

X-18

65A

EDITORIALS

PIONEER PRESS NOV 23 '06

WHAT WE'RE THANKFUL FOR

No attitude,
all gratitude

On a day set aside for carving and stuffing

We put a sock in our huffing and puffing
And salute our community, throughout the ranks,
For you and your work, today we give thanks.

Out of our well of gratitude, pull up a bucket,
For the smile and hop-step of the late Kirby Puckett,
Speaker Steve Sviggum is a graceful authority,
We'll like him even when he's in the minority,



Margaret Anderson Kelliher and
Pogemiller, Larry,
Thanks in advance for when session
gets hairy,
And the best to him who made our
budget less hinky,
Number-crunching Dr. No — our own
Phil Krinkie.

St. Paul Chief John Harrington, keeping a handle on crime,
Sen. Brian LeClair, whose laugh is sublime,
Rosemarie Reger-Rumsey of Listening House fame,
Stadium foe Tom Goldstein, who loves the great game.

Michele Bachmann's smile and message were catchy,
Dean Singleton saved the Pi-Press from McClatchy,
Sec-State Mary Kiffmeyer, Auditor Anderson, Pat,
To the chamber's Larry Dowell, St. Paul is where it's at.

We thank South St. Paul muralist Robert Zins,
Rev. Leith Anderson, coping with another Rev's sins,
And a wish for a bridge that may some day carry
West Siders to the heart of Trooien, Jerry.

For dry runways, St. Paul's floodwall is a cause for elation,
Full speed ahead, compensatory excavation,
Mike Hatch and Judi Dutcher did not see fruition,
But we thank them for trying to cut U tuition.

Thanks and best wishes to the hard-working horde
Of men and women at Highland Park Ford,
Nothing in St. Paul could be much stranger
Than Ford Parkway without the shiny new Ranger.

To a man in the skyways, it seems, since his youth,
A super-shout out to building guru Bill Buth.
Seeing Robert Altman this year was groovy
Premiered in St. Paul — Prairie Home, his last movie.

Marty Seifert and David Senjem stepped into the breach,
Chris Coleman and Amy Klobuchar oft gave a fine speech,
Fletcher and Finney will no longer be dour,
They can join in the cheers for Morneau and Mauer.

Cy Thao, Dick Cohen, Sandra Pappas, Mee Moua,
All merit our thanks and a Ventura-like Hooya.
Peter Hutchinson and Mark Kennedy fought mano a mano,
They had good stuff, like Francisco Liriano.

We scribblers often sound like whiners and cranks,
But today we offer our sincerest thanks
To those who serve in our newsy dominion
Gratitude is today's only opinion.

65A

DFL retains hold in city

512 676.3062

BY TIM NELSON

PIONEER PRESS NOV 8 '06

Despite Tuesday's Democratic wave across the nation and state, challengers put up some of the most spirited opposition in years to the Democrat-Farmer-Labor Party's longtime lock on St. Paul's 12-member legislative delegation.

In District 64A, Minnesota Nurses Association head Erin Murphy was handily elected as the first new member of the city's all-DFL delegation in four years, succeeding outgoing House minority leader Matt Entenza, who did not seek re-election.

It was the only open legislative seat in the city this year.

But Green Party challenger Jesse Mortenson helped significantly cut the DFL's margin in 64A for the first time in more than 10 years. With Mortenson and Republican Kirstin Beach, Murphy's opposition trimmed the DFL's victory ratio from nearly 4 to 1 in 2004 to about 2 to 1 this year.

"We're disappointed that we didn't pull into second place, but ... I think we demonstrated some significant growth," Mortenson said of the Green Party's strength. He said he was encouraged by Tuesday's support for instant-runoff voting in Minneapolis and that St. Paul might consider the procedure.

"We're looking forward to the city elections next year," he said.

In District 64B, Republican Emory Dively's bid to become the first deaf legislator in the nation's history fell short. Despite one of the most visible campaigns in years against the DFL incumbent, Michael Paymar, Dively failed to turn

around six years of steady decline by Republicans in the district. Paymar won with 71 percent of the vote.

Dively's loss and Beach's showing in the neighboring district indicate their "urban Republican" strategy gained them no ground this year. (Beach's results dropped by about 4 percentage points from her 2004 run and fell about 6 points from the average of the last five elections.)

Easily winning was District 64 Sen. Dick Cohen, who was first elected to the Legislature in 1976.

Other members of the city's DFL delegation also handily won re-election. They include three senators: Ellen Anderson, representing the city's northwestern corner since 1992; Sandy Pappas, representing the West Side, downtown and parts of Rice Street, West 7th Street and Frogtown since 1990; and Mee Moua, representing the East Side since 2002;

Also re-elected were six House members: Alice Hausman, elected in 1989 and representing St. Paul from St. Anthony Park to Como Park; John Lesch, representing the North End and part of the East Side since 2002; Cy Thao, representing the area around the Capitol, Frogtown and Summit-University since 2002; Carlos Mariani, representing downtown, West Seventh Street and the West Side since 1990; Tim Mahoney, elected in 1998 to represent the north half of the East Side; and Sheldon Johnson, representing the south half of the East Side since 2000.

Tim Nelson can be reached at tnelson@pioneerpress.com or 651-292-1159.

65A

Elb. 30 leg Elb. 9A

EDITORIALS

PIONEER PRESS NOV 2 '06

MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE, DISTRICT 65

For Senate, Pappas; for House, Thao and Mariani

✓ **Senate District 65** is a St. Paul district centered in the heart of downtown. It includes the West Side, a good portion of the West 7th Street neighborhood, the Capitol area and neighborhoods along the eastern portion of University Avenue. The incumbent, Sen. Sandra Pappas, a DFLer, has been in the Legislature for more than two decades, and in the Senate since 1990. She ran unsuccessfully for mayor of St. Paul in 1997.



Sandy Pappas

This has traditionally been a safe DFL seat. Pappas was unopposed in her last re-election campaign in 2002. Two years earlier, she won with 76 percent of the vote. Her opponents this year are Republican Lori Windels and frequent candidate Bill Dahn.

We endorse Pappas and rely on her experience, her seniority and her passion for St. Paul to help push important east metro projects off the drawing board and into reality, including the Central Corridor light-rail transit project. She has been a strong advocate for her city; we appreciate that and have come to depend on it. Central Corridor plans will test the ability of all St. Paul legislators to advocate on our behalf.

Pappas now chairs the Senate Higher Education Budget Division, where the money for the University of Minnesota and the state college and university system is doled out. She said she wants to continue to work to find consensus among the competing players in higher education. This may be particularly important if there is a push from the governor's office to hold down tuition costs.

Helping build the Central Corridor and improving our higher-ed system are two wor-

thy goals. We would add one more: to use her political security to become a force for bipartisanship, beginning with her own committee and moving into the DFL caucus itself. If more safe-seat members did more of that, the Legislature would be a better place.

✓ **House District 65A** is mostly north of University Avenue toward downtown St. Paul. DFLer Cy Thao is the incumbent. He was first elected in 2002. His opponent, Paul Holmgren, did not participate in an endorsement interview or send campaign information.



Cy Thao

Thao, an artist, is known for working well with others and for his sense of humor. Asked what he'd like to see if he's re-elected, he replied, "To be honest, I'd like

to be in the majority, for once."

He has served on the health policy and finance and local government committees. He says there's no single magic solution for what's wrong with our health care system, but also says, "We clearly have a universal health care system, whether we like it or not" — but delivering primary care in the emergency room isn't efficient. He suggests experimenting with ways to pool risk, perhaps allowing small businesses to buy into the Minnesota Care system. He also says shifting education funding to property taxes is especially detrimental for core city and rural districts. He wants to aim anti-crime money at where the crime is.

In his first two terms Thao has been a straightforward advocate for his district and a reasonable participant in the broader debate. The House is better with him in it.

✓ **House District 65B:** Carlos

Mariani has represented St. Paul's West Seventh and West Side neighborhoods in the State House for 16 years and, though he did not interview for this endorsement, we see no reason for a change.

An attorney who works in nonprofit management, Mariani represented the state's largest Hispanic district when he first entered the state House. The district is now more ethnically and economically diverse, and Mariani has been a leading voice in the House on a range of issues around social justice, the environment and public education.

He has championed the child development needs of Minnesota's seasonal farm workers and introduced a bill to police immigrant communities under "best



Carlos Mariani

practices" standards. He has led efforts to restore state funding to pre-kindergarten programs and direct the state's education commission to request waivers for unfunded mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. He sought to establish a Minnesota Universal Health Board to oversee a universal health program and trust fund. He took on local causes, seeking money to redevelop parks on Raspberry Island and the Mississippi River and make capital improvements at St. Paul College.

His priorities for the next session, as he expressed in an interview available on the state Legislature's Web site, are funding the Central Corridor and restoring public school funding cuts at the state level.

Mariani's Republican opponent, Lisa Murphy, also didn't respond to interview requests for this endorsement, and there is no information about her or her views on the Web site listed for her with the Republican Party.

65A

DAILY GLOBE

WORTHINGTON, MN
THURSDAY 13,000
MAR 9 2006

WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN
THURSDAY 16,927
MAR 9 2006

BEMIDJI PIONEER

BEMIDJI, MN
THURSDAY 10,200
MAR 9 2006

Bill allows pharmacists not to fill prescriptions

By Don Davis

Pioneer Capitol Reporter

ST. PAUL — Pharmacists should not be required to dispense medicine such as birth control pills if they feel it would violate their ethics, religion or morals, Michael Barrett says.

A Minnesota House committee agreed Wednesday, sending a bill giving pharmacists the right to say no to the full House.

Pharmacists testified that there are very few times when one of them cannot to fill a prescription in good conscience, but Barrett said the law change is important.

"Besides my education, I find my morals and ethics the most important things I bring to my job," Barrett said.

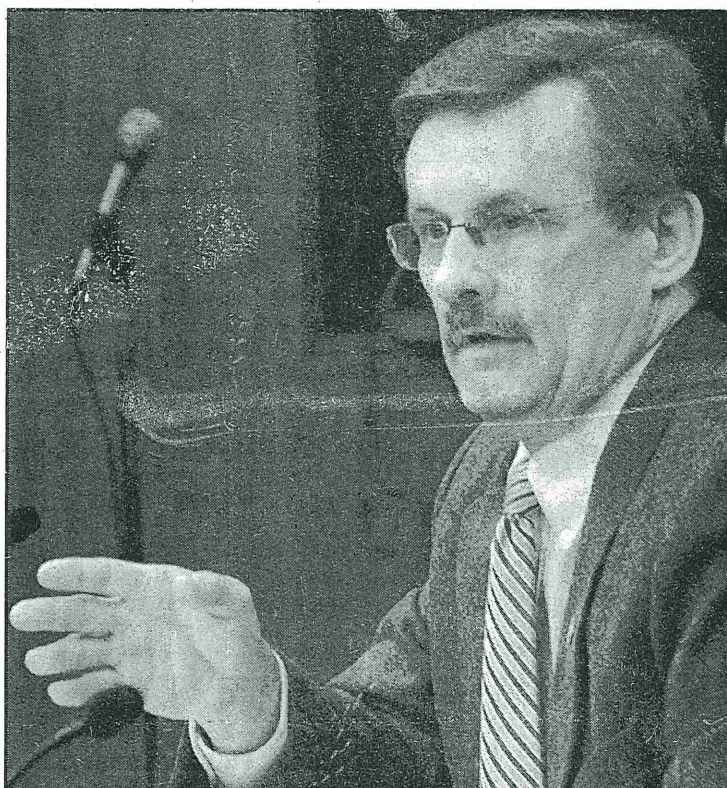
Barrett, a Long Prairie Memorial Hospital pharmacist and Republican candidate for the 7th Congressional District seat, told the Minnesota House Health Policy and Finance Committee that the bill he wrote balances pharmacists' rights with those who want medicines such as birth control pills.

Barrett said that if pharmacists must fill all prescriptions, as some feel current law requires, "we will have pharmacies devoid of religion, ethics."

While the bill does not specify any medicines that could be refused, the most likely would be birth control medicines, including the so-called morning-after pill.

Some committee members had questions of Barrett and bill sponsor Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, but there was little opposition. Even Planned Parenthood, which usually opposes such bills, supports it.

"It is a step in the right direc-



Pioneer Photo by Don Davis

Michael Barrett testifies in front of a Minnesota House committee Wednesday, promoting a bill he wrote to give pharmacists the right to refuse filling prescriptions due to ethical, religious or moral reservations. Barrett is a Long Prairie pharmacist and GOP candidate for the 7th Congressional District seat.

tion," Planned Parenthood's Tim Stanley said.

One provision that makes the bill acceptable to a wider range of people is that if a pharmacist won't fill a prescription, he must help the patient find a pharmacy where it can be filled.

• **Rep. Cy Thao**, DFL-St. Paul, said he doesn't see a need for the bill since patients will be able to get prescriptions they

want, even if they go elsewhere.

"This is a compromise by the folks who actually dispense these drugs," Emmer said.

Erin Matson, president of Minnesota's National Organization of Women chapter, said it is not right to make people seeking birth control medicines to hunt for them.

"Women deserve more than a wild goose chase law," she said.

✉ ddavis@bemidjipioneer.com

EDITORIAL

A memorial to some U.S. allies, and another to build

PIONEER PRESS JUL 23 '06

The war that remade St. Paul and other corners of the American Midwest now has a permanent monument on the Lake Michigan shoreline in Wisconsin.

Next year, if all goes well, there will be a similar marker here, where the Secret War in Laos also lives on.

Last weekend, under a broiling summer sun, a circular black granite structure was unveiled at a lakefront park in Sheboygan, about an hour's drive north of Milwaukee. Old Hmong soldiers in crisp camo fatigues joined white-haired special forces guys in dress greens. A recorded version of taps was played. Volleys were fired. A governor, members of

Congress, mayors and the old vets spoke with honor and respect.

The Lao, Hmong and American Veterans Memorial in Sheboygan is by far the most ambitious U.S. monument to the Secret War the U.S. waged in Laos in the 1960s and 1970s. The Hmong, living in the mountains of Laos, were key allies in that war. Supplied and directed by the U.S. CIA, Hmong Special Guerilla Units took the war to the North Vietnamese Army in Laos and helped rescue American pilots shot out of the sky.

The collapse of Laos to the communists in May of 1975 put tens of thousands of Hmong and Lao refugees in motion.

St. Paul, a welcoming city in a refugee-friendly state, became a prime destination for the Hmong. In the last census, St. Paul's Hmong population of more than 24,000 was the largest of any single U.S. city, and the number is probably closer to 30,000 now. St. Paul has two Hmong-American state legislators and a flourishing Hmong business and professional class.

Sheboygan and nearby Manitowoc, smallish towns between Milwaukee and Green Bay, have also become Lao and Hmong havens. Last weekend's event, coming in the midst of a loud national debate over immigration, was a reminder of how two countries can come together.

This was a day for unity and appreciation, for remembrance and rededication. The Asian and U.S. warriors were on the same side, again and forever.

"If there was anybody from another country who deserved to be here, they did," said Col. Bill Lair, who helped build the relationship between the U.S. and Hmong military in the 1950s and 1960s and was considered a godfather to the Hmong fighters. "They earned the right with their lives."

This was a war that was lost. Who lost it, or whether it could have been won, is subject to debate. The status of the U.S.-backed warriors in Laos after the defeat was not debatable, however: they faced persecution and peril. Lair put it bluntly. When the U.S. agreed to a coalition government, and then allowed the communists to take over, the days of the Hmong and Lao warriors were numbered.

HMONG MEMORIAL

State Rep. Cy Thao of St. Paul said organizers of the Minnesota memorial to veterans of the Secret War are accepting contributions for the project at: Veterans Memorial Fund, c/o Lao Hmong American Coalition, 1394 Jackson St./ Suite 206, St. Paul MN 55117.

"We basically sentenced them to death," Lair said.

"A lot of us hope that one day Laos will become free again, so all that want to go back, can go back," said Rev. Lucian Bouchard, a priest who ministered to the people of Laos during the war and is, like Lair, a legendary figure from the Secret War.

The Sheboygan memorial honors the Lao and Hmong fighters as well as the Americans who fought with them, with names of many who served, and others who died, etched into the granite. When organizers removed a red-white-and-blue covering over the memorial, families crowded in, oblivious of the heat, and broke down at this solid, physical representation of the saga they carried in their hearts for three decades.

This is the third such memorial to the Secret War.

There is a small plaque in Arlington National Cemetery and a bronze statue in Fresno, Calif., another center of Hmong immigration, that depicts two Hmong fighters rescuing a U.S. pilot.

And some day — perhaps next year — there will be a similar memorial in St. Paul.

State Rep. Cy Thao of St. Paul said work continues to raise funds and plan for a memorial to be placed on the Capitol Grounds. Thao said the project got \$150,000 in state funding this past legislative session. Organizers are trying to raise another \$100,000 privately.

A proposed design depicts four figures: a fallen American pilot, a Hmong soldier assisting him, a woman carrying the soldier's ammunition, and a boy soldier, carrying the weapons. Thao said if planning and fundraising can be completed this year, the memorial could be built next year.

Back to that hot lakefront.

Sitting under a tent, hoping for a gasp of wind, and looking at those old soldiers, the mind wanders from the past war in Southeast Asia to the current war in Iraq. In both cases, the U.S. formed alliances with indigenous factions whose interests coincided with our own. In both cases, the drumbeat of casualties triggered an opposition movement back home and a polarized debate about the rightness of the cause.

Is this how that war will end too? Will we be left with a memorial to the expatriate foreign fighters whose children, pounding the soccer ball on the grass a few feet away, will never know their homeland, or even what all the fuss was about?

Memorials have a way of making us wonder about the future. The low granite walls in Sheboygan, a five-hour drive from St. Paul, are like that. It's worth the trip.



The proposed design for a Minnesota Memorial to Hmong and Lao veterans depicts a soldier, woman and a child offering assistance to a U.S. pilot.

65A

Cy Thao ready to seek third term

By Tom LaVenture



State Rep. Cy Thao (DFL-65A)

ST. PAUL — State Representative Cy Thao (DFL-65A) said he was pleased, overall with the recent session, given that he was able to get legislation passed in Republican controlled House. Rep. Thao will be seeking a third term as the first and only Hmong in the Minnesota House of Representatives next November.

Thao worked directly on bills to provide funding for the Asian Pacific Cultural Center (APCC), and the Hmong Veterans Memorial. He was pleasantly surprised when the APCC, which found the city in opposition to their site for zoning issues, was still able to secure \$400,000 to continue with planning studies. It is a far cry from the \$4 million request, but will help ensure the eventual success of the APCC project.

The Hmong Veterans Commemorative Statue was awarded

\$150,000, and Thao wants to double that funding through other contribution and grants by the time the preliminary design is approved and site planning begins. The State granted space for the memorial on the capitol grounds last session.

It is difficult to claim victory with the St. Paul Police Asian Gang Task Force appropriated about half of the requested \$300,000, because of the massive cuts that nearly eliminated the unit all together. Yet, Thao's bill to fund undercover work, gang

CY THAO

Continued on Page 3

CY THAO

Continued from Page 1

infiltration, and work on related teen prostitution passed. He was disappointed in recent news reports that did not mention the efforts of he and Senator Mee Moua in this area.

Thao was disappointed and went so far as to claim anti-immigrant sentiment in the failure of his bill to allow newly arrived refugees and asylees a waiver with the Diversionary Work Program's four-month residency requirement. He said the purpose of the rule is to encourage four-months of job seeking before they qualify for assistance with the Minnesota Family Investment Program. He said that new residents need to get into ESL and job training right away to help them adjust and to prevent them from needing assistance later.

"We got a hearing two years ago, and this year it didn't go anywhere,"

he said.

Thao is frustrated with opponents of the bill who say it makes sense to help people get off of welfare, but will not take the extra step to fund Adult Basic Education or other programs that help immigrants.

Starting two years ago, Thao worked with Lutheran Social Services and area nonprofit leaders. They met with state commissioners to stress ESL and job training programs for self-sufficiency. A \$2 million request was pulled out of conference committee just before adjournment. Thao was so upset he went on the House floor and told legislators that if they would not fund ABE programs they should not introduce English first bills.

Thao won a minor victory this session with \$1.5 million in ABE funding to the Department of Education. Local nonprofits that work with immigrants in job training and ELS can now apply for program

grants. Thao credited these same nonprofit leaders for meeting with the Governor's office to make this happen.

Thao was disappointed that his translation bill for preference to native speakers did not get anywhere. The bill was born two years ago when he met with a Hmong speaker who's bid to provide translation for Department of Education and turned down and contract was given to a non-Hmong speaking applicant, who then offered to hire the Hmong applicant who lost the contract to do the job. "We didn't even get a hearing on the bill," he said.

Thao was disappointed at the lack of concern over public housing requirements for nine month rental histories, a rule that prevents new refugees and asylees from applying for nearly a year when they would qualify otherwise.

Right now, two or more families will live together to be able to afford

rent. Friends and families chip in to help with jobs, ESL, schooling, agencies. Thao feels that families that wind up in shelters are not getting this support.

Thao's bill for a minority veterans outreach program did not pass, but he feels that his work with the Council on Black Minnesotans and State Veterans Affairs to get outreach coordinator to work with veterans of color did inspire change within the agency.

"Sometimes a lot of bills don't get passed the way you want, but it does impact how decisions are made at some of the departments," he said.

Thao has supported good stadium plans since first running for office. He also supports light rail and wants additional stops at Western and Victoria Avenues, and mitigation

CY THAO

Continued on Page 9

(Back)

CY THAO

Continued from Page 3

available for businesses at risk. "I want them to not only survive, but to benefit after the construction," he said.

Thao is pleased with the \$7.5 million in central corridor funding that will help leverage federal dollars to let the process continue. He will try again in two years to fund the Pierce Butler corridor land acquisition and contamination remediation from I35N to Dale Street. The unused land parcels by the railroad tracks would become open and accessible to development.

"It was give a lot of consideration, and ranked second in the city priority this year," said Thao. "We had a hearing and didn't get funded."

The introduction of the Hmong Marriage bill was a surprise for Thao. Two years ago, he and Senator Moua introduced a simplified version that just allows Hmong Mekong to solemnize wedding. There were objections and it did not move forward. He was not pleased that the bill was introduced and moved along through various committees with little or not notice to the Hmong legislators.

Thao was more upset that the legislators that touted human rights and abuse issues to pass the bill, would not work with him on the Gang Task Force bill, or to sit and create meaningful legislation that would effectively deal with that as a problem on its own.

This November Thao will be up for reelection. He will also campaign for Attorney General Mike Hatch who is running as the DFL candidate for Governor.

"We need a strong person with democratic values to be governor and president so we can pass bills that are going to help move the state forward," he said. Thao and his spouse, Lee Vang have two daughters. They plan to expand their health care and assisted living facility, and want to open a noodle and coffee shop on University Avenue in about a year.

Thao's art exhibition will continue at Metro State University through July. He will have another exhibition this September in downtown Minneapolis. ■

CY THAO: THIS SESSION MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN LAST YEAR'S SAINT PAUL REPRESENTATIVE DISCUSSES TOPICS FROM HMONG MARRIAGE BILL TO LIGHT RAIL CONSTRUCTION

By Sao Sue Jurewitsch

The end of the legislative session is always a good time to reflect on how it went. Last year's session left State Rep. Cy Thao exhausted and disappointed. Last year, gridlock at the Capitol not only led to a partial government shutdown, Rep. Thao also felt that last minute deal making had put most of the burden of paying for budget shortfalls on those who could least afford it. This year's session ended on time, with lawmakers seeming to be eager to display their best behavior. After all, this is an election year. **HMONG TIMES** sat down with State Rep. Cy Thao to get his take on how this year's session went.



Sao Sue Jurewitsch: HMONG TIMES

Cy Thao addressed the second Saint Paul Mentorship Program Awards Dinner guests at the Drover Hotel in South Saint Paul

Cy Thao

continued on page 8

Cy Thao

continued from page 1

Apart from the legislature's desire to look better than last summer, Cy Thao also sees practical reasons for the more collegial tone of this year's session. "Overall, compared to last year, it was much less confrontational. Not necessarily because we were nicer, but the issues were less contentious. We did not have to cut millions of dollars out of the budget. The big issues were the Bonding Bill and the stadiums. In the Bonding Bill the gap was so small that there was no big fight."

One of last year's disappointments for Cy Thao was the compromise deal that took \$2 million he had requested for basic adult education out of the final budget. Most of it appeared in this year's supplemental budget. "\$1.5 million for adult basic education showed up in the governor's supplemental budget proposal. I did not do much work for it this year, but I laid the ground work a couple of years ago." The money will be available to providers of adult basic education throughout the state in the form of grants.

Rep. Thao was also able to secure funding for two projects for the city of Saint Paul. "I was able to get two bills through the legislature that will benefit Saint Paul. The legislature approved \$400,000 for an Asian Pacific Culture Center for Saint Paul. We also were able to get \$150,000 for a Hmong veterans' memorial on the Capitol grounds."

One issue that seemed to split the Hmong community

during the legislative session was the Wes Skoglund's Hmong Marriage Bill. Rep. Cy Thao called the proposal a "horrible bill" on Minnesota Public Radio. He is still unhappy about the way the bill was introduced and the role Ilean Her of the Council of Asian and Pacific Islander Minnesotans played in it. "The argument they made was that they want to protect women and children. That is just not true. They just wanted to put someone in jail. It is not the job of the Council of Asian and Pacific Islander Minnesotans to take sides, and that is what they did on that issue."

Despite his reservations about the bill, Rep. Thao would still like to work out a compromise. "Nobody even ask me to support them, even though we have worked on the same problem before. Even after this year, I would still like to sit down with the Council and Ilean Her to work on legislation that can help the Hmong community."

Another issue that has many Hmong business owners along University Avenue worried is the prospect of light rail along the central corridor. Rep. Thao promised to use his influence to help those impacted by the project. "I support light rail, because it is an important regional infrastructure project, but I will do everything I can to make construction mitigation part of the deal. I am not just talking about loans, but money to help businesses stay open. If we do not get mitigation, I will do everything I can to delay the project."

Contact Sao Sue Jurewitsch at hmongtimes.saosue@gmail.com.

5A

April 16, 2006

HMONG TIMES

HMONG MARRIAGE BILL HEARING IN SENATE COMMITTEE

By Amy Doeun

House File 3674, better known as the Paymar bill or the Hmong marriage bill, has been getting a lot of attention lately. On Monday, April 3, the Civil Law and Elections committee held a hearing which allowed for 30 minutes of testimony in support of the bill and 30 minutes in opposition to the bill; followed by 20 minutes of questions from legislators. Unfortunately, as the hearing began at 12:30 many of the committee members had not yet arrived. However in an effort to "respect the time," according to Acting Chair DeLaForest, of the people who came to testify, testimony began and was recorded.

The first to speak was Cy Thao, who was acting in opposition to the bill. However, he requested that



MN State Rep. Cy Thao

Representative Paymar present his case first. Rep. Paymar opened with a brief overview of the bill which would make traditional Hmong marriages attended by Mej Koob legal at the same level as other religious marriages. The Mej Koob would then be considered a sort of minister or legal body that would file necessary

paperwork with the state. This would also make the Mej Koob mandatory reporters in the case of child abuse or neglect. The bill states that allowing a minor to marry without consent would be a form of child abuse.

Rep. Paymar went on to say, "I don't bring this bill lightly. I don't relish being on opposite sides as Rep. Thao. . . our interest is to protect minors, especially girls." Paymar went on to say the bill provides, "accountability and protection" and that he is committed to working with the Hmong community.

Ilean Her also spoke in favor of the bill. She provided an outline of how a traditional marriage would take place

MARRIAGE BILL continued from page 1

desire to marry through the parents approaching Mej Koob to negotiate the marriage. After negotiations the parents would decide whether to accept the marriage or not. If it is accepted then there would be a feast and a marriage would be recognized according to Her.

Rep. Cy Thao offered a slightly different definition of how a marriage would take place. According to Thao, "the Mej Koob's job is to carry message between the two families. They do not

negotiate anything, do not solemnize anything." He added that sometimes 100 year old grievances are brought up at marriage negotiations and the Mej Koob work as a "buffer between the families." Thao went on to say Mej Koob can be highly trained or they can just be someone willing to fill this position.

Rep. Thao also stated that there are 3 types of traditional marriages. 1 a complete ceremony like the event both he and Her described. 2. an incomplete ceremony where perhaps the families are not able to agree, the groom's family leaves but often the bride follows.

3. no ceremony, this is the type of wedding Thao and his wife had. He feels that if the bill were to be passed all weddings would move to the no ceremony category, "In many ways this will destroy our culture. I have 2 daughters. I would like them to have the option to marry with a Mej Koob."

Rep. Thao proposed that the bill should be killed as currently written. Then set up a task force within the Hmong community to address the issue.

Due to the lack of a quorum in the committee, no decision was made.

MARRIAGE BILL continued on page 13

B15 E40

Rondo haunts light-rail debate

Memories of 'lost' neighborhood stir new fears

BY LAURA YUEN

PIONEER PRESS APR 9 '06

While playing with dolls or reading her books, Nieta Presley didn't fully understand what her parents

meant when they talked worriedly in their Rondo Avenue home of the government's plan for "taking houses."

Now, 50 years later, she's using the memory of her lost neighborhood to engage St. Paul's black com-

munity about the next major transit project to weave through their neighborhoods: a proposed light-rail line on University Avenue.

Memories of Rondo — a multi-ethnic neighborhood that was the heart of the city's African-American population — still produce fondness and

heartache for those who experienced its demise. Starting in the 1950s, the government displaced about 650 St. Paul families and additional businesses to make way for Interstate 94 in the name of urban progress.

LIGHT-RAIL DEBATE, 8A



COURTESY OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Rev. George R. Davis is led away in handcuffs to a waiting squad car in this September 1956 St. Paul Dispatch photo. Police officers and sheriff's deputies moved the partially blind clergyman to his new living quarters as Rondo Avenue was being cleared to make way for the construction of Interstate 94.

Light-rail debate

(continued)

To a certain degree, some residents see a similar threat from light rail along the Central Corridor, between downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis. Although the two transit projects differ in important ways, the idea of an \$840 million rail line running through the city's core is revealing some of the same wounds over race and class that never fully healed.

"The pain from Rondo is still alive and well, and so there's kind of that mistrust that they're going to be living that twice now," said Presley, executive director of the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp.

But with light-rail discussions, she said, "There is time and opportunity where the residents can get involved. It's not quite being done in the same way."

For one thing, the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority isn't planning to condemn entire houses and businesses in St. Paul, as the freeway project required. The proposed rail line would run down a predominantly commercial University Avenue, taking up about a 28-foot-wide band down the center of the street.

"We're not talking about cutting a trench through the community," said Kathy DeSpiegel, director of the rail authority. "We're talking about something on the street level that we hope, with their help, will unify the community rather than pull it apart."

But many residents in the Summit-University and Frog-town areas fear displacement of another kind. Rising property values, and thus higher taxes, could drive nearby homeowners and small businesses away, they fear. Others expect disruption to businesses during construction, increased traffic and a loss of street parking near the stations.

Some contend that an 11-mile light-rail line would benefit outsiders at the expense of their community. Longtime Summit-University resident Kwame McDonald, 74, worries about making his neighborhood again

a convenient pass-through for the rich.

"It's trying to make sure suburbanites and white folks can get to where they're going without having to stop at our stop signs," McDonald said. "First it was the freeway, and now it's this."

"The only upside of my concern is I'll probably be dead by the time it comes through," he said.

A LIVING MEMORY

Activists like Presley say they are trying to parlay that kind of hopelessness into action. Her group is part of an umbrella organization known as the Central Corridor Equity Coalition, which was formed to rally business owners and residents of color behind a set of demands before the first shovel hits the dirt.

Fliers promoting community meetings mention Rondo as "a living memory" whose story should not be repeated. At recent strategy sessions, coalition organizer Veronica Burt has been revving up people for the 45-day comment period that will begin soon, now that the Federal Transit Administration has signed off on a draft environmental-impact statement. Public hearings will probably be set in May, and the Metropolitan Council will later decide whether it prefers to operate a light-rail or a bus rapid-transit system.

A later phase focusing on preliminary engineering would give communities another chance to weigh in, DeSpiegel said.

Real influence, not merely the right to give input, is what community members want, said Steve Wilson, chairman of the Summit-University Planning Council.

"We're kind of the engine that's fueling the numbers for light rail," said Wilson, who is also part of a new district council collaborative aimed at addressing Central Corridor issues from a neighborhood level. "If we're the engine, don't shortchange us."

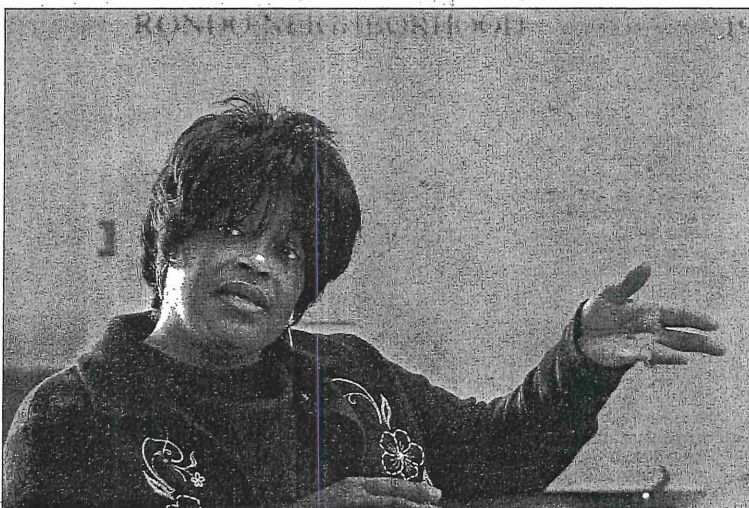
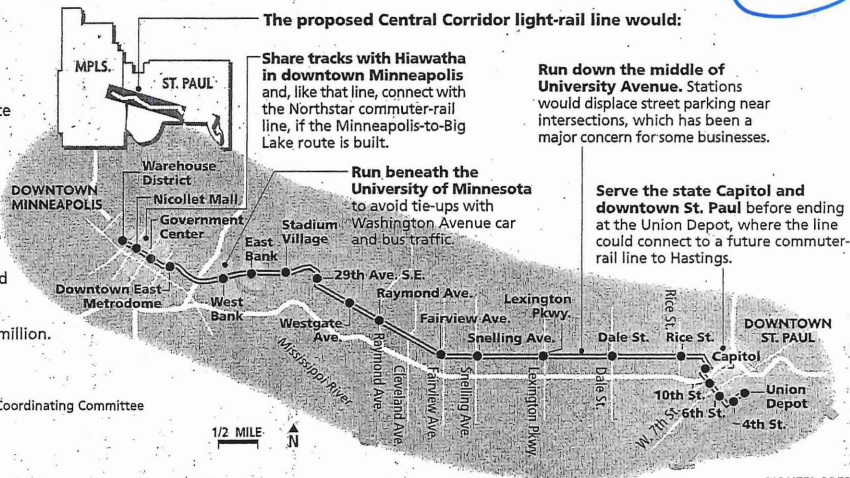
Wilson thinks the Rondo comparison fits the light-rail proposal to a certain degree, and the fears are more palpable for the families who went through such displacement, he said.

But Bobby Hickman, a longtime Summit-University activist

The Central connection

The 11-mile Central Corridor light-rail route would connect the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis and serve the University of Minnesota. It would also link with the Hiawatha Line serving the airport and the Mall of America. The cost estimate for the new line is \$840 million.

Source: Central Corridor Coordinating Committee



JOE ODEN, PIONEER PRESS

Nieeta Presley, executive director of the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp., speaks to the St. Paul organization about Rondo Days and other neighborhood issues during a meeting at Abundant Bistro & Catering on University Avenue. Presley is actively involved in the discussion about building the Central Corridor light-rail line.

who can stand at Lexington Parkway and what used to be Rondo Avenue and still name almost every family and business that used to line the street, is perplexed by the comparison.

"It was a devastation that can't even be matched," said Hickman, 70. "They already took out the heart of my community. It doesn't mean I don't have sympathy for those who will be affected. It just means that the knife cut deep. This (light-rail proposal) is a flesh wound compared to the deep cut we received with Rondo."

WHAT THEY WANT

Local and regional officials championing light rail, including Mayor Chris Coleman, have said they share a vision of economic equity. Within a week, Coleman plans to announce a new task force that would address concerns about the likely gentrification — the displacement of poor urban residents with richer newcomers — and the effect of construction on small businesses.

"There's a big push by the mayor — he understands the concerns and memory of Rondo," said Va-Megn Thoj, a

Coleman policy associate. "It's a priority for Mayor Coleman to do outreach and make sure they're part of the process so they will benefit and there will be community ownership when light rail is done."

So what does the community think true equity would look like? More train stops, for one. Many residents in the area would like to see additional stations between the proposed locations at Rice Street, Dale Street, Lexington Parkway and Snelling Avenue — each about a mile apart.

"If you're a senior citizen, that (station alignment) basically takes you out of the running," Wilson said.

State Rep. Cy Thao, DFL-St. Paul, is also exploring the idea of setting aside state money to assist University Avenue business owners during construction. Some Asian-American entrepreneurs look forward to the long-term prosperity the train would bring but aren't convinced they can survive the building period, said Khue Yang, chairman of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce.

"We have an obligation," Cy Thao said. "Certainly, we don't want light rail to kill all the eth-

nic and diverse businesses that gambled and took a chance by investing in a blighted area when no one else would. They've brought this avenue back to life."

Other leaders, like Nathaniel Khaliq of the St. Paul NAACP, are calling for measures to help new businesses of color to relocate on University Avenue.

Rondo's legacy became a common refrain last year when the Jeremiah Program, which offers services to single moms, moved forward with plans to build a campus on a long-vacant lot near the interstate. Many saw that piece of land as an important part of the neighborhood's future — possibly for a new housing development — that could one day help restore a part of Rondo that was wiped away.

If anything, some contend, the lessons of Rondo could and should bring Asian and black communities together.

"That bridge needs to be crossed," said Mychael Wright, owner of Selby Avenue's Golden Thyme Coffee, who opposes light rail but is still getting involved with community discussions.

"There are things the Asian community can learn from us, since we've gone through Rondo, and there are things we can

TO LEARN MORE

■ The Central Corridor Equity Coalition invites the African-American community to its next strategy session at 6:30 p.m. April 18 at Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church at 585 Fuller Ave. Call 651-222-0399 for additional details.

■ To learn more about another Central Corridor community group, the District Councils Collaborative of St. Paul and Minneapolis, contact Anne White at 651-249-6877 or e-mail info@districtcouncilcollaborative.org. The group is planning two public meetings on May 2 — at 7:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. — at the Cornelia House Chapel at Episcopal Homes near University and Fairview avenues.

■ Go to www.centralcorridor.org for more information about the transit project.

learn from them, like building a strong economic base."

Something many community leaders note is that the city has never formally apologized for the Rondo displacement. The black community has yet to be compensated, the NAACP's Khaliq said, and light rail "will be one of the last opportunities for us to use this as leverage."

On Sept. 28, 1956, Khaliq's grandfather, the Rev. George R. Davis, was escorted in handcuffs to a squad car when police and sheriff's deputies came to relocate him to new living quarters. The partially blind clergyman was the last resident on lower Rondo Avenue to leave home.

Khaliq, at 13, came home from school that afternoon and started to cry at the sight of officials already taking sledgehammers to his grandfather's house.

"He fought that battle alone," Khaliq said. "Unlike Rondo, people need to be involved and engaged. We may not get everything we want, but we'll have the satisfaction that we were part of this effort and we got at least some of the things we want."

Laura Yuen can be reached at lyuen@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5498.

Choosing to fill

House committee approves pharmacists' right of refusal

By BAO ONG

The House has another balancing act on its hands — trying to find a solution to the clash between patient demands and pharmacists refusing to prescribe them certain drugs.

Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano) believes he has the right answer.

He is the sponsor of HF3032, approved by the House Health Policy and Finance Committee March 8. Under his proposal, pharmacists are prohibited from denying prescribed drugs or devices to patients except in certain instances. The bill was sent to the full House.

"This is a balancing of the liberty of pharmacists versus the right and necessity of the patient to get their legally prescribed medication," said Emmer. The proposal is a compromise on his original bill, HF2597, and has received more all-around support, Emmer added.

Under the bill, pharmacists would not be required to fill prescriptions if they have an objection — ethical, moral or religious — to a prescribed drug or device.

Michael Barrett, a Long Prairie Memorial Hospital and Home pharmacist, disagrees with requiring pharmacists to fill all prescription requests. He said the number of people pursuing pharmaceutical careers would decline if they were made to feel like "second-class citizens" who couldn't hold onto their values and beliefs.

"Can we at the same time think of legislating that all Muslim and Jewish butchers must carry pork?" said Barrett. "I don't think this is the place for government to get into."

Abortion, always a contentious issue, came up almost from the outset.

Rep. Barb Goodwin (DFL-Columbia Heights) said the bill could be futile for patients seeking birth control, especially in cases of rape or incest. Goodwin

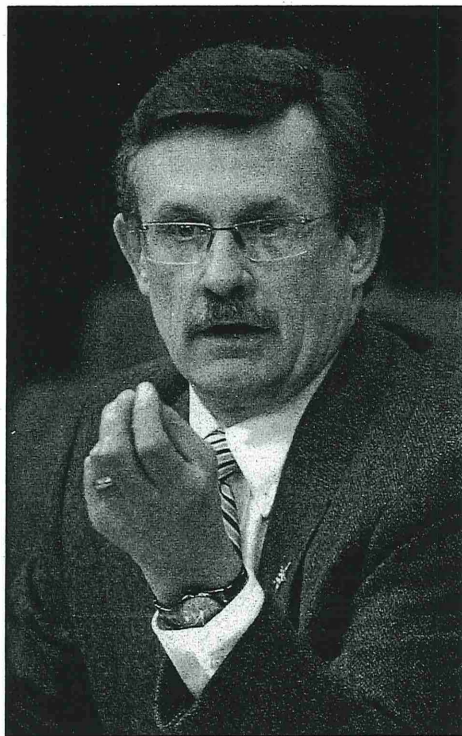


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Michael Barrett, a pharmacist with Long Prairie Memorial Hospital and Home, testifies March 8 before the House Health Policy and Finance Committee in support of a bill that would allow pharmacists to refuse to dispense a drug or device on ethical, moral or religious grounds.

and Barrett disagreed on whether using certain birth control methods, such as the morning-after pill, would constitute an abortion.

"It is the duty of pharmacists to fill prescriptions."

—Erin Matson, president of the Minnesota National Organization for Women

Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) said under current law, pharmacists can already refuse prescriptions for abortion issues. But Barrett said the threshold of pregnancy is not clearly

defined in Minnesota.

Meanwhile, Rep. Cy Thao (DFL-St. Paul) questioned whether there was even a need for

"It's a balanced approach that addresses the needs of the patient and the needs of the pharmacist, personally and professionally,"

— Todd Sorenson, president-elect of the Minnesota Pharmacists Association

the bill. He said patients denied prescriptions today already go to other pharmacies or sources.


Todd Sorenson, president-elect of the Minnesota Pharmacists Association, said the bill would be a proactive step. "It's a balanced approach that addresses the needs of the patient and the needs of the pharmacist, personally and professionally," said Sorenson. "This issue, for the pharmacists association, is not about abortion. It's about balancing values and balancing access."

Others, like Erin Matson, believe the doctor-patient relationship should determine if a prescription is in order. "It is the duty of pharmacists to fill prescriptions," said Matson, president of the Minnesota National Organization for Women. "It is the duty of this committee to rise above militant, unscientific personal beliefs about birth control."


Another clause would allow pharmacists to deny patients prescriptions if the drug or device was out of stock. But the pharmacist would have to offer alternatives, such as locating another pharmacy with the prescription in stock. Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan) said this could still be an issue for Catholic hospitals, which may not want any part in aiding an abortion.

Both Republicans and Democrats said the words "timely" and "reasonable" used to describe how pharmacists would help patients if their prescriptions are denied — could be troublesome.

Under the bill, pharmacists can also refuse to provide prescriptions if they determine a drug or device would cause medical problems for a patient or if payment is not received.

A companion bill, SF2647, sponsored by Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (DFL-Rochester), awaits action by the Senate Health and Family Security Committee. 

65A



ECHO PRESS

Giving Information *Life*

Tuesday, 03/14/2006
Current Temp for Alexandria, MN
22° - [More Weather](#)

Search the Web

go

- News
 - Sports
 - Lifestyle
 - Opinion
 - Entertainment
 - Classifieds
 - Announcements
 - Public Notices
 - Area Realtors
 - Public Services
 - Web Extras
 - Archives
 - Organizations
- Special sections
- Wedding Planner
 - Photo Gallery
 - Bus. Showcase
 - MN Destinations
 - Resident's Guide

NEWS

Bill allows pharmacists not to fill prescriptions

Don Davis, Echo Press Columnist
03/10/2006

ST. PAUL – Pharmacists should not be required to dispense medicine such as birth control pills if they feel it would violate their ethics, religion or morals, Michael Barrett says.

A Minnesota House committee agreed Wednesday, sending a bill giving pharmacists the right to say no to the full House.

Pharmacists testified that there are very few times when one of them cannot fill a prescription in good conscience, but Barrett said the law change is important.

“Besides my education, I find my morals and ethics the most important things I bring to my job,” Barrett said.

Barrett, a Long Prairie Memorial Hospital pharmacist and Republican candidate for the 7th Congressional District seat, told the Minnesota House Health Policy and Finance Committee that the bill he wrote balances pharmacists’ rights with those who want medicines such as birth control pills.

Barrett said that if pharmacists must fill all prescriptions, as some feel current law requires, “we will have pharmacies devoid of religion, ethics.”

While the bill does not specify any medicines that could be refused, the most likely would be birth control medicines, including the so-called morning-after pill.

Some committee members had questions of Barrett and bill sponsor Representative Tom Emmer, R-Delano, but there was little opposition. Even Planned Parenthood, which usually opposes such bills, supports it.

“It is a step in the right direction,” Planned Parenthood’s Tim Stanley said.

One provision that makes the bill acceptable to a wider range of people is that if a pharmacist won’t fill a prescription, he must help the patient find a pharmacy where it can be filled.


Representative Cy Thao, DFL-St. Paul, said he doesn’t see a need for the bill since patients will be able to get prescriptions they want, even if they go elsewhere.

“This is a compromise by the folks who actually dispense these drugs,” Emmer said.

Erin Matson, president of Minnesota’s National Organization of Women chapter, said it is not right to make people seeking birth control medicines to hunt for them.


“Women deserve more than a wild goose chase law,” she said.

For complete coverage... subscribe today.




Featured Businesses


PAID ADVERTISERS




ECHO PRESS PHOTO GALLERY




START A BIDDING WAR... OVER YOUR PROPERTY
MIKKELSON
REALTY & AUCTIONEERS



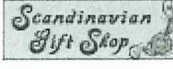
ALL PURPOSE LIFT.com



TRUMM DRUG



COUNTRY GARDENS



Scandinavian Gift Shop

Enjoy a beautiful B&B built in 1900.

Home Enhancing... Prepare Homes for Today's Real Estate Market.

Weekly smart card specials from the friendly food professionals at Pete's.

marketplace directory

Search Alphabetical

All OR

Search by keyword

go

calendar or events

More events

Get all the stories delivered to your mailbox with an Echo Press newspaper subscription.

Reader Posts:

clueless 03/10/2006 at 06:33 PM

I'm just puzzled. I am gainfully employed. I perform my duties as laid out in my Job Description and employer. Are there things in my professional life I disagree with and would prefer not to do? Certainly. Am I required to perform those duties anyway? Certainly and I do. Why do I? Simple logic. Because it's MY JOB and it's what I'm paid to do. I can't pick and choose my duties, I simply am required to do them. Should I strongly disagree with my job duties or responsibilities? There's always the option of finding different employment. I don't understand why a Pharmacist if they have strong objections to a moral issue should be allowed to take that into the workplace. Oy vey.

Leave a post for this article

Give us your feedback on this article.

Email this article to a friend!

Return to News



Receive EchoPress.com articles via RSS/XML

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Entertainment Ads](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Announcements](#) | [Public Notices](#)
[Area Realtors](#) | [Archives](#) | [Web Extras](#) | [Weather](#) | [Marketplace Directory](#) | [Business Showcase](#) | [Calendar of Events](#)
[Organizations](#) | [About Us](#) | [Web Design](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [Advertising Rates](#) | [Listing of Echo Press Newsstands](#) | [Site Map](#)

this site created & maintained by [Echo Press Web Solutions](#)
©2006 All photos, content and design are properties of the Echo Press

M104 C14 Minnesota's Hmong vets seek a memorial to their service

BY JASON HOPPIN

Pioneer Press
PIONEER PRESS OCT 13 '06

Sheboygan, Wis., and Fresno, Calif., both cities with sizable Hmong populations, each have one, and there's even a marker at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

But the Twin Cities, with the nation's largest Hmong population, has lagged behind in establishing a war memorial honoring the Asian veterans who — though officially

denied for years — fought on the U.S. side during the Vietnam War.

A committee of Hmong veterans is working to change that.

With the help of Rep. Cy Thao, DFL-St. Paul, the group this year secured a \$150,000 commitment from the Legislature toward the \$450,000 project.

"We think it's long overdue," said Xang Vang, 56, of Maplewood, who said that in 1969 he oversaw the

HMONG MEMORIAL, 11A



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHU WU

What the memorial would show: A Hmong man, woman and child helping a downed U.S. pilot.

Where it could be displayed: Near the existing Vietnam War memorial on the state Capitol plaza.

FYI

Donations toward a Hmong memorial can be sent to Hmong Veterans Statue Committee, 302 University Ave., Suite 202, St. Paul, MN 55103.

The committee also is looking for U.S. veterans in Minnesota who flew missions as part of the so-called "Secret War" in Laos. Call Chu Wu at 612-207-2473.

Hmong memorial

(continued)

distribution of CIA-supplied ammunition to an army of 30,000 guerrillas during the U.S. "Secret War" in Laos.

On Wednesday, however, the group was denied a \$100,000 grant request through the city of St. Paul's cultural STAR (Sales Tax Revitalization) program.

The grant was a long shot, because the 11-year-old program was almost out of eligible money by the time supporters asked. Undaunted, the group is turning to the private sector to raise the rest of the estimated \$300,000 it says is needed to build the memorial statue.

"We're not disappointed," said Chu Wu, who is heading the effort. "They told us clearly that they didn't have a lot of money this year."

Chu Wu said he envisions a diorama of four figures — a downed U.S. pilot being rescued by a Hmong man, woman and child. Pilot rescues were one of the Hmong fighters' responsibilities, Xang Vang said, along with hit-and-run attacks on the North Vietnamese army, scouting and protecting U.S. radar stations and other installations.

Xang Vang said the Hmong's task when a plane went down was to find the pilot to see if he was dead, alive or had been captured. If he were alive, they would take him to a place where he could safely be picked up.

"If any civilian (aircraft) or bomber jet got shot down, we were called," Xang Vang said.

Because of the operation's covert nature, the number of pilots rescued is not easily determined. Calls to the CIA, Defense Department, an aviation museum that keeps archives on the CIA-backed Air America program and the Air America Association were unsuccessful.

Chu Wu said the monument is a way to tell two stories; that of the Hmong involved in the war, and that of the rescued soldiers. If there are any surviving

Chu Wu said the monument is a way to tell two stories: that of the Hmong involved in the war, and that of the rescued soldiers.

pilots in Minnesota, he wants to contact them.

"We want them on this project," Chu Wu said.

The statue would likely be located near the Veterans Service Building on the Capitol plaza, near the Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial — a potentially sensitive proposition, since the site is considered hallowed ground by many veterans.

As the principal planner with the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board, Paul Mandell oversees projects near the Capitol. He said the Hmong monument likely would be "in or around" the current memorial, but that he wants to avoid a "cluttered" look that he said is starting to affect the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In a nod to the sensitivity of the proposal, Mandell said all stakeholders have to sign off before any ground is broken.

One of those is Teresa Vetter of the Mankato, Minn., area, who, with others, conceived of the existing Minnesota war memorial nearly 20 years ago.

Originally, it was to be a modest monument supporters hoped could be in a park somewhere. But the idea soon was swept up in political goodwill.

In 1992, an arduous five years after the original idea, the \$1.2 million Minnesota Vietnam Veterans Memorial was unveiled on the Capitol plaza. Retired Army Gen. William Westmoreland, who commanded U.S. forces in Vietnam, gave a dedication speech.

Vetter said she needed to see plans before drawing any conclusions. "It's something that the board needs to contemplate," she said.

John Walsh, who heads the St. Paul chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America, had not heard of the proposal.

Xang Vang said the Capitol plaza would be a fine location for the Hmong memorial.

"We would be more than happy to be accepted into their ground," he said.

Jason Hoppin can be reached at jhoppin@pioneerpress.com or 651-292-1892.

An e-mail string asks: Too many hats for Entenza?

L60.28D L60.58 E16.38AG

● Internal DFL House caucus e-mail reveals some concerns about Minority Leader Matt Entenza's ability to juggle three roles this legislative and election year.

STAR TRIBUNE JAN 6 '06

By DANE SMITH
rdsmith@startribune.com



Entenza

Juhnke also called for a "review of the current leadership's policies, directions and past practices as well as giving any potential candidates the chance to lay out their visions."

Juhnke confirmed that he sent the e-mail and that he is concerned that Entenza, who is running a statewide campaign for attorney general, is too overextended to do a good job managing the legislative session and as many as 134 DFL House campaigns in 2006.

"I personally think it will be difficult for him to do both

roles," Juhnke said. Former Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe tried to do both in 2002, and "he lost his race and almost lost control

of the Senate," Juhnke said.

Entenza, who led his caucus to a big comeback in 2004 and almost to majority status, said he is certain that his caucus members will give him a vote of confidence and retain him as leader.

Moreover, if Attorney General Mike Hatch remains a candidate for governor, and if Entenza gets the DFL endorsement for attorney general in June, as expected, Entenza said

he will resign and allow his successor to guide the House campaigns through the summer.

Other candidates, such as Gov. Tim Pawlenty when he ran for governor as House Majority Leader in 2002, have kept their caucus leadership positions and succeeded, Entenza said.

"An overwhelming number of members have told me that until I know for sure that I will be the attorney general candidate, that I ought to stay," Entenza said.

The e-mail string shows that at least one other member shared Juhnke's concerns. Rep. Arv Anderson, a former speaker, noted that "Matt is running for statewide office and all the fire-works in that campaign are go-

ing to hit us."

Others were noncommittal or supportive. Rep. Cy Thao of St. Paul said he thought Entenza had "done a good job, we should at least give him until the end of the session."

Entenza said it's common knowledge that among those interested in succeeding him are Reps. Joe Atkins of Inver Grove Heights, Margaret Anderson Kelliher of Minneapolis and Loren Solberg of Grand Rapids. None intends to challenge Entenza now, and Juhnke said he is not a candidate for caucus leader.

The e-mail was posted on the Web blog Minnesota Democrats Exposed, which is operated by Michael Brodkorb, a for-

mer Minnesota Republican Party researcher and operative.

One of the e-mailers on the string expressed frustration with the apparently frequent leakage of internal House e-mails to bloggers.

"I've got \$10 for anyone who can guess, to the closest half-hour, how soon this e-mail string gets published on Checks & Balances," wrote DFL Rep. John Lesch of St. Paul, referring to a site operated by Shawn Towle, who has been a DFL activist. "Let's have this discussion in a closed caucus. Just my suggestion."

Dane Smith • 651-292-0164

654