

Two states to get Armajani works // '99 to bring construction of bridge, poetry garden: [METRO Edition]
Flanagan, Barbara; Staff Writer. **Star Tribune** [Minneapolis, Minn] 02 Nov 1998: 03B.

The Flanagan Memo - RE: Newport, R.I., is a "preservation city"; what Twin Cities sculptor Siah Armajani is doing; plus, upcoming snow shoveling.

Armajani's art

There will be a new pedestrian bridge in Iowa City, Iowa, and a new "poetry garden" in Beloit, Wis., - both designed by Siah Armajani - but not until next year.

"In springtime," said Armajani, who recently had a show of his porch furniture in New York. "The park people didn't buy it, but other people did," he reported, happily. "People liked it."

Armajani has achieved international fame for his artworks that include the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge connecting Loring Park to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

His bridge for Iowa City has been approved, he said, and he'll begin on it next spring. It will connect a new biology building to the campus.

As for the poetry garden, it will be his second such installation inspired by poets. He did the first one for a foundation in Los Angeles. He seemed sad to note that the foundation is now moving to New Mexico and abandoning the garden.

"So this new poetry garden in Beloit will open next fall," he said. We'll be ready.

A life of wine

Minnesota-born Robert **Mondavi**, now a renowned California winemaker, was interviewed in a recent issue of Bon Appetit magazine. Mondavi, 85, was asked about his Minnesota upbringing, including the question, "Was there good wine around your house when you were growing up?"

Mondavi said, "I was brought up with wine. In fact, when we kids were 3 or 4 years old, my mother would take wine and water, mix them and serve it to us." And he added, "That's a pretty common practice all over the old country {Italy}."

His autobiography, "Harvests of Joy," has just been published.

Public works

Bigger cities than ours have pothole problems.

New York City's Mayor Rudy Giuliani has announced that New York is coping on a large scale.

In the 1998 fiscal year, 71,633 potholes were filled. For the current year, crews are hoping to fill 85,000.

I salute the mayor and ask whether he shares advice, because Minneapolis needs it. Our potholes are one of our constant pains -and with winter coming up, may I add snow shoveling to that list?

This month Minneapolis City Council Member Steve Minn will bring up once again the idea of 24-hour plowing for Minneapolis. He will probably be supported by the two Lisas - McDonald and Goodman.

And, once again, it will be presented to the City Council, where it will be tabled until next year or until Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton decides it's OK to spend enough money to install new snow emergency parking signs throughout the city.

Minn said union members are open to the plan. So, I imagine, are most Minneapolis voters. All of you who live on the outskirts would also benefit.

If you live in Minneapolis and like the idea, call your council member. Just remind them that most big cities - including St. Paul - shovel in 24 hours when it's necessary. We should, too.

Holiday plans

If you're beginning to make holiday plans, here are two events to remember:

- A turn-of-the-century Christmas party will be held Nov. 30 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Av. S. The institute will be decorated inside - complete with lights in every window - and the Dickens Carolers will be in costume to greet you. And, yes, St. Nick will be there. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for those under 16.

- On Dec. 5 and 6, you can greet the annual Teddy Bears & Friends at the holiday party in the historic Ard Godfrey House, Central Av. and University Av. SE. What makes it extra special is that if you bring a teddy bear or a doll with you, admission is free. The hours both days are from noon until 3 p.m. It is sponsored by the Woman's Club of Minneapolis.

A Breakers break

With all this talk about historic preservation of the Shubert Theater, Handicraft Guild Building and Milwaukee Depot, Minneapolis could take a lesson from Newport, R.I.

Since history is of No. 1 importance in Newport, no one, but no one, tears down a house. It has happened on occasion, but only after much study. And the exterior of the house you save must remain as it was more than 200 years ago. Inside, however, everything and anything goes.

The Preservation Society of Newport County operates several historic mansions, offering tours and special events.

And friends, the most famous of these, the Breakers, turned out to be just what everyone told me it would be - namely, spectacular.

I've finally seen it, and it's tough to imagine living there. The lives of the socially and financially prominent Vanderbilts in 1895 were definitely different from Minnesota in the 1990s.

For the record, among the 70 rooms are 23 bathrooms that offered guests rainwater and saltwater. There is also a splendid porch overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, and there are dozens of gilded rooms right out of a fairy-tale castle. That it was a "summer cottage" - as were all the Newport mansions - remains amazing.

Railroad magnate Cornelius II built it. His children and grandchildren used it for years and years, but shared it with friends. Now it's considered a must-see - and I'll agree. But it isn't the only preservation plus of Newport.

Downtown, in the Colonial part of town, the houses and a church or two have been preserved from before the Revolutionary War. (More houses were built after the war, but that's another tour.)

Starting at the waterfront and working uphill, you see the Colonial houses sitting side by side without much of a yard separating them. What space they have is usually bricked over to park the car. Parking is one thing that Newport seems to lack.

Among the other enticements of Newport are Hammersmith Farm, where the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis spent part of her childhood, and St. Mary's Church, where she and John F. Kennedy were married in 1953; the International Tennis Hall of Fame; a museum of yachts; and the 1763 Touro Synagogue, the oldest Jewish religious building in the United States.

This trip, I saw the synagogue and the tennis museum, both right in town, but missed Hammersmith Farm. Well, perhaps next time.

Barbara Flanagan, longtime columnist for the **Star Tribune** , writes on the first Monday of each month. Her interests are the metropolitan area - what's good and what's bad - and the fascinating people who live here.