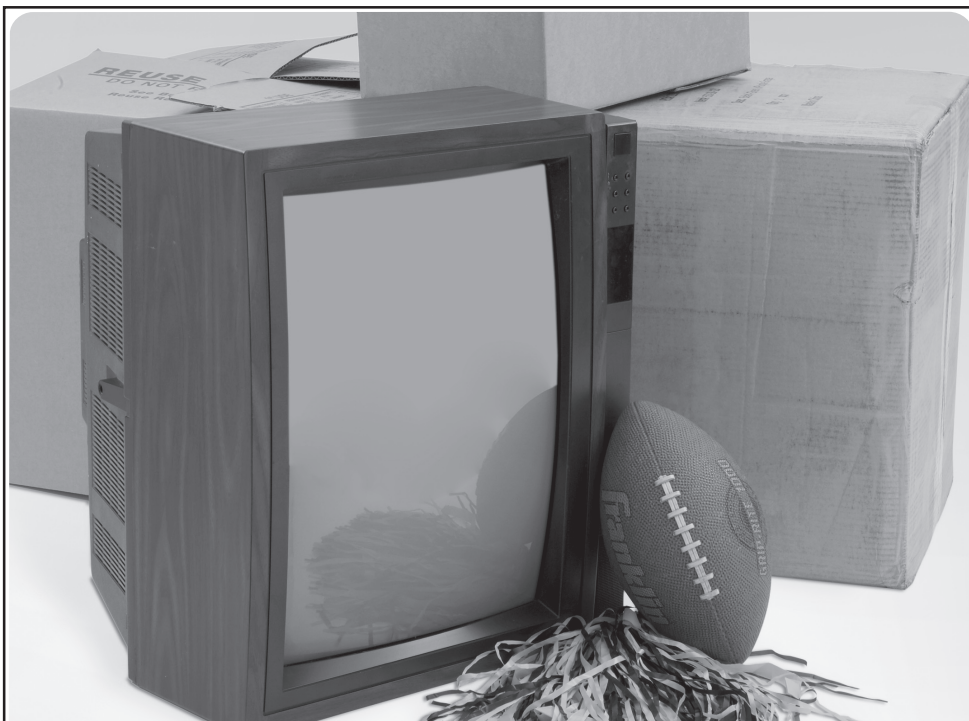
West End

Robbery—A woman was robbed as she entered Cooper's SuperValu, 633 W. 7th St., at about 4:30 p.m. Sunday, December 14. A male suspect snatched her purse from her shoulder.

Burglary—DeGidio's, 425 W. 7th St., was broken into between 11:30 p.m. Monday and 6:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 8-9.

—A locked laundry room was pried open and money was stolen from the commercial clothes dryers at Winslow Commons, 160 S. Western Ave., sometime before 7:30 a.m. Saturday, December 13.

Theft—An inflatable Santa was stolen from a yard on the 600 block of Palace Avenue between 8:00 p.m. Monday and 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 8-9.



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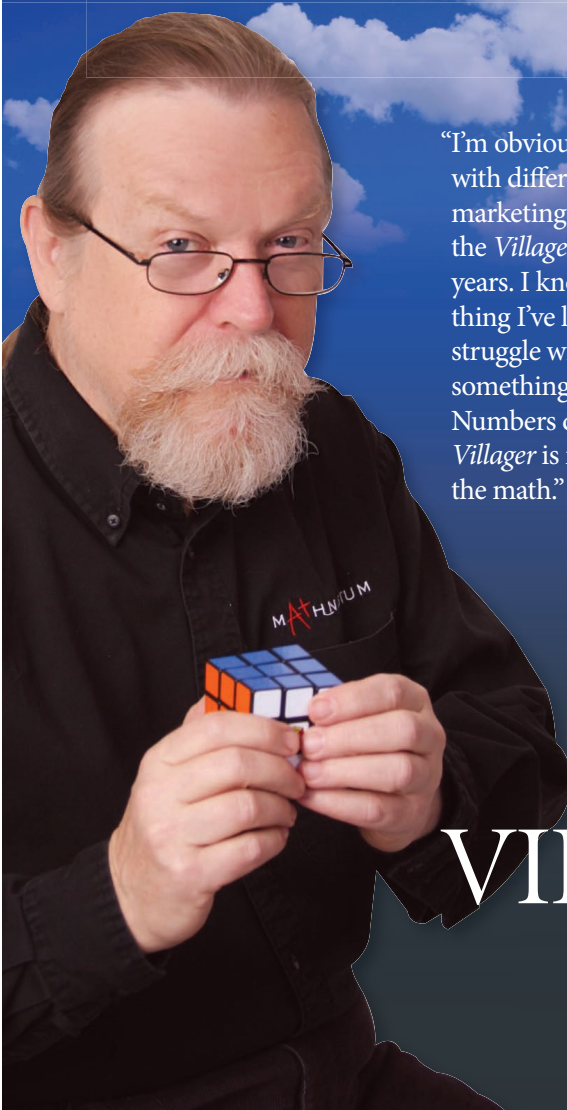
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District Council News

Highland Park

www.highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Bicycle boulevard update—The Highland District Council's Transportation Committee met on December 29 and voted down a request from the city to test a proposed bicycle boulevard on Highland Parkway. The committee recommended that the city organize a task force made up of members appointed by both the Highland and Macalester-Groveland district councils to take a more comprehensive look at bicycle issues in those neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Honor Roll—The HDC has nominated Molly Armstrong and Chuck Nehls for inclusion on the annual St. Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll. Armstrong has helped organize the annual Highland plant share since its inception in 2003 and Nehls has been involved in cleaning up graffiti and improving pedestrian safety in Highland Village for the last decade. An 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 cost is \$10 and includes hors d'oeuvres and musical entertainment. For information, call the HDC office.

At-large position—Robert Brandtjen was elected as the new at-large representative for the HDC's board on December 3. He brings much experience and knowledge of the neighborhood to the board, having worked on crime prevention and the Homecroft School issue, and having participated in many district council meetings over the last year.

Crime report—To receive the St. Paul Police Department's weekly crime report, crime prevention tips and other information, e-mail Kathy Carruth at hdc@visi.com.

Upcoming meetings—Board of directors, 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 8; Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, January 12; Community Services Committee, 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 14 (new date). All meetings will be held at the Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.

Looking ahead—The annual 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.

Macalester-Groveland

www.macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Frost Fest—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council will host its second annual Frost Fest on Saturday, January 17, at Groveland Park, 2045 St. Clair Ave. From 1:00 to 3:00 that afternoon there will be ice skating, a snowman-making contest, music by DJ Stevie Ray and free snacks and refreshments. Those who come are being asked to bring a nonperishable donation for the Keystone Community Services food shelf. Frost Fest will be canceled if there are harsh weather conditions that day. For information, check the council's web-

site or contact Afton Martens at the council office.

Crime updates—Those who are interested in receiving e-mailed updates regarding crime in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood may contact Afton Martens at 651-695-4000 or afton@macgrove.org.

Summit Hill

www.summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Board vacancies—The Summit Hill Association currently has two openings on its board of directors. Anyone age 16 and older who lives or owns property or a business in the neighborhood or serves as the designated representative of a local business is eligible to apply for the open positions on the 21-member board. The new members, who will be appointed by a vote of the current board, will each serve three-year terms. Renters and business owners are being especially encouraged to apply. For information or an application form, call or e-mail Jeff Roy or Diane Hilden at the SHA office.

Home energy workshop—The SHA's Environment Committee, in partnership with Xcel Energy, is sponsoring a workshop on "Improving Year-Round Home Energy-Efficiency" at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave. The workshop will offer tips to save energy while maintaining a comfortable home as well as advice for making no-cost, low-cost and "go-big" decisions to improve energy-efficiency. Summit Hill residents will find other "green" ideas and events in the new environmental column in each issue of the SHA newsletter, "The Summit." For information, call the SHA office.

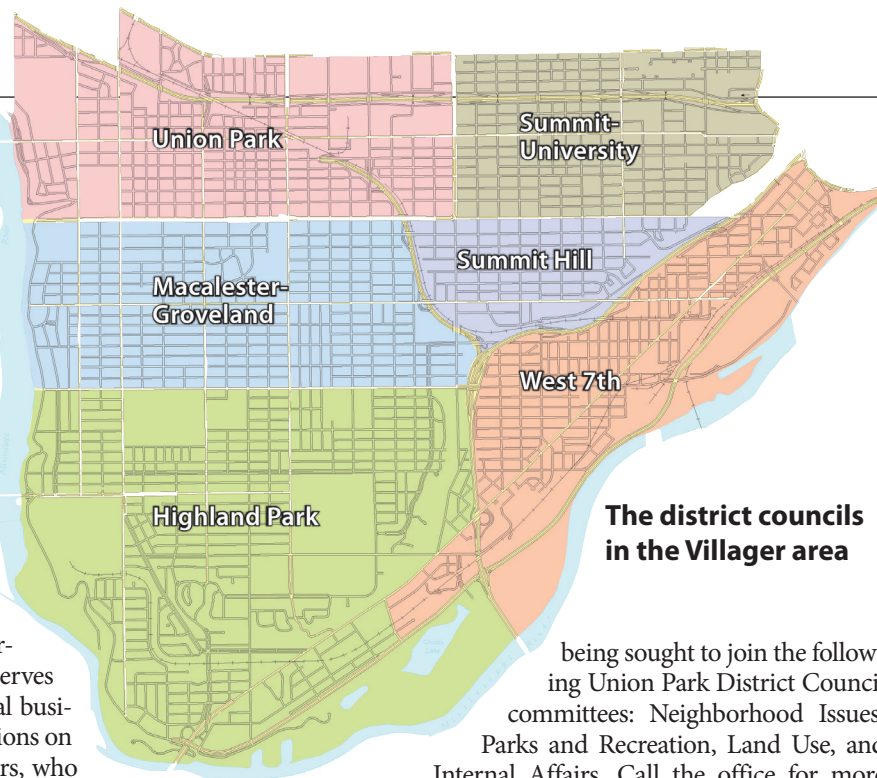
Welcome neighbors—A newly revised booklet welcoming new residents to the Summit Hill neighborhood is now available in the SHA office in the Linwood Recreation Center. The information also will soon be online at the SHA website. The SHA's Communications Committee and block and building club leaders recently delivered copies of the booklet to local residences. Those who did not receive a copy may contact the SHA office.

Upcoming events—Board of directors meeting, 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 8, Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave.; Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m. Monday, January 12, Linwood; home energy efficiency workshop, 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, Linwood.

Union Park

www.unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Union Park news—Residents of the Lexington-Hamline, Merriam Park and Snelling-Hamline neighborhoods are still



The district councils in the Villager area

being sought to join the following Union Park District Council committees: Neighborhood Issues, Parks and Recreation, Land Use, and Internal Affairs. Call the office for more information, meeting times and locations. The next UPDC board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 7, in Room 218 of Concordia University's Library Technology Center, 1282 Concordia Ave. For information and the agenda, visit the community council's website.

Recycling bins—Recycling bins are handed out from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at the Merriam Park Recreation Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave. The next pickup dates are January 7 and 21.

Shovel the sidewalk—St. Paul property owners are being reminded to clear their sidewalks within 24 hours after the snow has ceased falling. Leaving snow and ice on the sidewalk is not only a safety hazard, it is against the law. Friendly door hangers are available through the district council office to remind neighbors to keep their sidewalks shoveled.

Home energy audits—The Neighborhood Energy Connection is still offering subsidized home energy audits. A home's energy consumption and performance will be checked and the owner will receive a prioritized list of energy-saving recommendations and a cost/benefit analysis of making the improvements. To learn more, go to www.thenec.org.

Library film and discussion—"Jody Picks Shorts" is a discussion series that will take place at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month from now through April at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. The first session is set for January 13. The public is invited to watch a provocative short film and then discuss it over coffee and cookies. For information, call the library at 651-642-0385.

Stay connected—The UPDC publishes a monthly electronic newsletter that updates residents on coming events, meetings and programs. Weekly crime notifications are also sent to subscribing residents giving the date, case number and location of crimes in the neighborhood. To subscribe to either, e-mail info@unionparkdc.org with "subscribe to e-news" or "subscribe to crime notification" on the subject line.



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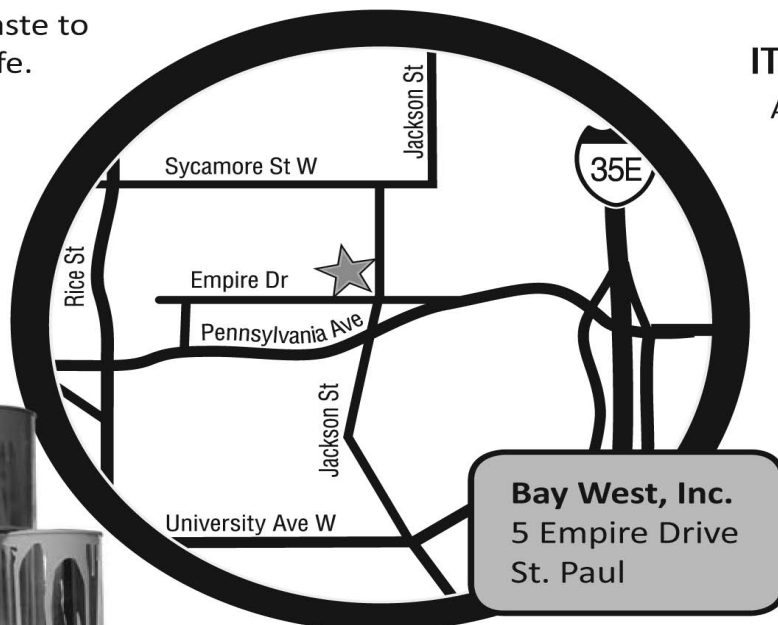
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Food



Home Fires By Jo Marshall

Saffron: The spice for life in hard times

The financial news may be grim, but in my pantry at this very moment is a tiny glass vial containing a scant gram of a substance that has the power to make me feel as though I'm wallowing in luxury.

The substance is saffron, the most expensive spice in the world. Its thin reddish strands are the dried stigmas of the saffron crocus. It takes 70,000 flowers to produce a pound of saffron, and each flower is painstakingly picked by hand. One ounce of quality saffron costs about \$100. But since a single gram can flavor two, even three, memorable meals, that tiny \$5.00 vial is enough to make a cook feel like a million bucks.

Saffron production had its genesis in ancient Persia, where it was used as a dye and for medicinal purposes. The Sumerians used saffron to concoct magic potions. Alexander the Great made saffron infusions to treat his battle wounds. Cleopatra took saffron baths to heighten the pleasure of love-making. And in Kashmir, saffron was offered up in reverent sacrifice to the Buddha.

By 960 A.D., Arab farmers were cultivating saffron in Spain. Christian warriors returning home from the Crusades brought saffron corms to other parts of Europe, and its popularity quickly spread. Saffron prices skyrocketed during the plagues of the 14th century when demand for saffron-based medications soared. Think it's disturbing when pirates help themselves to an oil freighter today? Saffron piracy in the Middle Ages resulted in the Saffron War. And in Germany, saffron adulteration became punishable by death.

In a culinary sense, saffron's value is readily apparent. The spice is essential to paella, the rice dish that stands at the pinnacle of Spanish cuisine. It's requisite in the cherished bouillabaisse of coastal France, and it's integral to the production of the cherished saffron cakes of Essex.



A pinch of saffron (right) is culinary gold when added to a bowl of arborio rice (above). PHOTOS BY JANET HOSTETTER

In a culinary sense, saffron's value is readily apparent. The spice is essential to paella, the rice dish at the pinnacle of Spanish cuisine. It's requisite in the cherished bouillabaisse of coastal France, and it's integral to the production of the cherished saffron cakes of Essex.

These days, my favorite use of saffron is one well suited to economically challenging times—Risotto Milanese, a simple dish of otherwise humble ingredients in which the exquisite spice shines through in all its decadent glory. Standing at the stove stirring a risotto makes me feel well cared for. It is a calming half hour that I spend in fragrant anticipation.

Risotto Alla Milanese

In Milan, this risotto is often served as an accompaniment to osso buco, or braised veal shanks. But for my money, a bowl of creamy, saffron-scented risotto and a simple salad is all that is required for a meal that just tastes decadent.

5 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup dry white wine
4 tablespoons unsalted butter (divided)
1/3 cup onion finely minced
1-1/2 cup arborio rice *
1 teaspoon saffron threads, loosely packed
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

In a saucepan, bring the broth to a simmer. Place 3 tablespoons of butter in a heavy 4-quart pot over moderate heat.

Add the onion and sauté, stirring for about two minutes or until the onion is softened but not yet browned. Add the rice to the pot and stir for a minute or so, making sure all the grains are nicely coated. Add the wine and stir until it is completely absorbed, then add the saffron, stirring for a minute. Begin to add the broth, a half cup at a time, stirring until each addition is almost completely absorbed. After about 15 minutes, begin to taste the rice.

Risotto is done when the rice is tender but al dente. Turn off the heat and stir in Parmesan and the final tablespoon of butter.

* Arborio rice has come down significantly in price in recent years, but to economize you could use regular, long grain rice. You won't get the texture of a classic risotto, but you'll still get a delicious dish. If you prefer not to cook with wine, simply increase the broth by half a cup.



Risotto is a specialty of northern Italy. As legend would have it, the dish was first made in Milan and dates back to 1574. During the two centuries it took to build that city's marble-spired cathedral, workers were employed from all over Europe. One such craftsman was Valerius of Flanders, a Belgian artist who oversaw the production of stained glass. One of his students developed a reputation for superior color-mixing, and it was rumored that his brilliant colors were due to the copious use of saffron. Valerius teased this apprentice incessantly, saying, "If you go on like that, you'll end up throwing saffron into your food."

After repeated taunts, the student decided the joke should be on his master. On the wedding day of Valerius' daughter, the student bribed the cook and a huge mound of yellow rice appeared at the wedding feast. Guest after guest was heard to proclaim, "Risus optimus, risus optimus!" (Latin for "excellent rice!")

To this day, Risotto Alla Milanese remains Milan's most important dish. Of course, no one really knows who first had the audacity and foresight to throw saffron into food, but unquestionably we owe him or her a debt of gratitude. There's no denying that saffron is culinary gold. And as stocks plummet, it's reassuring to have a little gold socked away in the pantry.

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Education

Moving on up to junior high

St. Paul Public Schools seek to ease the transition and plug a hole in its enrollment

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

In the transition from 6th grade to 7th grade, the St. Paul Public Schools have lost an average of 200 students in each of the past five years, and that has school district officials concerned. Enrollment districtwide has been on the decline for several years, mainly due to lower birth rates and families moving out of the city. However, that does not explain the sharp dropoff between elementary school and junior high school.

Most of the students who leave the school district are believed to be moving to charter or private junior high schools. "It's logical for parents to be looking at their options as their children leave 6th grade, because in most cases they'll be changing buildings anyway," said Denise Quinlan, the district's executive director for Middle Schools.

District administrators attribute the movement to parents' unfamiliarity with the programs offered at the district's junior highs and their concerns about discipline in those schools.

In an attempt to stem the exodus and improve student behavior, the school district is now "making a greater effort to help students in the 6th grade prepare for the transition to junior high," said Michelle Walker, the district's chief accountability officer. As part of that effort, the school district is assisting teachers in understanding the needs of

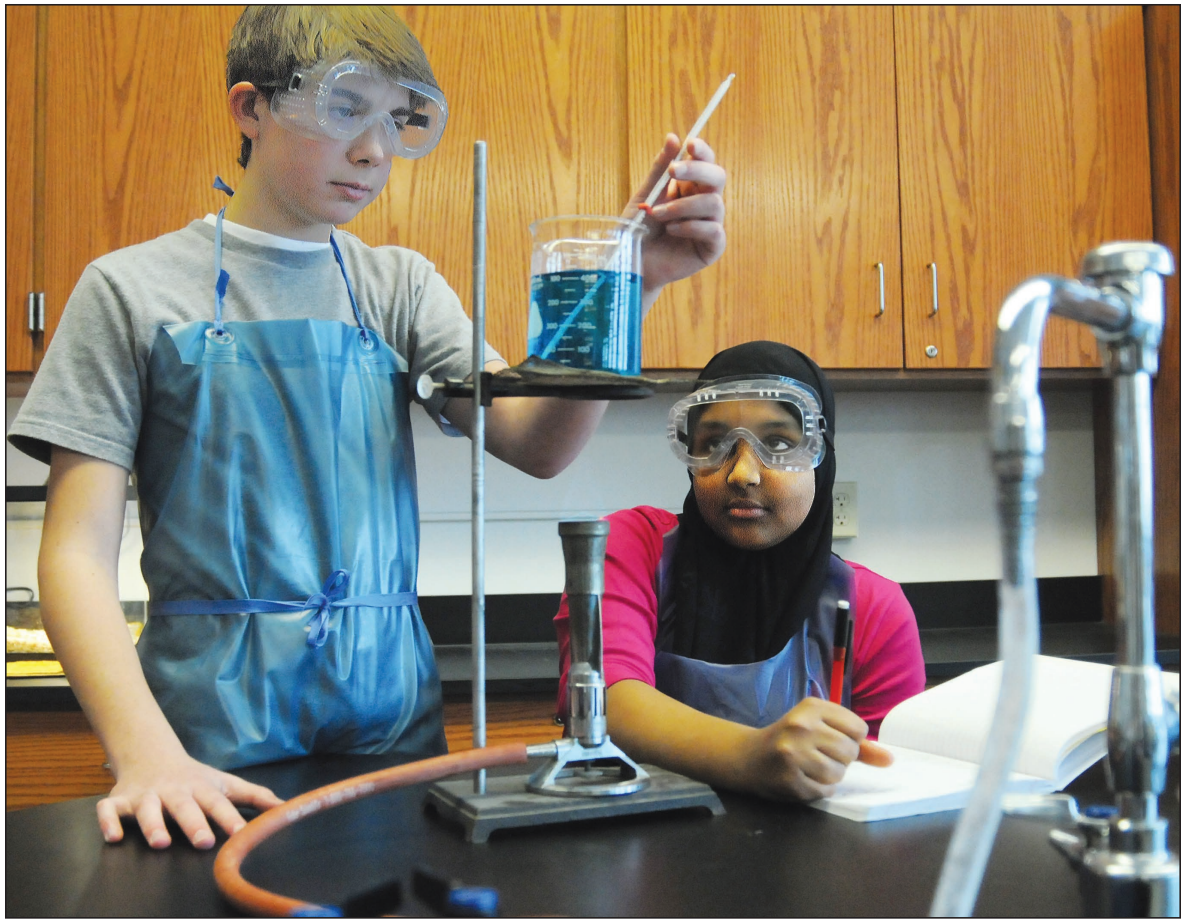
students who are making that transition, she said.

The district has also begun offering a series of informational meetings for parents to highlight the academic programs at each of its junior high schools. The principals at three of them—Highland Park, Ramsey and Murray—met recently with 6th-grade parents at Horace Mann Elementary School to explain the programs in their buildings.

Highland Park Junior High offers instruction in four languages—French, Spanish, Chinese and American Sign Language—and is two years into the three-year accreditation process for its International Baccalaureate Program, according to principal Charlene Hoff. "But our real strength is our core subject teaching teams," Hoff said. Similar to Highland Park Senior High School's "small learning communities," the core subject teams divide the junior high's 780 students into four groups of 140 students who work with the same four teachers in the core subjects of English, math, science and social studies.

Ramsey Junior has a special program for gifted and talented students and a strong music and arts curriculum, and it is also in the early stages of receiving accreditation for its International Baccalaureate Program, according to principal Bruce Maeda.

Murray has had a math and science magnet program since 1980, according to principal Winston



Ramsey Junior High 8th-graders Ryder Byrne and Kifaya Taha check the temperature of a liquid in a pre-Advanced Placement science class taught by Robb Keech. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Student behavior can be a challenge in any junior high school. In the St. Paul Public Schools' seven junior highs, an average of 22 percent of the students are suspended at least once during the school year.

Tucker. In addition to advanced courses in life, earth and physical sciences, Murray has the biggest school science fair in the state, Tucker said. Many of its students go on to state, regional and national science fairs. And in addition to standard courses in algebra and geometry, Murray offers college-level math in cooperation with the University of Minnesota.

Student behavior can be a challenge in any junior high school, the three principals said. In the St. Paul Public Schools' seven junior highs, an average of 22 percent of the students are suspended at least once during the school year, according to the district's website, and the suspension figures for Highland,

Ramsey and Murray junior highs are close to that average.

"Junior high is the first time kids are moving through the halls six or seven times a day to get to their next class," Hoff said.

"That's a lot to ask of most kids in a transition like that," Tucker said. "With all of the movement, kids meet more kids than in the lower grades and there are bound to be some arguments."

Teachers are trained to see the beginnings of conflicts and to step in at the appropriate time, according to Maeda. "Junior high schools have several tools for discipline," he said, "including expulsion, home suspensions and in-school suspensions where students are kept from

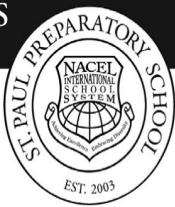
normal classes for a day or two and go to one classroom to study and do homework."

The St. Paul school district "has begun targeted intervention training for teachers to help them see and prevent conflict during the most likely times it can happen," Quinlan said. Other techniques that have been employed include escorting students from class to class, instituting longer class periods and shorter hall passing times, and creating student peer groups that meet periodically to discuss disciplinary issues.

For help in selecting a junior high for their students, parents may arrange a tour by calling the schools. Tours are periodically offered to groups of parents. Their children may also arrange to "shadow" a current junior high student throughout the day to get a better feel for a school. Parents and students may also attend the St. Paul Public Schools' free Information Fair from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 10, at Roy Wilkins Auditorium, 175 W. Kellogg Blvd.

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Tom Findlay talks with Diane Zanter about Highland Park Elementary's Primary Years Program during St. Paul's Parent Information Fair. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Open houses help families make smart choice on school programs

BY JOHN WADELL

The start of the 2009-2010 school year may seem like a long way off, but parents have to do their homework now to identify the schools that might best meet the needs of their children. To help make the process easier, the St. Paul and Minneapolis school districts will be hosting informational fairs and individual schools will be having open houses over the next few weeks.

In St. Paul, parents will have a chance to meet representatives from more than 100 schools and programs at the 2009 Parent Information Fair from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 10, in Roy Wilkins Auditorium at St. Paul RiverCentre.

All regular St. Paul public schools, as well as many charter, private and parochial schools, will be represented at the fair. Information also will be available about early childhood education, English Language Learner programs, programs for gifted students and special education services. Parents will be able to talk with staff regarding the school selection process and how to complete an application form. Interpreters will be available.

The fair is free and preregistration is not required. Free parking with shuttle service to the fair will be available at Sears, 425 Rice St.; at the school district's headquarters, 360 Colborne St.; and at Johnson and Harding senior highs.

The application deadline for attending public schools in St. Paul next year is February 27 for secondary schools and March 6 for elementary schools. For information, call 651-632-3760 or visit www.spps.org.

Minneapolis families with children entering kindergarten or changing schools through grade 8 next fall are required to fill out a school request card by February 28. High school request forms are due by January 31. The district's annual PreK-8 School Information Fair will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 10, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1300 Nicollet Mall. Teachers and other staff members will be available to answer questions and assist families with school choice options. For information, call Student Placement Services at 612-668-1840.

In Mendota Heights and the rest of School District 197, an open house for students planning to attend Sibley High School will be held on February 2. Kindergarten open houses also will be held over the next few weeks. Call 651-681-2307.

Following is a list of upcoming local school open houses and kindergarten roundups:

ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS Secondary

Capitol Hill Magnet, 560 Concordia Ave. Showcase from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-325-2500.

Central Senior, 275 N. Lexington Pkwy. Showcase from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 4. Call 651-632-6000.

Highland Park Junior, 975 S. Snelling Ave. Showcase from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, January 15. Call 651-293-8950.

Highland Park Senior, 1015 S. Snelling Ave. Showcase from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-293-8940.

Linwood Monroe Arts Plus, 810 Palace Ave. Showcase for grades 4-8 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-293-8690.

Ramsey Junior, 1700 Summit Ave. Showcase from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-293-8860.

Elementary

Adams Spanish Immersion, 615 S. Chatsworth St. Open house from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 10. Kindergarten orientation from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, May 7. Call 651-298-1595.

Benjamin E. Mays, 560 Concordia Ave. Open house at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Kindergarten orientation at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, May 21. Call 651-325-2400.

Capitol Hill Magnet, 560 Concordia Ave. Open house for grades 1-6 at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Call 651-325-2500.

Expo for Excellence, 540 S. Warwick St. Open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Kindergarten orientation from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 7. Call 651-290-8384.

Four Seasons A+, 340 Colborne St. Open house at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Pre-K and kindergarten roundup at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 26. Call 651-290-7595.

Groveland Park, 2045 St. Clair Ave. Open house from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, February 26. Kindergarten orientation from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14. School tours at 9:30 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Call 651-293-8760.

Highland Park, 1700 Saunders Ave. Open house from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb-

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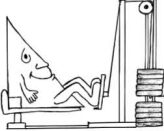
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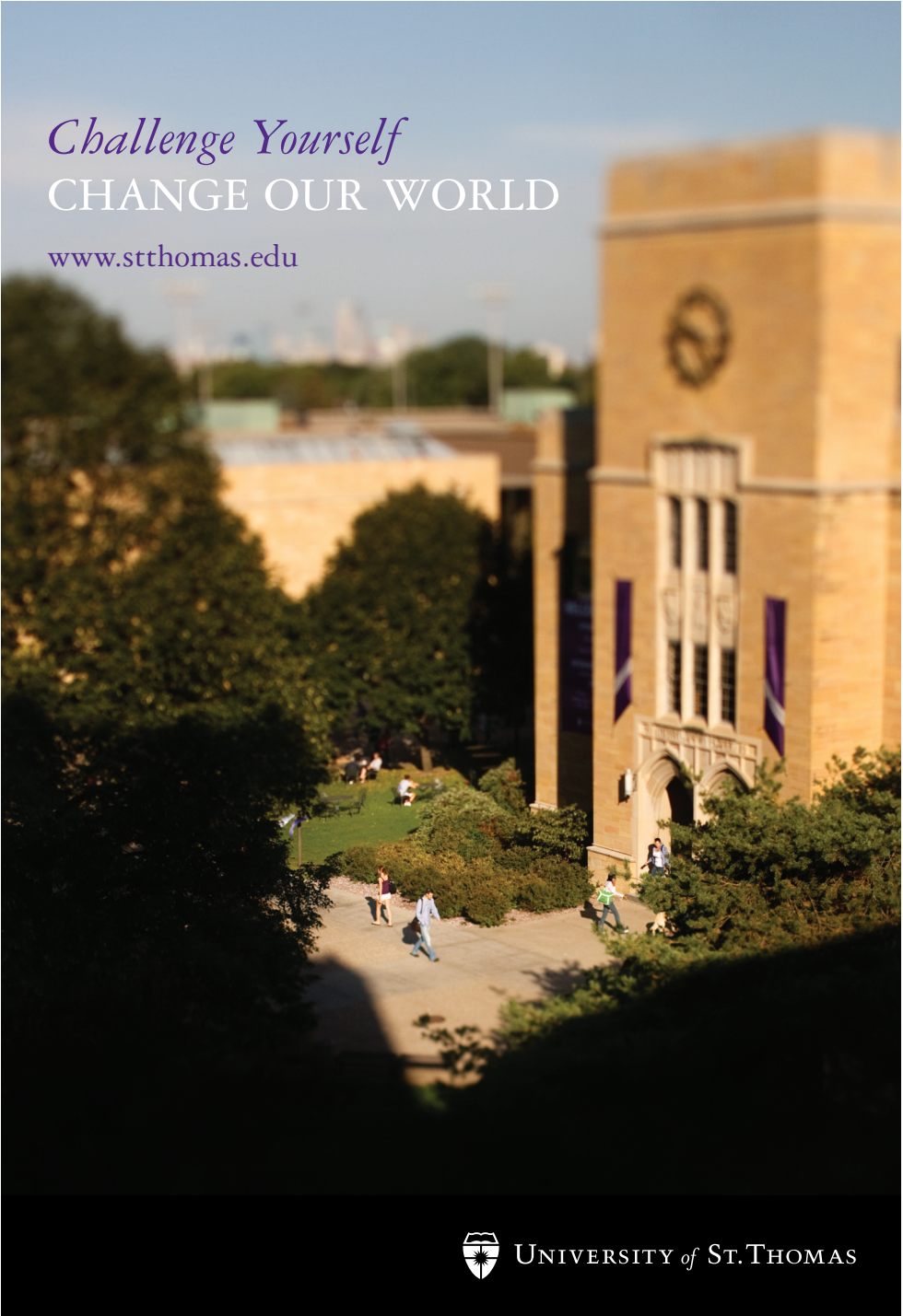


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 UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

'15 Ways to Get A's'

CDH sophomore devises a simple formula for succeeding at school

BY BOB GILBERT

Cretin-Derham Hall sophomore Tyler Hamblin is wise beyond his years, according to his teacher, Tom Cody. "Tyler doesn't stand out as one of my better students," Cody said. "He just stands out as one of my better people. He sees the big picture, where most high school sophomores don't see any picture. He's bright and he cares."

Cody, who has been teaching at CDH for the past 28 years, conducts seminars to help other teachers become more effective. He has called on Hamblin several times to augment the seminars from a student's point of view.

However, Hamblin is by no means an average student. The 15-year-old maintains a 4.0 grade-point average at CDH, and as an 8th-grader at Ramsey Junior High School he wrote a 25-page book titled "15 Ways to Get A's."

"Ever since I was little I got A's," Hamblin said. "My friends always asked me how I did it. I wrote the book so I could share it with them, because you can't go far without education."

Some of Hamblin's methods may seem elementary to adults, but their value for fellow students may just be in their simplicity.

Number one on his list is taking responsibility for your own education. According to him, that means getting a good night's sleep, eating a good breakfast, getting to school on time and turning in quality work.

Number three on his list is, "Do not be afraid to interact with your teachers. Do not forget they are there to help you. That is their job."

Hamblin advises students to find out what their teachers like and dislike. Some will let you be funny in class and others won't, he writes, and students ought to take note of that.

"If you are not happy with your current

grade, you can always ask if extra credit is available," Hamblin writes. In that way, he adds, a student can show the teacher that he or she is serious about doing well.

"A lot of my friends are scared to talk to their teachers," Hamblin said. "When they get a bad grade, they immediately think the teacher hates them. I'm trying to get them so they aren't afraid to communicate with their teachers because the teachers want you to get a good grade, too."

Hamblin's father, Ken Hamblin, has taught social studies for 12 years at the Connection Center, an alternative program in Minneapolis for talented students

who, hampered by learning disabilities or family problems, dropped out of high school but have returned to earn their diplomas.

"As a teacher I try to instill in the kids that we're working on this thing together," Ken said. "Your teachers are just like you. They're not going to fight you and they're not going to hurt you."

The Hamblins' family roots are in the state of Mississippi, and Tyler came up with many of the ideas for his book on

long road trips he made with his father to visit family and friends there.

Tyler first presented his ideas to a group of students at a Baptist church in Jackson and at a Boys and Girls Club in Canton. "A lot of the kids in Mississippi are street smart but not book smart," he said. "I think I'm getting a better education by living up here."

At 5-foot-11 and 175 pounds, Hamblin advanced from the junior varsity to the varsity football team at CDH by the end of the 2008 season. A defensive back, he was on the field at the Metrodome when the Raiders lost to Blaine 28-27 in overtime in the semifinals of the state tournament. He hopes to play varsity football at CDH next fall as a junior.

Hamblin also likes to read Harry Potter

"A lot of my friends are scared to talk to their teachers," Hamblin said. "When they get a bad grade, they immediately think the teacher hates them. I'm trying to get them so they aren't afraid to communicate with their teachers, because the teachers want you to get a good grade, too."



Cretin-Derham Hall sophomore Tyler Hamblin. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

books and autobiographies of his heroes, including Michael Jordan and Martin Luther King Jr. His favorite subjects are science and math, but ever since he wrote "15 Ways to Get A's" he has become more interested in English.

Number 14 in Hamblin's book is, "Recognize your weaknesses and focus on them as soon as possible." He believes it is the things that a student doesn't like or doesn't do well

that he or she ought to concentrate on. He writes: "Recognize those areas that trouble you and that you're weak in, and put extra focus and time into them instead of ignoring and avoiding them."

"I've told Tyler that if he keeps on his current path, no matter what happens, he'll always be successful," Ken said.

For information on purchasing copies of Hamblin's book, call 651-269-9717.



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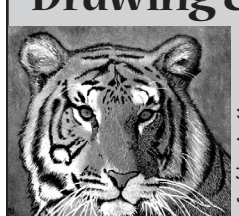
Open Houses:
Grades 6-12: January 8, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
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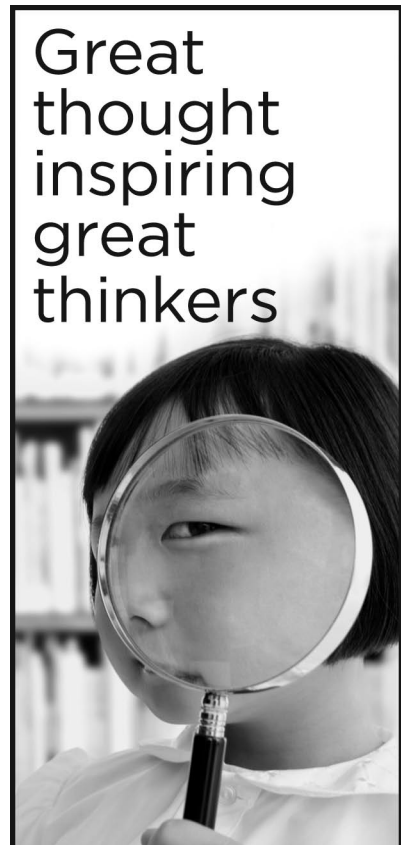
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17◀ OPEN HOUSES

ruary 12. Kindergarten orientation from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 29. Call 651-293-8770.

Horace Mann, 2001 Eleanor Ave. Open house from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22. Kindergarten orientation from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14. Call 651-293-8965.

J.J. Hill Montessori, 998 Selby Ave. Open house from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Kindergarten orientation from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday, May 6-7. Call 651-293-8720.

Linwood Monroe Arts Plus, 1023 Osceola Ave. Open house for grades K-3 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 10. New student orientation from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 12. Call 651-293-6606.

Longfellow Humanities, 318 Moore St. Open house from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, February 11. Open house and multicultural fair at 5:00 p.m. Thursday, February 12. Kindergarten orientation from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14. Call 651-293-8725.

Museum Magnet, 560 Concordia Ave. Open house at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 10. Kindergarten orientation at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 19. Call 651-325-2600.

Randolph Heights, 348 S. Hamline Ave. Open house at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 10. Kindergarten roundup at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, September 3. Call 651-293-8780.

Webster Magnet, 707 Holly Ave. Open house from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 22. Kindergarten orientation from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 14. Call 651-293-8625.

K-12 schools

Bridge View (special education), 360 Colborne St. Open house from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 26. To arrange a tour, call 651-293-8640.

St. Paul Open, 90 S. Western Ave. Secondary and elementary open house from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 27. Kindergarten orientation from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, May 14. Call 651-293-8670.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Avalon School, 1745 University Ave. Open houses for grades 7-12 at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, and at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 31. Call 651-649-5495, ext. 204.

Community of Peace Academy, 471 E. Magnolia Ave. Kindergarten information night at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. New student application deadline Thursday, February 26. Call 651-776-5151.

Nova Classical Academy, 1668 Montreal Ave. Admission events at 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays, January 15 and February 5; and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturdays, January 24 and February 21. Now K-8, Nova will expand to 9th grade in 2009. Call 651-227-8622.

St. Paul Preparatory School, 380 Jackson St. Open house from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-288-4611.

Twin Cities Academy, 426 Osceola Ave. Open houses at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 27, and Tuesday, February 24. The academy will move to the Trinity Catholic School Building at Sacred Heart Parish, 835 E. 5th St., for the coming school year. Call 651-205-4797.

Twin Cities German Immersion, 1745 University Ave. Information sessions at 4:00 p.m. Thursday, January 8; 10:00 a.m. Saturday, January 17; 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 21; 4:00 p.m. Thursday, January 29; 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 3; and 7:00 p.m. Monday, February 9. Call 651-492-7106.

Yinghua Academy, 1355 Pierce Butler Route. Information sessions from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays, January 10 and 24, and February 7. Open enrollment January 5-February 11. Call 651-379-4112.

DISTRICT 197 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Henry Sibley Senior High, 1897 Delaware Ave., Mendota Heights. Open house and registration for incoming 9th-graders at 6:00 p.m. Monday, February 2. Call 651-681-2351.

Heritage Middle School, 121 W. Butler Ave., West St. Paul. Information night for incoming 5th-graders at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 29. Call 651-905-4000.

Mendota Elementary, 1979 Summit Lane, Mendota Heights. Kindergarten open house at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 7, and 1:00 p.m. Thursday, January 15. Call 651-405-2451.

Somerset Elementary, 1355 Dodd Road, Mendota Heights. Kindergarten open house from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. Thursday, January 8, and from noon to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 14. Call 651-405-2631.

Garlough Elementary, 1740 Charlton St., West St. Paul. Kindergarten open house from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. Thursday, January 15. Call 651-405-2673.

Moreland Elementary, 217 W. Moreland Ave., West St. Paul. Kindergarten open houses from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Thursday, January 15, and from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Thursday, February 19. Call 651-405-2531.

Pilot Knob Elementary, 1436 Lone Oak Road, Eagan. Kindergarten open house from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Call 651-405-2788.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Cretin-Derham Hall, 550 S. Albert St. Ninth-grade placement test from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, January 17. Call 651-690-2443.

Friends School of Minnesota, 1365 Englewood Ave. Open house from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 5. Call 651-917-0636.

Highland Catholic, 2017 Bohland Ave. Kindergarten roundup at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 3. Call 651-690-2477.

Holy Spirit, 515 S. Albert St. Kindergarten roundups at 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 28. Middle School open house from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, February 5. Call 651-698-7233.

Minnehaha Academy. Open houses for grades 9-12 at 6:45 p.m. Monday, January 26, at the North Campus, 3100 W. River Pkwy., Minneapolis; and for preschool-8th grade at 6:45 p.m. Thursdays, January 22 and February 26, at the South Campus, 4200 W. River Pkwy., Minneapolis. Call 612-728-7756.

Minnesota Waldorf School, 70 E. County Road B. Preschool and kindergarten open house from 10:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, February 7. Information event from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, January 24. Call 651-487-6700.

Nativity, 1900 Stanford Ave. Open house from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, January 29. Call 651-699-1311.

St. Mark's, 1983 Dayton Ave. Kindergarten information event at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 27. Call 651-644-3380.

St. Paul Academy and Summit School. Open houses from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thursday, January 8, for the Upper and Middle Schools (6-12), 1712 Randolph Ave., and from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 21, for the Lower School (K-5), 1150 Goodrich Ave. Call 651-698-2451.

St. Thomas Academy, 949 Mendota Heights Road, Mendota Heights. Open house at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11. Entrance exams for 9th-graders at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, January 17, and for middle schoolers at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, January 24. Call 651-454-4570.

St. Thomas More, 1065 Summit Ave. Kinder story hour at 1:00 p.m. Friday, January 9, for children entering kindergarten next fall. Open house from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 29. Call 651-224-4836.

Talmud Torah of St. Paul, 768 S. Hamline Ave. Open houses for Lower School at 9:15 a.m. Thursday, January 22; and Upper School at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 20. Call 651-698-8807.

Visitation, 2455 Visitation Drive, Mendota Heights. Open houses for Lower School (K-5) at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 21; Middle School (6-8) at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 28; and Upper School (9-12) at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 14. Entrance test for 9th-graders on Saturday, January 17, and for Lower and Middle School students on Saturday, February 28. Call 651-683-1700.



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4200 West River Parkway, Minneapolis
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**Upper School Grades 9 through 12:
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3100 West River Parkway, Minneapolis
Monday, January 26 at 6:45 p.m.

**Preschool through Grade 5:
Bloomington Campus**

10150 Xerxes Avenue South
Thursday, February 5 at 6:45 p.m.

**Preschool through Grade 8:
South Campus**

4200 West River Parkway, Minneapolis
Thursday, February 26 at 6:45 p.m.

Please register by calling 612-728-7756 • School-age children welcome
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*Placement Test

Saturday, January 17, 2009

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

No Pre-registration Necessary

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Saturday, Jan. 17, 10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 21, 7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 29, 4 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 3, 7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m.

Tour dates

January 8
January 15
February 5
Tours start at 9:30 a.m. and run about 20 minutes.

Reservations required.

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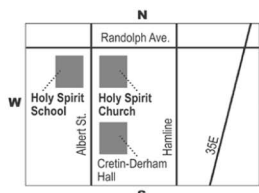
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School Notes

School District 197 is now accepting preschool registration for fall 2009. Classes will be held at Mendota and Moreland elementary schools. Threeschool is offered on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at both locations; children must be 3 by September 1. Prekindergarten for children ages 4-5 is held three mornings or afternoons a week; children must be 4 by September 1. Registrations will be opened and classes assigned on the morning of January 28. Visit www.ISD197.org or call Dolly O'Rourke at 651-403-8353.

Musikgarten of Minnehaha Falls will offer a parent education and community night, “Healthy Living: Music in Early Childhood,” on Wednesday, January 7, at Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, 5212 41st Ave. S., Minneapolis. Supper is at 5:30 p.m., followed by a presentation at 6:45 p.m. Participants will learn why music is beneficial for young children and hear ideas to incorporate music into their daily lives. Childcare will be available and donations will be accepted. Family music night will be offered at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11. Call 651-485-0153.

St. Paul College continuing education will offer the following classes: beginning Italian from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays, January 8-February 19, at the college, 317 Marshall Ave. (\$79); and an introduction to Microsoft Office 2007 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. and again from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22, at the UAW-Ford-MnSCU Training Center on Ford Parkway and Mount Curve Boulevard (\$44). Call 651-846-1783.

Beginning computer classes will be conducted from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays in January at the St. Paul Central Library, 90 W. 4th St. The series will include an introduction to computers, e-mail I and II, and an introduction to the Internet. The classes are free. To register, call 651-266-7000, ext. 5.

The Weavers Guild of Minnesota will hold an open house from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 17, at the Textile Center, 3000 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Visitors will be able to tour the classrooms, see weaving and spinning demonstrations, and try their hand at weaving. Information on upcoming classes and workshops will be available. The guild offers daytime, evening and weekend classes for beginning, intermediate and advanced students. Call 612-436-0463 or visit www.weaversguildmn.org.

St. Paul College will offer a paralegal certification of completion course beginning Tuesday, January 20. The class will meet from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays at the UAW-Ford-MnSCU Training Center on Ford Parkway and Mount Curve Boulevard. The fee is \$1,095. Call 651-846-1783.

The Minnesota Parental Information and Resource Center will kickoff “Helping Your Child Succeed at School,” a free workshop series for parents of children in public school, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, January 22, at the Rondo Library, 461 N. Dale St. The session will feature strategies for parents to help their children with homework and other learning tasks at home. Call 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/MPC/workshops.asp.

Joe Nathan, a Highland Park resident and director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota, will discuss school choice and the successes and shortcomings of public charter schools at a free luncheon event from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22, on Century College's east campus Lincoln Mall. Call Sue Klecker at 651-773-1792 for reservations.

Jacob Szymanski was named St. Thomas Academy's 101st cadet colonel. Chosen as lieutenant colonels were fellow seniors Thomas Caturia, Robert Muellerleile, Ryan Robinson, Andrew Ayotte and Matthew Baer. Szymanski was all-state and captain of STA's soccer team last fall. He also is captain of the basketball team and has earned two Eagle Awards and two Torch Awards for his academic achievements. He plans to attend either the University of Minnesota or the University of Wisconsin following graduation.

Patrick O'Shaughnessy of the West End and **Scott Penticoff** of Woodbury returned to Minnesota in November after successfully completing a 100-mile, five-day race through the Himalayan Mountains. In the process, they raised more than \$27,000 for Admission Possible, a nonprofit organization that helps low-income high school students get into college.

The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program is offering 550 full scholarships to U.S. high school students to study abroad and learn Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Russian and Turkish. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, among others, NSLI-Y is designed to increase American citizens' capacity to engage foreign governments and peoples through those critical languages. Visit www.NSLIforyouth.org.

School District 197 is seeking applicants for a Blue Ribbon Panel that will help chart the future of the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools. The panel will research grade configurations, building capacity, educational programming and other areas beginning in January and will present its findings and recommendations to the administration and School Board by June. Applications are available at www.isd197.org or by calling the superintendent's office at 651-403-7002.

The Perpich Center for Arts Education Arts High School is now accepting applications from high school sophomores and juniors with a strong interest in performing, visual or media arts. The tuition-free school occupies a 30-acre campus in Golden Valley. The application deadline is February 1. Information sessions will be offered at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays, January 10 and 24. Call 763-591-4710 or visit www.pcae.k12.mn.us.

School District 197 teachers Anne Bolsem and Patrick Hibbard were recognized as TIES Exceptional Teachers during a conference last month in Minneapolis. Bolsem teaches first-grade at Garlough Environmental Magnet School and Hibbard is a sixth-grade teacher at Friendly Hills Middle School. TIES is an education technology consortium of 38 Minnesota school districts.

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP

Wednesday, January 28, 2009
1:00 PM or 6:00 PM



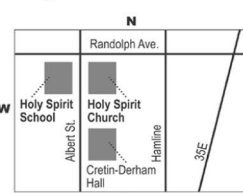
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Health and Fitness

Face value

Mac-Grove laser clinic exposes need to care for the skin you're in

BY CAROLYN WILL

Minnesota winters can damage the finish on cars, so just imagine what they can do to tender skin exposed to vacillating temperatures and biting winds.

"Everyone living in this region could benefit from skin rejuvenation," said Natalie Ansari, owner of the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic, 2050 St. Clair Ave. "Even people who are very healthy with their diet and exercise routines need to maintain their skin."

Ansari is a certified laser technician and medical esthetician who did her paramedical training at Woodwinds Hospital in Woodbury. She became interested in the use of laser treatments for skin conditions while accompanying her mother on appointments for rosacea, a condition that causes persistent redness in the face, especially around the cheeks and nose.

"I sat in and observed the treatments," she said. "The laser care made a huge improvement in my mom's physical and emotional state. I knew I wanted to do that for other people."

Ansari, who joined the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic when it opened in November 2005 and bought the business a year ago, believes that more and more people are recognizing the need for proper skin care. "People are getting more comfortable talking about procedures they've had done, like laser hair removal," she said. "It used to be an unapproachable subject, very hush-hush. But now people are much more open."

The services offered at the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic include skin rejuvenation, laser hair removal, laser vein therapy, sun spot removal, drug-free acne treatments, microdermabrasion, chemical peels and organic facials. The staff includes two certified laser technicians and medical estheticians, a physician who serves as a medical consultant, and a registered nurse who does all of the injections.

"One of our treatments is skin tightening to get rid of the 'creping' around the face and neck," Ansari said. The treatment uses a laser that targets the water layer deep in the skin. The infrared light stimulates new collagen production in the dermis. According to Ansari, clients may see immediate results, but most results are visible six weeks after treatment and can last as long as two years. The technique can be used on loose skin on the face, arms, legs and abdomen.

For skin rejuvenation, the laser is set to a shorter wave length that targets the upper dermis and warms the skin's red blood cells.

The laser stimulates collagen regrowth and addresses skin texture, large pores, fine lines, redness and scarring.

Laser treatment can also be used for hair removal, which has been the clinic's most popular service for both men and women. Permanent hair removal is offered, but the laser is not effective in removing white, gray and red hair. "The laser doesn't work on those colors due to the lack of pigment," Ansari said.

A client from Mendota Heights originally went to the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic looking for a way to treat her adult acne. "I was rounding the corner on turning 40, had signs of aging plus my adult acne had grown worse after having children," said Maureen, who preferred not to give her last name. She had also decided against taking any more oral antibiotics. Ansari used a combination of light therapy to kill the bacteria that causes acne and chemical peels to clear up Maureen's skin.

"It worked!" Maureen said. "My skin is clear and I never felt pushed into anything. I felt like they were very realistic about what they could do for my skin."

Injections are a growing trend in skin rejuvenation to remove fine lines and wrinkles on the forehead and around the eyes and mouth. For these treatments, the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic employs registered nurse Bill Joy, who



A client at the clinic receives Omnilux acne light therapy.



Certified laser technician Natalie Ansari applies a skin-tightening treatment to a client at the St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic on St. Clair Avenue. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

administers injections of Botox, Juvederm, Restylane and Pearlane.

Prices for the treatments vary. Clients may set up an appointment for a free consultation.

The St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic carries a full line of skin care products from a 50-year-old Hungarian company. The Eminence Organic Skin Care products include Blueberry Soy Night Recovery Crème, Citrus Exfoliator, Chocolate Mousse Hydrating Masque, Mimosa Body Lotion and Cinnamon Paprika Body Lotion.

"People want to eat these products they smell so good," Ansari said, "and because it's all organic, they could eat it."

Facials cost \$60 for the first treatment and \$85 thereafter. For home skin rejuvenation, the clinic sells Vitamin C serum that Ansari refers to as "liquid gold" and sells for \$120 a bottle.

Ansari is very hands-on in her approach to her business. "Seeking out skin treatments is a very personal decision and it requires an owner who treats it as such," she said. "I'm here all the time and all of our clients' services are kept confidential."

These days Ansari is also spending time with the proprietors of other clinics to raise a concerted voice for the laser skin care industry. As of now, Ansari said, Minnesota has no regulatory standards for the practice. "We'd like to see some regulations for laser skin care put into place," she said.

The St. Paul Skin & Laser Clinic will hold an open house from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 11. The public is welcome to stop by for skin consultations, free drawings and giveaways. For more information, visit www.StPaulLaser.com.

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Move this way

Hill teaches age-old technique to reduce wear and tear on the body

BY FRANK JOSSI

After a minor car accident two decades ago, Lauren Hill began suffering chronic pain in her upper back and neck. She had trouble sitting for more than five minutes, and two of her greatest loves—playing the piano and running—became nearly impossible to do because of the pain.

Physicians had trouble identifying the origin of Hill's injury. Massages helped, but the relief did not last. Then several years after the accident she heard about the Alexander Technique, which helps people learn to overcome stress and pain by relearning common, everyday body movements.

"It was empowering to me to be able to do something to help myself," Hill said. "When you have chronic pain—and people who have it will often tell you this—you feel helpless."



Lauren Hill practices the Alexander Technique on Kris Jacobs in Hill's Summit Hill teaching studio. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

In 1995, she began the process of helping herself with an Alexander Technique instructor while living in Delaware. In 2000, Hill moved to Illinois to take classes to become an instructor herself, and three years later she earned her certification from the American Society for the Alexander Technique.

After graduating, Hill moved to St. Paul where she now trains clients in the well-appointed basement studio of the Summit Hill home she shares with her husband. Mirrors

adorn one wall, allowing clients to see themselves as she works with them.

Hill, 39, is one of nine Alexander Technique professionals in Minnesota and 1,000 or so in the country. Many of her clients are musicians, dancers and other artists who suffer from the strains of repetitive motion. In her marketing brochure she states that the technique is taught to performance students at Juilliard, Yale, UCLA, the Royal College of Music and other institutions.

According to a study conducted in the United Kingdom, patients who received 24 Alexander Technique lessons experienced more dramatic reductions in pain than those who received either classical massage or did 30 minutes of aerobic activity. A year after the study, Alexander Technique patients saw the number of days in pain in a month plummet to three, compared to a control group that re-

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE ► 23

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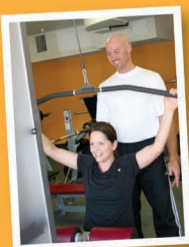
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Hill shows clients how to reduce pain by changing their common movements.

22◀ ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

ported having pain for 21 days.

So what is the Alexander Technique? “We look at how you’re using your body throughout the day—all those movements we don’t think about how we’re doing them,” Hill said.

The technique works best for clients suffering from chronic pain, a recurring injury, slipped disks, scoliosis or other long-term conditions, Hill said. Treatment begins with observation of a client’s posture and movements, from answering the phone and sitting to standing and crossing their arms.

The two key principles, she said, are inhibition and direction. Inhibition looks at how clients respond to various activities or stimuli. In watching how clients pick up a phone, for example, Hill can detect ways in which their bodies may be responding poorly and causing pain. Direction is how clients move through space, such as how they sit or how they rise from a sitting to a standing position.

Hill primarily focuses on the relationship between a client’s spine and head. Typically, a person’s head is eight percent of his or her body weight—the equivalent of a heavy bowling ball. Changing the relationship among the head, spine and torso—the “primary control area” as Alexander instructors call it—will create better posture. Combining how people move their neck and head while transforming some common movements are the keys to reducing pain, Hill said.

Hill basically uses just three objects in treating clients: a chair, a massage-style table and an exercise ball. By improving her clients’ sensory awareness and kinesics, they can “change how they use themselves over time,” she said.

The Alexander Technique was developed at the beginning of the 20th century by F.M. Alexander, an Australian actor who would often get hoarse while delivering Shakespearean soliloquies. Unable to find a physician who

So what is the Alexander Technique? “We look at how you’re using your body throughout the day—all those movements we don’t think about how we’re doing them,” Hill said.

could help him, he set up a series of mirrors in a studio and closely studied his performance style over a nine-year period.

Alexander created a thriving practice teaching the technique in London, where he lived until his death in 1955. Among his most famous students were George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley and John Dewey. Following his death, trainers adapted his approach for a variety of fields, from swimming to public speaking to juggling.

Today, Hill has 20 students, many of whom are musical performers. However, people in other professions also have sought her guidance and sing the technique’s praises on her website (www.alexanderteachingstudio.com).

“I’ve always known that my chronic back pain was made worse by my poor posture,” wrote Kris Jacobs, executive director of the Jobs Now Coalition based in Ramsey Hill. “When I catch myself unconsciously clenching the muscles in my back or gripping my steering wheel, I’m more and more able to let it fall away. An added pleasure is the compliments I’m getting about my appearance.”

According to Hill, anyone can benefit from the Alexander Technique. “But it works best with people who want to make change,” she said, “who take responsibility for themselves.”

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Learn-to-Skate instructor Andy Ness gives Ryan VanOfferen, 4, some encouraging words before trying a new skill at the Highland Ice Arena. PHOTOS BY ANNE BRANDRUD

An edge on the ice

Highland program marks 10 years of teaching finer points of skating

BY BRIAN JOHNSON

When Zach Parise was drafted in the first round (17th overall) by the New Jersey Devils of the National Hockey League in 2003, the Minneapolis native and University of North Dakota standout had all the talent and drive to become the professional hockey star he is today. But there still was one thing that he needed to work on—his skating.

Zach's father, Minnesota North Stars legend J.P. Parise, explained that there was "a little flaw" in his son's skating technique. He cred-

its Diane Ness, a former U.S. gold medalist in figure and freestyle skating, with helping Zach ditch that glitch.

"He wasn't a great skater," said J.P. Parise in a phone interview. "(Diane) worked with Zach and changed his stride. He has more strength and power now and he has become a very good skater."

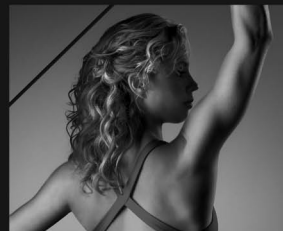
Zach has lots of company under Ness' tutelage. In her more than 35 years as a professional skating coach, Ness has shared her skating knowledge with a host of big-time college

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24 ◀ LEARN-TO-SKATE

and professional players. She is currently the skating coach for the University of Minnesota men's and women's hockey teams and also works with the U.S. women's national hockey team and the New Jersey Devils.

Since 1998, she has also been the director of the Learn-to-Skate program at the Charles M. Schulz-Highland Ice Arena, a Ramsey County initiative that offers instruction for figure skaters, hockey players and pleasure skaters age 4 and older, no matter their skill level. The popular program has fall, winter and spring sessions, with about 300 participants per session. Class levels range from pre-alpha figure skating to advanced hockey.

Ness already had 25 years of teaching behind her by the time the county chose her to direct the Learn-to-Skate program 10 years ago. "I went into it with a 'let's see' attitude," said Ness, who also runs hockey camps through her ProEdge Power business. "It absolutely went off the charts. Ten years later, we're still going strong."

What's the key to the program's success? First, Ness has a staff of talented instructors. Second, there was nothing like Learn-to-Skate in the area when the program debuted. And third, people here love their winter sports.

"Skating is popular in Minnesota, particularly in this area," she said.

A native of North St. Paul, Ness practically grew up on skates. Six of her neighbors were Division I hockey players and "all my dates turned into hockey games," she said with a laugh.

As a figure skater, Ness competed at an elite level until the early 1970s, when she turned her sights to coaching. She ended up teaching a power skating class and got to know strength and conditioning guru Jack Blatherwick.

"He basically was the king," Ness said. "Any-

body who had any questions about conditioning or skating would go to Jack. He got me into the thick of it."

Ness went on to instruct figure skaters and hockey players at all levels of competition, focusing on balance, body positioning and other skating techniques.

The average fan might assume that a professional or college hockey player already knows all there is to know about such a basic skill as skating. However, there's always room for improvement, and in the NHL skating skills are more important than ever because of recent rule changes that reward finesse at the expense of hooking, holding and slashing.

"It's all the little things that make a player great," Ness said. "For instance, going back to Zach Parise, I'll take his first two steps and go over and over how he can get quicker in his first five feet to the puck."

J.P. Parise said local residents should feel fortunate to have the Learn-to-Skate program in their backyard. "Skating is very, very hard to teach," said Parise, who has also asked Ness to assist with the team he coaches, the Des Moines Buccaneers of the USHL. "She can spot little flaws. Her students have to be ready to accept the changes, but she has been wonderful. She certainly knows what she's talking about."

Being a skating coach to the stars is gratifying, but Ness enjoys working with the young novices just as much. "They're there to have fun and get better," she said. "The improvement is huge with the young kids because they have so far to come."

New Learn-to-Skate sessions are being offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays beginning this month at the Highland Ice Arena, 800 S. Snelling Ave. For more information, call 651-770-7324 or visit www.proedgepower.com.



Georgia VanOfferen, 7, glides along the ice with the help of Andy Ness.

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Business Briefs

Inner Strength Fitness, 758 Grand Ave., will offer a beginner spinning class at 3:15 p.m. Sunday, January 11. The cost is \$10. A yoga, wine and cheese event will also be offered from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, January 17. The evening will include 75 minutes of yoga, along with wine, cheese and chocolate. The cost is \$35. To register, call 612-644-1953 or visit www.innerstrengthstudio.com.

St. Paul Snap Fitness has opened at 80 N. Snelling Ave. next to Cheapo Discs. St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman joined owner Ben Cowan and the public in celebrating the grand opening in December. The first Snap Fitness center in the city was able to open after a modification of an old city ordinance was made to accommodate 24-hour, limited service health clubs like Snap.

Fitness Together will host a yearlong series of seminars dealing with health and wellness issues. Owner Randy Zarecki will lead the first seminar, "Fantastically Fit Fundamentals," on Saturday, January 24, at the Fitness Together studio at 1024 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. Gifts and refreshments will be provided at each seminar. The cost is \$25 by January 15 or \$35 at the door. To register, call 612-455-2246.

BodyMind Chiropractic Center will host a free seminar about its upcoming FirstLine Therapy Program, which is designed to help people lower their blood pressure and cholesterol, lose weight, feel better and have more energy without medication. The seminar will be held at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22, at Mississippi Market Co-op, 622 Selby Ave. To register, call 651-293-1497.

Fein Violins, 1850 Grand Ave., has expanded into 500 square feet of space above the street-level storefront. The addition, which features hardwood floors and improved acoustics, will be available to musicians trying out new instruments.

Sarah Ernhart, owner of Sarah Beth Photography in Ramsey Hill, took the top prize in the humor category of the 2008 Outstanding Dog Photo contest sponsored by "Pampered Puppy," an online magazine devoted to dogs. There were six first-place winners and 20 honorable mentions among the 3,500 photos entered in the contest. A second photo by Ernhart received honorable mention.

Cemstone, a Mendota Heights concrete manufacturer, has received eight first-place awards from the Aggregate & Ready Mix Association of Minnesota, including Project of the Year for its work on the new I-35W bridge.

The University Avenue Business Association will meet from 7:45 to 9:00 a.m. Thursday, January 15, at Model Cities, 849 University Ave. The discussion at the meeting will center on the next steps in securing assistance for University Avenue small businesses that will be affected by the Central Corridor light-rail line. Contact Linda Winsor at linda@universityavenuebiz.com or 651-641-0334.

Steven Press and **Jody Cohen Press**, Highland Park residents and attorneys of the Press Law Office, have moved their law firm to the Associated Bank Building, 5353 Wayzata Blvd., St. Louis

Park. The firm's principal practice areas are estate and business planning, probate, guardianship and commercial collections. Steven Press also is a Ramsey County Conciliation Court referee.

Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli will open its new store with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, January 8, at 2823 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis. The \$10.5 million project, funded in part by member investments, makes Seward only the second grocery store in Minnesota and third in the nation to receive LEED gold certification for its energy-saving features. The new store is nearly twice the size of the previous store, but almost no increase in energy use is projected because of the green features that were incorporated into the new building's design.

Lund Food Holdings has signed a long-term lease to operate a supermarket in the proposed Penfield development at 10th and Robert streets in downtown St. Paul. The approximately 30,000-square-foot supermarket will occupy the main level of the \$88 million development, which also is expected to include a 208-unit apartment complex and a 170-room Hyatt Place Select Service hotel. Construction is slated to begin next fall and be finished in 2011.

Drs. Dennis Killian and Frank Milnar of Killian, Milnar & Associates recently announced that **Dr. David Kubes** and the staff of Kubes Dental Care of St. Paul have joined their dental office at 120 N. Snelling Ave. Killian, Milnar & Associates provides family, cosmetic and sedation dentistry services in St. Paul as well as at Arden Dental Associates in Blaine.

~ Advertisement

Low Vision Doctors Help Legally Blind to See

Members of the *International Academy of Low Vision Specialists* help those with macular degeneration to keep reading and driving.

By **Elena Lombardi**
Freelance Writer

Jackson, New Jersey Donald Paquette, 72, a former assessor from Anaheim, California thought that his driving days were over. "I could not read the street signs soon enough and I couldn't pass the vision test at the DMV office."

Gonzalo Garcia, 74, Albuquerque, New Mexico, wanted to be able to read and write more easily. He wanted to see the nails and screws when he tried to use them in home repairs. He wanted see his grandchildren singing in the church choir. But he thought those days were over when he was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration.

Neither Donald nor Gonzalo knew that a low vision optometrist could help with some of those issues.

"In New Jersey, Bioptic Telescopic Glasses can be used to pass the vision test for driving", says Dr. Chris Palmer,

optometrist in Minneapolis, Mn. "This can allow some with conditions like macular degeneration to continue driving".

"Amazing!" says Donald. "I can read the street signs twice as far as I did before and even see the television better!" Mr. Paquette received bioptic telescopic glasses and also special prismatic reading glasses for easier newspaper reading.

People don't know that there are doctors who are very experienced in low vision care. "Not many doctors like to work with people who are often upset and anxious" says Dr. Palmer, who traveled to California for special training recently. "I love to see their faces light up when they see again."

Macular Degeneration is the most common eye disease among the senior population. As many as 25% of those over 65 have some degree of degeneration. The macula is one small part of the entire retina, but it is the most sensitive

and gives us sharp images.

When it degenerates, ARMD leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision making it impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver's vision test.

The experts do not know what causes macular degeneration. But major factors include UV light from the sun, smoking, aging, and improper nutrition.

Vitamins can help. The results of two studies, AREDS and LAST demonstrated a lowered risk of progression by about 25% when treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins.

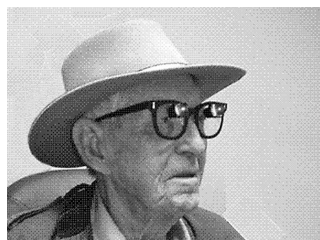
A new, proprietary supplement based on the scientific studies is available from these doctors. A very powerful formulation, Macula Therapy Formula is available from Dr. Palmer's office.

Nine out of ten people who have macular degeneration have the dry type. There is no medical treatment ex-

cept for vitamins. The wet type is more aggressive and results in more dramatic vision loss. It involves leaky blood vessels that sometimes can be sealed with hot or cold laser. Newer treatments, such as Macugen, Lucentis and Avastin are injections to prevent leakage.

"Our job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning," says Dr. Palmer. "Whether it's driving, reading, watching television, seeing faces, playing bridge...we work with whatever is on the persons 'wish list'."

"Telescopic glasses usually cost over \$2000", says Dr. Palmer, "especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass". Reading glasses start at \$500 and hand magnifiers under \$100. Every case is different because people have different levels of vision and different desires.



RICHARD DOUGHERTY WITH TELESCOPE GLASSES

Richard Dougherty, 89, of Palmdale, California came to Dr. Shuldiner in June, 2003. He has returned every two years to have the DMV vision report form filled out to keep driving. Dr. Shuldiner prescribed bioptic telescopic glasses to read signs and see traffic lights farther away in June, 2003.

At his visit on March 3, 2007, Mr. Dougherty said "The telescopic glasses keep getting better and better!". "They are actually better, by far, than the day I got them. The doctor is a genius! Definitely worth the \$2300 I paid for them". On his visit this past March, Mr. Dougherty reported that the special prismatic reading glasses were still working fine.

The following are some of the very experienced doctors working with low vision patients. They are members of the International Academy of Low Vision Specialists and are happy to speak with you:

Chris Palmer, OD Minnesota	888 882 2040	Brian Saunders, OD Georgia	877 948 7784
Yanna Nachtigal, OD Pennsylvania	877 523 2020	Marc Gannon, OD, FAAO Florida	866 942 2020
Randolph Kinkade, OD Connecticut	800 756 0766	Ross Cusic, OD Washington	877 823 2020
Richard Shuldiner, OD, FAAO Southern California	888 610 2020	Sheldon Smith, OD Michigan	877 677 2020
David Armstrong, OD Virginia	866 321 2030	Larry Chism, OD Texas	888 243 2020

The Kiosk

Wednesday/January 7

THE SUMMIT HILL MOMS (Moms Offering Moms Support) Club will meet at 9:30 this morning. The club provides daytime activities and support for mothers who are raising their children full- or part-time. Call 651-699-8522.

THE 2009 KLONDIKE KATE will be chosen during a contest that begins at 6:30 this evening at the Prom Center in Oakdale. Contestants will be judged on musical performance, song choice, vocal abilities, costuming, crowd appeal and authenticity in portraying the real-life character, Klondike Kate. Guests who donate non-perishable food items or cash will receive a free Klondike Kate trading card. Admission is 10 in advance and \$15 at the door (\$13 with a Winter Carnival button). Call 651-289-KATE or visit www.klondikekates.org.

Thursday/January 8

A WORLD WAR II HISTORY Roundtable on "The Battle for Moscow" will take place at 7:00 this evening at historic Fort Snelling. Andrew Nagorski, author of *The Greatest Battle*, will speak on why Hitler's mistakes eventually trumped those of Stalin's and why Germany eventually lost the war. Admission is \$5.00 or free for students. Call 612-726-1171.

Saturday/January 10

THE MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL Chronic Fatigue Syndrome support group will meet at 2:00 this afternoon at the Nokomis Library, 5100 34th Ave. S., Minneapolis. Register at empowerhealth@live.com or visit <http://cfs.meetup.com/102/> for future meeting dates and locations.

THE 14TH ANNUAL WINTER TRAILS event will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at Fort Snelling State Park. Children and adults will get a chance to try snowshoeing for free. Visit www.wintertrails.org for call 651-635-0211.

WORKSHOPS ON RAISING vegetables in a Minnesota winter will be held from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. today at Hamline University. The workshops will cover such topics as the best vegetable varieties to grow in the winter and the potential income of winter greenhouse vegetable production. Each workshop will cover the same topics; a multiple language translation will be provided during the second session. At noon, a lunch featuring locally produced foods will be provided. The fee is \$15, or free for members of the Land Stewardship Project and the Minnesota Food Association. Contact Amy Bacigalupo at 320-269-2105 or amyb@landstewardshipproject.org.



Jenna Marcolina, 6, warmed up by the fire during a frosty New Year's Eve celebration that included skating on a frozen pond at Fort Snelling State Park. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Tuesday/January 13

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA HOUSE, 943 W. 7th St., will hold a conversational salon from 6:30 to 8:30 this evening. The film *Soldiers of Conscience: To Kill or not to Kill* will be shown. The salon is free, but donations are encouraged for the program and treats. Call 651-227-3228.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 11:30 this morning in the parking lot of 1800 Graham Avenue. Call 651-646-6421.

Wednesday/January 14

THE LONGFELLOW GARDEN CLUB will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 this evening at Epworth United Methodist Church, 3207 37th Ave. S., Minneapolis. Come plan next spring's garden, peruse seed and tool catalogues, and swap favorite seeds for planting. There also will be a gardening book exchange. Admission is free.

Thursday/January 15

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

"SHOPPING THE TWIN CITIES Like a Pro" will be offered at 6:30 this evening at the Temple of Aaron, 616 S. Mississippi River Blvd. The discussion will be led by Allison Kaplan, a *Pioneer Press* columnist and host of "Shop Girls" on FM107.1. The cost is \$8.00, which includes a light dinner. Send check payable to Temple of Aaron Sisterhood by January 8 to Marcia Taple, 1833 Eagle Ridge Drive, #4, Mendota Heights, MN 55118. Call 651-688-3030.

Saturday/January 17

A HISTORY DAY KICKOFF and library open house will take place from 9:00 a.m. to noon today at the Minnesota Historical Society Library 345 W. Kellogg Blvd.

Students are invited to join the History Day and library staff for help in getting started on Minnesota History Day projects. Admission is free. Call 651-259-3300.

FREE KNITTING LESSONS will be offered from 10:30 to 11:30 this morning and on January 24 and February 7 at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. The lessons are geared for those 13 and older. Participants will knit a scarf and all materials will be provided free. Call 651-695-3700.

Sunday/January 18

URBAN EXPEDITION will kick off a new season with a focus on Germany from 1:00 to 3:00 this afternoon at Landmark Center. German music, dance, food, arts, crafts and lore will be on the program. Admission is free. The public is encouraged to bring nonperishable donations for the food shelf. Call 651-292-3276.

Monday/January 19

THE GARDEN CLUB OF RAMSEY County will meet at 7:25 this evening at the Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Steve Gonzalez will speak on growing orchids at home. Admission is free. Visit www.ramseygardeners.org.

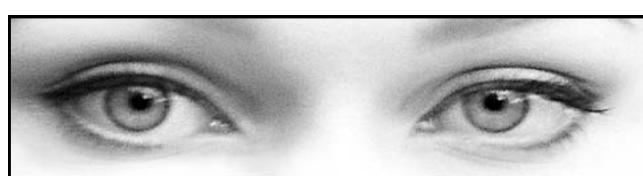
Tuesday/January 20

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA HOUSE, 943 W. 7th St., will hold a conversational salon from 6:30 to 8:30 this evening. On President Barack Obama's inauguration night, salon-goers will send a postcard to the nation's new leader and let him know what they would like him to do. Postcards will be provided. The salon is free, but donations are encouraged for the program and treats. Call 651-227-3228.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 7:30 this evening in the O'Shaughnessy auditorium lot at the College of St. Catherine (enter off Fairview Avenue). Call 651-646-6421.

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. In the summer of 1872, Anna Ramsey went on a shopping spree in New York City and purchased nearly two freight cars filled with furnishings for her St. Paul mansion. 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.



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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.

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On the Town

Poe and the pantomime Esau celebrates a literary genius on 200th anniversary of his birth

BY JUDY WOODWARD

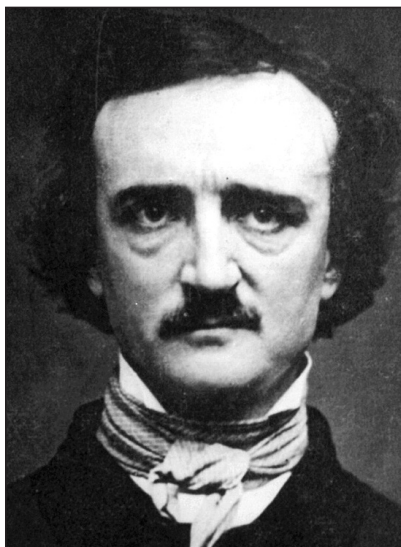
Jake Esau of Macalester-Groveland first read the writings of Edgar Allan Poe as an 8-year-old. That was more than half a century ago, when Poe was considered an author for adults only. But Esau was a precocious youngster—so precocious that the staff at St. Paul's Riverview Library were forever redirecting him to what they considered the more suitable books in the children's area of the library.

Fat chance. Esau immediately bonded with Poe, and six decades later he and the 19th-century American author of such stories as "The Masque of the Red Death" are still a team. In the coming week, Esau will mark the 200th anniversary of Poe's birth with eight dramatic readings from the man who virtually invented the horror story.

In his one-man show, Esau portrays Poe's editor, Nathaniel Parker Willis, who mounts the stage to defend the reputation and honor of the recently deceased author against the attacks of the Reverend Rufus Wilmot Griswold. In the wake of Poe's death in 1849, Esau said, Griswold published a "slandorous obituary" that effectively sealed Poe's reputation as a drunk, drug addict and sexual libertine who went so far as to marry his own 13-year-old cousin. According to Esau, Griswold's piece was "the ultimate cheap shot."

Esau has been portraying Poe on stage since 1979. In the early years, he appeared as Poe himself, but when a critic described him as looking more like Abe Lincoln than Poe, he made some modifications.

"Poe can be described as larger than life," Esau said, "but physically he was a short man. I, on the other hand, am over 6 feet tall." Fortunately, "there's an amazing resemblance between me and Willis," he added.



Edgar Allan Poe.

Esau said his show is suitable for adults and children age 8 and older. Along with several of Poe's stories, he recites some of Poe's more popular poems, including "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee."

"I've stopped doing (Poe's story) 'The Tell-Tale Heart,'" Esau said. "It's so intense that kids sometimes had to be taken out of the room." What sent the young listeners over the edge was the way Esau portrayed the main character's descent into madness. Esau would pantomime a man fighting the confines of a straitjacket. Working one arm free, he would spin around, thrust his index finger at someone in the audience and intone Poe's classic line, "But, you think me mad?"

Esau began his professional career as a school teacher, but at the age of 25 he took up acting. In 1971 he saw a television special starring Vincent Price in "The Pit and the Pendulum" and three other classic Poe tales. "I'd like to do that," he remembers thinking to himself, and after eight years of research and preparation, he did.

Since then he has generally been able to support himself as a character actor. "In fallow periods, I do anything that requires a phone voice," he said. Although he performs from time to time with an ensemble,

Esau always comes back to the one-man show. "It's gratifying to be able to entertain an audience all by yourself," he said.

Esau said he probably knows Poe almost as well as the real Willis did. "My approach to acting is to internalize the character," he said. "When I research them, I can almost do a personality meld with a character, but not for a moment do I forget who I am."

Though Poe is clearly Esau's favorite, he is far from his only dramatic subject. "The tribute to Edgar Allan Poe was my first show," he said, "but I have about 30 other shows on literary and historical themes."



Jake Esau portrays Edgar Allan Poe contemporary Nathaniel Parker Willis in a dramatic celebration of Poe's literary genius. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Esau's repertoire runs from the Ancient Greek Aesop to a variety of Biblical figures to Sherlock Holmes, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain. He also does a holiday show featuring the works of Hans Christian Andersen. "I portray the Danny Kaye version of Andersen," he said, referring to the 1952 movie. A more historically accurate version of the notoriously ill at ease Danish author "wouldn't go over," he said.

Esau will present his tribute to Poe at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 6, at the Wentworth Library in West St. Paul; 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 7, at the Hamline-Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave.; 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 8, at the St. Anthony Park Library, 2245 Como Ave.; 3:30 p.m. Friday, January 9, at the Rondo

Library, 461 N. Dale St.; 1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 10, at the Sun Ray Library, 2105 Wilson Ave.; 7:00 p.m. Monday, January 12, at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy.; 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, at the Riverview Library, 1 E. George St.; and 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 14, at the Hayden Heights Library, 1456 White Bear Ave. Admission to all performances is free and open to all.

In his show, Esau said, he strives "to keep the integrity and flavor of Poe's tales, but I also try to adapt Poe's prose to the modern attention span. Kids have short attention spans. The mission is to keep them interested."

For more information, call the St. Paul Public Library at 651-266-7000.

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On the Town Briefly

Books

The Central Library Book Club will discuss *Spot of Bother* by Mark Haddon on January 8. The club meets at 10:30 a.m. on the second Thursday of the month in the fourth floor Community Room at 90 W. 4th St. Admission is free and open to all. For information, call 651-266-7000, extension 5.

"Winter Jackets," a new reading program for adults, is being offered through the end of February at all St. Paul Public Library branches. Those who complete the reading of any three books can win a free coffee mug while supplies last. Call 651-266-7000.

Historian Steve Trimble will discuss his recent book, *Historic Photos of St. Paul*, in a free program at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11, at St. Paul's Central Library, 90 W. 4th St. Call 651-266-7000, extension 5.

Fiction on a Stick, 24 stories that challenge assumptions about what it means to be a Minnesotan, will be featured in a free reading at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, January 11, at Magers & Quinn bookstore, 3038 Hennepin Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Contributors Sarah Stonich, Steve Lang, Dominic Saucedo and Anastasia Faunce will take part on that date. Contributors Jacey Choy, John Reimringer and Ethan Rutherford will read in a free program at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 20, at Micawber's bookstore, 2238 Carter Ave.

Author Benoit Denizet-Lewis will read from *American Anonymous: Eight Addicts in Search of a Life* in a free program beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 13, at Common Good Books, 165 N. Western Ave.. Call 651-225-8989.

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 Julie Kramer from *Stalking Susan*, January 15; John Coy and Julie Schumacher from their young adult novels, *Box Out* and *Black Box*, respectively, January 22; poet and memoirist David Mura from his debut novel, *Famous Suicides of the Japanese Empire*, February 5; Nora Murphy from *Knitting the Threads of Time*, February 12; and poets James Cihlar and William Reichard, February 19. Coffee and cookies will be served. Call 651-222-3242.



Dr. Henry Jekyll (Steve Hendrickson, right) and his alter ego, Mr. Edward Hyde (Peter Christian Hansen), seduce Elizabeth Ann Jelkes (Emily Gunyou Halaas) in Park Square Theatre's production of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Playwright Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story about a split personality will be staged January 16 through February 8 at 20 W. 7th Place. Call 651-291-7005. PETRONELLA YTSMA

Shrink Your Lawn: Design Ideas for Any Landscape will be introduced by author Evelyn Hadden from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Friday January 16, at Terrace Horticultural Books, 503 St. Clair Ave. Light refreshments will be served and a prize drawing held for a free copy of the book. Call 651-222-5536.

Growing Up White, a new memoir by Minneapolis Public Schools teacher Julie Landsman, will be discussed by the author in a free program at 7:00 p.m. Friday, January 16, at the Loft, 1011 Washington Ave. S. in Minneapolis. In the book, Landsman discloses her sense of privilege as a white person, the mistakes she made in her classroom and the lessons she learned from them. For information, call 612-215-2575.

Six members of the 42nd Street Irregulars writing group, authors of the anthology *Charlotte's Table*, will read at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 20, at the University Club, 420 Summit Ave. Taking part in the free program will be Judith Coggins, Rick Fournier, Roger Jones, Elizabeth Lofgren, Joyce Mellstrom and Diane Pecoraro. Call 612-871-4444.

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.

Dance

Ballet Hispanico will celebrate Latin American culture past and present on Sunday, January 11, at the Ordway. The 7:00 p.m. program will feature "Palladium Suite," with choreography reminiscent of the 1950s New York City jazz scene; and "Ritmo y Ruido," an urban prowler by Tony Award-winning choreographer Ann Reinking set to pulsing hip-hop and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Tickets are \$25-\$35. Ballet Hispanico company members will conduct a social dance class and party from 8:00 p.m. to midnight Saturday, January 11, at Cinema Ballroom, 1560 St. Clair Ave. Admission is \$15, \$10 for students. Package deals with the Ordway

show are available for \$30, \$22 for students. For information, call 651-224-4222.

Exhibits

"Vatican Splendors," documents, art and historical objects illustrating the Catholic Church's 2,000-year impact on history and culture, is on view through January 19 at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Tickets are \$20, \$17 for seniors and students, \$13 for children ages 6-12. Call 651-989-5151.

"The Campaign Trail," recent and historical images of national and local political campaigns by some of Minnesota's best photographers, are being displayed through February 22 at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Included are photos of the 1984 Mondale campaign by Tom Arndt, Paul Wellstone's last days on the campaign trail by Terry Gydesen and the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul. Admission is \$8.00, \$6.00 for seniors and students, and \$5.00 for children ages 6-17. For information, call 651-297-2555

"Nature: Provocations, Reflections, Abstractions," a variety of works by the 16 members of the Rain Collective, will open with a public reception from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Friday, January 9, at the Vine Arts Center, 2637 27th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The show will continue through February 28. Call 612-728-5745.

"Jews Of Color: In Color," photos of small Jewish communities around the world that challenge stereotypes of the Jewish people, will open with a public reception at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11, at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. Bryan Schwartz, executive director of the sponsoring organization Scattered Among the Nations will speak. The photos will remain on view through February. Call 651-698-0751.

"The Green House: New Designs in Sustainable Architecture," featuring photos and drawings of 22 single- and multi-family projects around the world documenting the emergence of a new brand of sustainable building, will be displayed from January 12 through March 8 at the HGA Gallery in the University of Minnesota's Rapson Hall, 89

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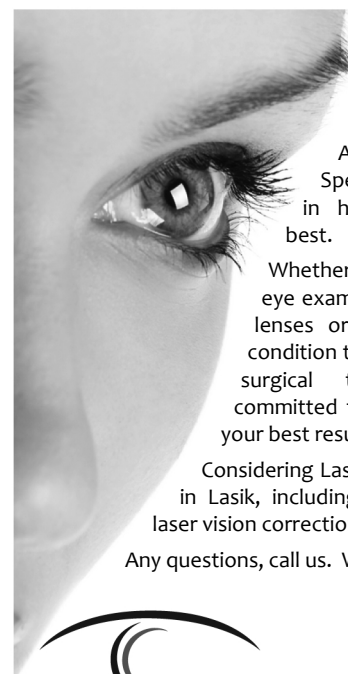
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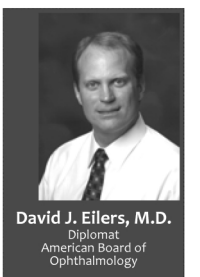
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Pam Davis' "The Tree of Inspiration" will be among scores of fiber works by more than 100 member-artists displayed from January 16 through February 21 at the Textile Center, 3000 University Ave. SE. in Minneapolis. The exhibit "A Common Thread" will open with a reception beginning at 6:00 p.m. Friday, January 16. For information, call 612-436-0464.

Church St. SE. in Minneapolis. The projects address the challenges of desert, waterside, mountainside, tropical, suburban and urban locales. Admission is free.

"Restful Places," an exhibit of finely crafted cremation urns and objects, will be displayed from January 16 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. Week-long workshops in urn making will be offered in conjunction with the show by St. Paul artist Jim Sannerud. Call 651-484-9094.

"Minnesota Made," featuring bronze sculpture by Tom Christiansen, paintings by Francene Christianson and ceramics by Andrea Leila, will be displayed from January 17 through February 15 at the Grand Hand Gallery, 619 Grand Ave. An opening reception with refreshments will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 17. Admission is free. Call 651-312-1122.

Music

The Bell' Alma Duo, featuring Michele Frisch on flute and Kathy Kienzle on harp, will present a free concert at noon on Wednesday, January 7 at the St. Paul Conservatory of Music, 29 E. Exchange St. They will perform melodies from Italian and French operas, arrangements composed especially for them as original works. Coffee and bagels will be served at the post-concert reception. Call 651-224-2205 extension.

The Chamber Orchestra of Europe (COE) will join the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra on January 8-11 at the Ordway in the opening week of the four-week SPCO International Chamber Orchestra Festival. Thursday's 8:00 p.m. performance will feature the SPCO in Alban Berg's Chamber Concerto for Piano, Violin, and 13 Wind Instruments and the COE in Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence for String Orchestra. At 10:30 a.m. Friday at the Ordway, the SPCO will play Berg's Chamber Concerto and Mozart's Serenade No. 10 in B-flat for Winds. Shows at 8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday will feature the two chamber orchestras in Michael Tippett's Concerto for Double String Orchestra, Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis, and Béla Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta. An all-COE concert will close out the week at 2:00 p.m. Sunday at Bethel University's Great Hall with

Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony in C Minor and Prelude and Scherzo for Strings and Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence for String Orchestra. Tickets are \$10-\$59 for adults, \$5.00 for children. Appearing with the SPCO in subsequent weeks will be the London Sinfonietta, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Call 651-291-1144.

The Minnesota Sinfonia will present the world premiere of Stephen Danken's Great Winter Festival Overture in a free concert on Friday, January 9. The program also features Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 in A Major ("Italian") and Dvorak's Violin Concerto in A Minor with violinist Kyoko Takezawa. The music will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Metropolitan State University, 700 E. 7th St.

The Minnesota Boychoir will perform from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11, in the Capitol Concourse of the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. The concert is free with museum admission. For information, call 651-259-3000.

The chorale of the St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity will perform Lessons and Carols for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in a free concert at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, January 11, at St. Mary's Chapel, 2260 Summit Ave. Organist Michelle Plombon, guitarist Christopher Kachian and flutist Wendy Barton Silhavy will accompany the chorale in carols and hymns for the season, including works by Bach, de Victoria and Rutter. A reception will follow. Call 651-962-5050.

The Australian-bred heavy metal band AC/DC will return to the Xcel Energy Center at 7:30 p.m. Monday, January 19, with an encore presentation in their "Black Ice" world tour, named for their latest studio album. Tickets at \$91.50 are available at the Xcel or by calling Ticketmaster at 651-989-5151.

Theater

All I Want for Christmas is \$700 Billion, a satirical look at a holiday season pockmarked with mad traditions, traumatic work parties and eccentric families, is being performed through January 31 at the Brave New Workshop, 2605 Hennepin Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Show times are 8:00 and 10:30 p.m. Fridays and 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets are \$25 and \$27. Call 612-332-6620.

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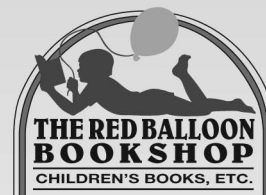
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drama about deaf, mute and blind Helen Keller of Tusculumbia, Alabama, and the Irish woman who rescued her from a dark and tortured existence, will be performed January 8 through February 21 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. A coproduction with Torch Theatre, it stars Ivey award-winning actor Stacia Rice. Shows are scheduled mornings, afternoons and evenings. Tickets are \$25-\$30 with discounts for students and seniors. Call 651-292-4323.

Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1981, will be read on Friday, January 9, in a free program sponsored by the Lex-Ham Community Theater. The play tells of the three Magrath sisters of Hazelhurst, Mississippi, who pull together when one of them is arrested for shooting her husband. The program will open at 6:30 p.m. with a potluck supper at 1184 Portland Ave. No registration is necessary. Just bring some food to share and a copy of the play if possible. Call 651-644-3366.

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 7-28, 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 "The Science of the Segway Human Transporter" with entrepreneur Bill Neuenschwander at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 10; author John Coy and *Two Old Potatoes and Me*, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, January 17; author Ellen Levine and *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*, 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 17; author-illustrator Mo Willems and *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, 7:00 p.m. Thursday, January 22. Call 651-224-8320.

"Hmong at Heart," a journey into the history and traditions of the Hmong people, is being offered through January 19 at the Minnesota Children's Museum, 7th and Wabasha streets. The interactive exhibit re-creates a village in Laos, a refugee camp in Thailand and a typical Hmong-American home, offering a window into the everyday lives of the Hmong people. Visitors can use



The Ice Fishing Play, Kevin Kling's meditation on love, loss and a Minnesota winter, will be performed January 9 through February 1 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Matt Erkel (left) stars as Ron, the solitary sportsman who in an icehouse in the middle of a frozen lake is visited by a host of characters, including his wife, his brother, the goofy bait-shop owner, even a couple of missionaries. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday. Kling will appear at the postperformance discussion on January 18. Tickets are \$20. For reservations, call 612-333-3010.

ACT ONE, TOO

colored beads to create Hmong art, examine Hmong artifacts, learn everyday Hmong phrases, plan how to plant 50 acres of crops, and watch a video on the history and family life of a Hmong-American farm family. Admission is \$7.95. Call 651-225-6000.

Barnes & Noble, 2080 Ford Pkwy., invites youngsters to engage in crafts and listen to a story beginning at 10:00 a.m. Thursdays and 7:00 p.m. Fridays. Call 651-690-9443.

"Saturday Live!" free entertainment for children at 11:15 a.m. Saturdays at St. Paul's Central Library, 90 W. 4th St., will feature storyteller Carla Vogel and klezmer musician Judith Eisner on January 10, a variety show by A Touch of Magic on January 17, magician Star Michaelina on January 24, and the music, puppetry and stories of Safari Greg on January 31.

"Paw Pals" Catherine Roach and her dog Taylor will read with children ages 6-11 in

a free program on Saturday, January 10, at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Fifteen-minute sessions are available between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. Call 651-695-3700.

The Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., will show family movies at 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays, January 10 and 24, February 7 and 12, and March 7 and 21. The library will provide treats. Families are invited to bring pillows to sit on. Call 651-642-0385.

Stories, finger plays, rhymes and songs are offered at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays in the children's area at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Children of all ages are invited to take part in the free program.

The Gruffalo, a monstrously fun musical adaptation of the award-winning picture book, will be performed January 16 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 the terrifying Gruffalo. For show times and tickets, priced from \$20-\$35, \$14-\$29 for children and seniors, call 612-874-0400.

Traditional German music, dance, arts and crafts will be featured in a free program from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sunday, January 18, at Landmark Center.

Film

Sasa!, a documentary on the widespread problems of HIV/AIDS infection and violence among African women, will be shown at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 14, at the Rice Street Library, 1011 Rice St. The free screening will be followed by a discussion led by Advocates for Human Rights attorney Mary C. Ellison and Linda Harris of Amnesty International. Call 651-222-3242.

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, will be screened from January 9 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 many ways the river has changed since they last traversed its whitewater and what these changes mean for water worldwide. Tickets are \$7.50, \$6.50 for students and seniors. Call 651-221-9444.

Et cetera

The Macalester Festival Chorale will hold auditions on January 19-21 for singers interested in joining this ensemble of the college's faculty, staff and neighbors. Rehearsals will be held from 7:30-9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays in preparation for an April 25 concert in Macalester's Janet Wallace Concert Hall. For information and an audition appointment, contact erogers2@macalester.edu and put "festival chorale" in the subject line.

Open sessions in figure drawing are available to aspiring artists from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Saturdays from January 24 through May 9 (no session on March 21) in the Drawing Studio of the College of Visual Arts, 173 N. Western Ave. The cost is \$10 per session. Children under 18 years of age must fill out a permission form. Visit www.cva.edu or contact Carmen at charris@cva.edu.

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Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Football in the desert is...well...different

I was on vacation with friends in southern Nevada when I was asked what I thought about getting up at 7:00 a.m. and driving three hours on a Sunday morning to Phoenix to watch the Minnesota Vikings take on the Arizona Cardinals. I originally viewed the notion with skepticism. First of all, my passion for the professional game has waned a bit, no doubt partly because my hometown team—the Detroit Lions—failed to win a single game this season. Second, I had made a couple of visits in recent years to see the Vikings play in the Metrodome and was rewarded for the effort with a splitting headache because of the deafening din. Third, there was the dubious prospect of getting up at an ungodly hour to drive past 1,000 cacti to watch the freaking Cardinals play. What kind of a vacation is that?

Still, I'm an amenable sort. My companions included the wife, a tepid football fan at best, and Doreen and Mike Welter, native Minnesotans who had wisely moved to Las Vegas 20 years ago. Mike, a former Highland Park gridder, and Doreen remain avid Vikings fans and joining them would be a chance to see an NFL game played outdoors—sort of. So it was that I found myself rolling along the Arizona countryside en route to watch a December football game in the desert.

As it turned out, I was glad I made the trip. As I settled back in my seat on the return trip, I reflected on the fact that professional football teams no longer seem content to just play a game on Sunday. They seem intent on making the game an experience in which the determination of the final score is just one of the attractions.

This is not nearly as easy to pull off at the Metrodome. Though some inventive fans do come early for games and tailgate on nearby street-level parking lots, downtown Minneapolis doesn't lend itself to much pre- and postgame frivolity. Tailgating in a four-story ramp isn't my idea of fun. And though the Metrodome may be a perfectly acceptable football facility, the cavernous space beneath its Teflon tent only inspires one thing: artificial noise.

Things are a different in Cardinal land. First of all, there's plenty of room for outdoor tailgating. True, we ended up parking about a mile away and had to hike through the lot to the stadium, but that was OK because we were in a huge asphalt expanse just off a main road and the price was right: free. (After the game, we snuck out a back entrance and were on a major highway in minutes. Try doing that when you exit the Metrodome.)

As we approached the multi-purpose University of Phoenix Stadium, we were treated to some of the most exuberant tailgating we'd ever witnessed. Though chilly by Phoenix's standards, the temperature was in the 50s—warm enough for people to stretch out and be creative.

Many Phoenix fans had arrived early to set up shop. You don't see a lot of portable TVs in downtown Minneapolis parking lots on game days and in my experience it was unique to see a portable satellite hooked to the edge of a trailer. There were three of the latter in the parking lot next to the Arizona stadium. There also were several pickup football games being played in large side lots near the stadium and the hockey arena across the street from it.

For years, the sideshows in the parking lots were about the only things of interest to Phoenix football fans. However, this year things were a bit different. The Cardinals climbed to rare heights by winning their division and hosting a playoff game for the first time since 1947 when the franchise was still located in Chicago.

WRIGHT CALL ► 34



Central's Samantha Robinson-Ricks, right, tussles for the ball with Eastview's Taylor Cullers as teammate Theairra Taylor rushes in at left during the Hopkins tournament over the holiday break. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Holding their own

Though not the juggernaut of champions past, Central still ranks among state's top girls' teams

BY BILL WAGNER

The Central High School girls' basketball team still has a bit of work to do if it plans to win three state Class AAAA titles in a row. Over the past two seasons, the Minutemen lost a total of only four games and could beat their opponents by putting any combination of 10 starters on the floor. This season, the team is not as dominant, having compiled a 7-3 record as 2008 came to a close.

Central may no longer be 10 or more deep on its roster, and coach Willie Taylor said the team has yet to play up to expectations on both offense and defense. Then again, the Minutemen remain one of the top-rated squads in the metro area, and when they settle down, Taylor believes this year's squad will be good if not great.

"To have a shot at the state tournament we'll need to improve," he said, "but I think that there are 15-20 teams (in Class AAAA) within 10 points of each other, and that includes our team."

The season started off on an encouraging note for the Minutemen as they blasted Rosemount by nearly 30 points and made a good run against Centennial, ranked No. 1 in the state at the time, before losing. Central also beat highly ranked New Prague, largely on the superlative performance of freshman point guard Jen'Von'Ta Hill.

Taylor was probably almost as happy with the loss to Centennial as he would have been with a victory. "After that game my expectations got higher," he said.

However, at other times, he has been reminded of how much work has yet to be done. Central finished with a 1-2 record at the Hopkins tournament over the holiday break, beating Grand Rapids but coming up short against Eden Prairie and Eastview. Taylor said the team's overall performance in the tournament was "somewhat of a disappointment," despite Central managing to beat Grand Rapids by 16 points. The Minutemen

"We really have only two kids with extensive varsity experience," said coach Willie Taylor.

do not have the same formidable inside game that they did in the past two years and are relying more on outside shooting and a full-court pressure defense.

Central lost some talented players from last season—including Kiara Buford, who is now playing for the University of Minnesota—and Taylor has had to integrate some new pieces into the lineup. "We really have only two kids with extensive varsity experience," he said.

However, those two seniors—shooting guard Theairra Taylor and point guard Kyana Johnson—do a lot in making Central a solid team. The 5-foot-9 Taylor, who has already committed to Iowa for next season, has settled nicely into a leadership role after being a key

part of two state champion teams. She has a knack for hitting clutch shots and logged 24 points in the loss to Eastview.

"She's a complete player," said coach Taylor (no relation). "She averages about 23 points, nine rebounds and five steals per game. She's versatile and can play other positions on the floor for us."

The 5-foot-6 Johnson has been doing a good job quarterbacking the Central offense. When the ball is in her hands, the coach knows there is little chance for anything bad to happen. "She dishes the ball well and knows how to break down the defense," Taylor said.

The only other starter with varsity experience is 5-foot-10 senior forward Samantha Robinson-Ricks. She saw a little action last year and has settled in this season, compiling 14 points per contest.

Taylor noted that Robinson-Ricks is benefiting greatly from the increased playing time. Ditto for 5-foot-6 point guard Hill, who is averaging 17 points per game. "She's very, very good," Taylor said of Hill. "She plays smart ball. She takes the ball to the hoop. She makes the difference between us being an average team and a good team."

The other starter is 6-foot senior center Catavia Jones. Taylor likes her athleticism and the improvement she has shown with every game. Jones has contributed six rebounds per contest and Taylor hopes by the end of the season she will have perfected her offensive moves.

The first player off the bench has been 5-foot-8 senior guard Megan Tate, a

CENTRAL GIRLS ► 35

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33◀ WRIGHT CALL

Arizona fans still haven't figured out how to celebrate this good fortune. There was no half-crazed mascot jumping up and down, imploring the crowd to cough up a lung while welcoming their hometown heroes. Accordingly, the cheering seemed a bit more forced when the locals took to the field prior to the kickoff.

But there were other distractions. Most fans were paying rapt attention to a pair of enormous scoreboards at either end of the stadium that were showing highlights from the other games in the league. In Section 416 where we were, many people were taking notes, apparently computing the points earned by their fantasy football teams.

On the field, the Vikings zipped out to a 21-0 lead in the first quarter en route to a 35-14 thumping that may have reminded the longtime Cardinal fans of the past six decades or so of their franchise's football fortunes. The locals' reaction to the Viking onslaught was, for the most part, to sit and mutter quietly as the 20,000 or so Minnesota fans on hand danced, clapped, hooted and generally had a grand old time. Since there were few replays of note for the locals to watch, the scoreboards continued to show highlights and stats from the other games around the league. The locals seemed content to have any distractions from watching Tarvaris Jackson run and throw at his pleasure.

The lopsided score left me time to muse on my surroundings.

The University of Phoenix Stadium is one of those nifty arenas with a hole in the roof that spans the playing field when the weather is clement. On this sunny Sunday, the hole was open for all to see the sky. It didn't seem like a very big hole at first. However, being semi-outdoors made all the difference in the world. Though there was always something going on, you could actually hold a conversation with your seatmates throughout the contest. In the NFL, silence is not golden. It's forbidden. But when you're not under a big top, it doesn't matter as much.

Though it cost \$455 million to build, the Phoenix stadium is a simple thing of beauty. And though it has hosted Super Bowls, it was built with more than football in mind. (Indeed, the Gophers' men's basketball team played a game there

six days after the Vikings' visit.) That should serve as a suggestion should the Vikings ever decide to pony up the dough to build their own place.

There were the usual fancy suites at the Phoenix stadium, but they weren't noticeable if you were sitting in the upper deck. What stands out are the sort of things that aren't sexy, but critical nonetheless. There's plenty of room to get to and from the concession stands and there are bathrooms galore—77 in all. Escalators move fans easily in and out of the stadium. In fact, the only stairs that fans have to climb are when they're actually in the arena and walking up to their seats.

The locals' reaction to the Viking onslaught was, for the most part, to sit and mutter quietly as the 20,000 or so Minnesota fans on hand danced, clapped, hooted and generally had a grand old time.

The locals seemed more than happy to point out these and other features of the stadium to visitors. The odd thing was that there seemed to be far fewer souvenir stands than at most stadiums. When asked about this, a local said, "We don't have much need for sweatshirts here. We prefer to eat and drink."

By the fourth quarter, the outcome of the game had already been decided and the locals took off early, annoyed but not too unhappy. After all, they had seen this kind of game before, and there was still a home playoff game in their future. That left the Purple faithful to rejoice by themselves as the game ended.

All things considered, I suspect the NFL doesn't mind this in the least. Wins and losses come with the territory. But the play is not necessarily the thing. It's the experience that counts.

(Dave Wright may be reached at dwright53@msn.com.)

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Minnehaha Academy's Taylor Hanson looks for an opening against Sibley's Mike Bruesewitz during the Warriors' 72-59 win over the Redhawks at the Olive Garden Holiday Basketball Tournament on December 27. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Sports Shorts

Tim McManus of Mendota Heights, a 2007 graduate of St. Thomas Academy, has been chosen the 2009 captain of the Dartmouth College football team. This is only the second time in the history of the college that a junior has been selected as captain. During his high school career, McManus was named all-state and set school records for career passing yards (3,297), career passing touchdowns (26) and season passing yards (1,852). At Dartmouth, the 6-foot, 183-pound quarterback was one of only two sophomores chosen as a district academic All-American this past season.

Visitation seniors Elizabeth Walston, Kelly Reagan and Sophie Pilhofer will be continuing their athletic careers in college. Walston, who has six varsity high school hockey letters, will play hockey for NCAA Division III St. Anselm College. Reagan, with 12 varsity letters (four each in golf, swimming and alpine skiing), will play golf for Division I Holy Cross. Pilhofer, a five-time all-American swimmer with six varsity letters, will swim for Division III Carleton College.

The Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., will offer classes in creative movement,

tap, ballet, tumbling and yoga for youths ages 3-6 beginning the first week of January; Soo Bahk Do for ages youths ages 6-11 at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays in January; body conditioning through dance for adults at 7:15 p.m. on Thursdays, beginning January 8; and yoga for adults on Mondays and Thursdays beginning the first week of January. Register at Hillcrest or visit www.stpaul.gov/parks.

Lucy Meyer of St. Paul was one of 24 Jewish gymnasts selected to represent the United States at the 18th Maccabiah Games in Israel next July. Meyer was chosen from among more than 120 athletes from around the country and Canada who competed at the team trials in Norman, Oklahoma. She will compete as a member of the Open Women's Gymnastics Team.

The World's Toughest Rodeo will ride into Xcel Energy Center for bareback riding, saddle bronc riding and bull riding shows at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, January 30-31. Tickets, beginning at \$17 (half price for children), are available at the Xcel Box Office and Ticketmaster locations or by calling 651-989-5151.

33◀ CENTRAL GIRLS

good athlete who plays solid defense. Taylor is also hoping that 5-foot-9 sophomore forward Brianna Reeves, who has been out all season with a stress fracture in her foot, will return soon to provide a spark with her game savvy, strength and good hands. He expects Reeves to be back in the lineup by January 15.

After the first game of the Hopkins tournament, Central was averaging 64 points per game while allowing only 48. The Minutemen's vaunted press has been smothering opponents, forcing them to turn the ball over 200 times. And Central's assists total indicates a team that likes to look for the open player.

Central has been productive offensively, though Taylor believes that has been partly due to putting up so many shots. Just the same, the team's accuracy improved noticeably in the win over Grand Rapids when Central canned nine three-pointers.

The Minutemen gave up 34 free throws against Eastview, but Taylor said reducing fouls is just another area that falls into the will-improve category.



Central's Theairra Taylor looks for an outlet against Eastview. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

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2009 Villager publication dates and deadlines

JANUARY

4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jan 7: Education Health and Fitness
Jan 21: Education

FEBRUARY

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Feb 4: Summer Camps
Feb 18: Valentine's Day Seniors

MARCH

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Mar 11: Home Improvement
St. Patrick's Day
Mar 25: Home Improvement Fair

APRIL

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April 8: Home Improvement
Easter
April 22: Real Estate Guide

MAY

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May 6: Gardening/Mother's Day
Health & Fitness
May 20: Gardening Graduation

JUNE

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June 3: Grand Old Day
June 17: Father's Day Seniors

JULY

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July 1: Fourth of July
July 15: Highland Fest Summer Sales

AUGUST

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Aug 5: Education
Aug 19: Real Estate Guide

SEPTEMBER

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27	28	29	30			

Sept. 2: Home Improvement
Primary Election
Sept. 23: Home Improvement

OCTOBER

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Oct 7: Seniors
Oct 21: Election Guide Halloween

NOVEMBER

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Nov 4: Holiday Gift Ideas
Nov 18: Holiday Gift Ideas Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

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Dec 2: Grand Meander
Hanukah Greetings
Dec 16: Christmas Greetings Gifts Close To Home

Villager Publication Date News Deadline Want Ad Deadline Display Ad Deadline

Classifieds

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Next Issue: Jan. 21

Deadline: Jan. 14

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☐ Computer/Internet
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☐ Professional Services
☐ Special Services
☐ Personal Services
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☐ Health & Beauty/Massage
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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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