

Doug Moe
THE TALK



Halcyon days? Not around here

son in the manner of "Indian summer" in autumn or the "dog days" of August. The halcyon days, which began Saturday, are the least known of the informal seasons.

Nash continues:
*No letters to answer,
No bills to be burned,
No work to be shirked,
No cash to be earned,
It is pleasant to sit on the beach,
With nothing at all to be done!*

In the Greek myth, a king named **Ceyx** sailed into a stormy sea and drowned. His distraught queen, **Aleyone**, threw herself in the sea but the gods gave her wings and she emerged as a bird, **Halcyon**, a kingfisher, and the gods quieted the sea so she could lay her eggs in a floating nest. Halcyon days are peaceful, tranquil, comfortable and carefree.

Exactly how you feel today, right?
Ogden Nash obviously never saw Gammon Road on Dec. 17.

Maybe the following poem, author unknown, would better summarize your feelings as you face the next two weeks:

*Look! In the sky,
Kites.
Red. Orange. Blue. Green. And then,
I run, freely,
The string in my hand.
Breaking wind.*

Nash was far from alone in celebrating the bliss and peace of the season in verse. America's great poet **Walt Whitman** also waxed eloquent on halcyon days. To wit:
*As the days take on a mellow light,
And the apple at last hangs really finish'd
and indolent-ripe on the tree,
Then for the teeming quietest, happiest
days of all!*

*There once was a halcyon season,
When all were frantic beyond reason,
They spent themselves broke,
They wanted to choke,
And outside the weather was freezin'.*

It's clear that the Midwestern halcyon days spring from a slightly different mythology than those rhapsodized by Nash and Whitman. That's as it should be. Every community should have its own lore.

In Madison, for instance, we could recall fondly the legend of **Hal Cyon**, a seasonal worker at Pleasant Co. who fell through the ice of Lake Monona and, after drowning, was reincarnated as a doll costing \$150 and available just in time for Christmas.

Happy Halcyon Days! May your first primal scream be your last.

Heard something Moe should know? Call 252-6446, write PO Box 8060, Madison, WI 53708, or e-mail dougmoe@madison.com.

MY GUESS is that most of you are operating under the assumption that the next two weeks, with maxed-out credit cards, rotten weather and too many relatives, should be known, if anything, as Primal Scream Days.

You would be wrong. Allow me to quote the poet **Ogden Nash**:

*How pleasant to sit on the beach,
On the beach, on the sand, in the sun,
With ocean galore within reach,
And nothing at all to be done!*

That's the opening of a Nash poem titled "Halcyon Days." Greek myth and folklore tell us that the seven days before and after the winter solstice — Dec. 21 this year — are known as the halcyon days, an informal sea-

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DAVID SANDELL/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Toys for Tots

Volunteers Don Ebert (top) and Jocelyn Lawhorn (right) sort and stack toys for needy children Monday at the Alliant Energy Center's Exhibition Hall. The Salvation Army of Dane County is seeking additional volunteers to help with the annual Christmas baskets giveaway and Toys for Tots event, which are being held at the Alliant Center this week. About 100-130 volunteers are needed each day this week, and less than half of the shifts are filled. The following time slots are available: Wednesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon. For more information call 250-2220.



Big slowdown on the Beltline

By Steven Elbow

The Capital Times

Beltline traffic was noticeably slower today after news of a new enforcement program spread.

"Everybody slowed down," said Madison Police Officer Andy Slawek after about an hour on the Beltline this morning. "It was just amazing."

Madison police today began using unmarked, nontraditional police cars to catch drivers who are driving recklessly on the Beltline, where the speed limit is 55 mph, but the typical speed is closer to 70 mph.

The program, dubbed "The Shadow," puts out-of-uniform officers in the middle of traffic to hunt down drivers guilty of lane violations, follow-

New police program has intended effect

ing too closely and speeding. The officers then radio uniformed officers posted at Beltline on-ramps who make an arrest.

The initiative follows a sharp rise in driver complaints about Beltline traffic, Slawek said.

He said officers will be using a variety of cars and other vehicles, and there will be no tell-tale antennae because the cars won't have radar.

The officers will be using a technique called pacing — gauging the speeds of drivers by following them.

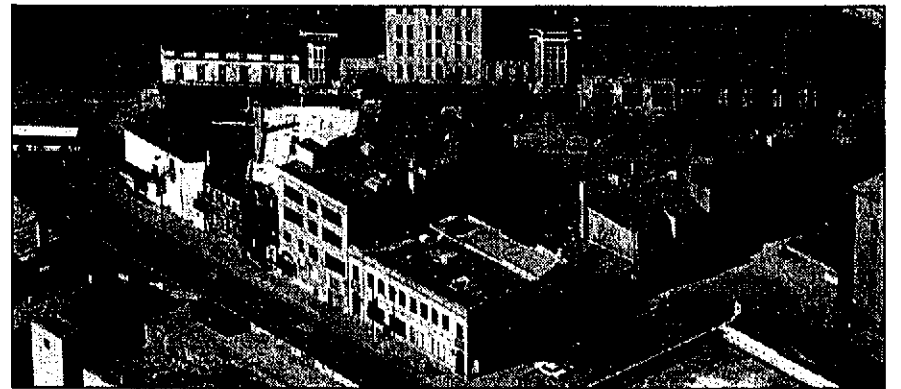
While some drivers complain that pacing is not legal, Slawek said, it was how police caught speeders before radar became standard.

"It's redoing the old wheel again," he said.

Slawek said the program will run through the fall. The times the officers are on the road will depend on their availability and driver complaints.

On the road this morning, Slawek said he saw only one speeder, but because he was calibrating his speedometer he didn't pull the driver over.

"I think it's because of the media blitz right now," he said of this morning's slowdown. "You know, like when you get a ticket you tend to slow down. It'll last about three days."



MIKE DOVRIES/THE CAPITAL TIMES

The triangular block facing the Overture Center is bordered by Fairchild Street (left), West Mifflin Street (right) and State Street (top).

The mayor's block buster

Bauman says 'never' to condo plan

By Aaron Nathans

The Capital Times

Mayor Sue Bauman told developer Marty Rifken last week that she would fight his plan to place condominiums on a historic block of State Street.

Rifken said shortly afterward that he was dropping the plan and would stick to renovating the properties.

"I told Marty last week that plan was going nowhere," said Bauman, who will meet with property owners on the block next month to discuss soaring property tax bills. "I told Marty face-to-face that he wasn't going to be able to tear down those buildings in the 100 block of State Street or anywhere on State Street and build high-rises."

Rifken said Monday that neighborhood and political resistance caused him to drop his plans to redevelop the triangular, odd-numbered 100 block of State Street.

He said Bauman's reaction "had an influence on my decision."

But Rifken said he's not done buying properties on the block, and said he would renovate buildings there because they are a good investment.

Bauman said she's ready to begin a discussion between property owners and the city about how to maintain the area's low-rise feel, despite real estate interest in the area surrounding the new Overture Center arts district.

"One of the things that makes State Street unique is the human scale of the buildings, the character of the buildings, the way they look, the mixture of the other kinds of architecture, the different kinds of businesses, et cetera. If you were to tear them down and build a high-rise, you would destroy the very fabric and the character of State Street. That is not something I want to see happen," she said.

Downtown Ald. Mike Verveer said he was relieved by Rifken's decision. He said the majority of property owners on the block would not sell to Rifken. Some didn't like his vision for the block, Verveer said.

"Others saw kind of a bullied aspect to this plan, where one individual was

trying to buy out an entire block and build something new," Verveer said. "None of them really mentioned price."

There were plenty of historic preservation concerns, Verveer said. He added that he was unwilling to help Rifken with eminent domain to kick out any holdouts on the 100 block.

Verveer mentioned a concern echoed by many downtown: If individual property owners were to sell to Rifken for big bucks, it would raise their neighbors' property tax assessments.

Rifken's Central Focus LLC already owns one property on the back side of the block, 122 W. Mifflin St., which he bought earlier this year for \$165,000 over the building's assessed value.

Rifken told The Capital Times in October that he wanted to replace existing buildings with condominiums, new retail space and underground parking. He

later said he would try to move some buildings off the block to put in the parking, and then move them back, and some corner buildings could remain. The odd-numbered block of State Street includes historic and unique buildings, and some funky

Mayor Sue Bauman

businesses like Game Haven and Myles Teddywedgers.

Rifken acknowledged that Dan and Maria Milsted and John Caputo, who own large portions of the block, were unwilling to sell to him and his investors.

The Milsteds say they are skeptical this is really the end of the redevelopment project, adding that they believe Rifken and his investors are regrouping to lay low for a couple of years.

Local preservationist Joe Lusson said he was happy to hear about Rifken's change in plans. But he said as long as assessments creep up, local property and business owners will be pressured to sell to moneyed interests.

"There's major pressure on the values of those properties, so city government really has to take a position that buildings need to be three and four stories tall max, and storefronts need to be limited in the square footage. It's not going to be easy," Lusson said.

Man arrested, was mistakenly released from probation

By Mike Miller

The Capital Times

A man who had been mistakenly released from probation after serving 30 months rather than 30 years fled Madison last week after being put back on probation but was arrested over the weekend in Marquette County.

Jan Hilleshiem, 64, was convicted here in 1999 of sexually assaulting a 3½-year-old girl and was put on probation for 30 years

and ordered to serve one year in the Dane County Jail.

Hilleshiem was mistakenly released from probation in April, however, and that error went undetected until an anonymous telephone call to Dane County Judge Daniel Moeser revealed that Hilleshiem was no longer under supervision.

Moeser scheduled a hearing for last week and it was made clear to Hilleshiem then that he would be back on probation. Corrections officials told him to report to his prob-

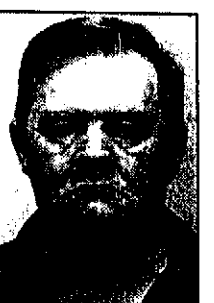
ation agent the next day but Hilleshiem did not show up.

"He was supposed to come in Wednesday and when he did not we went to his home to find him," said William Grosshans, administrator of the Division of Community Corrections in the DOC. "He was not there and we issued a warrant for his arrest."

Hilleshiem was picked up in Marquette County over the weekend and Grosshans said at the moment it appears he committed no other offenses while he was on the loose.

"We will investigate his whereabouts during the time he was missing," Grosshans said, before deciding what action to take against him. Hilleshiem could face sanctions up to an including revocation of his probation, which would bring him back before Moeser for a new sentencing hearing.

At last week's hearing before the judge, the DOC said the error in releasing Hilleshiem came about when a clerk mistakenly entered 30 months rather than 30 years as the term of probation.



Hilleshiem