

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Madison just experienced several beautiful days heralding spring. Melting snow and recent rains soaked the ground and have generated many calls about sewer backups and flooded basements and garages. Like dandelions, potholes are already appearing, so if you spot any, please contact the Pothole Patrol at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/ReportaProblem/Potholes.cfm>? Funding has been approved to replace decaying trees on various medians within District 20, especially along Raymond Road and S. Whitney Way. Gypsy Moth numbers have been growing in our area, so aerial spraying will resume in May. Please log on to <http://www.gypsymoth.wi.gov> for more information. As the stoplight at the S. Whitney Way and Raymond Road intersection has proven to be well-liked by many, I expect the next traffic calming project at the Segoe/Tokay/Constitution intersection (slated to start after spring thaw) will also be well received.

The tough decision for a 50-cent Metro bus fare increase was passed by the Common Council. I voted in support of this much needed increase to improve Metro efficiency and safety at transfer points. Metro desperately needs resources to enhance routes and services to attract more riders. Delaying the increase would require the inevitable cuts in Sunday and holiday services and further route elimination. Eventually, a fare increase is unavoidable.

While our city still faces the Overture Center financial dilemma, we also are waiting for details to be worked out with the recently approved stimulus package that promises to revitalize our economy. With safety as my top priority and as a Commissioner for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), I am encouraging Dane County Habitat for Humanity to explore opportunities to purchase troubled spots within our district (based on calls for police service). Once renovated, these units will be offered to screened buyers, who are expected to be new, contributing members of our community.

Although saddened that Cub Foods on Verona Road has closed, I am quite excited with the opportunity presented to the languishing Westgate Mall by employee-owned Iowa Hy-Vee Groceries' proposal to build and operate a store at Westgate. This will bring hundreds of jobs to the area and ensure the current 29 small local business owners in this mall can continue to serve our community. I do believe the positive rewards of business competition will benefit consumers, who must watch spending during this economic downturn. The developers are working with City authorities to address area traffic safety. My sincere gratitude to all who have participated in this process to ensure that everyone gains from this joint effort.

The pilot neighborhood center got Madison Metropolitan School District/Board of Estimates approval just in time to execute the lease and start remodeling work at Meadowood Mall. A successful open house was celebrated on Monday, February 23, and operation started the very next day. Since this is only a one-year "pilot center," please volunteer your time and service, and make your best use of it. City and Madison School & Community Recreation staff will assist us and collect data for a feasibility study to secure permanent funding beyond next year. Your suggestions on HOW we can all pitch in to make this mixed-use neighborhood center a permanent success are welcome. Please drop in to check it out and volunteer. I encourage you to contact Christine Reid, the Center Director, at creid@madison.k12.wi.us or 467-8918 for information on volunteering or to sign up and reserve space for your group meetings and activities.

Since 2007, when Clear Channel dropped sponsorship of Fourth of July fireworks at Elver Park, Midwest Family Broadcasting Service (MFB) has graciously stepped in to take over. The costs for police, EMS, insurance, and park permits/fees, etc. total about \$60,000, in addition to \$20,000 for the fireworks display. The City contributes nearly \$20,000, while MFB absorbs the remainder. In January, MFB alerted me that unless additional funding and sponsors could be secured by March, our area's 20-year plus tradition of July Fourth fireworks wouldn't happen this summer. Three years in a row I've had to make special efforts to continue this celebration. I enlisted assistance from the Mayor's Office, Police Chief Noble Wray and West Police District Captain Jay Lengfeld, and we agreed to hold Elver Park Fireworks on Friday, July 3 (instead of Saturday, July 4), to save on police holiday overtime costs from \$60,000 to about \$12,000. We just successfully wrapped up final details.

* Reminder: As the spring election coincides with our area's spring break, if you will be out of town, please don't forget to vote absentee. Contact the City Clerk in Room 103 of the City-County Building (210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) or at 266-4601 for details. Extended voting hours are provided, and all voting information can be accessed at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/citycalendar/>

I am thankful to run for re-election unopposed. This definitely allows me to devote my precious time and energy to working on the urgent needs of District 20 and our city.

My warmest wishes for a happy spring break.

Alder Thuy