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COMMUNITIES

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Schools here tackle 'summer loss'

By Lee Sensenbrenner
The Capital Times

Elementary and middle school students in Madison who are falling behind their peers academically will take home an enrollment form for a newly expanded summer school program with their March report cards.

The six-week program in which they will be encouraged to participate makes its debut this year and will stress primarily reading and math.

The program is designed, said Assistant Superintendent Rita Applebaum, to narrow the achievement gap by eliminating what's known as "summer loss."

That phenomenon is what students and parents have long suspected: From June through August young minds tend to uncoil. But these months of unlearning have been shown to disproportionately affect

District to urge extra instruction

students from low-income families, Applebaum said.

For them, summer loss is so significant, she said, that by sixth grade it often accounts for a student being a year and a half behind.

By identifying the students who are not performing at the level of their peers and instructing them in small groups through much of the summer, Applebaum expects that the gap can be greatly narrowed.

"What the research found was that, during the regular school year, poor students learned at the same rate as their middle class students," Applebaum said. "It's over the summer that we see them falling behind."

The Madison Metropolitan School District embarked four years ago on a smaller summer school plan called the Summer Reading Academy that taught students in kindergarten through second grade. Applebaum, who started the state's first year-round curriculum in Racine, was behind that program, which the administration has counted as a large success.

Now, the program this summer will more than double the number of students included. If 75 percent of the students who are targeted for summer school agree to participate, the enrollment will be about 1,900, according to district estimates.

Students will be split among six sites throughout the city. The sites include the five locations where there is an adjacent middle and elementary school and Chavez Elementary, the only completely air-conditioned build-

For students from low-income families, 'summer loss' is so significant that by sixth grade it often accounts for a student being a year and a half behind.

ing.

Students will be taught depending on their needs, with most elementary students taking both morning and afternoon classes. Middle school students will have most classes in the morning, with opportunities for afternoon enrichment classes and Madison School Community Recreation activities. These afternoon programs will be open to all Madison students, not just those targeted for additional academic work.

The summer school curriculum

also satisfies new rules for promotion from fourth and eighth grades. Students who don't meet other criteria — including minimum grade levels and testing proficiencies — must complete the summer school classes to move on to either fifth or ninth grade.

The School Board has set a fee structure at \$20 per six-week class, with an \$80 maximum. Families who qualify for the free or reduced school lunch program will have summer school fees waived.

Applebaum said that she encouraged parents to fill out the enrollment forms as soon as they arrived with the March report cards. School principals are also expected to send letters next month explaining the program to families who receive an enrollment form.

HERE & THERE

Internet child safety is DeForest topic

DeFOREST — Representatives of the Dane County Sheriff's Office and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections will give a presentation about Internet child safety from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday in the DeForest High School auditorium, 815 Jefferson St.

The presentation will cover protective safety for children using the Internet and information about Wisconsin's sex offender registry. For more information, call 846-7837.

Italian flier's feats feature of photo show

A historical photographic exhibit commemorating Francesco dePinedo, the first pilot to fly a foreign aircraft to the United States, will be on exhibit in the State Capitol rotunda Feb. 20-28. The exhibit commemorates the 75th anniversary of dePinedo's achievements and is sponsored by the Italian American Women's Club of Madison. For more information, call 241-4123.

Jazz Society brings Habanero to town

The Madison Jazz Society will sponsor a performance by the Habanero Jazz Band from 2 to 5 p.m. Feb. 23 at the Marriott Madison West, 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive. Tickets are \$18.

The Madison Jazz Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting jazz music in the Madison area. For information or to order tickets, call 850-5400.

State sheriffs offer chance for scholarship

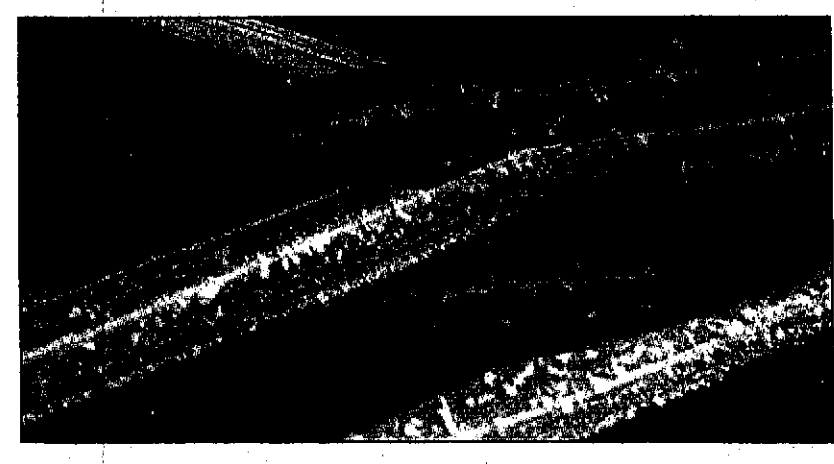
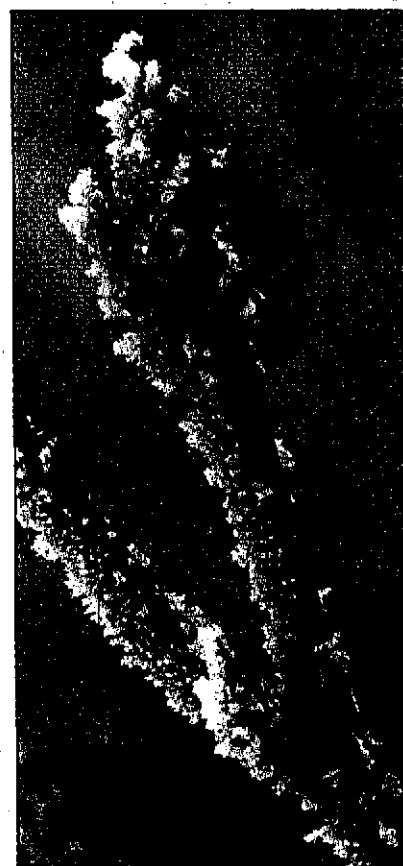
The Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association is accepting applications for its annual scholarship program.

The scholarship was developed to encourage educational growth and professionalism among police officers and deputy sheriffs in Wisconsin. Applications are available at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, 411 S. Center Ave., and are due March 1. For details, call (920) 735-5608.

— Andrea N. Kinsaul

Frosted fields

Photographer Henry Koshollek captures winter's tapestry



Monroe St. sites remain vacant

Potential tenants don't get response

By Judith Davidoff
The Capital Times

When attorney Lynn Bodi and her partners were searching for a new law office this summer, she inquired about the Monroe Street storefront that has been empty since Moze's Gourmet Specialties closed its doors two years ago.

Bodi called the leasing office of High Pointe Properties in Fort Atkinson, which bought the adjoining properties at 1925 and 1921 Monroe Street in 1995 for \$305,000, to inquire about the rent. Bodi, who lives in the Monroe Street area, said she was told by the receptionist that she needed to leave a message and wait for a callback.

That return call never came, said Bodi, even after she left several more messages at the leasing office.

Bodi and her partners eventually leased office space on South Yellowstone Road.

More than six months later, the Moze's space is still vacant, as is another nearby property owned by High Pointe: the old Ken Kopp's grocery store site.

Bodi and her Monroe Street neighbors, including mayoral candidate Dave Cieslewicz, are frustrated that these properties are still without tenants.

"They've been completely unresponsive," said Cieslewicz of High Pointe. "The neighborhood leaders suspect they're waiting us out."

Brad Ricker, president of the Monroe Street Grocery Cooperative, which would like to rent space in the Ken Kopp's building, said he has heard of three other occasions when High Pointe did not get back to people inquiring about the property.

"It has to make one wonder whether the signs offering to lease aren't a front," Ricker said. "What is the motivation? It eludes me unless it's to hold the property and eventually sell to Walgreens."

Sandy Mayer, president of High Pointe, did not return phone calls seeking comment.

The Monroe Street neighborhood fought hard two years ago when grocer Ken Kopp announced his plans to sell his building at 1864 Monroe St. to Walgreens. Walgreens eventually walked away and Kopp sold his building in April 2001 for \$1.49 million to High Pointe.

The company has since floated a proposal to lease part of the building to a Curves for Women fitness center, but never submitted a necessary zoning change request to the city. The Monroe Street Grocery Cooperative



Ken Kopp's sits empty on Monroe Street, as does Moze's.

'I think they should start moving toward condemnation.'

Dave Cieslewicz

also indicated interest, but couldn't come up with the going rent, Ricker said.

Cieslewicz said the city should take some affirmative steps to keep the buildings from becoming eyesores.

"I think they should start moving toward condemnation," he said.

City Planning Director Mark Olinger said he knows the neighborhood is feeling frustrated about the vacant buildings. So is the city, he said, particularly in regards to the Ken Kopp's property.

"It's a great site," he said. "We'd like to see some positive activity occur there to support the other businesses in the neighborhood."

Olinger met last week with representatives from High Pointe and Ald. Ken Golden.

Golden said the property owners called the meeting to discuss in general terms the future of both sites.

"They are back planning on the site and they wanted to get a sense of the ground rules from alders and city staff," Golden said.

"There were no real specifics," Olinger added.

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Public ideas sought on upgrading Wingra Creek

By Kathryn Kingsbury
Correspondent for The Capital Times

After a seven-year wait, Wingra Creek is in store for environmental improvements to make the waterway friendlier to wildlife, anglers and kayakers.

The public is invited to a workshop Wednesday evening to discuss possibilities for improving the creek, which runs from Lake Wingra to Lake Monona. The workshop is sponsored by Ald. Matt Sloan, Friends of Lake Wingra, the South Metropolitan Planning Council and the city's Engineering Division. It will run from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Martin House, 1862 Beld St.

The city developed a stream bank stabilization plan in the mid-1990s, the same time that it started planning the Wingra Creek bike path. Although the city was able to go through with

Meeting is set Wednesday night

constructing the path, funding for environmental improvements fell through.

"We're sort of resurrecting the old plan" as a starting point for discussion, said Ben Kadel, a volunteer for the planning council. "Because the plan is so old, we really wanted to open it up again to new ideas."

Participants in the workshop will write their comments on a large map that shows the changes first proposed in 1996.

The city has budgeted \$35,000 for updating and finalizing the plan in 2003, Sloan said, and the actual work will total \$750,000 over the next four

years and come out of the stormwater utility.

"As the banks crumble, the stream becomes less and less able to handle large stormwater events," Sloan said. The creek has long been plagued by erosion and pollution.

Some of the erosion problems could be remedied by stream bank reinforcement using fiber rolls, natural plantings, shrubs and retaining walls. Dredging will be minimal and will focus on removing accumulated sediment in a few areas, Sloan said. He added that chemical contaminants are not a concern. "Except for trash, there's really no contamination in the creek."

The improved channel will be more easily navigable by canoe and kayak.

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DAVID BANDELL/THE CAPITAL TIMES

A kayaker navigates Wingra Creek in January 2002.