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St. Paul OKs \$18.8M to improve Central Corridor streetscape

Businesses balk at assessment, want more help with parking

BY JANE MCCLURE

The owners of property along University Avenue and in downtown St. Paul will have to chip in for new street lights, new trees and other streetscape improvements along the Central Corridor light-rail route. However, they will split \$2.9 million in assessment costs, not \$3.9 million as was originally proposed.

"We heard loud and clear from a number of businesses that all of the streetscaping won't solve the parking problems," said St. Paul City Council member Russ Stark.

The council debated at length before voting 6-1 on November 25 to approve an \$18.8 million payment plan for the streetscape improvements. The plan calls for lantern-style street lights, 1,000

boulevard trees, benches, colored concrete, crosswalk pavers, planters, irrigation and other improvements to the public right-of-way. About \$5.2 million would be earmarked for an additional transit station at Western Avenue, Victoria Street or Hamline Avenue. Those improvements are not included in the \$941 million that the Metropolitan Council has earmarked to build the 11-mile light-rail line between the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The streetscape payment plan was whittled down from a \$22.3 million proposal that was announced on November 17 by Mayor Chris Coleman and council members Melvin Carter III and Stark, who represent neighbor-

STREETSCAPE PLAN ► 3



Way to go, Joe. Hometown hero Joe Mauer was besieged by autograph seekers at the Jimmy Lee Recreation Center, where he was honored on November 24 for being named the American League MVP. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Silva's selection as St. Paul's new superintendent hailed

Twenty-two-year district employee has worked her way up from teacher

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Three and a half years after hiring a superintendent from Washington, D.C., and six months after that same superintendent departed to take the same job in Austin, Texas, the St. Paul Public Schools has elevated one of its own to be its new superintendent. Valeria Silva, who has devoted all but two of her 24 years in education to the St. Paul school district, was hired by the School Board

last week over more than 40 other applicants. "If I can't succeed as superintendent in St. Paul, where I've put my heart and soul—and my children—over my entire career, then I can't be a superintendent anywhere else," said Silva, 48, in her public presentation five days prior to her appointment.

"We're just so glad that someone from our own ranks was willing to step up and take on a difficult job," said School Board chairwoman Kazoua Kong-Thao. "Valeria was the candidate who best fit the profile we had established for the ideal superintendent at this time." Silva's national recognition for her work with English language learners as well as her "passionate focus and commitment to the diversity of the district's student needs and

achievement were all factors in her favor," Kong-Thao said.

"You can't teach that kind of passion," newly elected School Board member Jean O'Connell said of Silva. "That passion can and will get the whole community excited about where we can and must go."

"We're excited the board chose someone who was a teacher and someone from the district," said Mary Cathryn Ricker, president of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers. The teachers' union had no favorite among the finalists for the job, Ricker said, but "we did want the search to be primarily local."

"I was happy to see the School Board come together unanimously behind the choice of Silva," said Charlie Kyte, executive director

of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. "It's common for boards to vote unanimously these days, but my sources tell me the board was virtually unanimous in their private deliberations as well."

According to Kyte, Silva has had "good training" through her various jobs in the district and her Superintendent's Academy fellowship at the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems.

"The Broad fellowship is excellent training," said Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change in the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. "It allowed (Silva) to travel all over the U.S. to

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visit and view best practices in some of the nation's best school districts."

Silva is also one of 24 local and school district officials from across the nation serving on the Core Standards Task Force, which is designing a set of educational standards that the U.S. Department of Education and Congress will use to revise the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

As part of the Broad fellowship, Silva has been provided with a mentor of sorts. "Mine is Tom Payzant, a Broad trainer and a former superintendent of the Boston Public Schools," Silva said. "He'll be helping me implement my 100-day plan."

That plan has three components. "The first is to begin working on next year's budget," she said. "We're already facing a \$27 million shortfall for next year. We also want to continue with our current agenda of ensuring at least 10 percent gains in achievement for all student groups and attaining cultural proficiency." The latter is an effort to train teachers and staff on the cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups in the school district. Finally, Silva said, "I want to assess the effectiveness of all our various programs and replicate the best ones throughout the district."

Nathan, who has worked with Silva previously on a mayoral task force, believes the School Board "made a wise decision in their choice of Valeria. She represents not just the best of both worlds, but the best of many worlds because of her passionate commitment to close the achievement gap for all students. She's a passionate advocate for children, an excellent listener and collaborator, as well as an effective bridge-builder."

Silva was chosen over five other semifinalists for the job: Deborah Henton, superintendent of the North Branch school district; Charles Hopson, deputy superintendent of the Portland, Oregon, school district; Elk River superintendent Mark Bezek; recently retired Robbinsdale superintendent Stan Mack; and Nancy Stachel, chief of schools in the St. Paul school district.

Silva succeeds Meria Carstarphen, the former chief accountability officer for the Washington, D.C., public school district who served three years as St. Paul's superintendent before moving on to the Austin, Texas, school district. While interviewing for the job, Silva told the School Board that she wanted to retire from the St. Paul school district. "If I get this job, it will be my only superintendency," she said. "This is the only district I've ever worked in. I gave both of my sons to the district for 12 or 13 years for their education, and they're now both attending college."

Silva has served as the St. Paul Public Schools' chief academic officer since December 2006. In that position, she was in charge of virtually all of the district's educational programs, including special education and community education, overseeing the expenditure of \$450 million of the district's \$650 million annual budget.

From 1997 to 2006 Silva was director of the district's English Language Learner programs. In 2007 she received the University of Minnesota's University Council for Educational Administration Excellence in Leadership Award in recognition of her work in reducing the achievement gap between ELL and English-speaking students in St. Paul.

Born and raised in Santiago, Chile, Silva immigrated to the U.S. in 1985 at age 24. "It was the best decision I've ever made in my life," she said.



New St. Paul Superintendent of Schools Valeria Silva

Though she had a bachelor's degree in education from Pontificia Catholic University of Chile, she had not yet learned to speak English when she arrived. She settled in St. Cloud "and learned English in a nursing home where I worked," she said. "There were many retired teachers there who taught this chili pepper Valeria how to speak English. So I speak English but, really, I speak Minnesotan. 'You betcha' is definitely part of my lexicon."

"You can't teach that kind of passion," newly elected School Board member Jean O'Connell said of Silva. "That passion can and will get the whole community excited about where we can and must go."

Silva earned another B.A. in education at St. Cloud State University, and in 1986 she became one of the first teachers at St. Paul's Adams Spanish Immersion Elementary School, where she would later serve as principal. She also served as an assistant principal at Dayton's Bluff Elementary School and as the school district's coordinator of Spanish Immersion Programs and Curriculum. She spent two years working for the Minnesota Department of Education, helping develop statewide standards for ELL and special education, before taking the reins of the St. Paul Public Schools' ELL programs.

Silva earned both master's and educational specialist degrees from the University of Minnesota and was working on her Ph.D. in education administration at the U of M when her Broad Center fellowship intervened.

"Now that I have this new job, I can't restart my doctoral studies," she said, "but I look forward to the day when I can once again pursue that ambition."

The 38,000-student St. Paul Public Schools, though it has been challenged in the past two decades by an influx of immigrant students, is nevertheless considered to be one of the nation's most successful urban school districts by, among other groups, the national Council of the Great City Schools. "And (Silva's) work is a very big part of the reason for that," Nathan said.

The School Board's contract negotiations with Silva have already begun. Her start date will be determined as part of that.

Group seeks tax relief to save homes along LRT route

By JANE MCCLURE

Worries that the Central Corridor light-rail line will result in property tax and rent increases that will drive residents near the route from their homes drew more than 130 people to a meeting on November 21 at the Ober Community Center in the Summit-University neighborhood.

Members of the Save Our Homes campaign are asking St. Paul City Council members Melvin Carter III and Russ Stark to help launch a property tax relief program for neighborhoods that would be affected by light rail. The proposed city fund would provide a partial deferment of property tax increases on owner-occupied and rental properties within a half-mile on either side of University Avenue between Prior Avenue and Rice Street.

Homesteaded properties and rental properties where the landlord has agreed to voluntary rent controls would be eligible for the deferment. Property owners would pay 102 percent of the previous year's property tax bill, not including any special assessments. The difference between that amount and what the county assesses would be paid by the city fund. The concept was developed by the William Mitchell College of Law Community Development Clinic, working with the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, Take Action Min-

nesota and the Metropolitan Interfaith Coalition on Affordable Housing.

"I moved into this community because I could afford this community," said Aurora-St. Anthony resident Rena Moran. She and other residents said they are worried about gentrification as higher-income residents move in and displace lower-income residents.

Carter and Stark said they would take the proposal to city officials, but cautioned that setting up a special fund could be a hard sell in tight budgetary times. Carter suggested the group look at the Agricultural Property Tax Law, a state statute often referred to as "Green Acres." Under that law, Minnesota farmland is taxed on its agricultural value rather than its future development potential or "best use." It is meant to keep farmers from being forced off their land when looming development drives up property values and taxes.

For St. Paul to establish a similar program, enabling state legislation would be needed. "Our first step would be to go to the Capitol,"

Carter said.

Both Stark and Carter said they want to make sure the Central Corridor has more benefits than drawbacks for local residents.

"We need to find ways to make sure the community benefits and that we can keep people here," Stark said.

"If we do this project wrong it could increase displacement," Carter said. "If we do

this project wrong, it could also increase transit disparities."

Diane Dube of William Mitchell conceded that the property tax relief idea needs more work. However, she said it would be less expensive to preserve existing affordable housing in the city than to have to replace it if people are displaced.

Dube said the intent of the property tax program is to protect homeowners and landlords who want to stay. When the owner of a homesteaded property sells, he or she would have to pay the previous three years' difference between the actual taxes and what the city fund paid. That condition would be waived if the property is sold to a relative. Once a property is

sold to a non-relative, it would no longer be eligible for the program.

For landlords, the owner would repay the amount paid by the city for the previous 10 years unless the new landlord agreed to keep rent controls in place for at least 15 years. If the voluntary rent controls were removed, the property would no longer be eligible for the program.

Elected officials and leaders of Save Our Homes admit that no one knows what will happen to property values on University Avenue when light rail is built (the Central Corridor is scheduled to start operating in 2014). Mona Langston, a policy advocate for the Housing Preservation Project, said other rail projects around the country had an effect on property values ranging from decreasing to increasing by more than 20 percent.

Langston noted that there already has been speculative property investments along University Avenue, especially around the proposed light-rail stations. "Our goal is to not split up people who have been living together for a long time," she said.

"This place we all call home is a very diverse area," said Victori Vu, whose family was among the wave of Hmong immigrants who came to St. Paul in the 1980s. Vu said the neighborhood has changed for the better since then, but that work could be lost due to gentrification caused by the Central Corridor.

"If we do this project wrong, it could increase displacement," Carter said. "If we do this project wrong, it could also increase transit disparities."

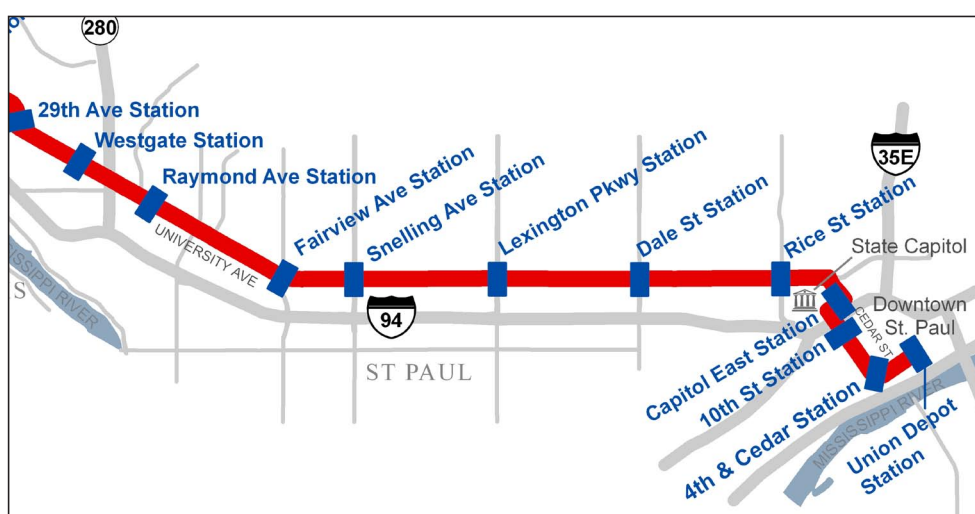
1 ◀ STREETSCAPE PLAN

hoods along the light rail line. The new plan adds \$1.5 million for parking improvements that business owners have clamored for and removes \$3.1 million in median improvements and \$185,000 in downtown streetscape improvements. Other cost savings were found by reducing lighting and paving expenditures.

Along with \$2.9 million in assessments from abutting properties, the streetscape improvements would be paid for with \$12.7 million from tax increment financing districts along the east end of the rail line, \$2 million from the city's Capital Improvement Budget and \$1.2 million from the city's Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) program. Another \$750,000 for "non-transit-related improvements" would be taken from city Housing and Redevelopment Authority funds and is not included in the \$18.8 million total.

Many St. Paul property owners along the route questioned having \$2.9 million of the improvement costs come out of their pockets. Some opposed the assessments outright, while others said if they are going to be assessed, the money should be spent for off-street parking improvements and business mitigation, not landscaping and light posts.

"It doesn't do us any good to have trees and benches and pavers if we're not going to be here," said Jim Segal, owner of Ax-Man Sur-



plus Store on University and Fry Street. "We need to know if we're going to have enough funds to pay for parking improvements. We need to know if we're going to have a business mitigation fund."

"They can come up with funds for the streetscape and yet there's so little for off-street parking," said Jeff McCann, president of the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) and an owner of Update Companies, which owns several commercial properties in the Midway area.

"Streetscape is important, but it's not more important than trying to assist the businesses that want to stay here," said UABA director Linda Winsor.

At this point it is unclear how much each

property owner would be assessed for the improvements. The assessments would vary by amount of street frontage, as well the zoning classification of each property.

University Avenue businesses will be asked to weigh in on the payment plan during a meeting from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 10, at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Ave. Other local business groups also are reviewing the proposal. A public hearing on the assessments will take place on January 6 at City Hall.

The City Council laid the assessment plan over on November 18 at the request of Stark and Carter. Stark said he was not convinced the city should be financing all of the proposed improvements, especially those that are

safety-related.

Council members Pat Harris and Helgen had concerns about the proposed financing sources. Harris expressed concern about using TIF dollars and how that would affect the city's tax base as a whole.

Council member Lee Helgen, who cast the lone vote against the payment plan, failed at trying to keep the city's STAR funds out of the financing mix. He said the city should not use those funds for "whatever shiny object is in front of us next." However, he was unsuccessful in his effort to amend the financing plan by substituting money from a \$2 million surplus in the city's sewer fund. Other council members said the sewer funds may be needed to balance other parts of the city budget.

Meanwhile, city and Metropolitan Council officials continue to negotiate on which aspects of the Central Corridor project should be paid for out of federal, state and county funds, and which should be St. Paul's share. One sticking point is the overhead poles that will carry the light-rail line's electrical service. Project staff want basic poles, while city officials want poles that are painted and more attractive.

"We're still developing an agreement with the Met Council to determine what are and are not eligible expenses," said the mayor's policy director, Nancy Homans.

"This is still a work in progress," said city engineer John Maczko.

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Victoria Theater's colorful past comes to light in fight for old building's future

By JANE MCCLURE

Local residents and business people who are hoping to save the old Victoria Theater returned to St. Paul City Hall two weeks ago to submit a request for local historic designation for the building at 825 University Ave. Whether that will be enough to stave off the building's demolition remains unclear. However, the latest plan to tear the building down and replace it with a parking lot has reportedly been shelved.

The Victoria Theater opened as a silent movie house in 1915. According to historic architectural surveys of the city, the building was designed by Franklin Ellerbe, who founded the venerable Twin Cities architectural firm Ellerbe Becket. The building still has many of its original exterior details, including a terra cotta front, as well as historical interior details.

Past efforts to place the Victoria Theater on the National Register of Historic Places have fallen short. Though local historic designation does not carry the same weight as the National Register, it can sway an

argument for preserving a building in the face of demolition.

The Save the Victoria Theater Project is behind the drive for local historic designation. The St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is charged with reviewing such requests along with the St. Paul Planning Commission. However, the application must ultimately be approved by the City Council.

Tait Danielson-Castillo, director of the District 7 Planning Council, said the designation is needed to help protect the building. "We've heard an amazing amount of support for preserving this structure and reusing it," he said.

The effort to secure local historic designation for the Victoria Theater is part of a larger land-use planning process in the neighborhood. A group of local residents and business people met on November 18 to discuss reusing the theater along with a vision for the future of University between Victoria and Grotto streets. At the meeting it was announced that an earlier plan to buy the theater and tear it down had been dropped by Model Cities, the community development agency



Hai Truong, founder of the Save the Victoria Theater Project, stands outside the former moviehouse, cafe and retail store at 825 University Ave. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

that owns the Model Cities Brownstone just west of the theater.

The push to save Victoria Theater has energized the neighborhood, according to Danielson-Castillo. The effort began when the New Victoria Theater Project asked the District 7 Council to support its request earlier this year for a city Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grant to turn the old movie theater into live performance space. That request was denied by the city, although the group is still seeking funding to buy and redevelop the Victoria.

Property records show that the building is currently owned by Bee

Vue. Efforts to reach Vue were unsuccessful.

Members of the Save the Victoria Theater Project continue to research the theater's history. Much of the research to date has been done by local resident Kurt Gegenhuber. Although Gegenhuber has focused more on the building's musical history and an obscure recording made there in 1927, he has uncovered much of the building's past.

The Victoria's days as a movie theater lasted only five years. It was then converted into a dance hall known as the Victoria Cafe. The Victoria Cafe had its own orchestra.

Newspaper articles of the time indicate that it also served as a speakeasy, serving illegal liquor during Prohibition.

The Victoria Cafe was the site of at least two raids by federal agents. The *St. Paul Dispatch* reported in 1927 that the Victoria Cafe was one of several establishment targeted for selling set-ups—non-alcoholic mixes to which patrons would add their own alcohol.

The Victoria Cafe closed in the 1930s. The building housed a light-storing for many years after that, but has been vacant for about a decade.

Committee envisions dog park and more at power plant site

By JANE MCCLURE

The idea of turning the site of Xcel Energy's old High Bridge power plant into a multi-use park was met favorably by a city advisory committee on November 16. The committee, which includes Xcel Energy and city officials as well as neighborhood residents and parents of special-needs children, has been discussing ideas for the future use of the property for the past few months at the request of Ward 2 City Council member Dave Thune.

The latest ideas for the 50-acre site include space for a senior exercise trail, a playground for children with disabilities, an off-leash dog area and stables for the St. Paul Police Department's Mounted Patrol.

Gregory Page of the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation cautioned that discussions are still in the conceptual stage. "It's not a plan yet," he said. Transforming the site is expected to take several years.

Public use of the property has been discussed ever since Xcel Energy announced that it planned to replace the old coal-burning

plant with a nearby natural gas-fired facility. Previous ideas for the site have ranged from cross country ski trails to soccer fields.

Demolition of the old plant began in 2008 with the toppling of its 570-foot-tall smokestack. All of the remaining building foundations are expected to be removed from the site by the end of the year, according to plant manager Jim Zyduck. The property will be graded next spring and any remaining pollutants from the old power plant and the coal piles that sat beside it will be cleaned up. Grass and trees will be planted over the next few

years with the help of Great River Greening.

Under the current proposal, Xcel would retain ownership of the property and would enter into a long-term lease with the city. No firm timeline has been announced for developing the property, though the advisory committee is expected to earmark locations for various park uses by next spring. Park advocacy groups also will be solicited to help plan and raise funds for various features in the park.

OLD XCEL PLANT ► 5

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Council still scrutinizing plans for Subway on Selby

Rezoning laid over to address potential litter, loitering issues

By JANE MCCLURE

Plans for a proposed Subway restaurant at the northeast corner of Selby Avenue and Victoria Street will return to the St. Paul City Council on December 9. By then, measures to address potential litter and loitering should be ready for the council's review.

The City Council is being asked to rezone the property at 857 Selby Ave. from community business to traditional neighborhoods so the fast-food restaurant can operate there. The rezoning was recommended for approval in October by the St. Paul Planning Commission and has the support of the Summit-University Planning Council (SUPC).

The Planning Commission also approved four variances for the site: for off-street parking, front setback, curb cut location and parking lot location. The variances are final since they were not appealed within 10 days.

Council member Melvin Carter III asked for a layover on the rezoning following a November 18 public hearing. He said he wanted more information about trash pickup around the property as well as measures to deter loitering. Subway franchise owners Jeff and Jackie Lunde will meet with the SUPC prior to the council meeting to outline those plans. At their other Subway locations, the couple said they have employees patrol the vicinity for trash two to three times each day.

The Lundes have owned and operated a Subway restaurant at Grand and Fairview avenues for 20 years. They also renovated a dilapidated auto repair shop and taxi business into a Subway near University Avenue and Vandalia Street several years ago.

Other council members agreed to the layover, but noted that Carter's request had nothing to do with rezoning the property. The City Council and Planning Commission cannot legally attach conditions to zoning changes, as they can to conditional use permits and variances.

"To me, this is reminiscent of the arguments over Trader Joe's," said council member Kathy Lantry regarding the many non-zoning-related issues raised by residents and businesses when developers wanted to redevelop the southeast corner of Randolph Avenue and Lexington Parkway.

The proposed Subway on Selby has generated controversy in the Summit-University neighborhood for several months. Some residents have argued that the restaurant will lead to more fast-food businesses coming to the area. Others wanted to see some other type of development at the corner.

City planning aide Emily Goodman said the current mix of zoning on Selby does not

make a transformation to a fast-food strip likely. Unlike other fast-food restaurants, the Subway will not have a drive-through window, and any future fast-food restaurant wanting a drive-through would need a conditional use permit.

Goodman said she did not believe allowing a Subway would set a precedent for Selby. "Grand Avenue has a Chipotle and a Subway," she said. "I don't think anyone would say Grand Avenue has become a fast-food corridor."

The corner being considered for the Subway was originally a gas station and later housed an auto repair shop. It most recently was occupied by motorcycle escort service. The property is owned by Abdalla Tobasi, who owns the Tobasi Stop convenience store a block to the east. He plans to lease the property to the Lundes.

"To me, this is reminiscent of the arguments over Trader Joe's," said council member Kathy Lantry.

Tobasi told the City Council that he looked for a tenant that would fit the neighborhood. While Selby Avenue has many restaurants at its east end, "there's not a place to grab a decent \$5.00 sandwich," he said. He said he decided to work with the Lundes because of their solid business record and service to the community. He also collected 15 pages of signatures on a petition in support of Subway.

Jackie Lunde said she has met several times with neighborhood residents and the SUPC to resolve issues related to the zoning change and the operation of the business. She said the Subway shops on Grand and University show they operate good restaurants and are committed to working with the neighborhood.

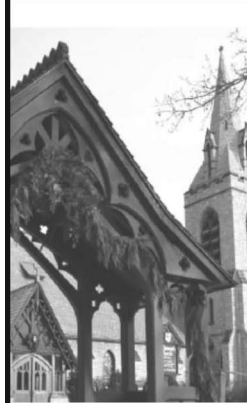
Chris Oaks, who lives on Dayton Avenue behind the proposed restaurant, said that while the Lundes may be good operators, he still has concerns about their proposal. He said the Subway would set a precedent for more fast-food restaurants on Selby and that a Subway is inconsistent with local land-use plans and could hinder realizing the full potential for the site's redevelopment. "If you start low, you're going to stay low," he said.

However, Planning Commission members noted that rezoning the site for traditional neighborhoods opens the corner to mixed-use redevelopment in the future. The northwest and southwest corners of Selby and Victoria already have buildings with retail space on the first floor and residences above, which is the kind of land use the traditional neighborhoods zoning is intended to promote.

decides to move its Mounted Patrol stables to the site, he noted. Mounted Patrol horses currently are stabled in Lake Elmo and have to be transported to the city for regular patrols or special events.

A third idea for the park that has found support is establishing a senior citizen exercise area or walking trail with fitness stations.

Concerns over public access to the park have been raised by West 7th/Fort Road Federation president David Bredemus and others. Most of the West End neighborhood is on the riverbluff above where the park would be located. "If there isn't some kind of pedestrian connection, people would have to drive there," Bredemus said.



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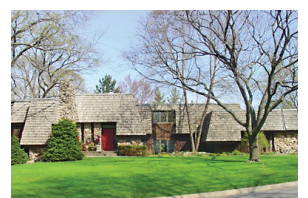
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4◀ OLD XCEL PLANT

Thune said he would like to see the park meet unfulfilled needs in the city. He has fielded numerous requests from parents of children with disabilities who would like to see the city build a totally accessible playground.

"I think that type of park would get a lot of use," said Summit Hill resident Renee Pritzker. She said her family now have to travel out of St. Paul to find a park that her wheelchair-riding child can enjoy.

Thune is also interested in seeing if programs that use horses for children's therapy, such as We Can Ride, can be operated at the park. Horses would already be there if the city

News Briefs

Three area organizations receive Cultural STAR grants

The College of Visual Arts, Walker West Music Academy and the Highland Friendship Club are among 22 local organizations that will receive grant money through the city of St. Paul's Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) program.

Thirty-three groups in all had requested a total of \$1.243 million in grants through the Cultural STAR program in this, the second round of funding for 2009. A total of \$516,200 was allocated by the St. Paul City Council on November 18. Most of the groups that received grants saw their requests trimmed.

The College of Visual Arts in Ramsey Hill was awarded \$22,000 to help pay for improvements to the heating, cooling and ventilation system at its Summit Avenue building. The college had requested \$47,000.

Walker-West Music Academy in Summit-University was awarded \$25,000 to expand its administrative leadership from part-time to full-time status. Walker-West had sought \$40,000.

The Highland Friendship Club was awarded \$8,000 for its Culture Club, a program that provides weekly cultural activities and entertainment for adolescents and young adults with developmental disabilities. The organization had requested \$10,244.

Among the organizations that were turned down for funding was St. Catherine University, which had sought \$24,950 to help pay for a strategic assessment of O'Shaughnessy Auditorium and planning for its long-term future.

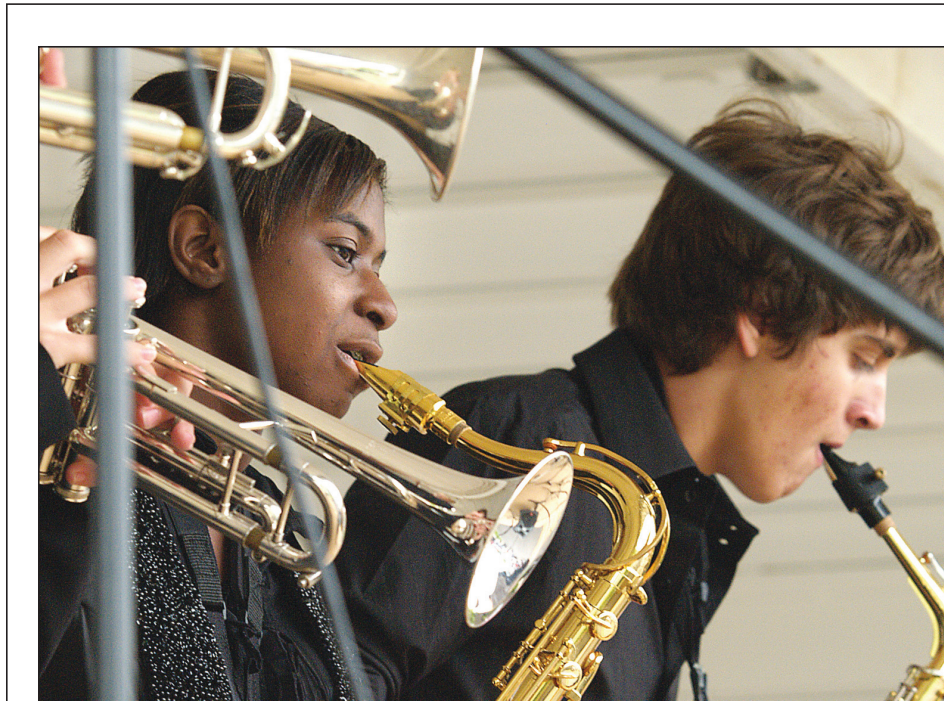
Council OKs reduced penalties for Casa Vieja license violations

Casa Vieja, a restaurant at 2176 West 7th St. in Highland Park, was ordered by the St. Paul City Council on November 18 to pay a \$250 fine and close for four days as a result of two liquor license violations last summer.

On July 23, Casa Vieja patrons were observed taking alcoholic beverages outside in violation of the establishment's licenses. That same month, the restaurant was cited for a one-week lapse in its liquor liability coverage.

City licensing staff had recommended a \$2,000 fine and 10 days' closure for the violations. The owners of the business asked for a reduced penalty.

"These are obviously a couple of very se-



The St. Paul City Council has awarded \$25,000 in Cultural STAR dollars to the Walker-West Music Academy, whose Youth Jazz Ensemble is shown above playing at the 2006 Selby Jazz Fest. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

rious violations," said Ward 3 City Council member Pat Harris, "but this is not a problem establishment in my neighborhood. I just think that (the recommended) penalty is too strong."

The City Council approved the reduced fine and license suspension on a 5-2 vote, with Harris, Melvin Carter III, Dave Thune, Russ Stark and Dan Bostrom voting for and Kathy Lantry and Lee Helgen voting against. Helgen noted that if an injury or fatality had occurred during the week that the restaurant was uninsured, the city may have been facing a liability problem.

City approves two projects for improving the riverfront

Funds for two park projects along the Mississippi River in St. Paul have been approved by the City Council.

The first is a \$2.5 million project to improve the deteriorated revetment, or retaining wall, along the north side of the river between the High Bridge and Upper Landing Park adjacent to the Samuel H. Morgan Trail. The money for that project comes from the federal government but will be administered by

the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

MnDOT will work with the city's Parks and Recreation Department on the second project, a series of interpretive signs and kiosks along the Mississippi financed by a federal Scenic Byways grant of \$125,000. Improved signage and informational kiosks have long been part of the city's plan for its portion of the federally designated National Great River Park.

Wine and malt liquor licenses OK'd for Geordies restaurant

The new Geordies 454 Bistro, 454 S. Snelling Ave., was granted an on-sale license to serve wine and strong beer by the St. Paul City Council on November 18. However, it may not remain open past 10:00 p.m. for special events without permission from the city.

Geordies recently opened in the space formerly occupied by Blondie's cafe and coffee shop. New owner Deborah Blair has transformed the interior of Geordies into what she described as a neighborhood bistro that is now serving dinner. Blair has no plans to offer entertainment, but she would like the option to stay open later for special events.

Geordies is located just north of the intersection of Snelling and Randolph avenues where there are two other bars and restaurants and a 24-hour Walgreens pharmacy. The amount of traffic and noise late at night has been a concern for neighbors in the past.

Several local residents met this fall with the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Housing and Land Use Committee to discuss their concerns about the corner. One neighbor relayed those concerns at a City Hall hearing on Geordies' request, and two other neighbors sent letters to city officials outlining their concerns. The problems include parking congestion, litter, theft, vandalism and public urination, though those problems were not tied to Blondie's or Geordies.

The City Council attached several conditions to Geordies' wine and beer license, including that no food or beverages be sold after 10:00 p.m., that gross receipts for the bistro each year be at least 60 percent from the sale of food, and that wine and beer not be served on the restaurant's outdoor patio without first securing an additional license from the city.

City moves ahead with plan to install artificial turf at Oxford

The installation of artificial turf on at least some of the ball fields at the Oxford Community Center can now move forward with the St. Paul City Council's recent approval of various donations for the project.

The city has gathered \$555,750 for the turf project at Oxford, which is located at Marshall Avenue and Lexington Parkway. The total includes a \$200,000 grant from the National Football League, \$300,000 from the city's Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) program and smaller grants from Bremer Bank and Kowalski's Market.

Additional money for the project could come through the \$2 million rebate the city recently received from Xcel Energy. City Parks and Recreation Department officials have said they will use some of that money to install artificial turf at a recreation center, and Oxford has been mentioned as a possible recipient.

The city currently has artificial turf at only a handful of locations, including McMurray Field near Como Park and the Rice-Arlington fields on the North End.

News Briefly was compiled by Jane McClure.

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Homeowners could see 6.8 percent increase in street maintenance fees

By JANE McCLURE

Increases in the fees paid for street paving, right-of-way maintenance, water, sewer and recycling services in St. Paul are poised for approval at the December 16 meeting of the City Council.

Public hearings on the fee increases were held in November. Only a few people attended the hearings and fewer yet commented on the changes.

Highland Park resident Dave Johnson said he is concerned that many of his neighbors will struggle to pay the higher assessments on top of their higher property taxes. Many of his neighbors are retirees on fixed incomes, Johnson said. After hearing that the average residential property owner would be paying an additional \$10 in street-maintenance fees next year, he said, "Every year it's a \$10 ding for roadway maintenance and this and that. Those \$10 dings over the years are really adding up."

The right-of-way maintenance fee increases vary depending on the type of property and the type of street or alley. Most residential property owners would see a 6.8 percent increase in this fee. Downtown and commercial property owners would see higher increases.

Most downtown properties would be assessed at \$16.29 per frontage foot, although property on downtown's brick streets would see an assessment of \$19.72 per frontage foot. Commercial property on arterial streets outside of the downtown area would be assessed at \$8.21 per frontage foot. Residential properties would be assessed \$3.14 per frontage foot on streets and between 72 and 36 cents per frontage foot on alleys, depending on whether the alley is improved or not.

The work covered by the right-of-way maintenance assessments includes street snow plowing, street sweeping, tree trimming, street lighting and sidewalk repair. The city expects to spend \$30 million on this work in 2010. Assessments would cover about \$25.3 million of the cost, with the rest coming from municipal, state and county aid funds and other revenues. City Engineer John Maczko said some of the funding this year is earmarked for trees affected by the emerald ash borer. The actual amount assessed will not be known until next

fall, after most of the work is done.

Public Works officials are looking at ways to cut down on costs and improve service delivery, according to Maczko. The city is cutting down on the amount of salt it uses in the winter, and buying equipment that is more efficient for sanding, salting and snow removal. Changes in winter operations are also being contemplated, including scheduling more crews to work nights rather than days.

Four Residential Street Vitality Program street repaving projects are planned for 2010, including the West 7th-Douglas project on the West End and the Davern-Jefferson project in Macalester-Groveland. The four projects have a total estimated cost of \$12.5 million. The assessment rate for the projects will be \$40.97 per frontage foot, up from \$38.65 per frontage foot for projects completed this year.

Public Works project manager Dan Haak said city staff had hoped to see more cost savings in 2010. Instead, increases are being seen in the cost of materials, labor and fuel.

One change for 2010 is the city's new public art policy, which requires that 1 percent of project costs be dedicated to public art. City Council members have asked for more information on those costs prior to their December 16 vote on the assessments. With the street paving projects taking place in all four corners of the city, questions remain as to what the public art component should be and where it should be located.

Haak told the City Council that it is not clear if there should be one piece of art for all four projects or one piece of art in all four project areas.

Ward 3 City Council member Pat Harris said the city cannot assess property owners in one project area for art that is placed in another area.

The proposed annual city recycling fees for 2010 are \$31.84 for buildings of one to three units and \$19.18 for buildings with four or more units. Storm sewer fees will increase by 6.8 percent in 2010. Sanitary sewer rates will increase by 5.75 percent. Water rates are pegged to increase about 6 percent as well, or \$8.80 for the typical homeowner, according to St. Paul Regional Water Services Director Steve Schneider.

New food regs on council's menu

By JANE McCLURE

St. Paul's attempt to make city restaurants safer for those with food allergies will be the topic of a public hearing on December 2 at City Hall. Although the new regulations now being proposed are less extensive than those that were dished up in September, they are still generating concerns in the hospitality industry.

The original proposal was introduced by council member Melvin Carter III, whose 3-year-old daughter has a severe allergy to peanuts. It called for restaurants to create handbooks listing every ingredient used in every item on the menu. The measures proposed in that ordinance provoked an outcry among restaurant owners and was pulled due to concerns over the cost and potential liability. Many restaurateurs also consider their recipes to be proprietary and did not want to publish ingredients for competitors to see or copy.

After several weeks of negotiation, a new ordinance was introduced on November 18 that calls for restaurants to display a poster listing the top eight food allergens. St. Paul would be the first city in the state to require the poster, which would be available on-line for downloading. Failure to display the poster could result in a fine or a the suspension of a restaurant's license.

Although several restaurant owners, the

Minnesota Restaurant Association, Hospitality Minnesota and the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce have worked with Carter and the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) on the poster's wording, there is still concern that it not be worded too strongly. Chamber spokesperson Liz Bogut said the poster has to be written so that it does not expose restaurants to additional liability.

A second ordinance would give restaurants a 7 percent discount on their city license fees if they provide their employees with food allergen training. Food service managers would have to view a video on food allergies and how to cope with them. The video would be provided by the DSI.

The discount would apply to all of a restaurant's city licenses, including those for food and liquor service. However, council members Lee Helgen and Pat Harris have questioned how the discount would affect the city's budget. "That (discount) could be a pretty substantial amount," Helgen said.

Restaurants would also have to have a written policy on how to alert employees of an allergic customer so everyone who handles that person's food knows what steps to take.

Carter believes the poster and license discount are a good compromise to his original proposal. He said he also plans to study the issue further to see if other measures could be brought forward in the future.

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Viewpoint

Minnesota's biggest challenge

BY DANE SMITH

The teenagers break your heart with their candid stories about the difficulty of doing well in school while drifting between homeless shelters, about their chronically dysfunctional families. And then these same youngsters lift your spirits as they explain how they somehow are rising above it all to make their way to college.

Their stories are the stuff of *Challenging Expectations*, a superb documentary produced recently by Twin Cities Public Television and sponsored by the Travelers Foundation. Watch it if you want to understand the biggest public policy challenge facing our state. The 90-minute documentary airs on December 11 on TCPT's Minnesota Channel. You can also see excerpts of it on YouTube and watch it in its entirety at www.mnvideovault.org.

The biggest challenge of our times is this: Only about 50 percent of young adults have any form of higher education credentials by age 25. There is overwhelming consensus that if Minnesota wants to succeed economically and sustain its quality of life, that percentage must rise—and dramatically.

Here are some of the most compelling excerpts from the documentary, from some of our most informed state leaders who are at the vanguard of a gathering movement for increasing educational achievement. I've framed their comments with my own formulation of the questions that they answer in the documentary.

Why is this important, and won't it cost more money?

Alice Seagren, commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education: "In 1950, 80 percent of the jobs in the U.S. were classified as unskilled. Today, 85 percent of the jobs are classified as skilled.... Moving up in our society and in our state today is increasingly connected to moving up educationally.... I agree with economists who say that investing in education and making sure our kids are ready for success after high school is essential. There are a lot of things that the schools need to do this, but the money has to be there to back it up."

Where should this investment begin?

Duane Benson, executive director of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation and former Republican state Senate minority leader: "Eighty-five percent of brain development occurs before the age of 5. The peak of learning occurs at the age of 3. The peak of funding occurs at the age of 17. So we have a mismatch in how we can maximize our return."

Why is there such a disparity between affluent and white students, and poor and minority students?

State Representative Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), chair of the K-12 Education Finance Division of the House Finance Committee: "Children don't come to school equal. We have huge differences in the preschool experiences that they get.... Some people would say that if we just pour money into schools, that would do some good, and other people say if we would just do reform, we wouldn't need any new money. I'm one who says we have to do both."

Isn't this a function of a broken public school system?

Kent Pekel, executive director, College Readiness Consortium, University of Minnesota: "The system is *not* broken. The system is producing what we (historically sought), meaning the traditional junior high/senior high system. It's producing what it was designed to produce, which is about 25 percent to 30 percent of our kids college-ready. That is wholly insufficient for this new information age and global economy."

Is it really that urgent?

Yusef Mgeni, director of educational equality, St. Paul Public Schools: "I think we need to approach it with a real sense of urgency. We don't have a lot of time. In fact, arguably, we may have already run out of time."

And from Pekel: "I think in Minnesota we are right at that moment, that fundamental moment, where we're going to decide as a state whether our educational trajectory is going to be up or down. And so this is a critical time to be raising expectations and providing support."

Dane Smith is a resident of Highland Park and president of Growth & Justice, a St. Paul-based policy research organization.



Inbox

Eager to implement IRV

With all due respect for your right to disagree with the 17,000 citizens who voted for St. Paul to use instant runoff voting (IRV), I take issue with your including editorial opinions in your report of the election ("St. Paul hoping to avoid pitfalls of IRV," *Villager*, November 18). From the negative tone of the headline to misstatements of campaign law and incomplete information about voting machines, the article brought your editorial opinion into what should be straightforward reporting.

Minnesota law does not require "expressed written consent" of organizations endorsing candidates or ballot initiatives, only that of individuals. Further, the discussion of costs of voting machines suggested that new equipment is required only because of St. Paul's use of IRV. In fact, Ramsey County has long had the replacement of current voting equipment scheduled for 2011, and the same machines can count both traditional and IRV elections.

FairVote Minnesota and the St. Paul Better Ballot Campaign are eager to work with the city to help prepare the ordinance for IRV implementation as we did with Minneapolis. We are delighted that Joe Mansky has some ideas about a better way to run an IRV election and will welcome the chance to learn and share those ideas with other jurisdictions across the country. We are eager as well to support the city's voter education efforts in 2011.

Ellen T. Brown, Coordinator
St. Paul Better Ballot Campaign

Editor's note: The writer is a resident of St. Paul's Summit Hill neighborhood.

Let's put Walgreens behind us

In the last issue, you reported that the Highland District Council's board of directors just want the Walgreens matter settled ("Highland finding drugstore resolution hard to swallow," *Villager*, November 18). What's the problem? The majority of the neighbors never wanted it, and the City Council voted 5-0 against it. Done. Finished. Move on!

Jack Mueller
St. Paul

A lasting gift to St. Paul

An enormous and lasting thank-you needs to go out to the Pedro family, longtime owners of Pedro's Luggage at 10th and Robert streets. After 94 years in downtown St. Paul, their store closed last year, bringing to an end one of downtown's most enduring family businesses.

Perhaps even more striking than the Pedro family's longevity downtown is the generosity that has followed. On November 18, the St. Paul City Council celebrated the donation of their former building and the land around it for a new city park—property with a tax-assessed value of nearly \$2 million.

Fittingly, Pedro Park will anchor the neighborhood on the north end of downtown that Pedro's Luggage has long called home. To be sure, many others helped us reach this milestone. The roughly 3,000 residents of the surrounding neighborhood are of largely modest means and have few community gathering spaces, no yards and no park space in the neighborhood. That's why four years ago, a city planning process identified a park as the key to transforming the northern part of downtown from disjointed parking lots to a true social center.

Lunds grocery store cited the proposed park as a key reason they have decided to locate across the street. Green squares like Pedro Park will be key in helping the transition downtown toward better urban living. And any celebration of this milestone would in no way be complete without thanks to City Council member Dave Thune. Dave was an early and persistent champion of the park concept, and worked closely with the Pedro family in making a lasting gift to the city. His genuine concern for the people and neighborhoods of his ward has been an irreplaceable asset.

The Pedros' gift will be shared with many future generations. We are so fortunate to have families like theirs as part of our city. The park is an amazing legacy, and its donation sets a humbling example to which we all can aspire.

Bob Spaulding
Downtown St. Paul

Editor's note: The writer co-chaired the city task force that identified the park as a priority.

8◀ INBOX

Politics and the personal

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman headlined the grand reopening on November 20 of the newly remodeled Life Time Fitness in Highland Village. He gave a few gracious, if canned, remarks about what such a business offers the community. He should have stopped there. Instead, he went on to tell us that we don't have to just accept the inevitable five-pound weight gain associated with the holiday season. He reminded us to do a little extra exercise to keep the pounds off.

The mayor could have let the actual fitness experts standing next to him offer this advice or, left to our own devices, we might even have figured that out for ourselves. Yet we were treated to another example, however innocuous, of the overreach of our governing class. There really isn't an area of our lives where some politician wouldn't offer an opinion, suggest a policy or impose a requirement for our personal improvement. We really have arrived at the nanny state, except we aren't getting Mary Poppins.

*Katherine Kennedy
Macalester-Groveland*

Asking more from Mayor Coleman

In Chris Coleman's first campaign for mayor, 82 percent of eligible voters did not elect him into office, and an even greater majority of St. Paulites did not support his re-election. As a hometown boy and longtime downtown business owner, I did not support Coleman either time as well.

Under his leadership as mayor and Ward 2 City Council member, it has been with sadness and dismay that I have watched downtown decline so far as a business center and have witnessed a riverfront renaissance fall far short of its potential.

The city's structural deficit that Coleman frequently complains about inheriting he helped create while on the City Council. Regarding the loss of state aid to St. Paul, that made up a very, very small part of St. Paul's budgets.

Some people say making misleading statements is what typical politicians do. That is part of my sadness as well. St. Paul has a typical mayor. I challenge Mayor Coleman in his second term to prove that I and so many others are wrong.

*Bill Hosko
Downtown St. Paul*

A coach for tennis and for life

The Cretin-Derham Hall girls' tennis team made its second consecutive appearance in the girls' state high school tennis tournament this fall. What prompts this letter is a comment made during the girls' sectional tournament by a group of parents from a competing team. The CDH girls were well ahead in the match, which prompted one parent to remark about the CDH team's obvious skill. Another parent responded by saying, "they should be good; they're all club tennis players." That comment is not true.

Four years ago I attended CDH's preseason tennis meeting and met coach Tim Spika for the first time. Tim spoke at length about the process of tryouts and his theory of competitive tennis. I have attended that meeting every year since. Tim has spoken about a lifelong sport for the girls and the opportunity for parents to watch their daughters compete.

Last month the state tournament dinner was held in downtown St. Paul. In attendance were all of the Class A and AA teams and individuals who qualified for this year's tournament. During the dinner one thing stood out about this team. It is what I have seen developing for four years. This is a true team. They care about each other and truly appreciate where they are and they have fun. This is evident in every match I have seen, the calls of encouragement from one court to the next, the girls staying until every match is complete and the importance they place in the point they win being for the team, not the individual.

The success of this team is a result of the sacrifice made by Tim Spika and his family for the benefit of these girls and for those of us who know them. Tim has been recognized for the second consecutive year as Coach of the Year. These young women have benefited from a coach who builds a team. These are not club players. Tim's girls work hard for every point and never quit. If any of them loses a match, they shake hands and move on to cheer a teammate.

I would like to thank Tim and his family for the sacrifices they have made to help develop these girls into young women better equipped to take on the challenges of life. I also want to thank him for giving these girls a lifelong sport and for providing me the chance to watch my daughter compete. No matter how this team did in the state tournament, they will do better in life because of CDH and Tim Spika.

*Tom Cullen
Macalester-Groveland*

Editor's note. The writer is the father of one of the girls on the Cretin-Derham Hall tennis team.

Timing is everything

Let's save some money by just changing the sequence of the signal lights at the intersection ("Redesign aims to remove traffic hazards at W. 7th-Montreal," *Villager*, November 18). Let eastbound or westbound through first, then let eastbound or westbound through next. No major redesign, and money saved. Problem solved.

*Roger Geisert
Merriam Park*

A man of action

President Obama's critics are becoming more weird and incoherent than even this summer's Tea Party crowds, if the November 18 issue of the *Villager* is any indication. It contains three letters criticizing the president. In the spirit of high irrelevancy, the first letter writer claims the United States shouldn't sign a climate change agreement because it didn't sign the soon-to-expire Kyoto Protocol. Another writer bizarrely asserts that janitors will have to pay for the new health care reform bill.

Lamely trying to show the president is all talk and no show, the third writer incorrectly quotes from the Robert Redford character in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* as saying to Paul Newman's character, "Keep talking Butch; that's what you're good at." In fact, in the movie, Sundance says, "You just keep thinkin' Butch. That's what you're good at."

Unlike his ranting critics, President Obama has been good at thinking as well as action—getting the economy growing again,

INBOX ▶ 10

VILLAGER

Volume 57, Number 19

Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

757 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul, MN 55116
www.myvillager.com
651-699-1462 • Fax: 651-699-6501

The Villager serves the Highland Park, Lexington-Hamline, Macalester-Groveland, Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, Summit Hill, Summit-University and West 7th neighborhoods of St. Paul, the Longfellow and Nokomis neighborhoods of Minneapolis, Lilydale, Mendota and Mendota Heights.

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CIRCULATION

The Villager is published twice a month by Villager Communications Inc. The paper has a press run of 60,000, including 50,000 copies delivered to households and businesses and another 10,000 copies distributed via newsstands. Mail subscriptions are available at \$35 per year for those who live outside the home-delivered area.

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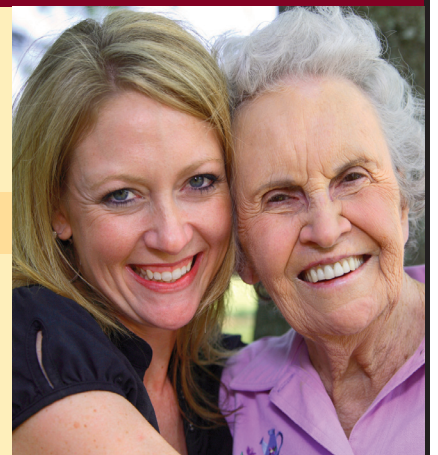


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9◀ INBOX

beginning the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, rethinking our involvement in Afghanistan, advocating for cutting greenhouse gases and being on the verge of passing health care reform.

Ken Peterson
West End

Two routes to electric transit

In August, President Obama went to Elkhart, Indiana, to announce \$2.4 billion in grants "to develop the next generation of fuel-efficient cars and trucks powered by the next generation of batteries."

The electric car is popular in the press. Consider Mr. Shai Agassi, the founder of an electric car company called Better Place. In July 2008, Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* called Agassi "the Jewish Henry Ford" who was launching an energy revolution that would end the world's "oil addiction."

In May 2009, *Time* magazine declared that Agassi was going to "help the world end its addiction to oil by transforming cars from their climate-changing, lung-polluting, gas-guzzling design to one that's clean, affordable and all-electric." The stories didn't mention that Better Place has just a concept car with a range under 100 miles, and a complex system for exchanging spent batteries on the road.

Two other startup car companies, Tesla Motors and Fisker Automotive, have been getting similar press treatment although their cars cost \$90,000-plus.

Hybrid gas-electric vehicles like the Ford Fusion, Toyota Prius and Honda Insight are cost-effective and selling. The technologies behind those vehicles are durable, reliable and affordable. Robert Bryce, author of the book, *The Dangerous Delusion of Energy Independence*, states that cars that don't come with an extension cord are here to stay, and should claim an increasing share of the automotive market.

GM, Ford, Chrysler and Nissan are all planning to introduce electric cars. By 2020 Nissan expects 10 percent of the vehicles it produces to be all-electric. In early 2009, a company official said that it sees "electrification of the transportation sector as our highest priority."

A century ago, the *New York Times* declared that the electric car "has long been recognized as the ideal solution" because it is "cleaner and quieter" and "much more economical" than gasoline-fueled cars. Unfortunately, the problem today is the same as it was then: the low energy density of batteries. Lithium ion batteries are today's best. They have a capacity per kilogram of 150 watt-hours. Gasoline has a capacity of 12,000 watt-hours per kilogram. This fundamental difference casts doubt on the near-term potential of the all-electric car.

Lithium ion batteries start degrading as soon as they leave the factory. They will last perhaps three to four years from the date of manufacture whether you use them or not. A lithium-ion battery pack needs an on-board computer to manage the battery. If depleted below its minimum voltage, you will have a dead battery. On rare occasions, lithium ion batteries can rupture, ignite or explode when exposed to high temperatures, like prolonged direct sunlight.

Long term, the market for better batteries and electric cars with longer range is enormous. It doesn't need government capital, as private investment is pouring into research. A better place for that federal grant of \$2.4 billion would be developing the equipment for an energy-efficient electric rail project. The project could cover at least the eastern half of the United States, which has many large cities within a few hundred miles of each other. Supplying the rolling stock and controls for a major passenger rail system would provide jobs and long-term energy savings.

The electric locomotives that transport passengers don't need batteries; their power is supplied along the line. The U.S. has the engineering talent and facilities to respond to this opportunity. It's time for all aboard.

Rolf E. Westgard
Macalester-Groveland

The death of common sense

I am sorry that Ms. Zimmer had to endure the death of her beloved dog due to it getting run over in the road ("A dog's life, a pet's death," *Villager* Inbox, November 18). My first "child" is also four-legged and 13 years old. I loathe the day when she dies. I am sympathetic for Ms. Zimmer's loss.

But then, there it was, one of the many reasons our nanny-state society is on the road to ruin. Ms. Zimmer stated that "the person driving the truck failed to adequately stop and apparently to look" and that she and her dog "were the victims of...careless drivers."

Why is it *always* someone else's fault for one's misfortune? The dog ran out into the street. I am assuming it was not listening to her command, was by herself or perhaps not on a leash. Where 4,000-pound vehicles operate, what did she think might happen? Where is her responsibility in the matter?

I am sad to report yet another death: that of common sense.

Todd Muntifering
Highland Park

The safest place for a dog

I was saddened to read the letter about Madchen, the little dog killed in traffic (*Villager* Inbox, November 18). Her wretched origins made the story even more tragic. Puppy mills are a scourge on any community. It is our civic responsibility to prosecute these neglectful, abusive dog "farmers" and to shelter the helpless offspring of their illegitimate businesses. I have two wonderful rescue dogs, both of whom were neglected and abandoned.

Losing a pet is heartbreaking under any circumstances, but the violent death of a furry family member is perhaps the most horrific. More than once I have witnessed dogs running into traffic with catastrophic results. No matter how well behaved a domestic animal is, instinctive behavior can be triggered without warning and without time for its handler to react.

Obedience training and regular practice can help curb a dog's natural impulses, but our pets' greatest measure

of protection is provided in the city ordinance that states, "The license holder, owner or keeper of any dog shall be responsible for the effective restraint of such dog and shall not permit the dog to run at large." While it may seem restrictive and confining to deny our pets free range, dogs are safest behind a fence or on a leash.

At the end of her letter, Madchen's owner ruefully warns that "Next time it could be someone else's."

Let's take fate into our own hands in the form of a leash. We'll never regret it.

Guy Harrison
Nokomis, Minneapolis

We still can save the planet

Climate change will wreck this planet if we don't do something about it now. The evidence that the earth is warming up and that we are contributing to the warmup is overwhelming.

The Greenland glaciers are melting at the fastest rate in 50 years. The Antarctic ice sheet is melting rapidly, dumping enough fresh water into the sea each year to supply Los Angeles. At this rate, the ice sheet could collapse this century, leading to a 16-foot rise in sea level. The Arctic sea ice could be gone in 30 years, the summer sea ice in five years.

The consequences of doing nothing will be catastrophic, and Minnesota will not slip the effects of global warming. The plant and animal life here will change dramatically. Many species we identify with the state will be gone. Our pine forest, for instance, would disappear. Agriculture would be subject to more severe storms and insect infestations. Tourism would suffer as winter recreation is degraded.

Don't believe the naysayers. The great weight of scientific evidence, collected and reported by the best climate scientists in the world, demonstrates that the planet is warming and people are contributing to the problem.

The Clean Energy and Security Act will help. This act has passed the U.S. House. The U.S. Senate will soon take up the bill. Please contact Senator Klobuchar (1-202-224-3244) and Senator Franken (1-202-224-5641) and ask them to support this legislation. We still can save the planet.

Pat O'Regan
Inver Grove Heights

Do write, won't you?

The *Villager* welcomes letters to the editors. In fact, the more the merrier. To be considered for publication, however, letters must be signed and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Also, please indicate the neighborhood in which you live. Letters may be sent by e-mail to editors@myvillager.com, faxed to 651-699-6501 or otherwise delivered to the *Villager* at 757 S. Snelling Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116.

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Highland Village to sprout new farmers' market in spring

The vendors still need to be lined up, money needs to be raised and a part-time manager needs to be hired, but it appears that locally grown produce straight from the field will be available next year in the heart of Highland Village.

The proposed farmers' market would operate from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. every Saturday from May through October 2010 in the parking lot behind Starbucks Coffee at Ford Parkway and Cleveland Avenue. The plan is to have between five and seven vendors on board in the first year.

Getting the market has been a longtime goal for the Highland Business Association (HBA). "It will give people just one more reason to come to Highland Village," said Michael Gayle, chairman of the HBA's Promotions Committee and owner of the M. Gayle Studio fitness center at 714 S. Cleveland Ave.

The HBA had considered working with the St. Paul Farmers' Market on establishing one of its satellite markets in Highland Village, Gayle said, but instead chose to cre-

ate its own nonprofit organization to manage the operation.

Setting up the nonprofit, working out an agreement for using the parking lot and creating a marketing plan for the farmers' market were all accomplished with the help of Leadership St. Paul, a program of the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. Gayle was one of six civic leaders on the Leadership St. Paul team that worked on the proposed farmers' market.

The HBA still needs to raise several thousand dollars to bring the market to fruition, Gayle said. It is hoping to raise at least \$1,500 of that with a holiday party on Wednesday, December 16. The party will run from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Tiffany Sports Lounge, 2051 Ford Pkwy. Tickets are \$15 and are good for appetizers and all the beer and wine you care to drink. Tiffany's is providing the wine and appetizers, and Summit Brewing has donated the beer.

For more information, contact HBA executive director Shelly Harris at 651-699-9042 or sharris@highlandba.com.

Business Briefs

A "Planning Your Website" seminar will be offered by SCORE small business counselors from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 2, at University Bank, 200 University Ave. The cost is \$40, which includes materials. Visit www.score-stpaul.org or call 651-261-1429.

HealthEast Grand Avenue Clinic, 870 Grand Ave., will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9:00 a.m. Monday, December 7. The Grand Avenue Business Association, St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman have been invited to attend. Previously called HealthEast Macalester/Groveland on Snelling Avenue, the clinic is relocating to the larger space and is changing its name.

United Family Medicine, located in the new Peter J. King Family Health Center on Randolph Avenue and West 7th Street, has been awarded LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Designed by Pope Architects and built by McGough Construction, United Family Medicine's building is the first clinic in the state to receive this level of certification. The designation notes the 32,000-square-foot, two-story facility's use of natural light, high-efficiency fixtures, recycled materials and low-VOC products in its design. United Family Medicine has served more than 2,100 new patients since the new clinic opened in March. Visit www.unitedfamilymedicine.org.

Geordies 454 Bistro has opened at 454 S. Snelling Ave., serving breakfast, lunch and dinner in the space formerly occupied by Blondie's Cafe. The 30-seat restaurant is owned by Deb Blair and John Dick. Executive chef Kyle Rosenwald oversees a kitchen staff with over 40 years' experience at such local restaurants as Lurcat, W.A. Frost and Sea Change.

The Highland Business Association will hold a holiday social from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 10, at Summit Brewing, 910 Montreal Circle. The cost is \$15-\$20 and includes food, Summit beer and root beer. To register, call the HBA office at 651-699-9042.



Santa Claus, shown here at a past Breakfast with Santa with Kaylee Kipfmuehler, 3, will once again be making his list for local children during two Breakfasts with Santa on Saturday, December 5 and 12, at the Chatterbox Pub, 800 S. Cleveland Ave. The Highland Business Association invites children and their adult guests to meet the jolly old elf and enjoy a complementary breakfast between 9:00 and 11:00 either morning. Admission is by donation of either a nonperishable food item or a new toy for Toys for Tots. The staff from the Hillcrest Recreation Center will be on hand to conduct the kids in a craft project. To register, call 651-699-1154. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Flannery Construction and the city of St. Paul recently announced plans to work together to complete the long-anticipated Farmers' Market Flats in Lowertown. The \$13.5 million development will feature a 15,000-square-foot indoor market on the first floor and 48 market-rate rental units above. Construction began in spring 2008, but ended after a dispute between the developer and Flannery over payments for work performed. The city and Flannery plan to rebid the project over the winter.

A "Community Shred" event to benefit Crime Stoppers of Minnesota will be held from 9:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, December 12, at American Bank, 2310 W. 7th St. The public is invited to bring personal and confidential papers to be shredded on site by Shred Right. A donation of \$2.00 per bag or box is suggested and will support Crime Stoppers' crime-fighting efforts.

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Changes recommended to Jefferson bike boulevard plan

Suggestions for redesigned roadway are dependent on the wishes of local residents

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul Department of Public Works and the nonprofit Transit for Livable Communities are both pushing for changes to a plan for creating a new bicycle boulevard along the entire length of Jefferson Avenue as a link between off-road bicycle trails along Mississippi River Boulevard and Shepard Road.

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council has yet to take a position on the changes. The district council's Transportation Committee is pushing for studies and tests before any plan moves forward.

The purpose of the bicycle boulevard is to make bicycling and, in some areas, walking safer. The project would cost \$1 million, with \$750,000 coming from a federal grant administered by TLC and \$250,000 from the city of St. Paul's Capital Improvement Budget.

In August the West 7th/Fort Road Federation approved the concept of a bicycle boulevard between Lexington Parkway and

Shepard Road, pending a more detailed design. That stretch of Jefferson is wide enough to accommodate dedicated bike lanes without losing much on-street parking. That stretch of Jefferson could also get new streetlights, sidewalks and corner bumpouts.

For the stretch of Jefferson between Lexington Parkway and Mississippi River Boulevard, Transit for Livable Communities is now suggesting that at a minimum, signs and pavement markings be added identifying Jefferson as a bicycle boulevard.

Public Works is also suggesting that signs and pavement markings be added along the Macalester-Groveland portion of Jefferson in addition to the following:

- A street table—a longer, flatter version of a speed bump—could be installed at Jefferson and Woodlawn Avenue and a traffic circle could be installed at Jefferson and Mount Curve Boulevard as part of a street repaving project planned for 2014.

- A traffic circle could be installed at Jefferson and Finn Street and a small pedestrian island at Jefferson and Cleveland as part of a street repaving project planned for 2016.

- Some stop signs could be removed and speed humps added on Jefferson between Cleveland and Fairview avenues. Another idea is to install a traffic diverter at Cleveland

and Jefferson.

- Public Works has dropped the idea of removing the semaphores at Jefferson and Fairview, but is suggesting possibly adding a button that would allow bicyclists and pedestrians to activate the signal.

- Traffic circles at intersections and the restoration of on-street parking on the north side are being contemplated for Jefferson between Fairview and Snelling avenues. This stretch of Jefferson also carries more traffic than other, so Public Works would like to do studies there.

- Jefferson between Snelling and Lexington also carries more traffic. The street there has been rebuilt recently. Improvements could include street markings and signage, as well as dynamic speed display signs.

Traffic circles are one feature of the Jefferson bicycle boulevard that members of the Macalester-Groveland Transportation Committee have said they would like to test before installing permanently. Public Works officials, Transit for Livable Communities representatives and the district council are still discussing what should be tested or studied. It will likely be early 2010 before any decisions are made on the tests, let alone the project.

What has been causing confusion for some Macalester-Groveland residents is that the

bicycle boulevard improvements are being discussed at the same time as the Davern-Jefferson Residential Street Vitality Project. The Davern-Jefferson project, which is slated for 2010, was the subject of two neighborhood meetings this fall. About 20 local residents showed up at the Macalester-Groveland Transportation Committee's November 23 meeting with a flier about traffic circles printed on district council letterhead and including a business card from city staff. Neither the district council nor the city had anything to do with the flier, according to Transportation Committee chair Terry Casey.

Some ideas for calming traffic along the bicycle boulevard could be incorporated into the Davern-Jefferson street repaving project, including traffic circles and the lifting of the parking ban on the north side of Jefferson between Fairview and Snelling. Residents have been told the traffic circles would be added if enough of the neighbors want them. Neighbors were polled at one of the Davern-Jefferson street repaving meetings, and they split 18-18 on whether or not to install traffic circles.

Any changes to streets in the Davern-Jefferson project have to be agreed on by next spring when the street paving project bidding begins.

Pearle of a businessman dies

Bernie Farstad, 66, former co-owner with wife Barb Farstad of the Pearle Vision store in Highland Village, died on November 14 after a 12-year battle with Alzheimer's disease. His wife and their two sons, Benjamin and Dominic, were at his side when he passed away.

Farstad grew up in northwestern Minnesota in small towns near his birthplace of Argyle. After graduating from high school, he moved to Minneapolis where he began working in the optical business.

After many years at Walman Optical, he and Barb purchased the Pearle Vision franchise on Ford Parkway in 1984.

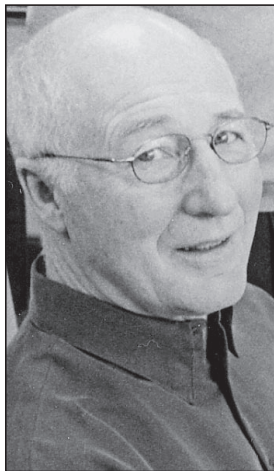
Farstad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2000, three years after its symptoms first began showing up. The couple sold the business in 2003 to their longtime friends, Becky Kerkow and Gene Krupa, to contend with Bernie's disease.

"The store was more than just a business to us," Barb said in a 2003 *Villager* article announcing

its sale. "It was like our child."

A memorial service to celebrate Farstad's life will be held at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, at the St. Paul College Club, 990 Summit Ave.

The family welcomes donations to Mount Olivet Adult Day Services (5601 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55419), where Bernie was cared for in his final years. Private interment will be at Lakewood Cemetery at an unspecified future date.



Bernie Farstad

Names in the News

State Senator Jim Metzen from District 39 has been appointed to a panel seeking strategies to balance the state budget. The Balanced Budget Subcommittee of the Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy recently held its first meeting at the state Capitol. The subcommittee's next meeting is set for December 10. For more information on the work of the subcommittee, call Metzen's office at 651-296-4370.

Metro Transit and the various local transportation management organizations in St. Paul gave out their end-of-the-year honors recently to individuals and organizations who have been outstanding for their work in the area of transportation:

The Sibley Bike Depot, 712 University Ave., received the Community Hero Award for its work to reduce traffic congestion. The shop provides space for local residents to repair their bicycles with assistance from

trained volunteers. It also hosts bicycle repair classes for youths and adults.

Linda Mainquist of St. Paul received the Citizen Leader Award for her work in reminding residents and business owners to shovel their sidewalks.

Chad Skally, a Summit Hill resident and Grand Avenue business owner, was named Neighborhood Advocate for his help in getting 66 bike racks installed along Grand Avenue.

Kris Stetter, a science teacher at Holy Spirit Catholic School, has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Toshiba Foundation. Stetter will use the money to purchase respiratory and muscle evaluation equipment, blood pressure instruments and other laboratory tools to help Holy Spirit students monitor their own health as part of their lessons in biology and personal health.

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My name is Lee Lewis and I am a real estate agent with City Connections Realty Incorporated in New York City. I am a former Saint Paul resident, a graduate of Saint Paul Academy and University of Wisconsin, Madison. I have been residing in Manhattan for the past thirteen years and always enjoy assisting other Minnesota natives as they make their transition to the Big Apple, as I did. I specialize in condo sales, but am also highly experienced in all aspects of the rental arena including both co-op and straight rental deals.



To look at my current property listings go to:

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Outlooks in oil

Local artists' landscapes to grace gallery walls at FrameWorks in Highland

BY BILL STIEGER

There is no shortage of fine artists in St. Paul, as the upcoming "The Oil Show" at FrameWorks in Highland Village can attest. The frame shop at 2022 Ford Pkwy. has been offering local artists wall space for the exhibition and sale of their works for over a year now. Its upcoming exhibition, which opens Saturday, December 5, will feature the talents of nine oil painters, a majority of whom live in the Villager area.

Most of the work will consist of landscapes. Joshua Cunningham of Macalester-Groveland paints Midwestern landscapes and explores what he calls "everyday subjects under a variety of light effects." Mark Hamel of Highland Park, who earns his living as a corporate writer, paints realistic still lifes and more impressionistic landscapes. Landscape painter and printmaker Stewart Loughridge of Highland Park won a blue ribbon at the Minnesota State Fair in 2007 for a print titled

"Cathedral Snow." He paints Midwestern and Western landscapes, and divides his time between St. Paul and Colorado, where he also likes to paint.

St. Paul seems to be a haven for realistic landscape painters. The three aforementioned artists have studied with esteemed painter and Highland Park native Joseph Paquet, who recently returned from an artist's excursion to China. Paquet offered up his opinion of local artists.

"I've been teaching in St. Paul for 13 years and there are still people who refuse to believe the high level many local painters have achieved," he said. "There is a load of talent in the Twin Cities and, knowing the painters in it, I'm sure that anybody would be delighted by the show at FrameWorks."

Highland Park artist Joy Liberman works in landscapes and still lifes. Her notable work is a series of Italian landscapes. (She made frequent trips to Italy and returned with an Italian husband.) The twist



Pam Fechter and Jim Laitinen show off the art gallery at FrameWorks on Ford Parkway. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

in Liberman's style is her nod toward surrealism in some of her work. The Magritte influence is evident in "Soul Droplets," which depicts a levitating candle that burns at both ends.

Landscape artist Bob Upton of Highland Park works as the creative director of Parachute Design, a Minneapolis design and branding firm. He is a traditional outdoor realist, who studied at the Atelier in Minneapolis, and is another student of Paquet's. His design work gave

him the opportunity to travel extensively in Europe, filling sketchbooks in Amsterdam, London, Paris, Florence, Madrid, Barcelona, Venice and Warsaw.

A florid use of color sets Highland artist Jane Weis' paintings apart from the crowd. She prefers to paint landscapes and still lifes in bright pastels that remind one of the colors of Gauguin.

Other local artists whose work will appear in the show include Robert Bonawitz, who has painted

a stunning series of landscapes of the Fort Snelling area; Kevan Willington, who paints still lifes and botanicals; and Bob Matheson, a devotee of plein air landscapes.

FrameWorks is managed by Pam Fechter and Jim Laitinen, who began showing the works of local artists to give their customers an opportunity chance to

purchase original art. Fechter noted a change in the shop's customers' tastes.

"Before the recession, a lot of people would come in to have their posters framed," she said. "But today's customers tend to want to frame original art. They certainly don't want to spend money to frame pictures not worth the expense. So we were motivated by the idea of offering art they can purchase for their homes."

Fechter, who lives only a few blocks from the 35-year-old framing shop, said Highland Village is a great place to show the works of good artists. "We get a lot of foot traffic here on the parkway, and a lot of people just stop by to browse," she said. "We want people to know there are some terrific artists who live right here."

"The Oil Show" will open with a reception from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5. The show will remain on display through January 6.



Joshua Cunningham's "December in Swede Hollow."



Joy Liberman's "Tree Houses in Puglia."



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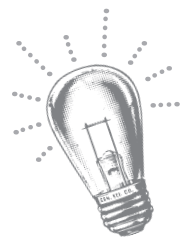
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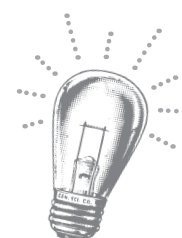
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School Notes

Students for Justice and Peace will host a Holiday Fair Trade Sale from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, December 2-3, at the University of St. Thomas. Ten Thousand Villages, Coat of Many Colors, Tradewinds and other local vendors will be selling goods from around the world on the lower level of Murray-Herrick Center. Live music and refreshments will be provided, as well as education about the concept of Fair Trade.

The Vincent L. Hawkinson Foundation for Peace & Justice in Minneapolis has named its top scholarship in honor of Stan Jacobson of Highland Park, who served as the foundation's treasurer for its first 20 years. The Jacobson Scholarship will recognize students who demonstrate a commitment to peace and justice.

Highland Park Elementary School has been named a Family-Friendly School by the Minnesota Parent Center in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education. The school was selected for having staff who make the building an inviting place and for policies that encourage parents to be involved with their child's learning.

St. Paul's Central Library will offer two free classes in the

coming weeks: an introduction to genealogy at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5; and an exploration of digital photo sharing and editing at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, December 12. To register, call 651-266-7000, ext. 5.

Laura Jeffrey Academy, 1550 Summit Ave., will hold parent information sessions at 7:00 p.m. Monday, December 7, and Tuesday, January 12. The academy is a girl-focused charter school serving students in grades 5-8. Call 651-414-6000 or visit laurajeffreyacademy.org.

Cretin-Derham Hall, 550 S. Albert St., will present *The Jungle Book* at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, December 9-12, with additional 2:00 a.m. matinees on Saturday and Sunday, December 12-13. Call 651-690-2443.

A **Christmas concert** will be presented by the music department of Cretin-Derham Hall at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 16, in the school's field house, 550 S. Albert St. The concert will feature performances by the Select Treble Choir and Vocal Arts Ensemble, together with the CDH Concert Band. Call 651-690-2443.

School District 197 is now taking registration for its winter

Early Childhood Family Education classes for parents with young children. Classes are held in the day and evening at Somerset School in Mendota Heights and Pilot Knob School in Eagan. The winter session begins the week of January 11. Visit www.isd197.org or call 651-403-8353.

The Open School, 90 S. Western Ave., will present William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, December 2-4. Cafe tables will be available for the Friday performance and will feature desserts from the Stockholm Pie Company. Tables for four include preferred seating with desserts and beverages served to the table at intermission for a contribution of \$50. Regular tickets are \$3.00-\$5.00. Admission to the December 2 performance is by a food or cash donation to the food shelf. Contact Pam Larson 651-293-8670, ext. 1116.

Horace Mann School, 2001 Eleanor Ave., is seeking volunteers who can give a minimum of one hour per week during the school day helping children in grades K-6 with their math and literacy skills. Training, lesson plans and materials will be provided. Previous teaching experience is not necessary. Call Mandy Leung at 651-293-8965, ext. 1089.

Volunteers

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities is seeking volunteers to meet with young people for one hour a week at one of more than 25 participating schools. Locally, mentors are needed at Highland and Murray junior high school, and at Bruce Vento, Como Park, Dayton's Bluff, Mississippi and World Cultures elementary schools. Volunteers serve as friends, not tutors. Call 651-789-2400 or visit www.bigstwin-cities.org.

Miss Teen Ramsey County applicants are now being sought. Candidates must be single and between the ages of 13-18. Teens compete in personal interview, fitness wear, fun fashion wear and evening gown events. There is no talent or swimsuit competition. The winner will compete in the Miss Teen Minnesota pageant on March 6-7 in St. Cloud. The state winner will receive a prize package and scholarship totalling \$10,000 and a chance to compete in the international pageant. Call 652-432-6758.

GiveMN.org, a new online giving website, was launched this month. The site was designed by the Minnesota Community

Foundation and other nonprofit leaders in the state to make the donation process easier and more convenient for Minnesota nonprofits and the individuals who care to support their work. The site provides donors with information about organizations that match their philanthropic goals, and allows users to keep track of their donations in a single location.

The Minnesota Air Guard Museum has a variety of volunteer opportunities available. Jobs include administrative assistant, tour guide, restoration work, exhibit development, museum maintenance, collection archivists and photographer. Call 612-713-2523.

'Round Again, a free clothing closet for maternity and children's clothing, is a service project of the MOMS Club of Summit Hill and is located in the basement of Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 1935 St. Clair Ave. It is open from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Fridays. It will be closed on Christmas Day. Call 651-699-8522.

Serving Our Troops, a St. Paul-based volunteer group, was recently presented with the Civilian Award for Excellence from

the U.S. National Guard in recognition of its work to support active guard members. Since 2004, Serving Our Troops has shipped and served more than 40,000 steak dinners to members of the Minnesota National Guard and their families at events in Kosovo, Iraq, Mississippi, Oklahoma, St. Paul and Rochester. On December 12, Serving Our Troops will send more than 10,000 steak dinners to soldiers stationed in Iraq and Kuwait. Family members here will gather at the same time at Roy Wilkins Auditorium for a special meal. The two events will be connected by a live international video link to allow families to share a dinner together. Visit www.servingourtroops.com or call 651-698-4615.

The Express Bike Shop, 1158 Selby Ave., has received a donation of 55 used bicycles from local RBC Wealth Management financial consultant Gary Petrucci. Teen interns from the shop will refurbish and resell the bikes, with sales funding the Youth Express program. Petrucci made the donation after being inspired by an event this fall where 40 children from Big Brothers Big Sister of the Greater Twin Cities were surprised with new bicycles. Call 651-644-9660.

Senior News

The Thompson Park Activity Center in West St. Paul is offering the following events for older adults in the coming weeks: Yoga Flow: Midday from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Mondays; Fit for Life exercise classes at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays; Aerobics and Stretch classes at 9:00 a.m. on Thursdays; duplicate bridge from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays; a Scandinavian Club meeting at 10:15 a.m. on Thursday, December 10 (bring holiday treats to share); a Great Decisions discussion on "Cuba on the Verge" from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 14; a Socrates Café Philosophers Club meeting from

1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 15; and a trip to see *Oklahoma* at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre on Wednesday, December 16. Call 651-403-8300.

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 104 S. Snelling Ave., will continue its Aging Splendidly series, with Marlene Stum of the University of Minnesota speaking on "Who Gets Granny's Yellow Pie Plate," on Thursday, December 10. The session will introduce participants to six key factors to help family members communicate and plan in advance for the death of a loved one. An optional health check will be offered at 11:30 a.m., fol-

lowed by lunch at noon and the speaker at 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$7.00. Call Russ Carlson at 651-699-5560.

Winter Carnival Senior Royalty candidates are now being sought. People age 55 and older who live in Ramsey, Hennepin, Washington or Dakota county are eligible to apply. Three men and three women will be chosen in January as the 2010 Senior Royalty and will represent St. Paul throughout the year at parades, festivals and other events. The application deadline is December 21. Call 651-266-6447 or e-mail mary.livingston@ci.stpaul.mn.us.



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District Council News

Highland Park

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Montreal, West 7th, Lexington—Monica Beeman from the city of St. Paul discussed proposed changes to the intersection of Montreal Avenue, West 7th Street and Lexington Parkway at the Highland District Council's Transportation Committee meeting on November 18. The intersection has an unusually high number of left-turn crashes. The plan is to remove parking spaces in front of Exit Realty to provide turning lanes in both directions instead of the current overlapping lanes. The committee recommended that a left-turn arrow be installed and discussed additional signage to minimize confusion as drivers enter the intersection. The addition of pedestrian crossings was also discussed, as was the idea of a two-lane roundabout.

Ford Parkway sign variance—The HDC's Community Development Committee heard a request on November 17 for a variance of 200 square feet from the 400 square feet allowed for signage on the property at 2221 Ford Pkwy., where Haskell's and eight other tenants currently are located. Because Haskell's signage already consumes 329 square feet, the variance would allow for the remaining 271 square feet to be split by the other tenants. The committee voted unanimously in favor of the variance, which was scheduled to go before the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals on November 30.

Highland Village rezoning—The Community Development Committee voted on November 17 to recommend to the full HDC board that a zoning study be conducted of the Highland Village business district. Of the 63 letters sent to property owners on or near Ford Parkway and Cleveland Avenue, only one business expressed concern about the proposed study.

Mark your calendar—Breakfast with Santa, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Saturdays, December 5 and 12, Chatterbox Pub, 800 S. Cleveland Ave.; a "community shred" event to benefit Crime Stoppers of Minnesota, 9:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, December 12, American Bank, 2310 W. 7th St.; and a holiday party and farmers' market fundraiser, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 16, Tiffany's Sports Lounge, 2051 Ford Pkwy. There will be no HDC board meeting in December.

Macalester-Groveland

www.macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Beauty of a deal—Register at the Macalester-Groveland Community Council office, 320 S. Griggs St., to win two free tickets to *Beauty and the Beast* at the Ordway. Stop by any time between now and Monday, December 7, to sign up. The office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays, but it is advised to call ahead.

Neighborhood rep meetings—Have any great ideas or burning questions that could be answered at an upcoming neighbor rep meeting? Contact Afton Martens at afton@macgrove.org to share ideas.

KidsPark enrollment—KidsPark, the community council's child-care service, is now accepting enrollment at its new Des-

noyer Park location. KidsPark gives children a place to play in a supervised environment while their parents take a class, shop or exercise. To learn more about the program, visit www.kidsparkdropin.org.

Board note—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council board of directors will not meet in December.

Summit Hill

www.summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming—The Summit Hill Association's Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming Committee is back. The committee's first public meeting in some time will be held at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 15, at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave. Committee co-chairs Cheri Kedrowski and Colin McFadden are looking forward to hearing Summit Hill residents' thoughts about traffic and pedestrian safety, as well as engaging the city on these issues.

SHA annual fund—The annual Summit Hill Association fundraising campaign letter has been mailed to all households in the neighborhood. Tax-deductible contributions to the SHA will be invested directly in the neighborhood.

Commuter Choice—Summit Hill resident and business owner Chad Skally was one of seven winners of a 2009 Commuter Choice Award. Each year, Metro Transit and other local transportation management organizations recognize people and companies that develop creative ways to promote commuting options. Skally was recognized for his work in partnering with the Grand Avenue Business Association, the Summit Hill and Macalester-Groveland district councils, the city of St. Paul, Dero Bike Racks and local businesses to install 66 bike racks along Grand Avenue this summer.

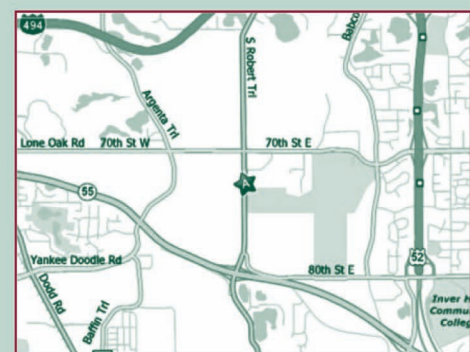
Neighborhood honor roll nominees—Volunteers Charlie Hardy, Kate Pearce and Lisa McGann are the SHA's selections for the 2009 St. Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll. Hardy has done extraordinary work as the former chair of the SHA Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee. Pearce has made a big impact on the neighborhood as a member of the Communications and Environment committees, and has served as the SHA's treasurer. McGann has been a block club leader, SHA board member and chair of the Development Committee, and will chair the 2010 SHA House Tour. The Honor Roll award ceremony will be held in January.

Tree-lighting ceremony—The SHA Communications and Outreach Committee is inviting the public to the lighting of the official Grand Avenue holiday tree at 5:00 p.m. Saturday December 5, outside Charlemagne, 1262 Grand Ave., as part of this year's Grand Meander. Carols will be sung and refreshments will be provided by local businesses. The public is being encouraged to donate new, unwrapped toys to Toys for Tots and nonperishable food items for Second Harvest.

SHA joins Facebook—The SHA has joined the world of social networking with its newly launched Facebook group. The page will provide videos, photos and news to supplement the association's newsletter and website. Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for the Summit Hill Association.

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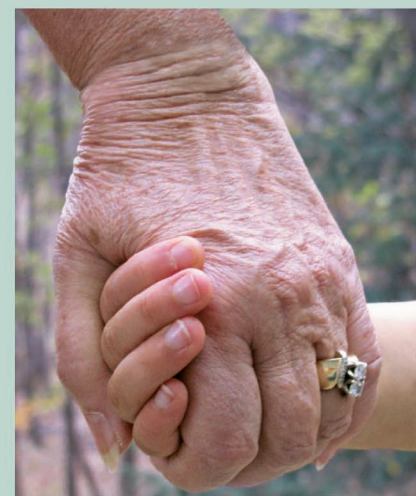
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Food



Rolling out memories of a wondrous baker

The word “cookie” is a corruption of the Dutch words *koekje*, meaning “little cake,” but it is hardly a Dutch invention. Cookie-like confections date to 7th century Persia, one of the first regions in the world to cultivate sugar cane. As sugar conquered Europe, cookies collected the spoils. Here in the U.S., one immigrant group after another has contributed to our collective cookie jar, a heritage that’s unique even by name, since most English-speaking people call them biscuits.

In our family, the holiday cookie jar has been ineffably enriched by an extraordinary baker, my cousin Becky Connor. Becky and I were born within months of each other, but our lives took different turns.

My first memories of Becky have her flat on her back, unable to come out to play. It wasn’t the last time that would happen. A bout of spinal meningitis was followed by a series of painful surgeries that left her bedridden for months on end and dependent on back braces, leg braces and crutches.

But none of these obstacles could keep her out of the kitchen. As a 4-year-old, Becky’s culinary curiosity led to an un-



Home Fires

By Jo Marshall

Each year, the three Connor women cranked out dozens upon dozens of plates of sweets to share. Whether you were the minister or the mechanic, you got a plate of cookies.

fortunate encounter between her index finger and a pair of whirling mixer blades. Doctors were able to save the finger, but a cautionary tale emerged for the benefit of her cousins: “Remember what happened to Becky,” my mother would say whenever little fingers got too close to a mixer. I repeated the warning to my own children. In retrospect, I wonder if they thought a run-in with a mixer blade could confine them to a walker.

Recently, when Becky’s sister Sharon dropped off a folder bulging with recipes, I was struck anew by the obvious: If a talent for baking can come by either nature or nurture, Becky was imbued with every possibility. Among the items was a sort of cookie journal started by Becky’s and Sharon’s mother, Cecile. It’s a yearly list of items to be baked, each of them marked with an initial—M (for mom), S or B—designating the responsible party.

The first entry includes 32 types of cookies, candies and breads. “That list kept us organized when we were baking way too much,” laughed Sharon. “You’ll notice that anything that requires a precise baking time was assigned to Becky. After four or five batches, I’d lose patience. Becky never did.”

Each year, the three Connor women cranked out dozens upon dozens of plates of sweets to share. Whether you were the minister or the mechanic, you got a plate of cookies. Careful notes were taken of who liked what, and the list was adjusted accordingly. “If you said you liked divinity, next year’s plate would be loaded with it,” Sharon said.

When Aunt Cecile passed away, the journal was kept by her daughters—a vanilla-stained snapshot of weekends spent baking and bonding. The production continued after Becky was put on oxygen, choreographed to ensure that the oxygen tubes didn’t become tangled in her wheelchair and the tank stayed clear of the heat.

When my kids first saw a Connor cookie platter, the reaction was shock and awe, joyously redefined. If the Sugar Plum Fairy had waltzed in with a fairy battalion, the con-



PHOTOS BY JANET HOSTETTER

Dulce de Leche Cookies (Alfajores)

Rolling out this dough can be tricky. If you’ve got a pastry marble, this is the time to use it. It also helps to chill the marble and rolling pin beforehand in the freezer. If you don’t have a small cookie cutter, get creative. (I used a bud vase.) Alfajores are a favorite in South America.

1/2 cup softened butter
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg, plus one egg yolk
grated zest of 1/2 lemon
1/2 cup flour
1-1/4 cups cornstarch (yes, 1-1/4 cup)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 13.4 oz. can dulce de leche
1-1/2 cups flaked coconut, preferably unsweetened

Cream butter and sugar, add egg and yolk, and beat until creamy. Add lemon zest and mix well. Sift dry ingredients together and add gradually into mixture. Cover dough and chill for at least two hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Work with about a quarter of the dough at a time, keeping the remainder chilled. On floured surface with floured rolling pin, roll out dough to 3/16-inch thickness. Cut rounds of desired size, 1-1/2 to 2 inches, continuing to roll out and cut scraps until all the dough is used. Place on parchment-lined cookie sheets and bake 5-10 minutes, watching carefully and being sure not to let them brown. Remove immediately to cooling rack and cool completely. To assemble, spread dulce de leche on the flat side of one cookie and sandwich with another. Spread thin layer of dulce de leche on outer edge, and roll in coconut. (Cookies may be stored in air-tight container for up to a week before assembly.) Makes about 3 dozen.

Lemon Snowdrop Cookies

1 cup softened butter
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon lemon extract
2 cups flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
Lemon filling (see below)
Powdered sugar for dusting

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Thoroughly cream butter, sugar and extract. Add flour and salt. Mix well. Form dough into teaspoon-sized balls. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheet. Flatten slightly. Bake 8 to 10 minutes. Remove to rack and cool. Form sandwiches with lemon filling, and roll in powdered sugar. Makes about 4 dozen.

Filling:

1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
dash of salt
1/2 cup water
2 tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3 drops yellow food coloring, if desired

Mix sugar, cornstarch and salt in saucepan. Over medium heat, gradually stir in water. Stirring constantly, bring mixture to a boil and boil for one minute until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in butter and lemon zest, then stir in lemon juice and food coloring if using. Cool thoroughly before assembling cookies.

Buckeye Balls

Becky published this candy recipe years ago in a Marshall family cookbook, and relatives gobbled it up.

1-1/2 cups creamy peanut butter
1/2 cup softened butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 pound powdered sugar
6 oz. package semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 tablespoons butter or solid shortening

Mix peanut butter, butter, vanilla and powdered sugar until smooth. Dough will be very stiff. Shape dough into 1-inch balls, place on waxed paper, and refrigerate until well-chilled. In a double boiler, stir chocolate with shortening until melted. Insert toothpick into chilled peanut butter balls and dip into chocolate to coat 3/4 of “buckeye.” Place on waxed paper and chill until chocolate coating is firm.

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A history of how the cookie crumbled

Happy accident: Many cookie recipes were originally an accidental by-product of cake baking: Oven temperatures were tested by baking small bits of dough, and voilà!

Fanciful cookie shapes date all the way back to medieval Germany, where gingerbread was a high art strictly regulated by baking guilds.

What's in a name? The fact that we in the U.S. call cookies "cookies" is likely due to New York's history as a Dutch colony. When New York City was designated as the nation's first capital, visitors from around the country poured into the city, encountered the Dutch word for the confection—*koekje*, meaning "little cake"—and took the word back home with them.

Cookie baking exploded with the invention of baking powder in 1843. Earlier leavening came from ammonia derived from

deer antlers, if you can believe it.

The Toll House cookie was invented in 1930 by Ruth Wakefield, the proprietor of the Toll House Inn in Massachusetts. Hoping to devise a chocolate sugar cookie, she chopped bar chocolate into her Butter Drop Do batter, expecting it to melt. It didn't. She subsequently licensed her recipe to Nestlé and was paid for the gesture with a lifetime supply of chocolate. Thus, the chocolate chip cookie predates the chocolate morsel.

Until 1934, Girl Scout cookies were baked by actual Girl Scouts.

The newest animal in Barnum's Animal Crackers circus is the koala bear, which bested the penguin, walrus and cobra in a vote by consumers in 2002.

Fortune cookies are purely an American invention. Don't expect them served after dinner in Beijing.

—Jo Marshall



19◀ HOLIDAY COOKIES

quest couldn't have been more complete.

Cloud-like divinity sat next to dense squares of fudge. And not just one kind of fudge. There was chocolate and maple and two-toned fudge. Fragile rosettes were covered in drifts of powdered sugar. There were shortbreads and spritz and crescent moons. Pert little pecan balls. Bars oozing with caramel and coconut. Petite sandwich cookies revealing a gooey glimpse of the riches they enclosed. Artistry triumphed, every lily was gilded, and there was no shortage of creativity. My cousins were dipping Oreos in white chocolate and piping on pretty little poinsettias long before Nabisco got wind of the notion.

When the inevitable question came, "Will you take some cookies home?" the kids would shoot me a glance that telegraphed two moral

dilemmas: Is it right to take someone else's cookies when we have our own at home? And, Mommy, just how obvious is it that we think these cookies are superior to yours?

Of course, we never refused. You can't deny your kids perfection when it's sitting right there on a plate. And any embarrassment their eagerness prompted quickly melted in sugar euphoria. Besides, I wanted a few more pieces of fudge. And seconds on shortbread.

After one more painful surgery, Becky died last year. Her recipes are mine to copy but never to replicate. Some people inspire us in the kitchen. Some inspire us in life. As I bake Becky's Lemon Snowdrops, I'll recall a brave soul who smiled through tribulation. Perhaps her Dulce de Leche Cookies will remind you to savor every sweet thing that comes your way.

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Looking forward to Christmas

A SHORT STORY BY ROGER BARR

A hundred and one things to do, Matt thinks as he backs out of the driveway. Wednesday afternoon already. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, and Friday is the day to set up the crèche in the front yard. By his count, this will be the 50th year that the crèche in one form or another has graced the Bartholomew family's front yard.

He'll go to the corner hardware store rather than one of the chains, Matt decides. Next, he'll swing by the Open Cupboard and talk to Handyman about the food drive. Then he'll hit the grocery store and pick up the cranberries that Deidre forgot. He has enough to do today without Christopher acting like a 4-year-old rather than a boy who's going on 12. It has been a difficult year...across the country, at work and lately at home. It all came together last night with Christopher's accusation: "You never pay any attention to me!"

That was the last straw. He had promised Christopher he'd try to make his game last night, and he tried. But management had other ideas. Why couldn't management have waited until after the holidays to make the layoffs? Why spoil 20 families' Thanksgiving, to say nothing about their Christmas? He'd kept his job this time, but people he knew had been let go. He could hardly have said, "Hey, my kid has a hockey game, good luck, see you around!" These were people he worked with, his colleagues.

He turns the corner and heads north, the boy's words from last night still clanging in his ears. He remembers what it's like to feel ignored. His own father's inadequacies are the reason he makes a special effort to pay attention to Christopher, the reason he always tries to make his games. If Christopher wanted to know what real problems are like, he should have grown up with Silent John Bartholomew, the man who was always there and never there at the same time. Or he could put himself in the shoes of one of those fathers or mothers whose paycheck had just disappeared.

He would set Christopher down tonight and have a come-to-Jesus talk with him. Tomorrow, they would have a quiet Thanksgiving, the crèche would go up on Friday, and that night the whole Bartholomew family would be there for dinner and the traditional lighting ceremony.

The spotlight turns yellow, then red. Matt brakes to a stop and impatiently taps his fingers on the wheel. He wonders if Deidre wants fresh cranberries or cranberry sauce. He can't remember.

The light changes to green and he hits the accelerator. Half way into the intersection, he hears a car horn blare. He glances out his side window and sees the car racing through the intersection, so close he can see the driver's face behind the windshield, an obscenity forming on his lips. Before he can hit the brakes, before he can even brace himself, he hears the grinding thunder and feels the violence of the impact. His head slams against the side window, shattering the glass. The air bags explode in his face, knocking him backward. The car screeches to a stop against the far curb almost before the thunder dies away. He feels crushing pain along his left side, sees a blinding light followed by a liquid red curtain descending over him....

He is aware of movement around him. He opens his eyes and through the red sees blue sky. He is flat on his back. His coat has been cut away. The late November wind claws at his skin. He tries to move, but his arms and legs will not respond. A sledge hammer pounds in his head. An urgent, businesslike voice seems

to come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time: "...probable concussion, severe scalp and facial lacerations, fractured left clavicle, probable compound fractures above and below the elbow of the left arm, probable fractured left femur, possible internal injuries..." He hears another voice that he almost recognizes:

"Oh, my God!"

"You know this guy?" says the businesslike voice.

"He's a friend of mine!"

He feels himself being strapped down. Figures crowd around him. He is rising and moving, rolling along. Above him the blue sky disappears, replaced by a gray ceiling. He is embraced by warmth. Doors slam. He hears the wail of a siren and feels a lurch into motion. The voices around him become distant and undecipherable as he feels himself sinking, sinking....

He sees only darkness. The siren wails around him, within him. It's a terrifying feeling. He knows what it means. Everything is frighteningly clear. This will be the Christmas that everyone remembers as the year Matt Bartholomew died, taken away from Deidre in a car accident just like her parents were. He can't let that happen. Can't. He pulls an image of Deidre and Allison and Christopher into his mind, concentrating with all his might on their faces, their smiles. Everything seems to be shrinking, like a camera panning farther and farther away. There is nothing left in all of creation but the image of his family, hanging in his mind like a framed picture, growing smaller and smaller. He feels the darkness growing inside him....

He is walking in the darkness, free of the straps that bind him, free of the burning pain in his arms and legs, the sledge hammer pounding inside his head. Ahead in the darkness there is an open doorway filled with white light. He walks toward the light, for hours it seems, but he never gets any closer to it. Suddenly the light is coming toward him. Again the terror rises in him. But this time the source of his terror is not the darkness, but the light. He tries to back up, but the doorway keeps coming toward him and he is forced to step though it, like having to step off the end of a moving sidewalk at the airport.

He is in his own front yard on Pinehurst Avenue. The yard is bathed in beams of sunlight breaking through the gray clouds above. The crèche figures are set up in their proper places. In the front of the stable, Mary sits next to the manger where the Infant lies, with Joseph standing protectively beside her. The cow and donkey are standing in the background. To the left of the manger, the Three Wise Men, each bearing a gift, stand in single file, their camels positioned regally behind them. To the right of the manger, a group of shepherds worship the Christ Child, their flock milling about them. Above the manger the heavenly host of angels floats in the air. Everything is as it should be, except all of the figures are alive.

He realizes that he has not yet set up the crèche this year. The crèche figures are still locked in the Christmas shed in the backyard. This cannot be. But it is.

From around the corner of the house, John Bartholomew appears, as if coming from the Christmas shed. He is wearing his old plaid coat. His father gives him a half smile and a wave, just like he always did, and walks toward him, cutting through the crèche figures.

"Dad?"

"Hello, son."

"I'm scared!" he says.



"Don't be," his father says. "Everything will be OK."

But will it be, he wonders? Has he done everything he is supposed to do? Has he lived the kind of life that will result in everything being OK? Is this the moment he finds out?

"I tried to take care of everything, like you told me to," Matt says, recalling that day 11 years ago when he helped his father set up the crèche for his last time.

"You did fine," his father says. "And you'll keep doing fine."

"I changed the figures some," he says.

"I see that. They look good."

"I changed some things last year. Aunt Evelyn's angel. I realized that the crèche wasn't necessarily finished."

"Nothing is ever finished," John Bartholomew says.

"I'm scared!" he says again.

"Of what?" his father asks.

"Of the future."

"Don't be," his father says. "It's not time for you. But even when it is, there's nothing to fear. Now...go back."

His father turns and disappears around the corner of the house. The crèche figures become rigid statues again and begin to break apart and dissolve as the beams of light from above fade away.

Mr. Bartholomew, can you hear me?" He is lying flat on his back. "Wake up!" A hand grasps his shoulder, gently shaking him. "Do you know where you are?" It's a female voice. "You're in the hospital. You've been in a car accident. Don't worry, we're taking good care of you. You just rest now."

He feels like he has returned from somewhere. He fights to stay awake, uncertain that he'll wake again if he falls asleep.

He's aware of a light above him, a fluorescent glow against a beige wall. Slowly, a hospital room materializes around him. He senses as much as sees someone sitting in a chair beside him. He feels like he weighs 1,000 pounds...or nothing at all.

He tries to speak but only produces a moan. He feels a hand slide into his own. The contours are familiar. The grip is gentle and reassuring. He feels the wedding ring on her finger. He would know that hand anywhere.

"I'm here, Matt," Deidre says. "I'm here."

He tries to speak again, but cannot form the words.

"Shhh! Don't try to talk," she says. "Can you hear me? Squeeze my hand if you do."

He manages a little squeeze. She leans over him. He sees two of her. He loves them both. She talks softly, as though compelled to tell him all that has happened. As the words spill out, she wipes her eyes with a tissue. He can hear the relief in her voice as she recounts the details. It has been 10 days since the accident. He has been unconscious most of that time. The kids are OK...well, Christopher has

been acting a little strange, but it's probably just the stress. He'll be fine now. The whole Bartholomew family has kept vigil. They've all come to sit in the waiting room and wait for news, to cry together, pray together, draw strength from each other. Tim and Linda have been there every day. Linda, bless her heart, has sat with her for hours at a time. Tim said he looked like the Mummy, all bandaged up like that. Pastor Buzza has stopped by often....

At last she runs down. She sits silently beside him, her fingers interlaced with his own. He feels himself drifting off. Sometime later, he's awake again. She's still sitting there. She must have been horrified by the news of the accident, terrified that he was being taken away from her, just like her parents had been.

"Sa...sa—" he has trouble getting the word out.

"Shhh," she says. "Don't talk."

But he has to say it: "Sa...sarrie!"

"Sarrie? Sorry? You're sorry? Why?"

"Sa...sarrie. Worry...hey...pa...parents..."

At last Deidre understands. She takes his hand again, careful not to dislodge the tubes connected to his wrist. She kisses the back of his hand and leans in close to him. He feels the tears drip onto his wrist.

"Listen, Buster. You aren't checking out on me. Not for another 30 years or so. I won't let you."

And he knows then that he'll be all right. He can go to sleep now, confident that he'll wake up again.

He sleeps most of the time, losing track of whether it's day or night. He senses that he's getting better, and that there's less activity around him. Pastor Buzza drops by every day to visit and say a prayer.

He's somewhere between consciousness and sleep when the nurse enters the room. "Matt," she says, "you have a visitor!" And to the shadow that is the visitor she says, "Not too long, OK?"

"I'll only stay a minute."

He knows that voice. A moment later, Officer Darryl Carter, in duplicate, is standing beside the bed, his police hat in his black hands.

"The nurses tell me you're a lucky man," he says.

Matt can only nod. The sight of Carter chokes him up. And suddenly, he does feel lucky. Lucky to be alive. Lucky to have a family. The familiar voice triggers something else. It takes shape in his mind slowly as the memory of a voice shrill with shock: "Oh my God! He's a friend of mine!"

"Were...you...there?" Matt labors.

Carter nods. "It was a routine call—that is, until I saw it was you. I went personally to tell your wife. I brought her to the hospital."

It takes Matt a while to wrap his mind around the words he's searching for and form

Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Robbery—A purse snatching was reported at Madison Street and Rockwood Avenue at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 11.

—A man was robbed at gunpoint on Bohland Avenue and Howell Street at 9:30 p.m. Thursday, November 12.

Burglary—A green 2007 Toyota Prius was stolen from a garage on the 1800 block of Highland Parkway between 11:00 p.m. Wednesday and 8:30 a.m. Thursday, November 12-13.

—A home on the 2100 block of Eleanor Avenue was broken into between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Friday, November 13.

—Computer-related items were taken from an apartment on the 1000 block of Montreal Avenue between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Friday, November 13.

—Anderson Cleaners, 718 S. Cleveland Ave., was broken into at 2:30 a.m. Sunday, November 15.

—A man was seen using a brick to try to break into Red Robin Cleaners, 2015 Ford Pkwy., at 3:30 a.m. Sunday, November 15.

—Leeann Chin, 2014 Ford Pkwy., was broken into at 3:00 a.m. Sunday, November 15.

—Five storage lockers were broken into at an apartment building on the 1000 block of South Cleveland Avenue between 5:00 p.m. Tuesday and 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, Novem-

ber 17-18.

—A storage area at Highland Park Senior High School was broken into between 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 18.

—St. Patrick's Guild, 1554 Randolph Ave., was broken into between midnight and 4:30 a.m. Thursday, November 19. Adjacent Irish Indeed and La Patisserie were burglarized around the same time.

Theft—Three suspects stole seven cell phones from Radio Shack, 2026 Ford Pkwy., at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, November 14.

—Two pairs of eyeglass frames were stolen from Pearle Vision, 2024 Ford Pkwy., at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, November 18.

—The driver's window was broken and several items were stolen from a car at Hidden Falls Park between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 18.

Weapons—A juvenile was arrested at Expo Elementary School, 540 Warwick St., at 10:30 a.m. Monday, November 16, for possession of a BB gun in a school.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—Central Garage, 1157 Selby Ave., was broken into at 2:45 a.m. Saturday, November 7.

—A home on the 1200 block of Hague Avenue was burglarized between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday, November 9.

—A computer was broken during a burglary of Youth Express, 1158 Selby Ave., at 2:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 11.

Theft—Laptop computers were stolen from Gordon Parks High School, 1212 University Ave., on Monday, November 9, and on Thursday, November 12.

—A laptop computer and backpack were stolen from Concordia College's Library Technology Center at 4:15 p.m. Thursday, November 12. A purse and backpack also were stolen from the college's art room at 11:30 a.m. Monday, November 16.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—Walgreens, 1585 Randolph Ave., was robbed of cash at gunpoint at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, November 15.

Burglary—Two guns and a compound bow were stolen from a garage on the 300 block of South Pascal Street between 9:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, November 12-13.

—An attempted burglary occurred at Salon Etc., 244 S. Albert St., between 8:30 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. Saturday, November 13-14.

Theft—Police arrested an 18-year-old Minneapolis man after investigating a report of four suspects breaking into cars in an alley behind the 1900 block of Grand Avenue at 1:30 a.m. Monday, November 16. Numerous coins and other items believed to be stolen from vehicles were found on the suspect. The other three suspects could not be located.

—Cash and an ID were stolen from a woman at Plum's Bar, 480 S. Snelling Ave., on Saturday, November 21.

Miscellaneous—A suspicious person offered two young girls candy at 5:45 p.m. Monday, November 9, at Wellesley Avenue and Finn Street.

—Police responded to a call of a burglary in progress on the 400 block of South Cretin Avenue at 3:00 a.m. Saturday, November 14. They found an intoxicated man at the front door trying to get in. He was cited for under-

age consumption and brought to Detox.

Merriam Park

Burglary—The Dancers' Studio, 99 N. Snelling Ave., was broken into at 3:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 10.

—A purse and cell phone were stolen from a home on the 2200 block of Selby Avenue at 9:15 p.m. Wednesday, November 11.

—A flat screen TV was stolen from a home on the 1700 block of Selby Avenue between 4:15 and 6:30 p.m. Monday, November 16.

—A home on the 1600 block of Marshall Avenue was broken into at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 18.

Theft—A theft from auto occurred on the 400 block of Dewey Street between 7:00 p.m. Wednesday and 7:30 a.m. Thursday, November 11-12.

—A bicycle was stolen at the University of St. Thomas between November 11-17.

Miscellaneous—A 27-year-old man was cited for begging at Concordia and Snelling avenues at 10:00 a.m. Friday, November 6.

Snelling-Hamline

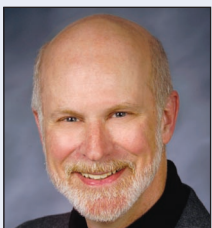
Kidnapping—A woman was kidnapped in a carjacking at 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 10, from SuperAmerica, 56 N. Snelling Ave. An unknown man armed with a knife entered the victim's car and forced her to drive to Eagan. The suspect then punched the woman, stole her purse and fled on foot.

Robbery—Big Top Liquor, 1574 University Ave., was robbed at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 11.

—Three men ages 18-19 were arrested for



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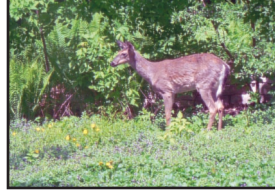
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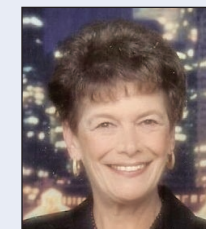
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robbery after they pointed a gun at an employee behind the drive-through window at McDonald's, 1570 University Ave., at 3:30 a.m. Monday, November 16. One of the men was also arrested for aggravated assault.

—A person was robbed at gunpoint at Snelling and St. Anthony avenues at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, November 19.

Burglary—A home on the 1400 block of Iglehart Avenue was burglarized at 5:30 p.m. Monday, November 16.

Theft—A theft from auto occurred on Snelling and University avenues between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 10.

—Several lockers were broken into and items were stolen at LA Fitness, 1370 University Ave., between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. Thursday, November 19.

Assault—Police cited a 42-year-old man for accosting strangers after people complained about aggressive panhandling on Concordia and Snelling avenues at 2:45 p.m. Saturday, November 14.

Summit Hill

Robbery—A female juvenile was arrested for committing a strong-arm robbery at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 11, at Grand Avenue and Grotto Street.

Burglary—The Mobile Station, 236 Grand Ave., was broken into between 1:45 and 4:45 a.m. Tuesday, November 10.

—Saji-Ya, 695 Grand Ave., was broken into at 4:30 a.m. Friday, November 13. Three men took a small amount of money and exited before police arrived.

—A 48-year-old Summit Hill man was arrested for burglarizing Grand Hand Gallery, 619 Grand Ave., at 10:30 p.m. Friday November 20. A witness followed the suspect to his apartment on the 400 block of Grand, where the arrest was made about an hour later.

Theft—Two purses were stolen at Cafe

Latte, 850 Grand Ave., between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 10.

—Suspects shoplifted items at Pier 1, 733 Grand Ave., at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, November 12. The suspects left the store through a fire exit and drove north on Grotto Street.

—A counterfeit \$50 bill was passed at Frattallone's Ace Hardware, 650 Grand Ave., on Saturday, November 14. The suspect was described as a black male in his 40s, 5-foot-8, with a husky build, a grey beard, and eyeglasses.

—A counterfeit \$50 bill was passed at Ramale Liquors, 666 Grand Ave., between Saturday and Monday, November 14-16.

—A wallet was stolen from a desk at Shoesters, 917 Grand Ave., between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 17.

Assault—A male assaulted another male walking on Grand Avenue near Avon Street at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, November 14. The assault was possibly posted on YouTube.com. Police arrested a juvenile and a 19-year-old Oakdale man three days later in connection with an online video posting of crimes committed around the city from November 13-17.

—A juvenile was assaulted at St. Clair Avenue and Chatsworth Street at 2:15 p.m. Saturday, November 14. The incident was reported after the juvenile's parent came to believe the incident was linked to the YouTube assaults.

Weapons—A 19-year-old White Bear Lake man was arrested for illegal transportation of an assault rifle at Avon Street and Grand Avenue at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, November 19. The man had driven his car into a parked UPS truck and had a loaded rifle along with three baggies of pills on the passenger seat.

Summit-University

Robbery—A man and woman were robbed at gunpoint on Dale Street and Hague Avenue at 10:00 p.m. Saturday, November 14. The

suspects fled south on foot.

Burglary—A home on the 1000 block of Iglehart Avenue was broken into between 12:30 and 4:00 p.m. Friday, November 6.

—Two males were reported burglarizing a house on the 800 block of Carroll Avenue at 11:30 a.m. Friday, November 20. Police caught one 18-year-old man as he was exiting the home with stolen items in his possession. The second suspect escaped.

Theft—A wallet was stolen from a woman's purse between 7:00 and 8:30 p.m. Friday, November 13, at Mango Thai Restaurant, 610 Selby Ave.

Arson—A satellite toilet was set on fire at St. Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave., at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, November 8.

Assault—A 22-year-old Merriam Park man was arrested for assault at Aurora Avenue and Lexington Parkway at 1:45 p.m. Saturday, November 21. He had tried to sell a man marijuana and waved a gun at him.

Weapons—A resident returned home to the 900 block of Iglehart Avenue on Sunday, November 8, to discover that a bullet had been fired through the wall of his residence and damaged a chair.

—Two people saw shots being fired at Carroll Avenue and Chatsworth Street at 10:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 10.

West End

Animal-related—A witness saw a pit bull kill a small dog at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday, November 10, on the 500 block of Jefferson Avenue. The small dog was being walked by an elderly woman.

Robbery—SuperAmerica, 1125 W. 7th St., was robbed of cash at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, November 19.

Assault—A man was assaulted on the 900 block of Bayard Avenue at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday, November 11.

Burglary—Two homes on the 700 block of Tuscarora Avenue were burglarized on Tuesday, November 10.

—Attempted burglaries occurred at the Downtowner Woodfire Grill, 253 W. 7th St., on November 6 and 9. Property damage was more than \$1,000 in the first incident and pry marks were found on a door in the second.

—A home on the 400 block of St. Clair Avenue was broken into between 7:00 a.m. Friday and 9:30 a.m. Sunday, November 13-15.

—Items were stolen, property was damaged and graffiti was marked at the former Schmidt Brewery gift shop, 882 W. 7th St., between November 13-16. The property had also been burglarized between November 9-12.

Theft—Three males stole a gas blower from a work trailer at Burger King, 1600 W. 7th St., at 10:15 p.m. Monday, November 9. They fled west on 7th Street in a white Ford pickup.

—Prescription medicine was stolen from a purse at Seed School, 900 Albion St., between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 11.

—Thefts from two autos occurred at Highland on the Park apartments, 2000 W. 7th St., between November 16-18. Someone also broke into the firebox and stole keys at the complex on November 19-20.

Sex crime—A 35-year-old West End man was arrested for indecent exposure at Tom Reid's Bar, 258 W. 7th St., at 1:00 a.m. Monday, November 16. After failing to pay his bill, the man exposed himself to the staff.

Miscellaneous—A man was cited for disorderly conduct after he pushed and punched people in line at the Salvation Army, 401 W. 7th St., at 7:15 a.m. Monday, November 2.

—A three-car crash occurred at Randolph Avenue and Shepard Road at 5:30 p.m. Monday, November 16. A 44-year-old male driver was arrested for DUI after he admitted to driving while using methadone.

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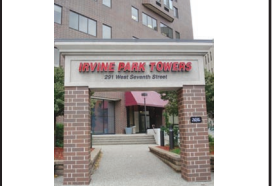


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21 ◀ 'LOOKING FORWARD TO XMAS'

them on his lips: "Thank you."

Carter smiles and shrugs. "It's what friends are for," he says. "You'd do the same for me."

"The...other...driver?" he asks.

"He suffered a bloody nose from the air bag," Carter says. "Otherwise, not a scratch on him."

Matt's too tired to continue. The police officer puts on his hat. "Well, I need to get back, and you need to rest. I just wanted to stop in and say 'hey.' I'll come back when you're feeling better."

"Thank you." It's as much a thought as a spoken word.

Over the next week, a battery of tests and examinations confirms Deidre's proclamation. It's a good news, bad news situation, the doctor announces, and gives him the good news first. There is no major damage to his internal organs. He's lucky the flying glass missed his left eye. His double vision will probably heal itself. He'll have some scars on his head and face, mostly inside the hairline. There'll be weeks, maybe months of therapy ahead. It'll take time, but the fractures in his arm, his collarbone and his leg will heal. Six months to a year from now, he'll be as good as new.

He's able to talk now, but it's still difficult. He keeps his sentences short: "The bad news?"

"The bad news is, we need this bed for the sick people," the doctor says, smiling. "We're kicking you out. You'll have to do your lolly-gagging elsewhere."

But he won't be going directly home. Instead he'll be transferred to a rehabilitation facility.

"Christmas?" he asks.

"Think of it this way," the doctor says: "At least you'll be celebrating Christmas this year."

Allison now accompanies Deidre on visits to the hospital. On her first visit, she stood stone-faced, frightened by the sight of the bandages, casts, tubes and monitors, eventually breaking down into choking sobs. But now, like her mother, she's full of determined good cheer. Christopher, Deidre reports, is still not ready to visit. He has been something of a pill lately. Matt thinks about the irony. He was going to have a come-to-Jesus talk with Christopher that night, and instead he had his own come-to-Jesus meeting. He considers cracking a joke, but lets it go, knowing that no one will laugh. Everyone seems cautious and stilted around him.

Everyone, that is, except Tim. "It's the Mummy!" Tim says when he stops in one afternoon after work. He imitates the Mummy's stiff, arms-extended gait, then pulls the lounge chair to a spot next to the bed.

"How you doing, Bro?" his brother asks him. "Really."

Matt shrugs with his good shoulder and winces at the discomfort. He doesn't know how to answer. Physically, he feels like he has been run over by a road grader. Beyond the numbness generated by the pain medication, he can feel the agony his body is going through. Otherwise, he's not sure if the feeling is coming from his brain or his heart, but he feels healed in a way he cannot put into words. He feels raring to get on with life, to do things. Waiting for his body to catch up with where his mind is going will be a supreme inconvenience.

"I checked with the cops," Tim says. "The other driver got tickets for speeding and running the light. They should throw him in the slammer."

How can Matt say that what happens to the other driver—good, bad or indifferent—is of no interest to him? Matt wants to move on, and so he does.

"The crèche," he says, "Put something up. This is the 50th year."

"Don't worry about that right now," Tim says. "Just rest and get better."

"Don't argue with a sick person!" he says, "Just do it!"

'Christmas' reading to benefit food shelf

Merriam Park author Roger Barr will read his short story "Looking Forward to Christmas" in its entirety on Sunday, December 13.

The reading will begin at 4:00 p.m. in the chapel of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches, 1671 Summit Ave. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted for the Department of Indian Work Food Shelf.

"Looking Forward to Christmas" is the 12th story Barr has written about the fictional Bartholomew family and its celebration of Christmas. The holiday stories have appeared annually in the *Villager*, and each year since 2004 Barr has done a benefit reading for a local food shelf.

A chapbook edition of "Looking Forward to Christmas," along with chapbooks

of some of the previous 11 stories, will be available at the reading, with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the food shelf.

"We're excited to be working with Roger again this year," said Lucy Zanders of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. "The need for our Emergency Services programs, including our Food Shelf, has increased dramatically during 2009. This event will help put food on the table for American Indian families who are in need."

Audience members are encouraged to bring nonperishable food items to the reading or to make a financial donations at the event. The Department of Indian Works will provide light refreshments, including wild rice soup. Tours of the food shelf will also be offered.

He's grateful when everyone is gone so he can think. His mind feels clear now, except when it doesn't, as he struggles to grasp the enormity of what has happened. He thinks about how life can change in a split second. His accident is an extreme reminder of a truth that everyone lives with every day: No one knows at any given moment what lies ahead. We just keep going, going until...well, now he knows. In his mind, he pictures the distant light in the doorway, the beams of sunlight, his father standing among the living crèche figures. He has no doubt now about where he was.

He's not sure if he'll talk about this with anyone...not sure if he even knows how to. Again, he feels lucky. Lucky to be given a second chance. He thinks about getting well, how he'll be different. When Deidre comes to visit, he tells her to remind Tim about setting up the crèche. He's looking forward to Christmas.

The day Matt is to be transferred to the rehabilitation center, Tim and Linda come with Deidre and Allison to help out. "I haven't got to it yet, I've been busy," Tim says by way of greeting. Deidre has insisted that Christopher come along. The boy stands in the corner of the room, as far away from the bed as he can, refusing to make eye contact.

"Christopher," Deidre says, "can't you at least say 'hello?'"

"Lo."

"No hug for your old man?" Matt asks. He holds out the arm that isn't wrapped in a cast and secured to keep his collarbone in place. Christopher crosses the room, stiff as the proverbial board. The second Matt releases him, he retreats to his corner, knocking a red poinsettia off the side table. The plant crashes to the floor, spilling dirt across the beige tiles. The boy stares at the mess on the floor, horrified.

"Christopher!" Deidre begins, "Be—"

"I'm sorry!" he cries. He grabs his head in both hands. "I'm sorry! I'm sorry, Dad! I'm sorry! I didn't mean it! I swear I didn't mean it!"

"Didn't mean what?" Matt and Deidre say together

"It's all my fault!"

"What's your fault?" Matt asks.

"I—I—" Christopher gasps between sobs. "I...wished you were dead! You didn't come to my game after you promised! I was mad at you.... But I didn't mean it! I swear I didn't! You almost died! It's my fault!"

Christopher sinks to his knees, his head still in his hands. There's a moment of stunned silence. Deidre moves toward him, but Matt raises his hand to stop her. He orders everyone out of the room except Christopher. Deidre gives him a stricken look and then reluctantly complies, closing the door behind her.

"Come here," Matt says. He pats the bed beside him. Christopher sits stiffly on the edge of the bed, his shoulders still shaking. Matt runs his hand up and down the boy's slim back. This is not the kind of come-to-Jesus talk he had expected.

"I'm going to tell you something that no one else knows," Matt says. "Not even Mom." He clears his throat and begins, trusting that it'll come out right. "After the accident, when I was in the ambulance or at the hospital...I don't know where I was, but I know where I wasn't. I left...my body behind. I stood at the gate...of heaven. You know what? It looked just like our yard...at Christmastime. I saw my dad, your grandpa. He told me that it wasn't my time. He sent me back—to all of you. And I came back. I woke up in the hospital, and your mom was sitting there. Look at me. I'm all banged up, but I received a second chance."

Where does he go from here? Matt wonders. He looks at the poinsettia lying on the floor.

"Son...the promise of a second chance is why we celebrate Christmas," he says. "Remember what the angel says to the shepherds? 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy...for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'"

With his good arm, he pulls the boy close to him. "Now, I want you to have a second chance. Listen to me. So you were mad at me. Your wish didn't cause my accident. It was just that...an accident. I don't have to forgive you, because you didn't do anything wrong. But you...have to forgive yourself. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Christopher wipes his eyes on his sleeve. He nods slowly.

"All right, then." He caresses the back of his son's neck. "You ready to help me blow this popsicle stand?"

The four of them—Matt, Deidre, Allison and Christopher—are gathered in Matt's room, making holiday plans. They'll be celebrating Christmas at the rehabilitation center. Everything will be the same, Deidre insists, except the location. They'll have the now traditional Christmas Eve dinner of spaghetti with red sauce, canned corn and brownies for dessert. She'll pack everything and bring it to his room—even the family china. Tim and Linda will be there to celebrate with them.

They'll open presents there on Christmas morning. For Christmas dinner they'll have turkey with all the trimmings—the turkey that was supposed to have been their Thanksgiving dinner.

"You'll have to buy cranberries," Matt says.

Everything will be the same this year, he thinks, except no crèche. Tim has never gotten around to it, pleading a heavy schedule at work. A fine way to mark the 50th anniversary, Matt thinks, but he'll let it go. It's been a rough month for everyone.

At six o'clock, Deidre turns on the television news. After the headlines and national news, the anchor adjusts his script. "We have a most unusual story for you tonight. We go live now to 'First News' reporter Ellen Mackenzie. Ellen..."

The screen cuts to a tight shot of Mackenzie

on a sidewalk. The reporter takes her cue and raises the microphone. "Peter, for the past 49 years, a life-sized, life-like crèche with dozens of figures, one created for each member of the Bartholomew family—"

At the word "Bartholomew," Matt snaps to attention.

"—has stood in this yard. Not even the damage caused by two vandals in 2001 could prevent the Bartholomew family from including the crèche in their holiday observance. That year, the family stood in for the damaged figures in a one-night living Nativity scene.

"But this year, the tradition was derailed by a near tragedy. We received calls from viewers asking why the Nativity scene wasn't on display this year. We investigated and found out that on the afternoon before Thanksgiving, Matthew Bartholomew, who's been the keeper of the crèche for the past 10 years, suffered life-threatening injuries when his car was broadsided by a car speeding through a red light. Matt Bartholomew is now recovering in a rehabilitation center and was unable to set up this traditional display. That might have been the end of the story were it not for Tim Bartholomew, Matt's younger brother."

The screen cuts to a prerecorded interview with Tim in front of the garage. "We really didn't have much choice," Tim says. "This crèche is an important part of the holiday season for a lot of people. People have been knocking on the door asking why it wasn't on display. They came with food for the food shelf and just left it by the fence. We knew we had to set it up. For my brother...and for the community."

Matt shoots a look at Deidre. "Did you know about this?"

Deidre smiles at him.

The screen cuts to daylight footage of Tim and others working among the crèche figures. In a voiceover, Mackenzie picks up the story. "Tim Bartholomew called upon family members and two friends to help him. One is a man known simply as Handyman to his friends. He is the director of the Open Cupboard Food Shelf, which has received food donations from visitors to the crèche for the past several years. The other, Police Officer Darryl Carter, is a friend of Matt Bartholomew's. Using plans that are decades old, family and friends erected the stable, set up the nearly 50 crèche figures, rigged the myriad spotlights and set out the barrels to collect food donations through January 6."

The screen cuts to a live shot of Mackenzie. "Traditionally, the crèche was illuminated for the first time the day after Thanksgiving, and the extended Bartholomew family gathered here for dinner. That tradition was broken this year. Instead of gathering at this house to celebrate, the family was keeping vigil at the hospital where Matt Bartholomew was battling for his life."

Mackenzie begins to walk along the sidewalk, the camera traveling with her. "We understand that Matt Bartholomew is watching this newscast." She turns and backs up the driveway, still facing the camera, microphone in hand. "His family and friends have a little gift for him." Behind her, the entire Bartholomew family is standing in front of the double garage door with Tim, Handyman and Officer Carter standing in front.

Tim leans toward the microphone. "This is for you, big brother," he says. The family cheers and shouts, "Merry Christmas!" The camera pans from the garage over to the dark yard. Suddenly the yard lights up. All of the crèche figures are in place.

Matt's eyes fill with tears. The segment ends and Deidre shuts off the television. The family collects around him.

"He's been planning this for two weeks," Deidre says. "He insisted I keep it a secret so he could surprise you. I told him you'd probably wring his neck, and he laughed and said he'd take the chance since you were laid up."

"I won't be laid up forever!" Matt says.

"Come on, Dad," Christopher says. "Give Uncle Tim a second chance!"

Grand Meander

Visions of sugarplums

Merchants to greet season with 37th annual Meander

Grand Avenue businesses will present their traditional salute to the holiday shopping season with the 37th annual Grand Meander on Saturday, December 5. St. Paul City Ballet is co-sponsoring this year's event and its performers will be rehearsing an original holiday ballet for the occasion. Meanderers can also enjoy breakfast with Santa, meet his reindeer, sample soups, listen to carolers, stroll the avenue or hop a trolley.

The Grand Avenue Business Association has compiled the following list of activities for this year's Grand Meander:

MEANDER HIGHLIGHTS

• **Breakfast with Santa.** Join Santa for a free pancake breakfast from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Tavern on Grand, 656 Grand.

• **Winter Carnival Button.** St. Paul Winter Carnival royalty will unveil the 2010 carnival button and kick off button sales at 10:30 a.m. at Salut Bar Americain, 917 Grand. Button discounts will be available at participating businesses throughout the day.

• **Art at Ramsey.** The Grand Meander's 15th annual juried holiday art show and sale will be presented from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

at Ramsey Junior High School, 1700 Summit. Fine arts and crafts by 63 artists will be presented. The show is sponsored by Highland/Macalester-Groveland Community Education and the Artists' Circle.

• **Young Art Fair.** The 16th annual Young Art Fair will be presented from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Ramsey Junior High. The artistic talents of more than a dozen local artists ages 12-18 will be on display.

• **Live reindeer.** Visit Santa's reindeer from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Frattallone's Ace Hardware, 650 Grand.

• **Free trolley rides.** Ride the trolley that will travel up and down Grand from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The trolley will pick up and drop off passengers for free at bus stops.

• **Fire truck rides.** Take a free ride down Grand in a fire truck that will be traversing the avenue from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning and ending at Dixie's, 695 Grand.

• **Soup tasting.** Eleven Grand Avenue chefs will serve free samples of their signature soups from noon to 3:00 p.m. Participating businesses include Dixie's, 695 Grand; Brasa, 777 Grand; Wild Onion, 788 Grand; Golden Fig, 790 Grand; Cafe Latte, 850 Grand; Billy's, 857 Grand; Cooks of Crocus Hill, 877 Grand;



Katie Turner, 10, picked her dessert of choice at Wuollet Bakery during last year's Grand Meander. This year's celebration of the season will be held on Saturday, December 5. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Just Truffles, 1363 Grand; Everest on Grand, 1278 Grand; Coffee News Cafe, 1662 Grand; and Whole Foods, 30 S. Fairview.

• **Tree lighting ceremony.** Enjoy music, refreshments and the St. Paul City Ballet dancers as the official Grand Avenue holiday tree is lit at 5:00 p.m. outside Charlemagne, 1262 Grand. The ceremony is co-sponsored by HealthEast Grand Avenue Clinic, 870 Grand, which will open on December 7.

• **Art of Grand.** Local artists will have their works on display all day and be available to meet the public during receptions from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Evla Pottery, 42 S. Dale St.; Sunny Sky, 760 Grand; Golden Fig, 790 Grand; Quince, 850 Grand; and Garden of Eden, 867 Grand.

• **Toys for Tots.** Put a smile on a child's face this holiday season by dropping off new, unwrapped toys at Aspire Chiropractic, Muska Lighting, Lillian's, Language Sprout, Bead Monkey, Red Balloon, phresh, Wonderment, D'Amico & Sons, Bibelot Shop, Baby Grand, Everest on Grand, Treadle Yard Goods, Coffee News Cafe, A. Johnson & Sons Florist or Dancers Studio.

• **Second Harvest.** Nonperishable food items may be dropped off at Aspire Chiropractic, Muska Lighting, Punch Pizza, Lillian's, Language Sprout, Cafe Latte, Cooks of Crocus Hill, Creative Kidstuff, Tibet Arts, Everest on Grand, Treadle Yard Goods, Just Truffles, Coffee News Cafe, A. Johnson & Sons Florist and Dancers Studio.

• **Santa sightings.** Watch for the jolly old elf as he too meanders on the avenue.

• **Sounds of the season.** Musical groups will be performing along the avenue throughout the day.

• **Holiday food and refreshments.** There will be scores of opportunities to sample complimentary holiday food and refreshments inside and outside stores all along the avenue.

INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES (from east to west)

Many businesses will be offering special enticements to welcome shoppers during the Meander.

GRAND MEANDER ► 27

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Printmaker Steve Nowatzki files through stacks of the linen paper he fashions by hand in his South Minneapolis studio. His etching "Snared Cheetah" hangs behind him, and at right are other examples of his art. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Art at Ramsey

South Mpls. printmaker joins 60 other regional artists in juried show

BY BILL STIEGER

Steve Nowatzki exhibits his prints at art fairs across the Midwest, although they are hardly your typical art fair fare. Much of the art produced for these fairs is the kind that reassures—dreamy watercolors of ducks in flight, handcrafted yarn owls, mallard mail boxes and the like. Among Nowatzki's prints are elephants slaughtered for their ivory, a leopard in the throes of being trapped for its fur, a buffalo whose hump has been pierced with a flag emblazoned with a UPC bar code.

You might think images that would make the average viewer squirm would not sell all that well, but Nowatzki manages to make a living with his art. "The work actually generates a lot of interest," he said. "People are curious about the subjects I choose and ask a lot of questions, which I'm only too glad to answer. For some reason, the only people who've been rude to me are some of the evangelicals in the southern states."

Though he is a vegetarian, Nowatzki does not consider himself to be better than anyone else when it comes to the preservation of wildlife. "I use chemicals and acids in my work," he said. "And I drive my van all over the country. I'm not trying to preach in my work, but I do like to display the natural consequences of the choices that we as a society make. My art is just my way of interpreting things."

Nowatzki, 51, is one of more than 60 artists from the Upper Midwest who will be taking part in the Art at Ramsey juried art fair, held in conjunction with the Grand Meander on Saturday, December 5.

Sponsored by Highland and Macalester-Groveland Community Education in cooperation with the Artists' Circle, the 15th annual show and sale will run from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the gym-

nasium of Ramsey Junior High School, 1700 Summit Ave. Works in clay, fiber, glass, leather, basketry, metal, paper and wood will be displayed, along with jewelry, sculpture, photography, paintings and prints.

Other area residents featured in Art at Ramsey are fiber artist Patti Bowes of Macalester-Groveland, Merriam Park goldsmith and jewelry maker Bill Plattes, and Jenny Levernier, a jewelry maker from Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood. And just down the hall in the Ramsey Junior High cafeteria will be the 16th annual Youth Art Fair, a show and sale by more than a dozen local artists ages 10-18.

Nowatzki shares a home in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood with his wife, Sue, a graphic designer. His basement studio includes a workbench and table, a separate room with a printing press and an area near the furnace where he makes his own acid-free printing paper with a machine called a pulp beater.

"I'm working down here from October to April," he said. "Then I'm selling prints at art fairs the rest of the year. But I don't often travel far because the best art fairs in the country are in the Midwest."

Nowatzki creates his prints from drawings that he has made. He begins by applying the drawing to a plate of zinc, which he then covers with a tar-like substance called "ground." With an etching needle, he traces the drawing by scratching lines in the ground. The plate is then dipped in acid, which cuts into the metal wherever it is exposed. After the leftover ground is scraped off, the plate is coated with ink, then wiped clean of all but the ink that remains in the lines cut by the acid. The plate is then taken to the press and printed on paper.

Nowatzki was born in Heidelberg, Germany, the son of an army officer who moved his family frequently be-

tween bases in Europe and the U.S. With a love of nature, Nowatzki studied biology at Moorhead State University, but soon changed his major to fine art.

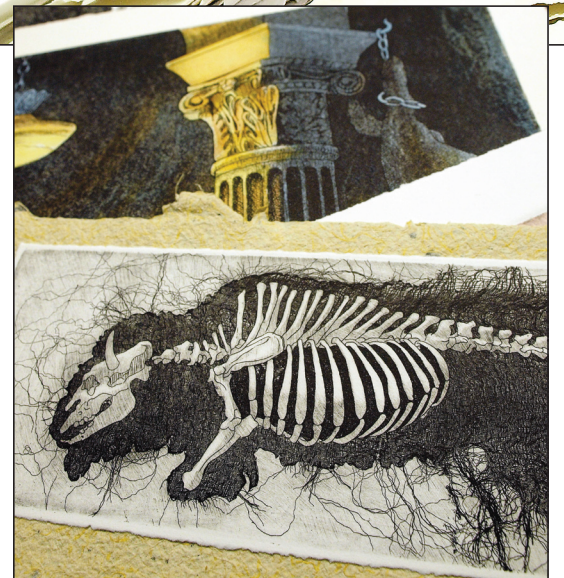
"Moorhead State's art department placed an emphasis on drawing and design, which gave me a good foundation," he said. "And Moorhead was where I was introduced to etching and printing. It wasn't long before I was hooked."

Nowatzki had been supporting himself as a roofer and laborer during college when he took part in an art fair in Moorhead. "I sold a print, I think, for about \$20," he said. "On the way back to my apartment, I thought, 'Hmmm, I can actually make money from this.'"

Nowatzki naturally gravitated toward wildlife as a subject for his prints, and his growing interest in environmental issues steered him toward the politics. However, he said, "the political intent in the work is secondary. The work itself, as art, comes first."

Unlike many artists, Nowatzki is clear about the meaning behind his images. He explains the meanings on his website at www.scc.net/~nowatzki. Beneath a print titled, "Why the West Was Won," an image of a mountain in the shape of a buffalo with a flag stuck in its back, Nowatzki writes: "Whenever a mountain is 'conquered,' there's usually a flag planted at the summit. Here the symbol on the flag is the UPC bar code, illustrating the changing of the environment into a commodity. The rest of the landscape is reflective of the development going on out there: clear cutting, strip mining, farming, pollution and urban sprawl."

Despite the often bleak messages delivered through his art, Nowatzki remains philosophical: "I look at life on this planet through a geologic time line. Even though human life may become as extinct as the dinosaurs, life will go on in some form. The universe remains."



25 ◀ GRAND MEANDER

Those that will be offering free items and activities include:

Grand Hand Gallery, 619 Grand. The gallery will feature a show of holiday ornaments and gifts. From 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. live holiday music will be provided by jazz pianist Chuck Solberg. Hot apple cider and holiday treats will be served all day.

Evla Pottery, 42 S. Dale St. Enjoy cookies and cider while checking out the shop's locally fashioned handmade pottery.

Dixie's, 695 Grand. Get a free photo taken with Santa.

Muska Lighting, 700 Grand. Enjoy complimentary cookies, cider and coffee, and enter a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate.

Grand Ole Creamery, 750 Grand. Free samples of new ice cream flavors will be served, including Hot Chocolate and North Country Crunch, from noon to 3:00 p.m.

Punch Pizza, 769 Grand. Enter a coloring contest to win Punch gift cards and receive an extra "punch" on your pizza card with a food donation to Second Harvest.

Brasa, 777 Grand. Stop in to sample soup, corn bread and *café con leche*.

Wild Onion, 788 Grand. Complimentary Tom and Jerrys will be served from noon to 3:00 p.m.

Golden Fig, 790 Grand. Samples of Northwoods Cocoa and Cranberry Orange Cheddar will be served.

Lillian's, 841 Grand. Holiday cookies, hot cider and coffee will be served.

Language Sprout, 844 Grand. Holiday craft activities from around the world will be presented from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Juut, 857 Grand. Receive a free gift



Karen Linn slurped up a soup sample with Jack Lee at D'Amico & Sons as part of last year's Grand Meander.

with a retail purchase.

Billy's, 857 Grand. Billy's annual pig roast will be served on the patio from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden, 867 Grand. Stop in for cookies from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hot Mama, 867 Grand. Enjoy free Christmas cookies.

Ten Thousand Villages, 867 Grand. Hot cocoa will be served while supplies last beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Chipotle, 867 Grand. Free chips and salsa will be served from noon to 2:00 p.m.

Bead Monkey, 867 Grand. Make a free pair of earrings to take home and enter a drawing to win a free class.

Aspire Chiropractic, 867 Grand. En-

joy free mini-massages and a free stress test. Scoliosis checks will be conducted for the kids. Those who bring in three toy donations for Toys for Tots will receive a gift card for complimentary first-day services.

Red Balloon, 891 Grand. Willi Brenaman will conduct storytime at 10:30 a.m., playwright Jennifer Kirkeby will recite *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* at 4:00 p.m. Santa will stop by at 6:30 p.m. to tell stories and launch the bookshop's annual "Be An Angel" holiday program, which provides books to children who live in homeless shelters.

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GRAND MEANDER ▶ 28

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27◀ GRAND MEANDER

Grand. A wine tasting will be held from noon to 3:00 p.m.

Phresh spa salon, 937 Grand. Hot cider and tours of the salon will be offered, and drawings will be held for gift cards and holiday baskets.

Picky Girl, 949 Grand. Stop in for drawings, hot cocoa and a showcase of local designers.

Wonderment, 949 Grand. Children with a parent may make an Advent wreath during a workshop from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (while supplies last) with a \$5.00 donation to Second Harvest.

Stogies on Grand, 961 Grand. A special event for cigar-lovers will take place from noon to 4:00 p.m.

Grand Jete, 975 Grand. Dance on in for free hot cider and candy canes from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

D'Amico & Sons, 975 Grand. Coloring contest entries will be accepted through 8:00 p.m.

Traditions, 1039 Grand. Stop in for complimentary holiday treats.

Wuollet's, 1080 Grand. The bakery will be handing out samples of its holiday treats.

Bibelot, 1082 Grand. Tea and food samples will be served from noon to 2:00 p.m., and author Warren Hansen will sign copies of his book, *Everything Happens for a Reason*, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Discounts will be given on toys purchased for Toys for Tots.

Irish on Grand, 1124 Grand. A bag-piping Santa will play carols and children may enter a drawing. The shop will also be collecting food for Brothers of Peace.

My Sisters' Closet, 1136 Grand. Young flutists will play holiday carols, and cookies and cider will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Grand Health Chiropractic, 1154 Grand. Warm up with hot beverages and holiday cookies and get a laminated holiday photo from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Creative Kidstuff, 1274 Grand. Stop in to create a holiday ornament.

Treadle Yard Goods, 1338 Grand.



Leo Anderson, 5, of Macalester-Groveland hugged Santa during the Jolly Old Elf's visit to A. Johnson & Sons Florist during last year's Meander.

Pick up a complimentary fabric square (limit one per customer) and sew a holiday gift bag from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Holiday cookies will be served from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Just Truffles, 1363 Grand. Local chef and author John Michael Lerma will sign copies of his cookbooks *Garden County Cooking* and *Garden County Pies* from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Dancers Studio, 99 N. Snelling. Free dance lessons and a dance party will take place from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The studio will also light its Christmas tree, serve hot apple cider and holiday cookies and conduct a drawing for dance classes.

Coffee News Cafe, 1662 Grand. Stop by for free soup samples.

St. Paul City Ballet, 1680 Grand. Visit the ballet studio's special guest—a penguin from Como Zoo—from noon to 2:00 p.m. and watch rehearsals of its original ballet, *The Enchanted Toy Shop—A New Holiday Ballet*, which will be presented on December 18-20 in the

E.M. Pearson Theater at Concordia University.

Wet Paint, 1684 Grand. Kathleen Sheridan will demonstrate Kusudama (spherical) Origami to make holiday decorations from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

A. Johnson & Sons Florist, 1738 Grand. Santa will stop by from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and parents are invited to bring their cameras. Hot chocolate, candy canes and cookies will be served. Door prizes include 100 roses and a giant poinsettia.

Whole Foods, 30 S. Fairview. Learn how to decorate gingerbread houses like a pro from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and pick up a kit to try it at home.

Subway, 1820 Grand. Stop in to meet Subman and get a temporary Christmas tattoo from noon to 2:00 p.m.

For more information, contact the Grand Avenue Business Association at 651-699-0029 or visit its website at www.grandave.com.

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The Kiosk

Wednesday/December 2

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS will be celebrated beginning today and running through January 3 at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. The mansion will be decorated with Ramsey family heirlooms, a 12-foot Christmas tree will be trimmed with blown-glass ornaments and the table will be set for an 1875 Christmas dinner. Music will be playing on the Steinway, fresh cookies will be served from the wood-burning stove and hot cider will be available in the Carriage House. Hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and from noon to 3:00 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$6.00-\$9.00. Call 651-296-8760.

Thursday/December 3

A HOLIDAY BAZAAR will be hosted at Landmark Center from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. today and tomorrow and from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 5. The 31st annual bazaar will feature 78 exhibitors selling handcrafted gift items, festive music, holiday treats and prize giveaways. Admission is \$3.00 for adults and free for children under age 12.

Friday/December 4

“A SIMPLE CHRISTMAS—Fair Trade Gift Fair” will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. today at Cretin-Derham Hall, 550 S. Albert St. The Fair Trade gifts for sale were produced by unemployed or under-employed artists in developing countries. Call Lou Anne Tighe at 651-696-3353.

Saturday/December 5

HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES will be offered from 1:00 to 5:00 this afternoon at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. The rides leave every 15 minutes and take in scenic Irvine Park. The cost is \$10-\$12. Call 651-296-8760.

MENDOTA LIGHTS will take place today at the Village at Mendota Heights on Dodd Road and Highway 110. The fourth annual holiday celebration will feature free hayrides, face painting and strolling Dickens carolers from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Santa will arrive at 5:00 p.m. and a ceremonial tree lighting will take place at 6:00 p.m., with guest appearances by the Winter Carnival Royal Family, the Visitation School choir and singer Connie Evingson. Visit www.villagemh.com.

HOLIDAY-THEMED TOURS will be offered from 1:00 to 3:30 this afternoon at the James J. Hill House 240 Summit Ave. Costumed actors will portray servants preparing for the holidays during the one-hour tours, which will take place in the first-floor spaces and basement servant work areas. The tours will continue on weekends through December. Admission is \$6.00-\$10. Call 651-297-2555.

A HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today at 2142 Marshall Ave. Baked goods, handcrafted soaps, jams and jellies, crafts, Scandinavian treats and gently used toys will be sold, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting community service-based organizations.

A HOLIDAY ART & CRAFT FAIR will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. today at Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 N. Snelling Ave.



Lovely weather for a ride together. Steven and Lisa Tonder, with daughter Lillia, 2, await a horse-drawn carriage ride around Irvine Park from outside the Ramsey House. Rides will be offered again on December 5. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

Many local artists will be selling their works. Call 651-645-2647.

Monday/December 7

A HOLIDAY PARTY for the West End neighborhood will be held from 5:00 to 6:30 this evening at the West 7th Community Center, 265 Oneida St. The evening will include a free dinner, entertainment, and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. For questions or to volunteer, call Jane Gregerson at 651-298-5493.

A FORUM for the 10 DFL candidates running for Minnesota governor will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 this evening in Weyerhaeuser Chapel at Macalester College. The forum is sponsored by the DFLers of Senate District 64, Congressional District 4 and the Macalester Dems.

Tuesday/December 8

THE COMO-MIDWAY LA LECHE League will meet at 7:00 this evening to discuss nutrition and weaning. Current and expectant mothers are invited with their babies and toddlers. For meeting location, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

HISTORIAN JAMES NEAGBOUR will present his illustrated talk on the history of early Twin Cities Christmas celebrations at 7:00 this evening at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Light refreshments and tours of the mansion will follow. Admission is \$5.00-\$8.00. Call 651-297-2555.

A FREE HISTORY LOUNGE presentation on the life of Minnesota inventor Frederick McKinley Jones will be offered at 7:00 this evening at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Call 651-259-3000.

A GUATEMALAN MARKET and holiday open house will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. today at Common Hope, 550

Vandalia St. Enjoy coffee, cookies and cider while shopping handcrafted, fair trade textiles, ornaments, creches and more from Guatemala. Call 651-917-0917.

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 11:30 this morning at Summit Avenue and Victoria Street. Call 651-455-0052 or visit stpaulhike.org.

Thursday/December 10

THE MINNESOTA SOCIETY of the Archaeological Institute of America presents William Barnes of the University of St. Thomas discussing “Aztec Calendrical Thought: Visual Form, Imperial Significance” at 6:00 this evening in the campus center at Macalester College. Visit aiamn.blogspot.com.

A WORLD WAR II HISTORY ROUND Table on “The 82nd Airborne Division in the Battle of the Bulge” will be held at 7:00 this evening at the Fort Snelling Visitor Center. Guy LoFaro, author of an upcoming book on the 82nd Airborne, and veterans of the division will speak. Admission is \$5.00 or free for students. Call 612-726-1171.

Friday/December 11

A FAMILY HANUKAH DINNER will be presented by the Mount Zion Temple Sisterhood at 6:00 this evening at the temple, 1300 Summit Ave. There will be chicken and vegetarian dinner options. The cost is \$10-\$18. To register, call Sheila Schuman at 651-698-3881.

Saturday/December 12

A VICTORIAN-ERA SANTA CLAUS will read from “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” at the top of each hour from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. today at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. Before and after the readings, children

may make their own ornaments and tell Santa what they would like for Christmas. Parents are encouraged to bring a camera. Visitors can tour the holiday-decorated mansion as well. The cost is \$6.00-\$9.00. Call 651-296-8760.

A HISTORY FORUM on Benjamin Franklin will be offered at 2:00 this afternoon at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Guests are encouraged to tour the new Franklin exhibit before of after the lecture. Tickets are \$10-\$14. Call 651-259-3015

Sunday/December 13

A HANUKAH CELEBRATION will be held as part of the Dreidel Dash 5K and Maccabee Mini-Mile that will take place today from the Temple of Aaron Synagogue, 616 S. Mississippi River Blvd. The 5K will begin at 1:00 p.m. and wend its way to the Jewish Community Center. The Mini-Mile for children 10 and younger will start at 2:00 p.m. and follow a short loop in front of the JCC. Following the races, the JCC will celebrate Hanukah until 3:00 p.m. with goodies, music, crafts, displays, activities and dreidel games. To register for the races, call 651-698-0751 or visit www.stpauljcc.org.

Tuesday/December 15

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will meet at 11:30 this morning by the Big Kmart sign off of Robert Street and Butler Avenue. Call 651-455-0052 or visit stpaulhike.org.

A HOLIDAY BAZAAR will be held from 9:00 a.m. to noon today at the Wellington Assisted Living, 2235 Rockwood Ave. The bazaar will include homemade doll clothes, vintage gifts, jewelry, purses, luxurious scarves, English tea items, silent auction items and more. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Golden Girl Homes. Visit www.goldengirlhomes.us.

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Religious Notes

"A Season of Joy: The Nativity in Global Perspective," an exhibit of 30 Nativity scenes from Westminster Presbyterian Church's collection, is on view through January 15 in the lobby of the O'Shaughnessy Educational Center at the University of St. Thomas. The gallery is open from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and noon to 10:00 p.m. Sundays. The exhibition's guest curator, Rodney Allen Schwartz, will present a lecture on "The Crèche in Many Languages" at 7:00 p.m. Friday, December 4, in the OEC auditorium. Both the exhibit and lecture are free. Call 651-962-5560.

The Cathedral of St. Paul began restoration of its E.M. Skinner and Aeolian-Skinner pipe organs on November 18. Several hundred pipes that were originally installed in 1927 were removed from behind the altar and transported to Quimby Pipe Organs in Missouri for restoration. The restored pipes are scheduled to be reinstalled in January. The \$2.5 million project also will include rebuilding the choir gallery, installing a new heating and cooling system, and building casework in the gallery. A Sound Off! 2010-2013 fundraising campaign is being held to pay for the project. For an online look at the inner workings of the Cathedral's pipe organs, visit www.cathedralheritagefoundation.org/organ.

The Holy Spirit Men's Club is selling Christmas trees from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Fridays and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through December 20 on the east side of the church, 515 S. Albert St. The balsams, spruces and

Fraser firs cost \$45-\$50, with proceeds supporting parish projects. Call 651-698-3353, extension 209.

Institute of the Himalayan Tradition, 1317 Summit Ave., will offer a workshop on "Transcending Life as a Duck" from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, December 5. Participants will explore the options of staying huddled in the duck pond or spreading their wings. The cost is \$25-\$30. Call 651-645-1291 or visit www.ihityoga.org.

St. Clement's Episcopal Church, 901 Portland Ave., will present lessons and carols for Advent at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, December 6. The church's choir and children's choir will perform to the accompaniment of handbells and other instruments. A reception and book fair will follow. Call 651-228-1164.

The Church of St. Mark, 2001 Dayton Ave., will present lessons and carols for Advent on Sunday, December 6. The parish's lectors and children's and adult choirs will participate in the 3:00 p.m. service. Rory Cravillion will serve as organist. Call 651-645-5717.

The University of St. Thomas Center for Catholic Studies has dedicated Sitzmann Hall, its expanded and renovated new home at the northeast corner of Cleveland and Summit avenues. An open house will be held there from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 8. The \$3.9 million project doubled the amount of usable space in the hall.

The Theology and a Pint group sponsored by St. Mary's Episcopal Church will address the incarnation of Jesus on

Tuesday, December 8. The program will begin at 8:00 p.m. at O'Gara's Bar and Grill, 164 N. Snelling Ave. For information contact Rex McKee at rex.mckee@gmail.com or call 651-644-3333.

Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality, 1890 Randolph Ave., will offer a Winter Light family event with artist and poet Marie Olofsdotter from 10:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, December 12 (\$10); a day of contemplative prayer from 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Saturday, December 12 (\$30, includes lunch); and a Winter Solstice Festival from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Sunday, December 20 (\$10). Call 651-696-2788.

The Temple of Aaron Synagogue, 616 S. Mississippi River Blvd., will hold the following: a Hanukkah party with games, prizes, latkes (potato pancakes), sufganeot (doughnuts) and a menorah contest from 10:00 a.m. to noon Sunday, December 13 (admission is by a donation of food or winter clothing); and a book club meeting from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 15. Call 651-698-8874.

Concordia University will present a Christmas worship service of lessons, carols and instrumental music at 7:30 p.m. Monday, December 14, in its Graebner Memorial Chapel.

A Mass for healing will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, December 14, at Lumen Christi Catholic Church, 2055 Bohland Ave. The Reverend Matt Linn will celebrate. The public is also invited to join the St. Francis Prayer Group in the saying of a Rosary at 7:10 p.m.

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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.

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On the Town

JCC Symphony opens its 82nd season under new conductor Marina Liadova

By JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

Something old and something new could be the theme for the St. Paul JCC Symphony's season-opening concert on December 9. Something old is the symphony itself, which at 81 years is likely the oldest amateur orchestra in Minnesota and one of the oldest in the nation. Something new is its conductor, Marina Liadova, who has chosen for the concert an eclectic mix of classic and contemporary compositions she calls "Treasures from the Music Library."

Liadova, who has taught music for many years in schools in Eau Claire and Roseville, immigrated to the Twin Cities from her native Moscow almost 20 years ago. She attended Russia's Gnessin Music Academy, where she also taught for 10 years beginning at age 18.

JCC cultural arts director Jeffrey Richman described Liadova as "an educator at heart who is committed to making concerts informative, musically compelling and fun."

"The JCC Symphony is very old, and that's why it is so exciting," Liadova said. "I understand this part of the tradition very well because of the music school I went to in Moscow. I really like the idea of the organization having a lot of tradition."

The JCC Symphony was established in 1928 as a youth symphony under the baton of Peter Lisowsky, a violinist with the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra). Within five years, the JCC Symphony's membership had expanded to include adults and the Jewish Education Center of St. Paul had taken over sponsorship of the organization.

The symphony's first rehearsals were held in the St. Paul Musicians Hall in downtown St. Paul, a building that was demolished when the Lowry Hotel was built. In 1931 the group moved its rehearsals to the Jewish Center on Holly Avenue and Grotto Street, and when the new Jewish Community Center was built on St. Paul Avenue in 1963, the symphony moved there.

Ed Rapoport is the symphony's longest-tenured member. He joined the orchestra as a clarinetist in 1966 when he was a student at Highland Park High School, then switched to



The JCC Symphony, shown here with past conductor Joseph Schlefke (2002-09), will open a new season on December 9 under new conductor Marina Liadova (right).

viola at age 26.

Lisowsky was still conducting the symphony at that time. In fact, he conducted the JCC Symphony until his death in 1970.

Rapoport remembers Lisowsky as a stern and demanding leader with a passion for symphonic music. Rapoport has played under nearly all of the symphony's dozen or so conductors, although he took a hiatus for six years when he worked in Switzerland. "When I joined there were a lot of older people in the symphony," he said. "And it was, I think, more heavily Jewish than it is now."

Of course, in prior decades "there was

more of an audience for classical music," Rapoport said. "That's one of the problems of orchestras these days. It seems like there are more people who want to play than want to listen. But I'm excited about our new conductor. She has incredible energy and has planned a very imaginative program. I think it'll be one of the best concerts we've ever played."

While in Moscow, Liadova helped start a youth opera troupe, for which she created many original shows and produced several commissions. After moving to the Twin Cities in 1990, she served as conductor of the Brimhall International Choir, collaborating with such theaters as Park Square, the Lakeshore Players and the Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company.

Liadova said she has always wanted to begin a concert with Rossini's Overture to *The Barber of Seville*, and that will open the December 9 engagement. The first half of the concert will also include Symphony No. 104 in D Major by Haydn, her favorite composer.

Liadova described the second half of the program as "more lighthearted," with *Two Slavonic Dances* by Dvorak, "Three Jewish Portraits" by contemporary American composer John Duffy, "Viktor's Tale" by John Williams from the movie *The Terminal*, Australian Arthur Benjamin's "Jamaican Rumba," and "Potpourri" from the operetta *Die Csardasfurstin* by Hungarian composer Emmerich Kalman.

Soloists will include guest performers Dee Langley on accordion and Katrina Munding on clarinet as well as 11-year-old violinist Emma Richman, Jeffrey's daughter and a student of the JCC's Suzuki violin program for the past seven years.

The members of the JCC Symphony range in age from the late teens to 90-plus and come from all over the Twin Cities. One member commutes from Lake City.

Bassoonist Andrea Lubof has been a member of the symphony for nearly 30 years, and for much of that time has served as the organization's librarian. She said that when she first joined she played alongside several



of the symphony's original members. "I enjoy the camaraderie," she said. "I enjoy making music. I enjoy getting better, the challenge of playing."

"Many of the orchestra's members have a wealth of musical experience and are willing to share it," Rapoport said. "It's wonderful to learn from all of them."

The JCC Symphony rehearses weekly from September through May, and has additional concerts scheduled for March 10 and May 26, 2010. Liadova is planning a joint concert with the Minnetonka Civic Orchestra, and hopes that the May 26 concert can be a reunion program that brings back former members and perhaps former conductors of the symphony.

"The symphony is a welcoming, friendly group of people," Liadova said. "I'm sure the audience will feel that, because it's tangible when the musicians have a good time playing together. They're very dedicated and very conscientious of their playing. I'm excited and grateful to have this wonderful opportunity."

The concert on December 9 will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the JCC, 1375 St. Paul Ave. Admission is free and open to all, although audience members will need to show a photo ID when entering the building.



Two curious children take in a Wednesday evening rehearsal of the symphony following their swimming lesson at the JCC.



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On the Town *Briefly*

Books

Local authors Carol Connolly and Deborah Torraine and historian Steve Trimble will take part in a panel discussion on the stories and traditions that make St. Paul unique on Thursday, December 3. The free program will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. It is sponsored by *St. Paul Almanac* and its publisher, Kimberly Nightingale of Macalester-Groveland.

Carol Masters will read and sign copies of her new book, *You Can't Do That! Marv Davidov, Nonviolent Revolutionary*, at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5, at Bohlander Arts Gallery, 3011 36th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Davidov will also be present to tell stories of the peace movement. Wine and dessert will be served. Call 612-721-6438.

A Lowertown Reading Jam will be held at 7:00 p.m. Monday, December 7, at the Black Dog Cafe, 308 Prince St. Featured will be local writers Kathryn Kysar, Aleli Balagtas, Richard Broderick, Mike Finley, Wendy Brown-Baez and Marie Weber. Live music will be provided by Fantastic Merlins saxophonist Nathan Hanson and singer and instrumentalist Toni Adedeji of Wednesday's Bliss. Admission is free and so are the hors d'oeuvres.

"Soap Boxing," the monthly open poetry slam, will return at 8:00 p.m. Monday, December 7, at the Artists' Quarter, 408 St. Peter St. Admission is \$5.00, or free if you enter the competition. The featured guest performer is award-winning slam poet Thadra Sheridan of Minneapolis.

Dance

Choreographer Deborah Jinza Thayer will present *Ode to Dolly*, a dance and installation about reproduction, cloning and the confusion that reigns between the two human drives, on December 4-13. Featured dancers include Rachel Barnes, Penelope Freeh, Sarah Jacobs, Christine Maginnis, Kimberly Richardson and Sharon Picasso. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. Saturday and 5:00 p.m. Sunday at the New California Gallery, 2205 California St. NE. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door,



Stacey Lindell, Ruthie Baker and Patty Neiman are back as Maxene, Patty and LaVerne Andrews in *Sisters of Swing*. The toe-tapping tribute to one of the most successful female groups of all time is playing at 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday through December 20 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Tickets are \$28-\$32, \$25-\$30 for seniors, \$15 for students and \$10 for children. Call 651-292-4323. PHOTO BY SCOTT PAKUDAITIS

\$15 for students and whatever you can afford at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5. Call 612-245-2253.

The Enchanted Toy Shop, an original holiday ballet, will be performed December 18-20 by the St. Paul City Ballet. Set in a magical toy shop where holiday dreams come to life, the production features professional and student dancers moving to the music of Tchaikovsky, Respighi and Rossini. Living dolls, dancing snowflakes and a dreamy prince are among the magical characters flitting among live singers and musicians. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday in Pearson Theater at Concordia University, 312 N. Hamline Ave. Tickets are \$18 for children age 12 and under, \$25 for everyone else. Call 651-690-1588.

Exhibits

A Victorian mansion decorated for the holidays is yours to tour between now and January 3. The Minnesota Historical Society has spruced up the Alexander Ramsey House as Anna and Alexander themselves might have for Christmas back in 1875. A costumed guide will lead visitors through the house,

telling holiday tales from the Ramsey's own journals and letters. The tours are offered between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and between noon and 3:00 p.m. Sunday. Hot cider and cookies fresh from the wood-burning stove will be served. The cost is \$9.00, \$7.00 for seniors and college students, and \$6.00 for children ages 4-17. Call 651-296-8760.

"Cliche," art by Rick Love that explores whether words, symbols and language can be emulsified into something else, is on view from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays through December 18 in the Concordia University Art Gallery, 1301 Marshall Ave. Admission is free.

"Hungry Planet: What the World Eats," a provocative exhibit based on the best-selling book by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Alusio, is on view through May 9 at the Bell Museum of Natural History, 17th and University avenues in Southeast Minneapolis. The show combines mesmerizing photos with hands-on displays about the origins of food around the world. Folklorist Peter Harle will explore food's often surprising roles in communication, culture and identity at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 3. University of

Minnesota professors Jeffrey Pilcher and Linda Brady will lead a tour of the exhibit with a focus on food science and nutrition at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, December 10. The film *Big Night*, about two brothers who ran a small Italian restaurant in 1950s New Jersey, will be shown at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 10. "Should I Stuff My Turkey and Other Holiday Food Safety Tips" will be discussed by U of M educator Elena Yepiz at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 17. Admission is \$5.00, \$3.00 for seniors and children ages 3-16. Call 612-624-7083.

The bustle of Christmas in a Summit Avenue mansion circa 1900 is brought to life in weekend tours now through December 27 at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Based on letters and oral histories of the people who worked for the Hill family, the one-hour program begins every 30 minutes between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. The fee is \$10, \$8.00 for seniors and students, \$6.00 for children ages 6-17. Also at the Hill House, historian James Neagbour will present an illustrated lecture on Christmas celebrations in the Twin Cities 1850-1940 at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 8. Light refreshments and a house tour will follow. The fee is \$8.00, \$6.00 for seniors and students, \$5.00 for children ages 6-17. Call 651-297-2555.

"Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World," a 5,000-square-foot exhibit on the 17th century American businessman, inventor and statesman and his journey from teenage runaway to founding father, is on view through July 4, 2010, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Admission is \$10, \$8.00 for seniors and college students, \$5.00 for children ages 6-17 and free for children age 5 and under. Call 651-259-3000.

The Como Conservatory's Holiday Flower Show will open on Saturday, December 5. Hundreds of poinsettias, including the cultivars of Orange Spice, Peppermint Twist, Eggnog, Visions of Grandeur and Winter Blush, will be on view from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily through January 18. Photographers are invited to use the show as a backdrop between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 6, at a cost of \$5.00 per person. A professional photographer will also be available at an additional nominal fee.

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www.theoshaughnessy.com

Ave., will hold a Holiday Art Sale and Auction from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5, and from noon to 4:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6. A Preview Party, with tickets at \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door, will be held from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Friday, December 4. For sale will be artwork made by students, alumni, faculty and staff. Selected artwork and prints from the CVA archives will be included in the silent auction, which closes at 3:00 p.m. Sunday. Call 651-757-4000 or visit www.cva.edu.

“The Last Polaroid Show.” Surrealistic and impressionistic images of the Como Park Conservatory, created by Mark D. Roberts and Denise Rouleau through the manipulation of the dyes in the now extinct SX-70 Polaroid film, will be on view from December 5 through January 19 at the conservatory. The gallery is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. A reception for the artists will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Monday, December 14.

Family

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins, a play by Shari Aronson based on the book by Eric A. Kimmel, will be performed December 5-22 by the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company. It tells the story of traveler Hershel of Ostropol, who is enlisted by the people of Helmsbergville to battle the goblins who for years have been preventing Hanukkah from being celebrated. Show times are 7:00 p.m. Saturday, 2:00 p.m. Sunday, and Tuesday through Friday mornings in the theater at Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Tickets are \$16. Call 651-647-4315.

Dubbed the worst kids in the history of the world, the Herdman children somehow turn the town's holiday play into *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!* The holiday drama runs December 4-22 at SteppingStone Theatre, 55 N. Victoria St. Show times are 10:00 a.m. and noon Tuesday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Friday, 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. Saturday, 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. Sunday and 7:00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday, December 21 and 22. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for seniors and children ages 2-17. Call 651-225-9265.

“Saturday Live,” free entertainment for children, begins at 11:15 a.m. Saturdays at St. Paul's Central Library, 90 W. 4th St. The schedule includes the Loki Players in “The Gingerbread Man,” December 5; the musical Okee Dokee Brothers, December 12. Visit www.sppl.org.

The wonderful world of Disney skates into the Xcel Energy Center on December 10-13. Cutting a fine figure will be “Princess Classics,” a dramatization of scenes from the movies *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Mulan* and *Snow White*. Show times are 7:00 p.m. Thursday, 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Friday, 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. Saturday, and 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets, priced at \$11, \$16, \$23, \$42 and \$65, are available at the Xcel box office or by calling Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000.

Find out what owls eat by dissecting an owl pellet during the Nature Play program at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, December 12, at the Bell Museum of Natural History, 17th and University avenues in Southeast Minneapolis. Admission is \$5.00, \$3.00 for seniors and children ages 3-16. Call 612-624-7083.

Film

From the producers of *Who Killed the Electric Car* comes *Tapped*, a new documentary that explores the water-bottle industry and the health dangers of polyethylene terephthalate. Director and producer Stephanie Soechtig and line producer Sarah Olson will show the film at 7:00 p.m. Thursday,

December 3, in the Lecture Hall of the Macalester College Campus Center. Admission is free. Call 651-696-6274.

The 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Czech Velvet Revolution will be marked with a weekend of film on December 4-6 at Oak St. Cinema, 309 Oak St. SE. in Minneapolis. The schedule includes *Goodbye, Lenin* (2003, in German with English subtitles) at 7:00 p.m. Friday and 9:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; *Cozy Dens* (1999, in Czech with English subtitles) at 9:30 p.m. Friday and 7:15 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; *Citizen Havel* (2008) at 3:00 p.m. Saturday and 5:15 p.m. Sunday; and *Ecstasy* (1933, in Czech with English subtitles), a restored black-and-white print of the early Hedy Lamarr film, at 5:15 p.m. Saturday and 3:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$7.00, \$6.00 for seniors and students. Call 612-331-3134.

The Trylon, a microcinema at 3258 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis run by all-volunteer Take-Up Productions, will be showing the following films on Fridays and Saturdays: *Stairway To Heaven* (1946), a witty fantasy starring David Niven as a downed World War II pilot who attempts to cheat death in the interests of romance, 7:00 and 9:05 p.m. on December 4 and 5; and *Black Narcissus* (1947), a highly charged drama set in a convent high in the Himalayas, 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. December 11 and 12. Admission is \$8.00. Call 612-424-5468.

Occupation 101, a documentary by Sufyan Omeish and Abdallah Omeish on the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, will be shown at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, in the gallery of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave. in Minneapolis. The screening is a fundraiser for Minnesota Gaza Freedom March, a group of Minnesotans who are planning to take part in a nonviolent peace march in Gaza in late December. A panel discussion with local experts will follow the film. Admission is by donation with \$10 suggested.

Music

The Schubert Club International Artist Series continues with mezzo-soprano Susan Graham on Wednesday, December 2, in a recital of works by Ravel, Messiaen, Debussy, Fauré, Satie, Bizet, Franck, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Chausson and Duparc. One of the foremost opera stars today, Graham will be accompanied by pianist Malcolm Martineau. The music begins at 8:00 p.m. at the Ordway Center. Tickets are \$50, \$40, \$35, \$25 and \$12. Call 651-292-3268.

A Radio Holiday. Singer Prudence Johnson and pianist Dan Chouinard will present timeless holiday standards from the 1930s and '40s at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Tickets are \$15. Call 651-259-3000.

“O Lux (Oh, light!)” a Christmas concert by candlelight, will be performed by the St. Catherine University Women's Choir and String Chamber Orchestra at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5, in Our Lady of Victory Chapel at St. Catherine. Admission is free. Call 651-690-6690.

Fitzgerald Theater, 10 E. Exchange St., will present the New Standards jazz trio and friends in a holiday show at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, December 5; the family Steele (Billy, Fred, J.D., Jearlyn and Jevetta) in a soulful Christmas special at 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, December 11 and 12; and mandolinist and violinist Peter Ostroushko in a Heartland Holiday Concert at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, December 19. For ticket information, call 651-290-1221.

Music from the Baroque era and beyond will be performed on Sunday, December 6, by Todd Tipton on the vihuela, Baroque guitar, Renaissance guitar and classical guitar. The free program begins at 2:00 p.m. at St.

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



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Oboist John Snow will join the Musical Offering in a holiday chamber concert at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, in Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The program includes August Klughardt's Wind Quintet in C, Gabriel Faure's Piano Quartet No.1 and Gebauer's Trio for violin, cello and bassoon. Tickets are \$17, \$14 for seniors, \$8.00 for students. Call 651-523-2459.

Macalester-Groveland lutenist Richard Griffith will present festive music and poetry from the Renaissance in a free program at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave.

Svenskarnas Dag Girls Choir will present its annual Christmas concert at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, December 6, at Bethlehem Covenant Church, 3141 43rd Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The performance of Swedish and American carols, hymns and folk songs of the season will be followed by a traditional candlelit Lucia pageant. Tickets are \$10, \$5.00 for children age 12 and under, or \$30 per family. A small smorgasbord, Lucia buns and Christmas cookies will be available at the reception that follows. Call 612-825-8808.

The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, under the baton of guest conductor Gunther Schuller, will perform at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Members of the University of Minnesota New Music Ensemble and Northern Lights Chamber Music Institute will join the chamber in a program that includes works by Beethoven, Mozart and Alec Wilder as well as Schuller's Adagio for String Orchestra, Early Songs for soprano and piano and his new Quintet for Horn and String Quartet. Tickets are \$15- \$25. Call 651-450-0527.

Irish singer and storyteller Máirtín de Cógáin of Fuchsia Band fame will take the stage at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6, at Celtic Junction, 836 N. Prior Ave. The concert, which is sponsored by the Traditional Singers Club, will include performances by club singers as well as one or two singers selected from the audience. Admission is \$10. Call 651-245-3719.

"Bring Us Fire, Bring Us Light!" The a cappella group InVocation will perform holiday favorites by Praetorius, Bach and Rutter and songs from cultures around the world on December 6 and 11. The music begins at 4:00 p.m. Sunday at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, 5011 31st Ave. S. in Minneapolis, and at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Ave. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted for the House of Charity in downtown Minneapolis.

Handel's Messiah. The Minnesota Orchestra and the Minnesota Chorale

will perform the celebrated oratorio at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, December 10, at the St. Paul Cathedral. British conductor David Hill will conduct. Featured as soloists will be soprano Sarah Fox, countertenor Iestyn Davies, tenor Daniel Norman and bass Kevin Deas. Tickets are \$15-\$53. Call 612-371-5656.

Folk songs about love, liquor and other mysteries of the human psyche will be performed by John Van Orman and Sherry Minnick in concert at 7:00 p.m. Saturday, December 12, at Celtic Junction, 836 N. Prior Ave. Special guest Todd Menton will join the duo in singing a cappella and with the accompaniment of guitar, concertina, hurdy-gurdy and oud. Tickets are \$15.

Irish soprano Katie McMahon will appear on Saturday, December 12, in a festive program of Irish music and dance. Joining McMahon and her band in the Celtic Christmas celebration will be guest carolers and the Corda Mor Irish dancers. It all begins at 7:30 p.m. in O'Shaughnessy Auditorium at St. Catherine University. Tickets are \$10-\$25. Call 651-690-6700.

British classical guitarist Michael Partington will perform sonatas by Scarlatti, Ponce, Giuliani, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Stephen Goss at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, December 12, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Tickets are \$22, \$17 for seniors and students, call 612-671-1151.

Classical guitarist Tony Hauser will perform the music of Brazil in a free program at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 13, at the Rondo Library, 461 N. Dale St.

"Celebrating the Mystery," a Christmas concert by the 40-voice choral ensemble Kantorei, will be presented at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, December 13, in the chapel of the St. Paul Seminary, 2260 Summit Ave. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for seniors and students.

The 30-piece Lex-Ham Community Band will perform music for Christmas and Hanukah in a free concert at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, December 13, in Buetow Auditorium at Concordia University, Hamline and Marshall avenues.

Theater

Sister's Christmas Catechism is playing through December 27 in the Ordway's McKnight Theatre. The sequel to *Late Nite Catechism* stars Kimberly Richards as the irrepressible nun who employs methods she learned from the TV show "Forensic Files" to discover the whereabouts of the Magi's gold. Tickets are \$40.50. Call 651-224-4222.

Holy Bells: A Deer Camp Christmas, a new holiday musical that pits the 500,000-member ACLU against four beer-swilling guys from Elmwood, is being performed through January 2 by Actors Theater of Minnesota. The guys are up north getting fresh trees

for the annual Christmas Eve Nativity scene and choir service when the ACLU steps in threatening to shut it down. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 5:00 and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 5:00 p.m. Sunday at the Lowry Theater, 16 W. 5th St. Tickets: \$29-\$39. Call Ticketmaster at 612-673-0404.

A Little Steinway Music, an original musical comedy, will be performed by the Walking Boxes theater at 7:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, December 3 and 4, in the parlor of the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. Tickets are \$17, which includes a tour of the first floor of the historic home. For reservations, call 651-296-8760.

Fezziwig's Feast, a retelling of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* adapted and directed by Jon Cranney, will be served up from December 3-20 along with a seven-course gourmet meal in the banquet hall of Wigginton Hall on Harriet Island. The holiday feast comes complete with roaring fire, hot-spiced cider, Victorian carolers and a picturesque staging of Dickens' tale of compassion and redemption. Show times are 7:00 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 7:30 p.m. Saturdays and 4:00 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$74.50, \$39.50 for children age 12 and under. Call 1-800-982-2787.

A variety show in the tradition of Carol Burnett, Andy Williams and Sonny & Cher, *Spiked! Put Some Punch in Your Holiday!* will be presented from December 4-20 by Tablesalt Productions. The local company of singers and actors will be joined by a host of guest artists from the region. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2:00 p.m. Sundays at the Lowry Lab Theater, 350 St. Peter St. Tickets are \$15-\$25. Visit www.TableSaltProductions.com.

A Christmas Story, humorist Jean Shepherd's memoir of growing up in the Midwest in the 1940s, returns to the stage for nine shows from December 4-20 at the Mounds Theatre, 1029 Hudson Road. Show times are 7:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2:00 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for seniors and students, \$5.00 for children age 12 and under. Call 651-772-2253.

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol, the flip side of the Dickens' classic featuring Jim Lichtscheidl in all 18 roles, returns to Park Square Theatre from December 4-20. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2:00 p.m. Sunday on the stage at 20 W. 7th Place. Tickets are \$36 and \$40 with discounts for seniors and anyone age 30 and under. Call 651-291-7005.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast, the classic tale of a hideous beast who is transformed into a prince through the power of a young woman's love, will be performed Tuesdays through Sundays, December 15 through January 3, at the Ordway. Tickets are \$63.50 and \$80.50. Call 651-224-4222.





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Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

The Odd Couple: Vikings, Saints face a common problem

The Minnesota Vikings and St. Paul Saints would seem to have little in common. One team plays in the most popular sports league in the country, every game is televised and sportswriters cover the squad daily. The other team plays in a league that has a much smaller cult following, the home games only get televised on local cable and the writers at the daily papers haven't covered a road trip in years.

However, the Vikings and Saints have more in common than one might think. The Vikings have played to full houses at home for more than a decade. And the Saints averaged roughly 90 percent capacity during their 48-game home schedule last season, one of the best draws in all of minor league baseball.

Both teams also play in stadiums that were built around the same time as multi-sport facilities, but now are being mainly used for one sport. As such, they are relics and their primary tenants are now making it clear they would like to move to new homes as soon as possible.

Let's consider the Vikings' situation first. As has been acknowledged before, the Metrodome is the architectural equivalent of comfort food. Although it was built with the football Gophers and Vikings in mind, it sufficed as the home of the Minnesota Twins until the public clamored to bring outdoor baseball back. With the Twins and Gophers now gone to new stadiums constructed in part with state money, Vikings owner Zygi Wilf decided it's time for his team to ratchet up the pressure and join the club. Never mind that the Metrodome is paid for and the Vikings' rent payments have been waived for the past nine years. Wilf and his main spokesman, Lester Bagley, are now pushing hard for state legislators to cough up sufficient money to subsidize the construction of a new playpen. They cite as their primary sales pitch the fact that their team's gross income is second to last in the NFL.

For good measure, they note the team's lease for the Metrodome expires in two years and they have no intention of extending their stay. They are also well aware that there is a former bodybuilder in California ready to sink the shovels in the ground tomorrow to build the team a stadium in L.A. You don't have to be Ray Kinsella and it doesn't have to be a corn field in Iowa to understand the phrase, "Build it and they will come."

The Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, the Metrodome's landlord, apparently thought the political winds were such that it needed to put pressure on the Vikings to either re-up for an extended lease or come to some other kind of agreement. Among other ideas, the commission is thinking about charging rent again to its primary tenant.

WRIGHT CALL ► 38

Tenacious 'D'

CDH shuts down Eden Prairie to win state title

BY BILL WAGNER

Creton-Derham Hall, operating on the strength of a stalwart defense and a quick-strike offense, emerged with the state Class AAAAA football crown by beating top-ranked and previously undefeated Eden Prairie 16-5 on November 27 at the Metrodome.

"This was a team win," said elated coach Mike Scanlan. "Our offense got the points when we needed them, but it was our defense that really won this game. They were unbelievable. I kept looking out there and saying to myself, 'We can't keep doing this.' But we just kept stopping them."

The Raiders defense held the Eagles to 248 yards and no touchdowns. Eden Prairie, which had never lost a state title game en route to winning six previous championships, got within the CDH 20 three times, but could only come away with three points.

The victory gave the Raiders (12-1) their second state football title in seven appearances in the championship round. The school's only other title came in 1999, when Joe Mauer played quarterback.

The Raider offense, which averaged more than 30 points a game during the regular season, scored when it mattered most, starting with a 79-yard strike from scrambling senior quarterback Mark Alt to senior wide receiver Brooks Hitchcock in the first quarter for the first score of the game.

"This is just a great thing for our school," said Hitchcock, who caught five passes for 152 yards. "It feels great to be part of this group of seniors. I'm just glad I could contribute."

Alt, who suffered a broken collarbone this season that caused him to miss three games, also enjoyed the hookups with Hitchcock. "He has become an unbelievable receiver," Alt said. "We work well together. We each know where the other guy is going to be out there."

Alt, who was 10-of-19 passing for 216 yards, appreciates how important team chemistry was for the Raiders. "We jell," he said. "We're not just a bunch of individuals."

Senior fullback Cameron Clarkson led the ground attack for CDH with 46 yards on 17 rushes.

Seantrel Henderson, the 6-8, 337-pound senior lineman and top high



Clay Horne leads the way for Kendrick Brewster during CDH's 16-5 win against the Eagles in the Class AAAAA final at the Metrodome. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

school player in the nation, found the outcome a fitting way to end his prep career. "The defense does such a good job and doesn't get enough credit," Henderson said, "but they came together in this game. Everyone contributed."

The Raiders, making their 21st state tournament appearance, had lost to Eden Prairie in the finals twice before. However, they served notice early that they were ready to play some serious defense. The Eagles could not move the ball on their first two possessions, and before the first quarter ended, Alt and Hitchcock hit on their big play. Alt kicked the extra point to make it 7-0.

In the second quarter the Eagles marched methodically from their own 22 to the CDH 20 before the Raider defense stiffened. Eden Prairie was hurt by a 15-yard penalty that took it out of field goal range and the score remained 7-0 at the half.

The Eagles went three-and-out on their first possession in the second half, whereupon the Raiders got their second score on a nine-play, 55-yard march. The capper came on a 29-yard pass from Alt to senior Clay Horne in the end zone. The extra point failed, giving the Raiders a 13-0 lead.

The Raiders intentionally gave up a safety after being pinned inside their own 5 to make it 13-2 in the third quar-

ter. It was a calculated risk, but Scanlan said he felt comfortable with the decision because of the way the defense was playing. "We felt we should take a shot at kicking from our 20 and see what happens," he said.

It turned out favorably for CDH, but not before some anxious moments. Following the kick after the safety, the Eagles took the ball from their own 49 late in the third quarter and rolled off 14 plays that stretched well into the final quarter. But with his team facing a fourth-and-four at the CDH 9, Eden Prairie coach Mike Grant opted to go for a field goal, which David Platner delivered from 26 yards out to make it 13-5.

With the Eagles still very much in the ballgame, the Raiders began their most critical possession of the year, starting from their own 12. Alt converted a key third-down pass to Hitchcock for 43 yards and a fresh set of downs just past midfield. From there, the Raiders chewed up the clock and Alt put the game on ice with a 27-yard field goal with 2:26 left. The Eagles were able to advance to the CDH 1 in the final seconds, but time ran out.

"Eden Prairie has a phenomenal defense," Alt said. "They play hard and they come at you. We knew we had to throw the ball. That was the only way we were going to beat them."

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Prep preview: Size has changed boys' hockey, but skill still counts

BY DAVE WRIGHT

In the late 1960s, there was a gangly lad who played defense for his hometown's youth hockey team. He wasn't the best skater in the world, but he was big and took up a lot of space. Eventually, he started shooting basketballs instead of pucks. For Kevin McHale, it proved to be a good move.

There aren't any hockey players of McHale's size (6-foot-10) kicking around the college and high school ranks. Still, when you see people like Cretin-Derham Hall's Mark Alt (6-foot-4, 205 pounds) patrolling the blueline, you realize that hockey isn't a game for runts anymore.

"You can't coach size," said St. Thomas Academy co-coach Tom Vannelli, "but you can't coach speed, either. If you have the latter as a forward, you can be small and still be a very effective player. But it's definitely true that there are more big guys on the ice than ever before."

Vannelli was a smallish, pepper-pot center during his prep days at St. Paul Academy and later for the University of Minnesota. But he didn't have to go up against many guys of Alt's size. He agrees with Minnehaha Academy coach Darin Thompson that little guys have to be more aware of the big boys than before.

"The big guys can do a lot with their reach," Thompson said. "If you have a small team, like we have, you have to go fast and win all the races to loose pucks. If you don't, the big guys simply reach out and take you down."

To neutralize the big guys, SPA coach Craig Norwich said you need to have a good passing game. "If you watch the NHL these days, you see a resurgence of little guys like Martin St. Louis (5-foot-9 forward with Tampa Bay)," he said. "Those guys are constantly moving the puck. It's made for a faster game there."

However, the prep game is different. Several teams only have two lines and four defensemen they rely on. Fatigue becomes a factor late in a game. And when you're more tired, it doesn't take as much effort for the 6-foot-4 palooka to corral a wayward forward. Thus, coaches like Vannelli feel they have an advantage when they use fresh legs. "We're fairly deep," he said. "We can use three lines and tire teams out no matter how big or little they are."

With that in mind, here's how the local boys' hockey teams size up this season:

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

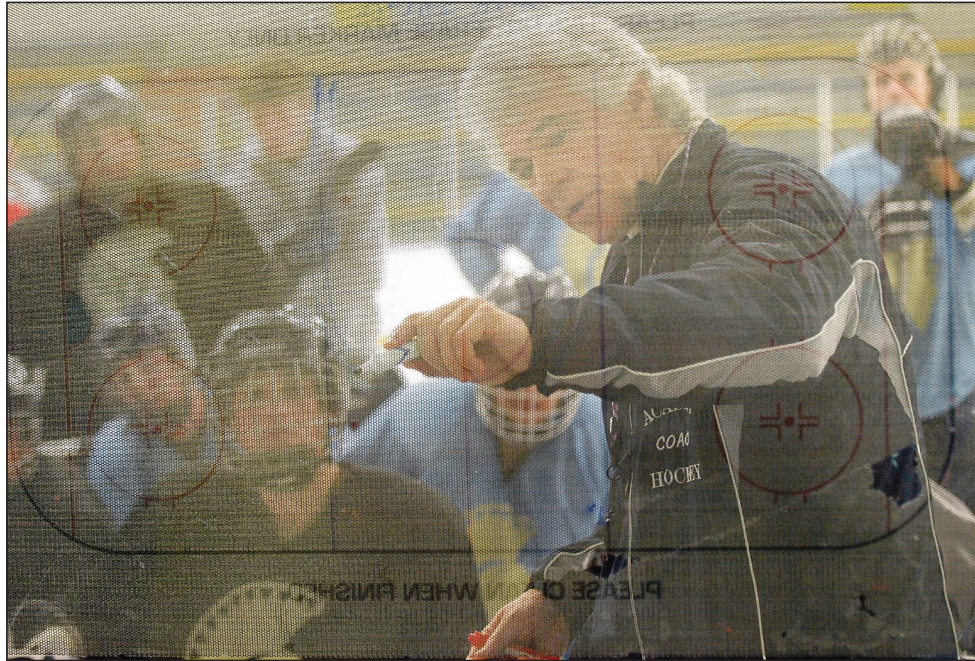
League: Suburban East Conference

Last year's record: 21-9-1

Coach: Jim O'Neill

Key players and their strengths:

- Mark Alt, senior defender. Has verbally committed to play hockey for the Gophers



Looking through rink glass, St. Paul Academy boys' hockey coach Craig Norwich diagrams a drill for his team during practice at Drake Arena. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

next season. Hurt his shoulder playing hockey in September, but will be one of the premier performers in the state this year if he stays healthy.

- Neil Batholomay, senior defender. A solid defender who played regularly the last two seasons. At 6-foot-3, has excellent range.

- Riley Dombek, senior defender. Surprisingly mobile and has a good scoring touch for a 6-foot-2, 210 pounder. "He likes to create space for himself," O'Neill said.

- Jesse Perron, senior forward. Last year's top scorer and a crafty playmaker. Had consecutive five-assist games last year.

- Bob Kinne, junior forward. Led the Raiders with 19 goals last season, including back-to-back hat tricks.

Outlook: Last year's state tournament surprise team is understandably defensive about its upcoming season. The Raiders have a bevy of blueliners returning that may make scoring against them difficult. Alt is the best-known of the bunch, but O'Neill also thinks highly of returnees Batholomay, Dombek and Tyllor Robert. With three of its top four scorers from last season back, CDH should be able to produce goals again. The biggest question will be the untested goaltenders. If the Raiders find somebody to equal what Ben Walsh did for them last year between the posts, they may well be playing in mid-March again.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Tri-Metro Conference

Last year's record: 6-19-2

Coach: Darin Thompson

Key players and their strengths:

- Peter Knutson, senior forward. Last year's leading scorer is small, quick and has good hands.

- Matt Wolpert, senior forward. "He creates turnovers," Thompson said. That's good news for his linemate, Knutson, one of the team's fastest skaters.

- Chase Wichelman, senior defender. An offensive force from the blueline. "He has a passion for the game," Thompson said.

- Bryce Walt, senior defender. A stay-at-home type who clogs up the middle and should be a steadying influence on defense.

- Alex Eide, senior forward. The former Edina youth player is small, but solid. Could become one of the team's finishers at the net.

Outlook: Second-year coach Thompson said he and his players have a much better feel for each other as this season begins. "The kids know what to expect from the coaches and we know what they can give us," he said. That kind of stability should help the Redhawks, who have some firepower and speed up front. However, as is often the case at Minnehaha, the team is not deep and cannot afford injuries, such as the one that will sideline Eide for a month. The team is a mix of vets and newcomers. "In some ways, we're old," Thompson said, citing a larger than usual group of seniors. "In some ways, however, we're very young."

ST. PAUL ACADEMY

League: Tri-Metro Conference

Last year's record: 15-10-2

Coach: Craig Norwich

Key players and their strengths:

- Wyatt Wenzel, senior forward. A speedy skater who scored 30 goals last season. "He creates breakaways and not many players can do that," Norwich said.

- Luc Bruggeman, senior forward. Scored eight goals last year. "He's very skilled but needs to be a better finisher" the coach said.

- James Trevathan, senior defender. Has played since 8th grade and knows the system well. Very good in his own end.

- Max Hommeyer, junior defender. A two-year regular who has shown steady improvement at both ends of the ice.

Outlook: Norwich is excited about the upcoming season, with six of last year's top eight scorers returning. "We had 42 kids come out, the most we've ever had," he said. "We have some real depth this year." As impressive as Wenzel's point total was last year, Norwich thinks his star forward can top it. Bruggeman grew on the job last year and is expected to be a leader as well. Trevathan is a fixture on the blueline. Pete Simpson fared well in 11 games last year in goal and is expected to shoulder the load this season.

ST. THOMAS ACADEMY

League: Classic Suburban Conference

Last year's record: 21-5-2

Co-coaches: Tom Vannelli, Greg Vannelli

Key players and their strengths:

- Kurt Altrichter, senior goalie. A member of the 2008 state champion team who allowed fewer than two goals a game and had a .90 save percentage last year.

- Christian Isackson, senior forward. A Gopher-bound player who scored 40 goals in the last two seasons. Has good size and strength. "One of the best playmakers I've ever seen," Tom Vannelli said.

- Justin Crandall, senior forward. Scored 21 goals last season and is headed to the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Was second in scoring in the Elite Fall League this year.

- J.P. Graveline, senior defender. A third-year player and natural leader who handles the puck well on both ends of the ice.

Outlook: The Cadets won the Class A state titles in 2006 and 2008. If things go the way Tom Vannelli thinks they might, another even-year championship could be within reach. "I'll be disappointed if we aren't a good offensive team," he said. "We have several top scorers back, a defenseman who's getting serious Division I looks and a goalie who was on our 2008 team. We could be very good this year." In addition to seniors Isackson and Crandall, juniors A.J. Reid and Zach Schroeder can also score. Graveline is the best known on the blueline, but there are other experienced players back there as well.



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Alpha Dental Plan

Point guards are at a premium in high school girls' basketball and Central has an outstanding one in sophomore Jen Hill.

PHOTO BY
BRAD STAUFFER



Girls' hoops preview

Coaches aren't guarded about need for strong player at point

BY BRIAN JOHNSON

The job description for a point guard includes being able to distribute the ball with aplomb, shoot with precision and dribble like a magician. Having eyes in the back of your head is a plus.

Leadership, game smarts, play-making ability and great ball-handling skills are the hallmarks of a great point guard, and local high school girls' basketball coaches all agree that it's a crucial position on the court.

"The point guard on my team is supposed to be my eyes on the floor," said Roosevelt coach Michael Wright. "She runs the floor, runs the offense, knows when to pull back and control the tempo of the game."

At point guard, it's not enough just to be a good athlete, according to Cretin-Derham Hall coach Amy Bellus. "The most important thing is understanding the game and the ability to see the big picture," she said. "The point guard makes the rest of the players better. It's probably the toughest position on the court."

Visitation coach Brian Kramer looks for point guards who can set the tempo of the game, push the ball up the court and lead the offense.

"We expect the point guard to be the coach on the court," said Minnehaha Academy coach Josh Thurow. "It's a big responsibility."

St. Paul Central coach Willie Taylor summed it up: "My point guard is a coach on the floor, pretty much running everything that goes on—offensively and defensively," he said.

All indications point to an exciting girls' basketball season. Here's a look at the prospects for the teams in the Villager area:

CENTRAL

League: St. Paul City Conference

Last year's record: 21-7

Coach: Willie Taylor

Key players and their strengths:

- Jen'Von'Ta Hill, sophomore guard. The team's second-leading scorer last year with 12.6 points per game.

- Brianna Reeves, junior forward. Was hurt most of last year, but is ready to log a lot of minutes this season.

- Maja Cyrus, junior forward. A good outside shooter who was the second player off the bench last year.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Central has

an outstanding point guard to lead the team and some emerging young talent. However, with double-digit losses to graduation and six freshmen on the varsity squad, the team lacks experience.

Outlook: After a string of conference titles, Central is being picked by some to finish third or fourth in 2009, Taylor said. Highland Park and Johnson are among the conference favorites, but "we're not going to be far behind those teams," he predicted.

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East Conference

Last year's record: 8-19

Coach: Amy Bellus

Key players and their strengths:

- Jenna Hoffman, senior forward. Has good size and speed, jumps well and is a skilled defender.

- Sally Boland, senior forward. A double-figure scorer who has speed and a knack for creating scoring opportunities.

- Maria McQuillan, senior guard. An excellent defender and terrific on the press.

- Moirra Caulfield, senior guard. Talented athlete who tends to be in the right place at the right time.

- Erin Noel, senior forward. A team leader who creates good chemistry.

Team strengths/weaknesses: CDH looks to be a hard-working team. The Raiders are solid on defense and have good team speed, but are short on varsity experience. Some players will have to assume more prominent roles on offense.

Outlook: CDH hopes to be competitive and show continued improvement. "With our lack of experience, we're going to try to be over-achievers," Bellus said. "Our goal is to make it through the growing pains and be stronger in February than we are at the start."

HENRY SIBLEY

League: Classic Suburban Conference

Last year's record: 13-14

Coach: Nathan McGuire

Key players and their strengths:

- Chelsea Miller, senior guard. A terrific athlete and starter since her sophomore year. Quick on her feet and a penetrating scorer.

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Sports Shorts

Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., is now accepting registration for the winter session. Classes include children's dance, tumbling and yoga, Abakadoodle art, computer claymation, parent-child growing with music, parent-child cooking, Sunday family art, Soo Bahk Do karate, adult yoga, adult body conditioning through dance, boot camp fitness and senior exercise. The classes will begin in January and February. Call 651-695-3706 or visit www.stpaul.gov/parks.

Fort Snelling State Park will offer the following classes and activities in the coming weeks: Naturally Kids, an outdoor exploration of woods, rivers and ponds and an indoor writing exercise, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Sunday, December 6; a two-day, eight-hour basketweaving workshop on Saturday and Sunday, December 12-13; a Fitness and Phenology Walk with snowshoes if possible at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, December 19; Geocaching 101 from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 19; a class in reading animal tracks from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Sunday, December 20; Birding for Beginners from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Saturday, December 26; a hike to identify native trees while bare (the trees) from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Sunday, December 27; a New Year's Eve Candlelight Walk and Skating Pond with refreshments from 3:00-8:00 p.m. Thursday, December 31. For more information and registration, call 612-725-2724.

Concordia University-St. Paul has been chosen to host the 2009 Division II National Championship Volleyball Tournament Thursday through Saturday, December 3-5. The top-ranked Golden Bears (34-0) are the Central Region champions and will join seven other regional champs in the Elite Eight

as they defend their back-to-back Division II titles. Concordia will face Indianapolis in the quarterfinals on December 3.

Rachel Hansen, a point guard from Minnehaha Academy, has signed a letter of intent to play basketball for Concordia University-St. Paul for the 2010-11 season. "Rachel is a pure point guard," said Golden Bears coach Paul Fessler. "She has great vision and passing skills and has the ability to take people off the dribble and hit the three."

Joe Wagner, an 8th-grader from Mendota Heights, has been selected to play in the second annual Football University Youth All-American Bowl on January 10 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. The bowl brings the top 7th- and 8th-grade football players in the nation together to play in an all-star format. It is modeled after the U.S. Army All-American Bowl that will be held in the same city the same week. The youth bowl will be shown live at FootballUniversity.org.

Jill Vandegrift, a Central High School graduate and sophomore forward on Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's women's hockey team, had two goals and four assists in the team's first 14 games this season. Vandegrift was a two-time all-conference soccer player for the Minutemen and played hockey for the Minnesota Thoroughbreds prior to attending Rensselaer in Troy, New York.

Taylor Hanson, a senior running back and four-year starter at Minnehaha Academy, has been named to the all-metro football team. He also was named to the all-state academic team in Class AAA by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association.

CDH's Janzen strikes more gold

BY REGAN SMITH

Cretin-Derham Hall junior Kiera Janzen capped off a strong season by winning the 200- and 500-yard freestyle events at the state Class AA girls' swimming and diving championship on November 21 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

"Kiera is an extremely talented swimmer," said CDH coach Patrick Marzolf. "Her strengths are her determination and work ethic. I have yet to see Kiera in a tough race and not be able to pull through when it's close at the end. She has tremendous finishing speed."

Janzen's times of 1:48.51 and 4:50.73 in the 200 and 500 were enough to win the gold, but they did not beat her state record-setting times of 1:47.86 and 4:50.55 that she posted in last year's meet. In 2008, she became the first girl in the state to swim 500 yards in under five minutes.

"Kiera seems to always be getting to the next level in practice," Marzolf said. "Just when you think she won't be able to handle a set or make the interval, she surprises you."

Janzen's strength is not restricted to individual events. In addition to leading CDH to a solid 9-2 overall record this fall, she was a member of the 400-

yard freestyle relay team that took seventh place, and she received all-state honors with teammates Sammi Fox, Emily Schleif and Nicole Hutchins.

"Kiera is an amazing team leader," Marzolf said. "Her intensity really inspires others."

Marzolf expects even greater things from Janzen next year. "With continued training and some technique work, Kiera has the ability to lower her records by several seconds in the future," he said. "She is the fastest distance swimmer Minnesota has ever seen, and she has the ability to lower the records to a time that could take quite a while for someone else to break."

Visitation takes fifth

In the state Class A finals on November 21, four-time consecutive champion Visitation fell short of extending its record-breaking run to a fifth year. The Blazers finished in fifth place with 127 points. It was a disappointing but commendable finish for the team, which lost to graduation four seniors who accounted for 105 of the team's 268 points at last year's state meet.

Although their state winning streak was broken, the Blazers still had a solid season and were crowned conference champions for the fifth year in a row.

35◀ WRIGHT CALL

The Vikings reacted to that idea they way Brett Favre does when he senses a full blitz: They started throwing bombs. Talk radio and Internet sites are now abuzz with discussions about the issue. Even though the start of the next legislative session is still two months away, pressure is inexorably building.

In a nutshell, the Vikings insist they need a new home. Or else....

Naturally, the local media agree with the Vikings. After all, covering the Vikings is nice work these days, particularly with that good old boy at QB. The Super Bowl, the grandest party of them all, is scheduled for early February in Miami, and there isn't a lot of room left on the Vikings' bandwagon.

Yet as popular as the Vikings are, the issue may be out of their hands. Would it be worth watching the team play in a new stadium on Sundays if it would mean closing local playgrounds or libraries? There's only so much money to go around after all. (A new stadium could cost up to \$1 billion, with the Vikings indicating they would contribute

\$250 million.)

Which brings us to the Saints. As has been noted in this newspaper a few times, finding a home for a new Saints stadium has become a complicated issue. (Truth-in-journalism note here: I worked for the team for a total of nine seasons over two different tenures.)

Midway Stadium was not built with the Saints in mind. The locker rooms are way too small and the press box is inadequate. It's probably the only professional baseball facility in the country that does not have armrests on any seats. And the telephone system was not installed with the idea of accommodating several lines. It's to the immense credit of Midway Stadium manager Bob Klepperich and head groundskeeper Connie Rudolph that the place manages to function at all.

So if you're team president Mike Veeck, you can look the people at the Minnesota Legislature or the St. Paul City Council in the eye and truly say the team is trying to make chicken soup with no arms, legs, breasts or thighs.

A Saints' stadium would cost \$30 million at most, which is considerably less than what a new home for the Vikings

would run. But need is still need. To get money from the Legislature, the Saints will have to convince folks who live in faraway hamlets like Cook and Jackson that theirs is a worthwhile proposition.

If that doesn't work, the team needs to convince City Council members to cough up some dough. Despite the fact the mayor favors the idea, that won't be easy during these economic times, no matter how much the Saints opt to contribute.

In the end, it comes down to this: Is a new Saints baseball stadium a good, long-term proposition for St. Paul? Are there enough revenue streams available to offset whatever the city would have to spend?

So it is that two pro teams who are opposites in so many ways have a common goal in mind. How the politicians—spurred on in part by what they hear from their constituents in the upcoming weeks—act on these requests will tell us all we need to know about our priorities for the next couple of years.

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



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37◀ GIRLS' BASKETBALL

- Emily Larson, sophomore point guard. A good slasher who can also sink the outside shot.
- Jessica Kreuser, junior forward. A strong rebounder at 6-foot-3 who is skilled at both offense and defense.
- Jill Gangl, junior forward. A physical inside presence who should pull down a lot of offensive rebounds.
- Lauren Turitto, junior guard. An excellent outside shooter. The first player off the bench last year.
- Katie Jacobson, junior guard. Sees the floor well.
- Gabi Cerda, sophomore guard. Tenacious on defense.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Sibley has good size and depth, with seven or eight interchangeable players. Outside shooting is a concern.

Outlook: The Warriors lost a lot of close games in 2008. "If we can learn to finish, I think we can be in the top half of the conference," McGuire said. Hill-Murray is the team to beat in the conference.

HIGHLAND PARK

League: St. Paul City Conference
Last year's record: 19-9
Coach: Deb Williams

Key players and their strengths:

- Kionda Nicks, sophomore forward. Second in the conference in scoring last year with 17 points per game.
- Kiara Creer, senior center. Averaged 4.2 points a game in 18 appearances last year.
- Malica Wiley, junior forward. Saw some playing time last year and averaged 5 points per game.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Highland returns a young, proven scorer in Nicks and the team knows how to win. However, the 2009 Scots have only one senior and two juniors on the roster.

Outlook: The Scots lost a lot to graduation last spring. The team will have to get some big contributions from its young players. The upside for Highland is that other teams, including perennial conference power Central, are in the same boat. "The conference is pretty even this year," Williams said.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Tri-Metro Conference
Last year's record: 27-3
Coach: Josh Thurow

Key players and their strengths:

- Rachel Hansen, senior guard. Led the Redhawks with 15.6 points per game last year and collected numerous post-season honors.
- Katelyn Adams, junior forward. A returning all-conference player with good size at 6-foot-4.
- Analisa Ballinger, senior forward. An outstanding three-point shooter.
- Sarah Scholl, senior forward. A tri-captain who is good at getting to the basket.
- Jana Halstengard, junior guard. A good passer, ball handler and shooting guard who is returning from a knee injury.
- Gabby Stienstra, sophomore guard. Another talented shooting guard.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Minnehaha returns a core group of strong players from last year's state tournament team, including leading scorer Hansen. However, the Redhawks graduated their top defender.

Outlook: Minnehaha, which has moved from Class AAA to AA, will have to get past a tough Minneapolis Roosevelt team in section play if it wants to return to state. "We think we have a chance to be really good," Thurow said.

ROOSEVELT

League: Minneapolis City Conference
Last year's record: 21-10
Coach: Michael Wright

Key players and their strengths:

- Suriya McGuire, senior guard. A good all-around player who can impose her will around the basket.
- Shakia Boler, senior guard. A pure shooter who knows how to control the floor.
- Tyesha Wright, senior point guard. Led the Teddies in scoring last year. Quick at transition, knows how to push the ball up the court, and is a good mid- and long-range-shooter.
- Jasmine Bell, senior forward. Has a lot of moves around the rim. Not the biggest player on the court, but can score in the post.
- Samirah Sa'id, senior forward. Was second on the team in rebounding last year.
- Kaylani Edwards, junior forward. Can shoot from just about anywhere and draw out the opposing big player.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Roosevelt is strong on team speed and experience. The Teddies should be able to control the game's tempo with pressure defense and have their way around the basket. The team could use more outside shooters.

Outlook: A strong group of seniors returns from last year's 21-win season. Some of those players have been together since 7th grade. South will be among the top competitors in the conference. "I think it's going to be a fun year," coach Wright said.

ST. PAUL ACADEMY

League: Tri-Metro Conference
Last year's record: 10-14
Coach: Mark Heiser

Key players and their strengths:

- Jenna O'Brien, sophomore forward. An all-conference player who has played on the varsity team since 7th grade.
- Megan Leslie, senior forward. A good shooter. Was all-conference honorable mention last year.
- Tania Russell, junior point guard. A good ball handler and quarterback of the offense.
- Cecilia DiCaprio, senior forward. A good rebounder and another honorable mention pick.

Team strengths/weaknesses: The Spartans have four solid returning starters and good talent about eight or nine players deep. The team is quick and athletic, but is low on numbers and does not have much size. A go-to offensive player will have to emerge to replace 2008 senior and top scorer Niambi Mitchell.

Outlook: DeLaSalle and Minnehaha will be strong in the conference, but SPA has reason to believe it can stand toe-to-toe with the other teams. "We'll be competitive overall, right in the middle of the pack," Heiser said.

VISITATION

League: Tri-Metro Conference
Last year's record: 9-17
Coach: Brian Kramer

Key players and their strengths:

- Claire Kranz, senior forward. Averaged eight rebounds and eight points a game last season. A tough post player who could have double-digit figures in those categories this year.
- Clare Robinson, senior guard. The team's most experienced outside player. Will guard the opposing team's best perimeter player.
- Kate Ruble, senior forward. A good shooter who is athletic and solid on defense.
- Laura Tangan, senior forward. A small forward who can do a little bit of everything well.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Kranz gives the team a strong inside presence and Visitation's outside shooting should be better than in the past. The Blazers do not have an abundance of experience, with three freshmen and two sophomores on the team. Size and rebounding are also concerns.

Outlook: Visitation returns only three players who logged varsity minutes in 2008-09, but the Blazers hope to make progress on the fly this year and be better in January than they are in November.



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Continued page 42

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