

LOCAL NEWS

ST. PAUL MAPLEWOOD NORTH ST. PAUL FALCON HEIGHTS

B

INSIDE ST. PAUL PARK STUDENTS HELP YOUNGER GIRLS ADJUST TO JUNIOR HIGH 3B

ST. PAUL

Lose a boat, get a DWI

Man cited after vessel falls, hitting seven empty cars

BY DAVID HANNERS
Pioneer Press

St. Paul police accuse William Steven Vevea of being intoxicated when he got behind the wheel of his van Tuesday night, but it was his boat that wreaked all the havoc.

While Vevea allegedly was speeding down Highland Parkway, his boat fell off its trailer and damaged seven parked cars.

Vevea, 43, of St. Paul was charged Wednesday with first-degree driving while impaired, a felony. He's being held in the Ramsey County jail on a \$20,000 bond.

The incident is not Vevea's first brush with the law. He was convicted of driving under the influence in Ramsey County in 2002 and of aggravated driving while under the influence in Carver County in 1999 and Hennepin County in 1998.

His record also includes arrests for domestic assault, probation violation, giving false information to police, driving after his license was canceled, criminal sexual conduct, driving without insurance, disorderly conduct and contempt of court, among other charges.

Shortly after 7 p.m. Tuesday, police got a call about a drunken driver at Mississippi River Boulevard and Highland Parkway. When the first officer arrived, several witnesses pointed out Vevea, who was sitting on the ground "and was soaking wet from the waist down," according to a police complaint accompanying the latest charge.

Witnesses told police that Vevea had been driving a van with a boat and trailer behind it. The witnesses said Vevea was driving "at a high rate of speed" when the boat fell off the trailer's right side, the complaint says.

When it fell, it hit seven parked cars. All were unoccupied, and there were no injuries.

Vevea told police he had been on the boat with a friend Tuesday and they had been drinking, the complaint alleges. Police said Vevea told them "that he consumed a 12-pack of beer over a short period of time."

Vevea agreed to give a breath sample and registered a blood-alcohol content of 0.14 percent nearly an hour-and-a-half after the accident. In Minnesota, anyone driving with a level above 0.08 percent is considered impaired.

"He stated that he knew that he should not have been driving," the complaint says of Vevea.

A first-degree charge of driving while impaired carries a maximum penalty of seven years in prison and a \$14,000 fine.

David Hanners can be reached at dhanners@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5551.



William Vevea

ST. PAUL NORTH END



Part of the makeover of St. Paul's North End includes this giant mural by artist Carly Schmitt. In the St. Paul cityscape "Victory Garden," a tree with deep roots bulges out of the frame. Its branches are made of hands of many shades, implying the neighborhood's health and growth depend upon each of its ethnic and racial branches.

PHOTOS BY SCOTT TAKUSHI, PIONEER PRESS

THE MURALS SPEAKS

A message of hope for even more renewal in a diverse urban neighborhood flows from the brushes of artist Carly Schmitt.

BY MATT PEIKEN
Pioneer Press

As she painted a window of hope on a St. Paul neighborhood, Carly Schmitt also painted over a neighborhood's past.

"I thought this was a nice visual metaphor for where the area is going," Schmitt said of her 20-by-35-foot mural on the west exterior wall of Schroeder's Bar and Grill, where Como Avenue and Dale Street meet Front Avenue.

Or, in the lay terms of Pat Hauer, a manager at Schroeder's, "It really dresses up the place."

Signs of blight long have hung over this key intersection in St. Paul's North End, where the grit of industry meets the groans of struggling neighborhood businesses.

Schmitt's mural pierces the gray with the vibrant blues and greens of a St. Paul



Carly Schmitt, a White Bear Lake native and Macalester College graduate, worked all of August to complete her mural, braving hot days that, at times, melted her paints.

cityscape, fronted by a tree that bulges outside the frame with deep roots and branches made of hands of many shades. More than a mere celebration of diversity, the

mural implies that the neighborhood's health and growth depend upon each ethnic and racial branch.

The mural, titled "Victory Garden," was commissioned

through a grant from the neighborhood association known as Sparc, which formed three years ago through the merging of the Hamline-Midway and North End neighborhood associations.

The mural is just one of the items up for celebration at a ceremony Thursday that also lauds the completion of a streetscape at Dale Street and Minnehaha Avenue and the 500 jobs that have come with the new Great Northern Business Center — all part of the Great Northern Corridor Project.

Schmitt, 24, is a White Bear Lake native and Macalester College graduate living in Seattle. After meeting with area residents through two community forums, the artist wanted to "give a charge to the future." She took the whole of August

MESSAGE OF HOPE, 4B

Mexican Independence Day celebration

Events run from 7 to 11:30 p.m. today. They are free and open to the public.



PIONEER PRESS

¡VIVA MÉXICO!



Festivities begin tonight

Traditional food, music, *grito* mark independence holiday

Minnesota's growing population of Mexican immigrants will celebrate Mexico's Independence Day, beginning tonight and continuing this weekend, with a number of events.

Though Sept. 16 is the official holiday, most Mexicans celebrate the night before, with the traditional call or *grito* for independence — recalling the night in 1810 when the first cry went up from Curate Miguel Hidalgo in the city of Dolores in Guanajuato.

Families come together every year on this

night to eat traditional foods, listen to music and watch historical films. They then watch the president lead the call on television from Mexico City.

In addition to tonight's festivities, there will be a celebration in front of Plaza Latina at 925 Payne Ave. in St. Paul from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, and a parade and fiesta at 11:30 a.m. Sunday on Lake Street between Bloomington and Third avenues.

— Emily Gurnon

Rybak's pick for police chief has grit — and he'll need it

The training wheels are finally coming off for Tim Dolan.

Mayor R.T. Rybak endorsed the Minneapolis police veteran last week as his choice to become the city's police chief. Dolan, 51, has been interim chief since March, when William McManus left for the top police job in San Antonio.

Dolan is now significantly closer to taking ownership of a troubling spate of murders and other violent crime in the



RUBÉN ROSARIO

That could take place by the end of this month or in early October.

But what kind of chief does Minneapolis need? And does Dolan fit the

bill, no pun intended?

It was thought in 2004 that Bill McManus was exactly the cure for what ailed the city: a charismatic modern-day chief who aggressively cultivated relations with the citizenry, particularly communities of color, and sought to improve the department's questionable public image.

And McManus appeared on his way to accomplishing those goals, notwithstanding a few missteps, until his well-publicized clashes with Rybak and some City Council members led to his premature departure last April.

There's no doubt Dolan knows policing. There's no doubt he cares for the city he polices. But does he have the leadership skills needed for what is becoming a more politicized occupation? Big-city chiefs are no longer simply the heads of a paramilitary organization or simple political party appointees. They are now as accountable to community and political pressures as the mayor.

"Tim's a good guy, but one of his major challenges is winning over those

ST. PAUL

Poisonous mushrooms send seven to hospital

Dinner ingredients were picked in park

BY JEREMY OLSON
Pioneer Press

Seven people, all Hmong, were hospitalized this week after eating poisonous mushrooms they picked at Keller-Phalen Regional Park in St. Paul, according to the Minnesota Department of Health.

While four have been treated, and released, three remain hospitalized. Two are in intensive care. At least two of the seven are children, ages 10 and 5, whose illnesses are severe enough that they have been transferred from St. John's Hospital in Maplewood to two other hospitals.

Warnings were sent throughout the community in English and a Hmong translation.

Mushrooms are dietary staples for Hmong people living in the Laotian highlands, said Michael Yang, who works with Hmong people who farm oyster mushrooms in central California. The Hmong may not be as familiar with the mushroom varieties in the United States compared with those they routinely picked in Laos, said Yang, who works with the University of California's Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"It's two totally different environments," he said. "If you go out and you see a mushroom, do not pick it and eat it unless you are absolutely sure."

Mushroom poisoning is unusual but happens occasionally in the late summer, said Dr. John Kvasnicka, medical director for HealthEast's three emergency departments, including St. John's. Most varieties are safe, but a few are so poisonous that they can cause severe illness or death.

"I think you really have to be an expert — really, truly an

POISONOUS MUSHROOMS, 6B



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Amanita bisporigera, also known as the Eastern American Destroying Angel, is toxic.

ONLINE

Find the news from your neighborhood — and others — on www.twincities.com. Click on "News: Local & Community" to find the day's top stories from St. Paul, Washington and Dakota counties and the northern suburbs.

AROUND THE AREA

RODRIGUEZ'S LAWYERS POINT FINGERS AT STATE 3B

DEBATE OPPONENTS GANG UP ON PAWLENTY 1A

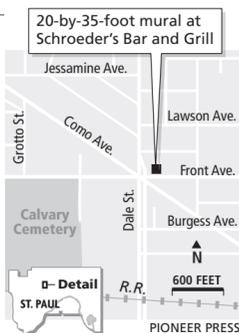
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Message of hope

(continued)

to complete the mural, overcoming the heat of direct sunlight that, at times, melted paint from the wall before it could dry.

"It's like painting in the middle of a parade," Schmitt said as she dabbed the final touches onto her piece. "It's a pretty busy, noisy intersection, and I can't respond to every honk, but people were cheering me. I like bringing my art to the people, and I think the people here get where I'm going with this."

Hauer sees the mural as a unique advertisement for both Schroeder's, which had a storied



SCOTT TAKUSHI, PIONEER PRESS

Hands reaching for something higher make up the trunk of a tree that rises from a bed of flowers sprouting at the hands of artist Carly Schmitt. The faux-framed mural graces one outside wall at Schroeder's Bar, where Como Avenue and Dale Street meet Front Avenue in St. Paul.

past life as a bar called Geraldine's, and the neighborhood as a whole.

"It says what we can't with words," he says. "I think we all want the same thing, for people to see this area in a new light."

Matt Peiken can be reached at mpeiken@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5440.

IF YOU GO

What: Ceremony celebrating several North End improvement projects

When: 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday

Where: Dale Street Bridge near Dale and Minnehaha Avenue

To learn more: Sparc neighborhood association at www.sparcweb.org/

WISCONSIN BRIEFING

WAUKESHA

Arsonist suspect left ID at the scene

Police said a suspected arsonist was arrested after they found his birth certificate at the scene of a fire this week.

The 19-year-old man from Waukesha was arrested Wednesday after officials found his birth certificate at the scene of Sunday's fire, Waukesha Fire Marshal Brian Charlesworth said.

"You would think somebody

wouldn't do that," Charlesworth said. "But, fortunately for us, they did."

The man was also being held in connection with a May 29 fire that damaged a historic home in town.

Police and firefighters noted similar characteristics between the two fires. The most recent fire was a series of small ones at a telecommunications business, said Lt. William Graham. The man's birth certificate was found at the back of the building, he said.

—Associated Press

GREEN BAY

Pig defies Taser, takes to the highway

A pig withstood Taser shots from police officers and eluded authorities for more than an hour after wandering onto Green Bay's major highway.

The 150-pound pig was spotted by a passing driver on U.S. 41 at 6 p.m. Wednesday night, Green Bay Police Lt. Todd LePine said. The animal reportedly went into traffic several times,

creating a hazard.

Officers located the pig about 7 p.m. and made two attempts to subdue it with a stun gun, he said, but it fled both times after pulling out the Taser probes.

A passerby who described himself as a former pig farmer tried to wrestle the animal, but the animal pulled away from him as well, LePine said.

Three tranquilizer darts were finally used to bring the pig under control, and it was placed in blanket and lifted into an animal control van, LePine said. The animal was taken to the Bay Area Humane Shelter that evening.

Police said a local attorney planned to claim the pig Thursday. The name of the pig's owner was not disclosed.

—Associated Press

MANITOWOC

Avery's family wants items returned

The family of Steven Avery, who is charged with his teenage nephew with raping and killing a young woman, has asked authorities to return items seized from their auto salvage yard.

A lawyer for Steven Avery, 44, filed a motion this week asking the state to return all items that are not needed as evidence in the death of Teresa Halbach.

A motion filed by Dean Strang, of Madison, asks that the state return items such as bedding from a spare bedroom in the home of one of Avery's relatives and hunting rifles that aren't connected to Avery or his nephew, Brendan Dassey, 16.

According to the motion, the state has returned a number of items taken from the family's auto salvage yard in rural Mishicot but there are still items left to be returned.

A hearing is to be scheduled on the matter.

—Associated Press

RACINE, WIS.



GREGORY SHAVER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kindergartner Quinn Lucier, 5, holds a "popper" Wednesday in front of Jerstad-Agerholm Elementary School in Racine. He received a four-day suspension from school after he brought the "popper" to school on Monday and popped it in class. His mom thinks he was disciplined too harshly.

Explosive toy gets boy, 5, suspended

Firework from home 'popped' at school

Associated Press

A novelty firework has landed a 5-year-old boy in hot water.

Quinn Lucier was suspended from kindergarten for four days after he brought to school a "popper," a novelty firework that makes a loud pop when its string is pulled. He found it in his older brother's drawer.

When Lucier popped the item at Jerstad-Agerholm Elementary School in Racine on Monday, the noise startled his teacher and earned him a trip to the principal's office.

The principal, Cecilia Holley-Young, imposed the four-day suspension, telling the boy's mother the item qualified as an explosive device.

Rachel Lucier said she understood that her son shouldn't have brought the popper to school but she thought the punishment was unnecessarily severe.

"I don't want it on his record, either elementary (school) or police-wise," she said. "I'm just worried, anything he does later in life, if this is going to come back to haunt him. Is he going to be considered the bad boy?"

Thursday was the last day of Quinn's suspension, said district spokeswoman Linda

Flashinks.

Ann Laing, an area superintendent for Racine Unified, said Holley-Young suspended the boy based on her interpretation of the district's "Code of Student Responsibilities and Rights."

The district doesn't have a zero-tolerance policy and principals can use their discretion in applying punishments in these cases, Laing said.

According to the district's code, the suggested discipline for a minor or first incident involving use of a "pyrotechnics device" ranges from detention to suspension. The code recommends expulsion for serious or repeat offenses.

The Luciers and school officials disagree on how threatening the popper is.

"The parents seem to think it was harmless," Laing said. "The principal and the teacher thought it was harmful."

Laing said the Luciers could appeal the suspension. Rachel Lucier said that's precisely what she and her husband will do.

"I understand there's a code of (conduct), but there should be some consideration for age," Rachel Lucier said. "There's got to be a line where there are different actions for different ages."

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