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Fernando Cavazos with fiancée Katie Hoffman and daughter Cienna, 7, ordered cups of ice cream from Sweet Science clerk Haley Wireman-Sobba at Keg and Case Market last week. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Keg and Case Market shuttered by state

Food hall closed till Dec. 18, though two tenants are still offering takeout, delivery

By CAROLYN WALKUP

New state restrictions on bars and restaurants aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 have forced Keg and Case Market to close for four weeks just as the spacious food hall was welcoming new tenants to replace those that have left.

Two years after it first opened in the former

Schmidt Brewery warehouse at 928 W. Seventh St., Keg and Case has been undergoing a transformation. Management is “reimagining” how to make the food hall and artisan marketplace successful, according to Gates Lindquist, Keg and Case’s executive director.

Governor Tim Walz’s latest emergency order forced all bars and restaurants in the state to discontinue sit-down service for the four weeks beginning November 21, though they have the option of continuing with takeout and delivery services. Because Keg and Case is classified by the city of Saint Paul as a food court, the entire space

KEG AND CASE MARKET ▶ 5

6-story apartment building eyed for Snelling-Randolph

Oppidan looks to build on site of existing gas station

By JANE McCLURE

A six-story, 115-unit apartment building is being proposed for the southwest corner of Snelling and Randolph avenues. Developer Oppidan hopes to start construction next fall after obtaining a conditional use permit and other city approvals.

The Community Development Committee of the Highland District Council (HDC) reviewed the project on November 17. The HDC expects to set up a future meeting for neighbors on the development plans. The Macalester-Groveland Community Council will also be invited to weigh in on the project, since the site borders the two neighborhoods.

The property at 485 S. Snelling Ave. is currently home to Highland Service/Minnoco, a gas station, convenience store and car wash. Paul Tucci, executive vice president for development at Oppidan, said the property is currently under contract with Oppidan.

The 24,395-square-foot property was rezoned from commercial to Traditional Neighborhoods 3 (TN3) in 2017 as part of a South Snelling Avenue zoning study. The proposed building would be 66.5 feet tall. TN3 zoning allows heights of up to 55 feet, so a conditional use permit would be required from

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COVID sets smaller table for Thanksgiving this year

Families forgo tradition, just grateful for what they have in the midst of a pandemic

By ANNE MURPHY

For many households, Thanksgiving Day 2020 will not be the traditional gathering of extended family and friends. In this year of COVID-19, families are instead filling their cornucopia with gratitude for the people and traditions that made previous Thanksgivings memorable.

Emmy Treichel of Lexington-Hamline is looking forward to Thanksgiving. “I already have my table-

cloth on,” she said. At 92, Treichel said her children will not be coming over for dinner this year as they are maintaining social distance, but they will be sharing their favorite Thanksgiving fare nonetheless. “I have a new cranberry salad recipe,” Treichel said. “My son will arrange for a driver who will pick up and deliver (the dishes), so we’ll all have the same complete meal and we’ll Zoom our Thanksgiving dinner.”

Being alone on Thanksgiving is not something Treichel has accepted since she and her late husband moved into their house over 60 years ago and spent their first holiday away from family. She has not been alone thanks in part to a flier she saw long ago at Saint Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Frog-town. The flier asked people to host international

students on holidays.

“Our Thanksgivings were always 14 to 20 people,” she said, and those gatherings always included “two to four international students.”

For Ryan and Laura Rapacz of Highland Park and their children Alice, 11, and Edith, 8, Thanksgiving will not include the usual gathering of her friends from high school. Last year, with spouses and children, the gathering was so large that the group met at Bap and Chicken on Grand Avenue at the invitation of owner and friend John Gleason. This year, each family may have to arrange curbside pickup to keep the tradition going.

“I imagine we’ll be blending some of our old

THANKSGIVING IN THE YEAR OF COVID ▶ 2



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1◀ THANKSGIVING IN THE YEAR OF COVID

Thanksgiving traditions on a smaller scale and forging some new ones,” Ryan said. In the past, the family of four participated in the Highland Turkey Trot. This year they may just take a run along river road. “Then we’ll make dinner together as a family,” Ryan said.

Laura and the girls are planning to do some baking with pumpkin puree given to the girls for Halloween by her mother. Both girls love to bake, she said. They will also be playing games, enjoying a fire and connecting with other family members by Zoom.

“We talk about traditions,” Ryan said. “Who likes to do the turkey, our uncle’s marshmallow-soaked sweet potatoes. But all of those may not matter as much. It will be nice for the four of us just to be together, having a couple of familiar foods. We’re going to be looking for whatever glimmer of normalcy we can find.”

“Our Thanksgiving celebration has long been a blend of family traditions,” said Duchesne Drew of Highland Park, the president of Minnesota Public Radio. That family includes wife and MPR news host Angela Davis, their two teenage children and Drew’s mother. “I typically make the turkey,” Drew said. “Angela and my mother usually make a ham as well as side dishes—lots and lots of side dishes: Angela’s grandfather’s sweet potato casserole, green beans, collard greens, my mom’s macaroni and cheese, stuffing, cranberry sauce, gravy, dinner rolls and more.

“Angela and I are transplants, and we spent years working in newsrooms with lots of other transplants, so we’ve often hosted folks who didn’t have family in town,” Drew said. “That won’t be happening this year because of COVID, but making room for others at the table is a tradition I’m eager to reinstate when it’s safe to do so. I vividly remember the invitations I got from new friends when I first



Laura (far left) and Ryan (far right) Rapacz, with their children Edith, 8, and Alice, 11, celebrated Thanksgiving last year with several longtime friends and their families at the Bap and Chicken restaurant on Grand Avenue. This Thanksgiving the same group will be meeting via Zoom.

moved here. Those invitations, those meals, were part of what helped me come to see Minnesota as home.”

Ann Farley Anderson of Macalester-Groveland grew up in Saint Paul. Her husband Bob Anderson is from Madison, Minnesota. When Ann and her five siblings were young, they did not have any aunts, uncles, cousins or grandparents in the area. “We always celebrated Thanksgiving with our immediate family and sometimes the friends of my parents,” Ann said. “My parents’ friends became our closest thing to family throughout the years, and probably our biggest tradition for Thanksgiving was having dinner with them.”

Now with her five siblings scattered, Ann and Bob will be grateful for whatever family connections they can make that day. “There

are so many families dealing with sickness and death out there,” Ann said. “Whoever we get to share the day with, we’re blessed if family and friends are well during these strange times.”

Mary and Shane Perry of Lexington-Hamline will also have a new look to their Thanksgiving this year. Shane’s mother lives with the couple. They also have children and close friends who live nearby. This year, however, “the gathering will be smaller,” Mary Perry said, in keeping with Governor Tim Walz’s recommendations. “We’ll have a memorable Thanksgiving, but it’ll be different.

“I started making Thanksgiving dinner at 15 years old for my mom and two brothers,” Perry said. “Later, we included others who had no family to spend the holiday with. Our

“There are so many families dealing with sickness and death out there. Whoever we get to share the day with, we’re blessed if family and friends are well during these strange times.”

Thanksgiving table is set with china and silver from Shane’s family and a few heirloom pieces from mine. Shane says a special prayer of thanks for the abundant blessings in our lives. As far as traditions, my sister pointed out that lumpy gravy seems to be a constant.”

Gingi and Bill Hickey of Highland Park are planning a smaller but no less meaningful Thanksgiving as well. They had planned to have an outdoor celebration on the patio and in the garage with portable heaters and their children, spouses and grandchildren distancing and wearing masks. But with the new COVID safety recommendations, Gingi said, “I’ll be cooking Thanksgiving dinner and delivering the meals on doorsteps. The silver lining, I suppose, is there’s less pressure for my food to turn out perfect.” Gingi said.

“Thirty years ago, my oldest daughter came home from kindergarten and told me that Thanksgiving is a time of mourning for Native Americans,” Bill said. “Since then, on Thanksgiving, we’ve focused on a spiritual heritage that celebrates gratitude for life, love, liberty, friends and family. When my son-in-law joined our family, he shared a short, beautiful prayer he got from his grandma, and we now use it to toast all of our gatherings: ‘We are thankful for the food before us, the family and friends beside us and the love between us.’”

1◀ SNELLING-RANDOLPH

the city’s Planning Commission.

It is unknown yet if the project would require variances, which would be determined after a review by city staff.

HDC committee member Marge Isom asked if the building could be reduced to five stories, but Tucci said the design was chosen to make the project viable financially.

The building would be C-shaped around a courtyard. Plans call for two levels of underground parking, each with almost 50 spaces, and about two dozen first-floor parking spots. The rest of the first floor would include a leasing office and tenant amenities, including a club room and fitness room.

The market-rate apartments would be a mix of studio, alcove, and one- and two-bedroom units. Some committee members asked if a few affordable units would be included.

Plans call for two levels of underground parking, each with almost 50 spaces, and about two dozen first-floor parking spots. The rest of the first floor would include a leasing office and tenant amenities, including a club room and fitness room.

Tucci said, if they were, they would have to be at 60-80 percent of the Twin Cities area’s median income (AMI). This year’s AMI in the Twin Cities ranges from \$72,350 for one person to \$103,400 for a family of four.

Parking would equate to about one space per apartment, which prompted some committee members to ask if that was enough. Tucci said with smaller units and the building located on three bus routes, not every resident would need a vehicle.

Committee members also raised the issue of potential soil contamination from years of gas station use. Tucci said a full environmental investigation and cleanup would be undertaken. One advantage he cited with two levels of underground parking is that any contaminated soil would be excavated.

Tucci suggested committee members look at a recent Oppidan project in Minneapolis’ Longfellow neighborhood for an idea of building scale for the proposed Randolph-Snelling project. Oppidan recently redeveloped a five-story mixed-use building in the 46th Street-Hiawatha Avenue area. That building, has a Cub Foods and other retail space on its first floor, and 148 apartments on the upper floors.

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VILLAGER

More than ever, you need to know what's going on.

City rolls out Community First Public Safety amid rising crime rate

But COVID has slowed full implementation of program

By JANE MCCLURE

Hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Paul's new Community First Public Safety program is being rolled out more slowly than city leaders would like. With gunshots, homicides and other criminal violence on the rise, the City Council is anxious to see progress in what was touted as one of Mayor Melvin Carter's signature initiatives.

City Council member Rebecca Noecker of Ward 2 noted the "staggering" level of gun violence in Saint Paul this year. She said she was disappointed that some aspects of Community First Public Safety have not moved forward as planned.

Ward 7 City Council member Jane Prince agreed. "We needed this last year. We need it now more than ever," she said.

Daniel Yang, a senior policy adviser to Carter, cautioned the City Council that there is no quick fix to the gun violence and other crimes

confronting the city.

Saint Paul logged 30 homicides in the first 10½ months of 2020—the same number as in all of 2019. The city had 34 homicides in 1992, the worst year for that statistic.

The city is now on pace for a record 77,820 "911" calls in 2020, up from the previous record of 75,852 in 2019. Part I crimes, the most serious, are up almost 12 percent this year, approaching 11,000. Reports of shots fired have increased more than 117 percent. Aggravated assaults and reports of people struck and injured by gunfire are also up.

Community First Public Safety is a nontraditional approach to fighting crime and violence—one that is less reactive and intended to have a more lasting effect. City staff began meeting in March to implement the program. However, the pandemic and the civil unrest following George Floyd's death hindered its progress.

The drop in city revenue caused by the pandemic and the COVID-related shutdowns have also cut into the program's budget. According to city budget director Susan Earle, the city's allocation to Community First was reduced from \$1.7 million to \$1.25 million in

2020. Its budget for 2021 is a proposed \$1.44 million.

Among the Community First Public Safety initiatives taking financial hits this year are restorative justice and the Right Track youth employment program. Community First initiatives that are still underway include the downtown "fusion center" for a coordinated response to local crime, a youth-focused program through the Parks and Recreation Department and targeted efforts to improve pedestrian safety.

One initiative in which council members especially wanted to see progress is Healing Streets. That effort is intended to address violence as a health issue, bringing in community partners to reduce the impact of violence through prevention, intervention and support for citizens in a crisis or experiencing grief.

Mark Campbell is leading the Healing Streets effort. According to him, it has been hampered by the high insurance costs for prospective staff. The city has lowered those costs by hiring temporary staff instead, Campbell said.

Progress has been made in the Community Ambassadors program, a collaboration

with the Saint Paul Police Department that began in 2013 in response to an increase in youth crime. Community ambassadors focus on building relationships with at-risk youths by, among other things, helping them find jobs and needed services. The program has expanded from 35 to 50 ambassadors. They are out on the streets reaching out to young people in the Midway, North End, Frogtown and SunRay neighborhoods, according to Joel Franklin, who leads the program.

City Council members Amy Brendmoen of Ward 5 and Mitra Jalali of Ward 4 praised the Community Ambassadors program, saying that it reaches youths in their wards in a way that young people can relate to.

"We've wanted to do even more direct support, but that's hard to get going with COVID," Franklin said.

According to Yang and Deputy Police Chief Matt Toupal, there are five police grids in the city where crime has especially spiked. They are located in Frogtown, the East Side and downtown, they said, and it is in those grids that the city has stepped up efforts to quell crime through such methods as restorative justice and Healing Streets.

Redesigned Ayd Mill Road reopens with shared bike-walking trail

By JANE MCCLURE

Ayd Mill Road reopened on October 31 with a celebratory ride by more than 100 bicyclists on its new bike and pedestrian paths. The three-month reconstruction project reduced the roadway from four motor vehicle lanes to three and added a paved 12-foot-wide recreational trail. The work addressed long-standing drainage problems that had plagued the 1.5-mile roadway with potholes for years. It also reduced the speed limit on the one northbound and two southbound lanes from 45 to 35 mph.

Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter hailed the redesigned roadway as a "street for people" and praised the addition of the recreational trail. "Reimagining this critical route as a complete street we can all use demonstrates our community's commitment to our residents and our planet," he said.

Carter thanked bicycle and recreational advocacy groups for their support of the \$7.5 million project and the City Council for approving it last April. The council had been considering a \$3.5 million mill and overlay project, which would have addressed the pothole problem, retained Ayd Mill Road's four traffic lanes, but provided no recreational trail.

One disappointment with the new design is that space constraints reduced the shared trail from 24 to 12 feet wide. Another concern was the confusion the roadway's new interchange at Jefferson Avenue has caused for some motorists.

Westbound Jefferson Avenue motorists now access northbound Ayd Mill Road by turning left onto a ramp on the south side of Jefferson—the same ramp used by motorists from eastbound Jefferson. Out of habit perhaps, some westbound motorists turning



Traffic flowed north last week on Ayd Mill Road near its intersection with the ramp to Saint Clair Avenue.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

north onto Ayd Mill Road have entered the recreational trail, providing unwelcome excitement for those on foot or bike.

Highland Park resident Bob Wiswell was one of the trail users who had to jump out of the way of an errant motor vehicle in early November. "I was caught off-guard," he said. He was not injured.

The Saint Paul Department of Public Works installed new barriers and signage on the north side of Jefferson on November 13 to prevent similar mishaps. "We also reached out to such GPS map providers as Google, Apple and Waze to have them update their maps with the correct vehicle access to Ayd Mill Road," said Public Works spokesperson Lisa Hiebert. A more permanent solution is in the offing, according to her.

Wiswell saw the temporary barriers and signage while driving by on November 15.

"They should help," he said. "As a runner, I'm pretty excited about the new trail."

Having a bike and pedestrian trail on Ayd Mill Road has been a goal of recreational advocates and city leaders for decades. The trail connects to the recreational trail along I-35E south of Ayd Mill Road. The more elusive goal remains a connection to Minneapolis' Midtown Greenway several miles to the northwest.

What has stymied that northwest connection is the adjacent Canadian Pacific Railway. CP Railway officials have repeatedly balked at the notion of bike and pedestrian trails anywhere near the railroad right-of-way. Moving the bike and pedestrian trail to the city right-of-way eliminated the railway's problem along Ayd Mill Road itself, but challenges remain in extending the trail through the Midway industrial area

Russ Stark, the mayor's chief resilience officer, attended the October 31 opening of Ayd Mill Road. "We know we're going to connect this trail to the Midtown Greenway," he announced to loud cheers.

Also on hand at the ride was Saint Paul Department of Public Works director Sean Kershaw. He said the final cost of the Ayd Mill project is expected to top \$7.5 million because additional work was needed to address the drainage issues.

Ayd Mill Road was constructed in a valley that carried the creek that powered John Ayd's mill which gave the street its name. Natural springs remain, and seepage often sent water over the roadway. That "was something we needed to address," Kershaw said.

The city completed a total of eight mill and overlay projects and two street reconstruction projects this year. Some of those projects came in under budget, Kershaw said, and he does not expect the city's overall street work budget for 2020 to be exceeded.

The redesign is the first major change to Ayd Mill Road in almost two decades. Constructed in 1960, the street was originally envisioned as a future link between I-94 and I-35E. A federal court case delayed the completion of I-35E through Saint Paul for close to two decades. After I-35E was completed, two community task forces studied a possible reconfiguration of Ayd Mill Road, but their recommendations were never implemented.

In 2002, then-Saint Paul Mayor Randy Kelly pushed through a connection between I-35E and Ayd Mill Road's south end. The cost of rebuilding the street with a north end connection to I-94 was estimated at the time at more than \$40 million. However, staunch neighborhood opposition blocked that connection from being made.

GABA looks to reorganize with five new board members in place

Signature events likely to be put off for a while

By JANE MCCLURE

With five new board members, the Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) held a virtual meeting on November 8 and is waiting for its new board to elect officers before holding an

official annual meeting.

The new board members are Rianna Mather of Caribou Coffee, Deanna Seppanen of Macalester College's High Winds Fund, Minh Dinh of Treats, Lanai Koep of Kinderberry Hill Child Development Center and Angela Brasel of Coldwell Banker Realty.

Having at least five members meets the business association's bylaws for a functioning board. The five new members are hoping that the Summit Hill and Macalester-Groveland community councils will fill their

designated board seats soon.

GABA members are hoping to bounce back from a rough couple of years marked by strained finances, board turnover and the cancellation of this year's Grand Old Day due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization is now being operated by volunteers with no paid staff. GABA currently has about 85 members.

Jimmy Fritz of the Wedding Shoppe, who chaired the November 8 meeting, cautioned that due to the pandemic, GABA may not be able to sponsor its signature public events for

some time. Without Grand Old Day to raise revenue, the association may have to further tighten its belt. Still, by cutting expenses, Fritz said, GABA should be able to continue operating.

GABA has moved out of its office and is now operating virtually with most of its office equipment in storage. Access to its bank account and electronic communications is being transferred to the new board. A 2021 budget is being prepared, as is a new dues structure and operational plan for the year ahead.

Former West Seventh fire station becomes day shelter for homeless

Listening House plans to start operating the facility in December

By JANE McCLURE

The Saint Paul City Council approved a lease on November 18 with the Listening House to operate a day shelter for homeless people out of the former Fire Station 51, 296 W. Seventh St. The lease is for \$1 and the shelter is expected to operate there for at least 18 months beginning in December.

The former fire station, which is referred to as Freedom House, most recently was occupied by the Saint Paul Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services Academy and two ambulances. The program and ambulances are being moved to other locations.

More than 60 people participated in a virtual forum on November 10 to discuss the shelter with city and Listening House officials.

"We're here because we really have a humanitarian crisis on our hands," said Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker.

It is estimated that Saint Paul has more than 300 homeless people currently living outdoors, a number that has increased tenfold since 2019. There are about 90 homeless encampments in the city, with about 268 tents. City officials regularly visit the encampments, including one that recently sprang up on state property at Snelling Avenue and I-94.

Ricardo Cervantes, director of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections, and Deputy Mayor Jamie Tincher said the COVID-19 pandemic has raised additional challenges as day and overnight shelters work to maintain safe social distancing between people. That means fewer people can go to shelters to stay warm and receive services.

"We have an urgent need for more day and overnight shelters," Cervantes said.

Cervantes and Tincher said the city and Ramsey County are continuing to look at options for additional shelters. A city-county

working group is trying to get people out of encampments, caves or beneath bridges before the temperatures plummet.

The former Bethesda Hospital is being pressed into service by the county to house homeless people. The county also is looking at longer-term solutions that are less expensive than its current practice of renting out hotel rooms for homeless people.

Listening House has provided day shelter and resources in locations in and near downtown Saint Paul for almost 37 years. It moved to a church in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood a few years ago after losing its location near the Catholic Charities complex in downtown. That sparked a fight with neighbors and a lawsuit against the city over what Listening House officials saw as onerous operating conditions. The lawsuit was settled in 2018.

Listening House will operate the shelter at the former fire station the same way it does its Dayton's Bluff location. Visitors will be able to obtain food, water and clothing there. The pandemic has limited capacity at the

Dayton's Bluff location to 20-30 people at a time. Those numbers could double at the former fire station.

The station will provide lockers and showers, which are not offered at the Dayton's Bluff location and would be a welcome addition, according to Listening House director Cheryl Peterson. The station would be open from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and have about half a dozen staff on hand.

Most West End neighbors who participated in the virtual meeting on November 10 expressed support for the day shelter at the station, though there were questions about the time lag between the 8 p.m. closing and the 10 p.m. opening of the Ramsey County Safe Space in downtown.

Some neighbors asked about trash pickup around the shelter and provisions for an outdoor smoking area. A few neighbors raised concerns about homeless people breaking into their garages and vehicles. It is hoped that the new day shelter will alleviate some of those problems.

14 KEG AND CASE MARKET

is limited to a total of five customers at a time, according to Lindquist. That restriction was unworkable for the other tenants, she said.

Just two outlets at Keg and Case continue to offer their products through online ordering and takeout. Clutch Brewing is selling crows of craft beer for pickup at the entrance, and Pimento Jamaican Kitchen is offering its full menu for pickup and delivery. All other tenants said they hope to return when Governor Walz lifts the ban on indoor dining, which could be as early as December 18.

Business has been a struggle this year at Keg and Case. Tenants got a boost this summer when the market expanded outdoors with food trucks and a stage for live music. The market was considering bringing back its outdoor European Christmas Market this winter. However, when earlier COVID-19 restrictions limited both outdoor and indoor gatherings to 150 people, Keg and Case abandoned those plans in favor of seasonal vendors at indoor kiosks.

The temporary "pop-ups" would have joined Clutch Brewing, Pimento Jamaican Kitchen such Keg and Case mainstays as Five Watt Coffee, Revival Smoked Meats, Bread & Boba, Pastamore, O'Cheeze, Forest to Fork, Sweet Science Ice Cream, House of Halva, Hobby Farmer Canning Company, Studio Emme and Sana CBD.

Woodfired Cantina recently moved into the former In Bloom restaurant space. Other new merchants include Big Fluff, Nadia's Boutique and Part Wolf Woodworks.

In Bloom, a fine dining establishment with an award-winning chef and the largest wood-burning hearth in the city, may have been too upscale for regular customers. Owner the Twist Davis Group closed it in July, blaming its demise on the decline of fine dining across the country.



Sana CBD Full Spectrum Oil grower and seller Lee Kosse displayed some of her wares at Keg and Case last Thursday, the day before the marketplace temporarily closed due to the state's new COVID-19 restrictions. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Woodfired Cantina owners Brian and Sarah Ingram appreciated the decor and the hearth at In Bloom. "We loved In Bloom, but we couldn't afford to go there often," Brian said. "Our concept is more approachable and one that the neighborhood can afford."

The Ingrams, who also own Hope Breakfast Bar off West Seventh Street and the Gnome Craft Pub on Selby Avenue, have patterned Woodfired Cantina after the food Brian enjoyed in Southern California and the Tijuana

area of Mexico.

The Cantina features a tequila lounge on the upper level, and this fall it set up three igloos on the patio to protect outdoor diners from the elements this winter. However, those plans have been put on hold until Governor Walz restores sit-down dining. In the meantime, the Ingrams are offering many of the Cantina's meats and salsas at the Gnome on Selby. They will not do takeout at Woodfired Cantina because the restaurant, with its open-hearth cooking, is not set up for it, Brian Ingram said.

Big Fluff is another one of Ingram's projects. The shop features cotton candy, gourmet hot chocolate and a s'mores bar.

Nadia Dunlap thought her Nadia's Boutique would be a good fit at Keg and Case. It features vintage and one-of-a-kind clothing and jewelry as well as Dunlap's own designs.

Part Wolf Woodworking sells handcrafted tables, cutting boards, charcuterie boards and wall art. Craftsman and owner Tony Koens has another full-time business and does the wood-working in his free time, "for fun," he said.

Among the tenants who have moved out of Keg and Case are Bogart's Doughnuts, Rose Street Patisserie, HandModMN, K'nack Meats, Evla Pottery, Faribault Woolen Mill, and Barkley's Bistro and Wandering Kitchen.

Rick Reams of K'nack Meats said he did not

Business operators who have been at Keg and Case since its inception are cautious about what the future holds. O'Cheeze manager Greg Reid said business was good during the summer when outdoor bands attracted customers, but it has been "quiet" since cold weather arrived.

renew his two-year lease when COVID-19 left him short-staffed. "We were doing well before COVID hit," he said. Reams is a partner in K'nack's parent company, RJ's Meats in Hudson, and he plans to include Keg and Case as a drop-off location for sausages ordered from the Hudson butcher shop.

A manager of Rose Street Patisserie said the company has no plans to reopen at Keg and Case. The bakery closed its kiosk there due to COVID concerns, she said. However, it continues to operate a store at 171 N. Snelling Ave.

Business operators who have been at Keg and Case since its inception are cautious about what the future holds. O'Cheeze manager Greg Reid said business was good during the summer when outdoor bands attracted customers, but it has been "quiet" since cold weather arrived.

Pastamore co-owner Stuart Kaufman is more optimistic about the future of his family-owned business, which features packaged handmade organic pastas, bottled olive oils and balsamic vinegars. He established the business 12 years ago at the Minneapolis Farmers' Market and expects to stay at Keg and Case indefinitely.

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County seeks public comments on second phase of Lexington reroute

Virtual open house set Dec. 1 on connection to Shepard Road via Elway

By JANE MCCLURE

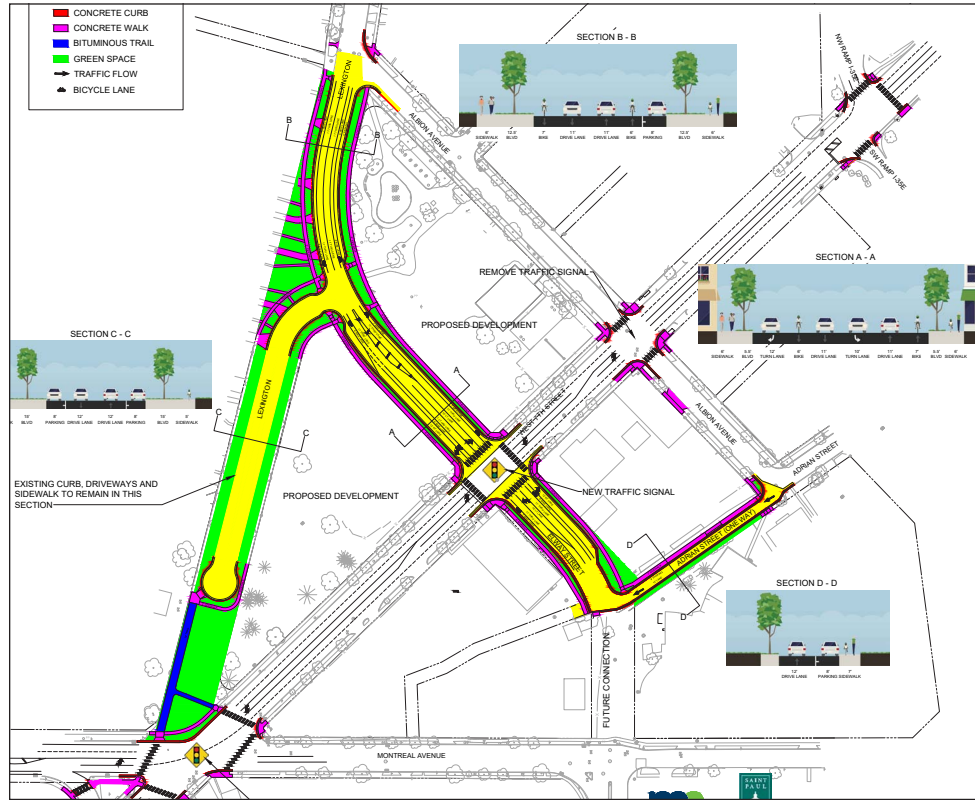
The second and final phase of reconstructing Lexington Parkway at West Seventh Street will be the topic of a virtual open house at 5 p.m. Tuesday, December 1. The project will directly connect Lexington to Shepard Road via a rebuilt Elway Street.

Ramsey County Department of Public Works staff met in November with the Highland and West Seventh district councils' transportation committees to review the second phase of the project. Design work and public engagement for that phase are now underway and will continue into early 2022. The county is working with the engineering firm of TKDA on the plans.

Reconstructing the dangerous Lexington-Montreal-West Seventh intersection had been discussed for many years. Its reconfiguration became an option for the county when the former Riverside School property at 900 Albion Ave. was sold for development.

The first phase of Lexington Parkway's reconstruction is expected to be wrapped up this month, according to county project manager Nick Fischer. Over the past several months, Lexington's south end at Montreal Avenue was turned into a cul-de-sac, and a new section of Lexington was extended through the former Riverside property, which is now part of the Lexington Landing senior housing complex that is scheduled to open soon.

The new section of extended Lexington Parkway has one traffic lane in each direction, with additional turn lanes and bicycle lanes.



Ramsey County's preliminary design for rerouting Lexington Parkway across West Seventh Street, with a future connection to Shepard Road via a rebuilt Elway Street.

A stop light will be installed at Lexington and West Seventh in December, after which the signal at Albion and West Seventh will be removed.

On the other side of West Seventh, a block of Adrian Street has been constructed behind Highland Nursery to provide a one-way connection to Elway.

Crews hoped to complete the work on sidewalks this construction season, but that work will have to wait until next spring. Temporary blacktop pathways will be in place over the winter.

In the second phase of construction, the new Lexington roadway will be extended through county right-of-way near the Montreal Hi-Rise and along Elway Street to create a direct link to Shepard Road. Elway will be reconfigured with bike lanes and its bumpy roadway will be resurfaced.

The entire project includes sidewalks and improved lighting along Lexington. The county will seek federal funding for the project, which does not have final design and cost figures yet. County and TKDA officials emphasized that public comments would be

sought in finalizing the design.

A traffic study was done for the first phase of work and will also be done before the design of the second phase is finished.

Both district council committees welcomed the completion of the first phase of the project. The Lexington bike lanes will eventually continue on Elway, providing a direct connection to the Samuel Morgan Trail along Shepard Road. Federation committee members also asked if connections to the I-35E bike trail could be considered.

One challenge will be to design around the Canadian Pacific Railway bridge piers that are in the Elway right-of-way. The spur line's fate could be an issue as well, since the line could be considered as an alternative for the proposed Riverview Corridor mass transit project.

Representatives of the adjacent Common-Bond Communities and Montreal Hi-Rise at 1080 and 1085 Montreal Ave., respectively, have raised several questions, including those related to traffic control at Montreal and Lexington, stormwater issues and the timing of driveway repair work at the high-rise in conjunction with the Elway street project.

Another question raised at both meetings was whether a new traffic signal or roundabout would be added at intersection of Lexington/Elway and Montreal. Staff and consultants said that will be determined by the traffic study.

Yet another issue is the street name itself. Ramsey County Public Works would prefer to have Elway changed to Lexington to avoid confusion. However, that decision will be up to Saint Paul officials since Elway is a city street.

For more information on the project and to register for the December 1 open house, visit ramseycounty.us/LexingtonExtension.



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Newly elected Saint Paul School Board member Jim Vue at home with his children (left to right): Thee, 12; Hlushia, 1; Ty, 13; and Dhoua, 9.

Vue answered call when tragedy struck the St. Paul School Board

BY CASEY EK

Jim Vue has been serving on the Saint Paul School Board since last summer when he was appointed to replace Marny Xiong, who died in June from COVID-19. Earlier this month, he beat out five other candidates in a special election to serve the remaining 14 months in Xiong's term. In the process, he inherited an unprecedented array of challenges, including grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and dealing with what he described as the socio-historical trauma brought on by the death of George Floyd.

The Saint Paul Public Schools are a school district in mourning, said Vue, 40. Mourning is something he is uniquely equipped to handle, he added.

One cannot tell Vue's story without mentioning his daughter, Ghia, who was 6 when she drowned three summers ago at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. On that sunny day in June, the Vue family's typical spot at the beach was occupied. When they went looking for another spot, Ghia got separated from them. The next time Vue saw her, she was being pulled from the water.

In the midst of the darkest moment of his life, a couple of families emerged to help him bring his other children and their belongings to their car. That kindness, Vue said, left an indelible mark. "What those families did for me was save my soul," he said. "From that day on, I thought if I was ever in a situation of crisis, I'm not just going to look around."

The news of Xiong's death in June felt like such a moment of crisis, Vue said. After serving on various school district committees and otherwise being involved as a parent in the Saint Paul Public Schools, he felt that serving on the School Board was a natural next step for him. "I just wanted to do something," he said. "I didn't think it was a big thing. I just thought I needed to do this."

Those who know Vue best describe him as a deep thinker who is not likely to accept easy answers to his often challenging questions. Since he joined the School Board, fellow board member John Brodrick has taken note of his sincerity and his pragmatic approach to problem solving. Brodrick described Vue as idealistic and industrious. "I think he's very conscientious, does his homework and isn't afraid to ask questions or to voice an opinion," he said.

Kristine Sorensen, executive director of In Progress, has known Vue for the better part of 15 years. She co-founded the nonprofit arts

"For Vue (serving on the School Board) is about making sure children and their families are well represented at a time when there is a lot of change going on and more change needs to happen."

and educational organization with Vue's wife, Sai Thao. According to Sorensen, Vue is likely to bring his inquisitive nature to the School Board, particularly in conversations about the impact school district decisions have on families.

Vue has always valued family, Sorensen said. His values, in fact, have helped shape the way in which In Progress delivers its programs. The organization seeks to engage whole families, not just the new and emerging artists it serves, she added. "For Vue (serving on the School Board) is about making sure children and their families are well represented at a time when there is a lot of change going on and more change needs to happen," Sorensen said.

Vue considers himself a stay-at-home father, but last year he wrapped up a three-year project for In Progress. Titled "Being Hmong," it sought to express the diversity of Hmong culture by recruiting Hmong artists to tell their own stories in photography, video and music.

Vue has a track record of advocating for families of color, Sorensen said. He takes his work personally and embraces it with a discipline she believes comes from his military background.

A native of Texas, Vue was the first in his immigrant Laotian family to be born in the United States. Vue joined the U.S. Army Reserves and was deployed to Iraq and Kuwait in 2003. He returned stateside in 2004, and later that year moved to Minnesota to be with Thao, his then-fiancée. In 2012, Vue left his job as a mortgage collector in order to pursue an education. He earned a B.A. in history in 2015 and a master's degree in liberal studies at Metropolitan State University in 2018.

Vue and Thao have four other children, ages 1, 9, 12 and 13. All of them attend Saint Paul district schools or early childhood programs.

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VIEWPOINT

Thanksgiving 2020 recalls struggles of holiday years ago

BY BETH L. VOIGT

Thanksgiving 2020 will be unlike any other for many families. But it doesn't take a pandemic to elicit a dramatic change in holiday plans. Decades ago, as relative after relative arrived at our Highland Park home in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, I eagerly anticipated Mom's usual feast of two turkeys basted to a golden-brown crust with Granny Smith apple and celery stuffing, mounds of mashed potatoes dripping with butter, acorn squash sprinkled with brown sugar, sausage links, dilled carrots, sautéed French-cut green beans with almonds, and steaming biscuits waiting to be dipped in thick gravy. And the pies—oh, the pies!—apple, pumpkin chiffon, and French silk.

Mom had set the adults' table for 10 with Grandma's white linen tablecloth and napkins, white scalloped plates, polished silverware and sparkling glassware. But that year, instead of the usual bouquet of fresh flowers from the store, Mom filled the chunky glass vase with dried hydrangeas from her garden. The kids' table was set more simply than the adults', as usual. It ran the length of the living room and connected with the adults' table in the dining room. There, the nine of us siblings would sit with our six cousins.

It took a full 24 hours to get everything washed, chopped, cooked, baked and garnished for our Thanksgiving crowd. As Grandma, Aunt Shirley and Mom conferred in the kitchen, I poked my head in the doorway, hoping to sample the food. Mom was mashing the potatoes in a 10-gallon stockpot, adding water instead of the usual milk, cream cheese, sour cream and butter. "Aren't we having...?" I asked, alarmed that one of my favorites wouldn't be on the menu.

"I'm trying a new recipe this year," Mom said.

Aunt Shirley and Grandma looked down, busying themselves with peeling the carrots. I looked in the fridge, hoping to get a taste of ambrosia salad, but didn't find any, nor much else. I looked around for the pies and then



Nora and Fred Wagner gathered with eight of their nine children (the youngest was not yet born) around the time of the gumball store Thanksgiving. Writer Beth Voigt is seated at the far right.

quizzically at Mom. Before I could ask her where she had put the pies, she said, "When Dad comes home from work, would you go to the store with him?"

"Sure," I said, relieved that more food was coming, and went off to find my cousins and siblings to build a snowman. By the time Dad got home from work, I was ready. He talked quietly to Mom, kissed her and headed out the door with me.

"Are we going to Red Owl or Applebaum's?"

"Neither," Dad said. "We're going to the gumball store."

That was our name for the gas station and convenience store on West Seventh and Davern streets. It's where my younger sisters and I would get one gumball each from the gumball machine while Dad pumped gas.

"And then where?"

"That's it. Nowhere else."

I frowned. Though our gumball store was stocked better than most, we needed a lot more than it had to offer to make

our Thanksgiving dinner complete. Even at the age of 10, I knew that.

Since the gumball store didn't have grocery carts, I helped Dad carry the items as we walked up and down the short aisles. Dad handed me four boxes of frozen squash, two boxes of frozen sausages, three loaves of Taystee white bread and 10 cans of Chicken of the Sea shredded chicken. He then loaded his arms with several cans of corn and peas and three canned hams.

"Dad, why are we...?"

"Want a gumball?"

We unloaded our items on the counter. Dad handed me some change before giving his credit card to the clerk to pay for the groceries. "Go ahead and get two gumballs."

When we returned home, Mom, Aunt Shirley and Grandma went into high gear, unpacking the groceries and shooing us out of the kitchen. Mom kissed Dad on the cheek and said, "Thank you."

That Thanksgiving evening, as the 25 of us crowded around our tables, Dad gave the blessing: "Thank you for this bountiful table and this healthy family, and help all those who are less fortunate tonight."

It wasn't until years later that I learned how much my parents' business was struggling that year and what minimal money they had to feed our large crew. I learned that even so, they had shared some of the fixings purchased for our feast with a neighbor in need. And I discovered that the gumball store was one of the few places back then where you could purchase groceries with a credit card.

This Thanksgiving, as I gather with my small bubble of loved ones, I will give thanks for the lessons my parents taught me on that Thanksgiving so long ago, for the bounty of food on our table, and for the extended family of 60 or so with whom I will once again celebrate at future holiday gatherings.

Beth Voigt is a resident of Summit Hill.

INBOX

Nearing the point of no return

We need a lockdown before we reach the point of no return. While we're well beyond the point where, as a nation, we should have taken this pandemic seriously, listened to the experts and been highly suspicious of those without the proper credentials giving advice, perhaps now that everything is unraveling before our eyes we can buckle down and get serious.

Perhaps doing what is necessary to overcome this pandemic is too inconvenient. Is it possible that we're so used to getting everything we want, we're literally incapable of conceiving a reality where we must make sacrifices? I know some of us can't handle the thought of being alone, isolated and forced to stay away from our friends and family. There are those who hate being told what to do, those who are struggling to behave like adults and refuse to take advice much less direction from those who know better how to overcome this disease. We'd better grow up quick and start taking direction from those who have dedicated their lives to understanding and combating pandemics.

If we refuse to accept the reality of the situation we face today, that fear of being alone, isolated from friends and family, it won't be merely a temporary reality but a reality we'll live with for the rest of our lives. I, for one, don't look forward to burying anyone I love because some people can't get it together and face reality. And I earnestly hope many of you feel the same.

*Daniel Carbone
Highland Park*

Reconsider redevelopment plans

I truly appreciate the depth of coverage that a publication like the *Villager* provides on such a wide array of topics. I hope others who appreciate these things will support its continued existence with their subscriptions.

The November 11 issue of the *Villager* reminded me of the dangers of political and civic inertia. Two articles in particular come to mind—on the city's reaffirmation of tax increment financing (TIF) for Midway Center's redevelopment and the proposed Riverview Corridor project.

While a Midway TIF district remains merely a technical possibility, experience indicates the probability of its ultimate approval. Aside from my usual concerns about the use of

TIF (e.g., the diversion of tax revenue that would otherwise flow to the city, county and school district), the plan for the Midway redevelopment is based on pre-COVID perceptions.

Many now believe that the already-moribund retail environment will be forever changed by our experiences during the pandemic. So, too, the market for office space, as many companies recognize the bottom-line benefits of employees working from home. The city should bear these changes in mind when the inevitable request for TIF comes. It might also consider that the former Herberger's remains empty two years after that department store closed.

The Riverview Corridor project seems similarly blind to likely changes in transportation needs resulting from changes in work places. I was opposed to the adoption of streetcars and preferred bus rapid transit because the latter is far more flexible and less expensive than the chosen option. I suggest planners re-run their projections based on likely post-COVID conditions before we commit any further to streetcars.

Conditions change. We must be prepared to change our decisions as they do.

*James M. Hamilton
Macalester-Groveland*

City has strayed from purpose

Phew! One contentious election down. Now we can start getting ready for the next one when we dump our budgeting-challenged mayor in Saint Paul and elect a new one. Then we can get rid of his public relations staffer, the three intermediaries communicating between him and his seven-member City Council, and the chief resilience officer he appointed right after his election, for a total savings of half a million dollars.

Additionally, we can dump the city's trash collection scheme. The present plan is to raise trash collection fees by an average of \$7 per year (*Villager*, November 11) and citizens have no say. That is exactly why the matter should have been left as private business between residents and haulers. Then people could choose another hauler with better rates.

We simply have got to have wiser management of this city, which seems to think citizens have endlessly deep pockets. Some of us at the lower end of the income scale are being squeezed between a rock and a hard place.

Before mandated city garbage collection began, I left my trash cart at the front door of City Hall, and I mailed a month's

garbage by first-class mail to my council member at a far cheaper rate. I've never had trash collected at my house, still sharing with a neighbor, and I've never paid for what I don't use. So now the fee is being added with penalties to my property tax.

The city has no business sticking its nose in this matter. All it had to do was allocate percentages of the city to the various private haulers and let them redistribute their carts, not spend \$4 million for city-owned carts. That was nuts. Carts are a cost of the haulers doing business. The whole plan is a money grab.

I've planted my own trees on the boulevard because the city, which hasn't resurfaced my street in the 50 years I've been at this address, won't be getting around to the necessities any time soon. We've got to get the city out of spending and dealings it has no business doing and into tending to our monstrously neglected infrastructure.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

Medicare plan has advantages

Senior citizens are about to make their Medicare choice for 2021. Everyone knows that once a plan is selected during the open enrollment period, October 15 to December 7, no switching of plans can be made. And everyone would be wrong.

The handbook "Medicare & You 2021" states on pages 67 and 68 that as far as Medicare Advantage Plans are concerned, a switch is possible between January 1 and March 31, 2021. Page 68 also refers to the so-called 5-star Special Enrollment Period, December 8 to November 30, when a switch can be made into a plan with a top five-star rating. However, while Minnesota has about 50 Medicare Advantage Plans, none has this top 5-star rating.

In case you are wondering why all the fuss about plan switching: One plan may have high monthly premiums and low costs for treatments while another plan may have low monthly premiums and high costs for treatments. Consequently, if you foresee good health for the immediate future, choose the latter for the first couple of months and then switch just to be safe.

*Paul Alper
Macalester-Groveland*

Neighbors' lawsuit aims to hold city accountable for Ford site master plan

BY KATE M. HUNT AND HOWARD J. MILLER

Since the master plan for the Ford site was approved in 2017, Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul has monitored the project to ensure that new building construction is consistent with the original principles of that plan. As Ryan Companies works with the city on the permitting and variance process for the first few buildings, it has become apparent that the master plan is merely a pretext to create unwritten rules about inconvenient zoning laws and to inflate the scale of the already out-of-scale plan.

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul has asked the city's Department of Safety and Inspections to enforce the provisions of its zoning code and the master plan that the city developed. The city has refused. Therefore, the neighbors are pursuing legal action against the city to compel it to enforce its own zoning laws. Several neighbors have filed a writ of mandamus and a declaratory judgment action petitioning Ramsey County District Court to declare that the city must enforce the formal variance process if Ryan intends to deviate from the master plan by counting private rooftop decks and apartment balconies as "open space."

The master plan prescribes that each development parcel has a certain percentage (typically a minimum of 25 percent) of public open space (i.e., landscaping, gardens, trees and parkland) that is distinct from the percentage of the parcel that is occupied by the building. These controls benefit the community by enhancing the aesthetics of the development with appropriate green space in order to avoid creating an urban canyon.

Despite the clear distinction between "open space" and "building lot coverage," Ryan requested variances for its first buildings on the Ford site in order to increase the lot coverage of the buildings from 70 percent to over 90.3 percent. This increase in building footprint reduces the public open space from 25 percent to less than 10 percent of the lot. For the proposed building at 2170 Ford Pkwy., Ryan applied for a variance

from the minimum 25 percent open-space requirement. However, the city inexplicably determined that a variance wasn't required.

In a departure from the plain meaning of the master plan and the municipal code, the city developed a new formula that counts privately owned rooftop decks and apartment balconies as "open space." This is unacceptable and inconsistent with nearly every codified definition of "open space" or common-sense understanding of the term, as well as the intent of the Ford Site Task Force that worked for more than a decade to shape the master plan. This will inflate the scale of the development beyond the controversial high-density plan that was originally

In a departure from the plain meaning of the master plan, the city developed a new formula that counts privately owned rooftop decks and apartment balconies as "open space."

approved. The results are bloated building scale, maximum high density and insufficient open space. If allowed to move forward, an unlawful precedent will be established resulting in a series of individual building parcels with greatly diminished open space and an aesthetically obtrusive urban canyon-style development.

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul remains committed to promoting responsible community development that enhances the existing neighborhood and the city overall. Given the concerning lack of checks and balances in Saint Paul city governance, the neighbors cannot stand by and watch the city break its own zoning rules.

"Counting apartment balconies as open space is the latest disappointment in the development of the Ford site," said longtime Highland Park resident and Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul affiliate Jim Winterer. "The city planned one of the most densely packed neighborhoods in the country at the Ford site, and now buildings are being designed to expand the scope using a dubious interpretation of what 'open space' means."

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul has always supported reasonable development at Highland Bridge. We are making a reasonable request that the city and the developer abide by the plan they developed and agreed to in the first place.

Kate Hunt and Howard Miller are residents of Highland Park.

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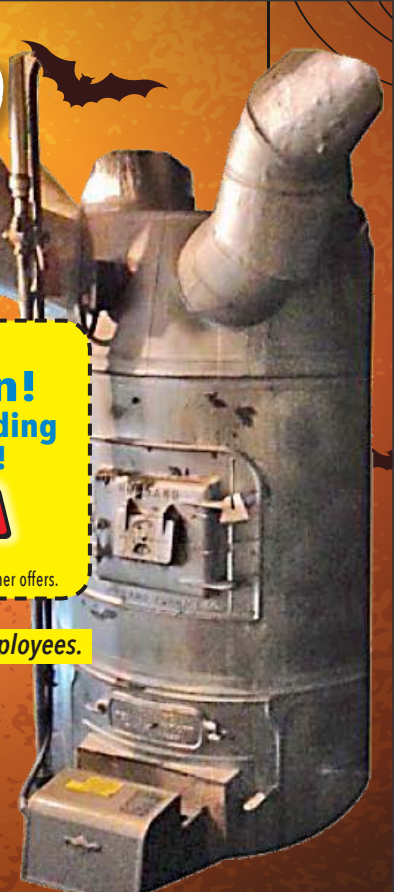
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Future of much-debated Pedro Park in downtown Saint Paul remains in limbo

By JANE MCCLURE

The fate of Pedro Park on 10th and Robert streets in downtown Saint Paul is more unclear than ever. Some \$800,000 in Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) funds earmarked for the park were used by the City Council this fall to make up a \$22 million deficit in the 2020 city budget.

The reallocation dismayed Pedro Park supporters, who are in the middle of a legal battle with the city over plans for the site. It also disappointed members of the CIB Committee, who debated the proposed shift at meetings this fall. While saying they understand the city's difficult financial situation, committee members were unhappy with the city for not providing notice to supporters of the park.

Pedro Park was one of two CIB projects that had funding shifted to balance the budget. The other was Fire Station 7, which had \$1.5 million taken away. The fire station in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood is slated for replacement.

"I'm concerned about the lack of trans-

parency," said CIB Committee member Amy Huerta.

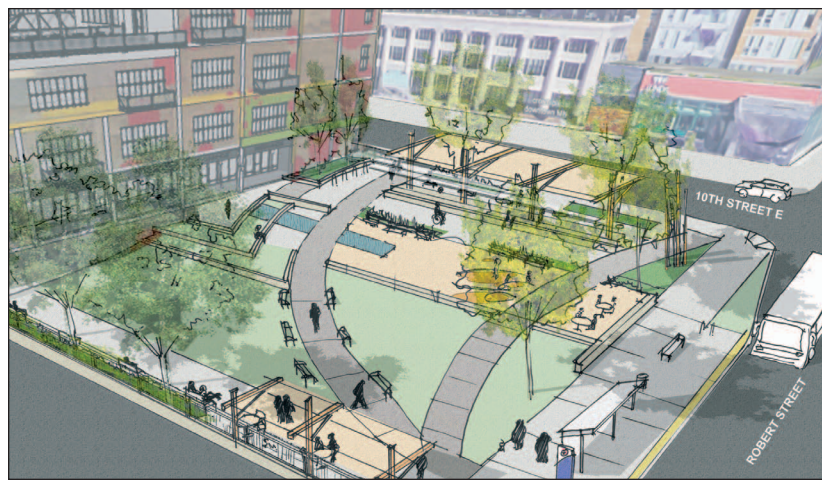
"Unfortunately, we have to make tough decisions to balance our 2020 budget," said city budget director Susan Earle.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd have strained city resources, requiring dozens of amendments to balance this year's budget.

Pedro Park was supposed to be completed next to the city's former Public Safety Annex at 100 E. 10th St. in 2019. However, city staff told the CIB Committee on November 9 that plans for the park going forward remain uncertain.

Instead of tearing down the annex and creating a larger park, the City Council voted in October 2018 to sell the building to Minneapolis-based Ackerberg Group, which planned to convert it into retail and office space.

Ackerberg was to buy the building for \$1.4 million and planned to work with the city to develop the .45-acre vacant land next to the building as a park. It was to provide \$40,000 annually for 20 years for park maintenance.



A 2018 rendering of plans for Pedro Park next to the former Public Safety Annex at 10th and Robert streets in downtown Saint Paul.

The park's development and maintenance funds were contingent on the sale of the Public Safety Annex. Noel Nix, deputy director of government relations and community engagement for Mayor Melvin Carter, said the sale has never been finalized.

Ackerberg did not respond to requests for comment.

The development of Pedro Park in 2018 had an estimated cost of \$3.8 million and was to include play equipment, paths, seating, space for dogs and a water feature. About \$200,000 in parkland dedication funds and \$2.3 million in capital improvement funds were to be used

to complete the work.

The issue pitted downtown residents and park advocacy groups who wanted a larger park against those calling for economic development. At the time, the CIB Committee supported the sale and the financing plan.

Kati Berg, a leader of the Friends of Pedro Park, said her understanding is that the sale to Ackerberg is off the table.

The Pedro family donated the site of its longtime luggage and briefcase business to the city in 2009 with the understanding that it would be combined with additional adjacent land for a park bearing the family's name.

News Briefs

District councils support UST's proposal to replace Loras Hall

The University of Saint Thomas' request to demolish Loras Hall to make way for a new science and engineering building will be taken up by Saint Paul's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on November 30 with votes of support from the Macalester-Groveland Community Council on November 12 and the Union Park District Council's Land Use Committee on November 16. The West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee heard an update on the demolition request on November 10, but took no action.

UST wants to demolish Loras to make way for a new STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) building on Summit Avenue, just west of the Frey Science and Engineering Center. Loras was built in 1894 as a residence for Saint Paul Seminary students.

Some people argue that its history and its design by architect Cass Gilbert make it worthy of preserving. UST officials have argued the high cost of maintaining Loras, as well as the difficulty in trying to renovate it for anything other than offices.

Loras is located in the Summit Avenue West Historic District, requiring HPC approval before the city can issue a demolition permit.

Retirement of Ward 3's Kelley marks end of an era in St. Paul

The Saint Paul City Council on November 18 honored Ward 3 executive assistant Pattie Kelley and declared her retirement date of December 1 as Pattie Kelley Day in the city.

Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert expressed his appreciation for Kelley's years of service and said she would be missed by the many people she helped. He praised her ability to get things done, but could not resist joking about her past job title of "secretary/stenographer." Kelley is believed to be the last city employee to hold that job title.

Kelley thanked everyone she worked with over the years. The Central High School graduate began working for the city in 1980. She started in the Planning and Economic Development Department (PED), worked in the city clerk's office, did a stint with the Saint Paul Public Schools and joined the city's Department of Public Works in 1993.

She later went to work for then-City Council member Janice Rettman, went back to PED in 1997, and returned to the City Council offices in 2006, working for Pat Harris and Tolbert in Ward 3.

Kelley has one son, Jesse, who is a military veteran. She once headed the local chapter of Blue Star Mothers of America, which provides support for women who have children in active military service.

Advisory committee members sought for Riverview Corridor

Ramsey County is forming two public advisory groups for the proposed Riverview Corridor modern streetcar project. Applications for both the Community Advisory Committee and the Station Area Planning Task Force will be accepted through December 15.

The committees will serve during the project's engineering and pre-environmental study phase, which is expected to last from early 2021 to late 2023. The Community Advisory Committee will meet quarterly, and the Station Area Planning Task Force will meet every one or two months. Each committee will

be composed of 15-20 members.

Committee members will be selected to provide broad geographic representation as well as racial and cultural diversity along the project area. Membership is expected to balance residents and potential users, business owners and employees, and others with connections to the corridor.

The Riverview Corridor is a proposed 12-mile mass transit link from downtown Saint Paul to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. The modern streetcar line would include the use of existing light-rail stations and tracks at the Union Depot and near Fort Snelling. Nine new stations are planned along West Seventh Street in Saint Paul.

Applications may be submitted to riverviewcorridor.com. For details, contact Kevin Roggenbuck at 651-266-2790 or kevin.roggenbuck@ramseycounty.us (Community Advisory Committee), or Frank Alarcon at 651-266-2795 or frank.alarcon@ramseycounty.us (Station Area Planning Task Force).

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and John Wadell.

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City considers redefining 'family' in housing

By JANE McCLURE

Changes in the makeup of Saint Paul households have prompted the city to consider changing its definition of family in the zoning code. The Saint Paul Planning Commission held a public hearing on November 13 on several possible new definitions before voting to extend the public comment period to 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 14.

The City Council asked that a new definition of family be studied back in 2018. While fair housing advocates, district councils and groups representing culturally diverse communities agree with the need for a change in the definition, they asked for more time for other people to comment.

Some groups view the city's current definition of family as archaic and discriminatory. "Our board feels pretty strongly that the definition of family should be eliminated from the zoning code," said Simon Taghiouf, chair of the Summit Hill Association's Zoning and Land Use Committee.

Since 1975, Saint Paul has defined family as one or two people "with their direct lineal descendants and adopted or legally cared for children (and including the domestic employees thereof) together with not more than two persons not so related, living together in the whole or part of a dwelling comprising a single housekeeping unit. Every additional group of four or fewer persons living in such housekeeping unit shall be considered a separate family for the pur-

pose of this code."

The city has used the definition to regulate the number of unrelated occupants allowed in one dwelling. Currently, up to four unrelated people can live in a single-family home or apartment. That has been viewed as a way to prevent overcrowding, a longstanding concern in neighborhoods surrounding colleges and universities.

However, the 45-year-old definition of family has been met with pushback in recent years. According to city planner Michael Wade, who led the city's study, the 1975 definition is believed to have a disproportionately negative impact on households of color.

"The city's definition of family limits households that don't closely conform to a nuclear family," Wade told the Planning Commission. "And it could violate fair housing laws." The definition is also viewed as limiting access to affordable housing, he added.

Larger households, households that include cousins or other relatives, and households that care for vulnerable children or adults could benefit from a change in the definition of family. So could temporary residents, recent immigrants, college students and others in a transitional phase of their lives.

Three years ago the Twin Cities Fair Housing Implementation Council found Saint Paul's 1975 definition of family at risk of being discriminatory or arbitrary. It recommended that the city revise its definition to more closely correlate to the neutral maximum occupancy restrictions found in safety and building

codes. It urged greater accommodations for nontraditional families, and possibly the creation of a case-by-case administrative process to determine whether a group that does not meet the definition of family is nonetheless functionally equivalent.

The Planning Commission is considering three possible definitions of family:

- "Any six," which would allow six or fewer adults and the minors in their care to live together as a single housekeeping unit.

- "Family of five," which would allow five or fewer adults—or any number of adults who are all related to each other by blood, marriage, guardianship or domestic partnership—and the minor children in their care to live together as a single housekeeping unit.

- "Family plus four," which would allow any number of adults who are related to each other by blood, marriage, guardianship or domestic partnership, and up to four additional adults, and the minor children in their care to live together as a single housekeeping unit.

None of the definitions would limit the number of minors in a household. All of the definitions would still limit to four the number of students allowed per dwelling in the University of Saint Thomas' housing overlay district, but they may open the door to additional non-students in those dwellings.

For more information or to comment on the city's definition of family, call Wade, at 651-266-8703 or email michael.wade@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

YMCA Service Club shuts down tree lot at Highland National

The Saint Paul YMCA Service Club will not be selling Christmas trees in the parking lot of Highland National Golf Course this year due to safety concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Going inside the trailer, exchanging money—all of that plays into fears of COVID, whether you're the customer or the cashier," said club president Joe Dotson.

According to Dotson, club members have been selling trees for the holidays for the past 80 years. Volunteers typically set up scaffolding and then unload close to 1,000 balsams, firs and pines on the day after Thanksgiving at the



The YMCA Service Club will not be selling trees this year in the parking lot of Highland National golf course. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

tree lot in Highland. Last year, the club raised around \$28,000 from tree sales at

the golf course parking lot alone to help youths attend YMCA camps and other programs.

The club has been selling trees at Highland National for at least the last 15 years, Dotson said. The Midway tree lot will reportedly still be operating this year.

Dotson said that the loss of some volunteer help as a result of reorganization at the YMCA and the advancing age of club members also were factors in closing down the Highland National tree lot this year.

"I'm 72 and I'm one of the younger members in the club," he said.

••2020••

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Crime Report

The following crime incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police department reports and other sources.

Highland Park

Robbery—Speedway, 1580 Ford Pkwy., was robbed at gunpoint at 10:21 p.m. Wednesday, November 4.

Burglary—Two residences were burglarized on the 2200 block of Stewart Avenue during the evening of October 30-31.

—A commercial burglary was reported on the 700 block of South Cleveland Avenue at 4:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 11.

Theft—Thefts of items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1400 block of Scheffer Avenue on October 30, on Edgumbe Road and Shelby Place on November 1, the 2500 block of Crosby Farm Road on November 1, on Montcalm Court on November 7, and the 1700 block of Saunders Avenue on November 10.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1300 block of Davern Street on October 30, the 1300 block of West Maynard Drive on October 31, the 2200 block of West Seventh Street and the 600 block of Mount Curve Boulevard on November 1, on Montreal and Saint Paul avenues on November 1, the 2200 block of West Seventh on November 2, the 2000 block of Ford Parkway on November 9, the 1300 block of Hartford Avenue on November 10, and on Finn Street and Ford on November 11.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1500 block of Randolph Avenue at 12:44 a.m. Sunday, November 1.

—Speedway, 232 S. Fairview Ave., was robbed at gunpoint at 11:40 p.m. Tuesday, November 3.

Burglary—A burglary was reported on the 400 block of South Lexington Parkway at 10:01 a.m. Friday, October 30.

—Four home burglaries were reported on November 9, including on the 1700 and 1900 blocks of Juliet Avenue, the 1800 block of Palace Avenue, and the 400 block of South Fairview Avenue.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on Saint Clair Avenue and Wheeler Street on October 31, the 1400 block of Saint Clair on November 1, the 1200 block of Edgumbe Road on November 6, the 200 block of South Albert Street and the 2100 block of Juliet Avenue on November 10, and two vehicles on the 2000 block of Grand Avenue on November 11.

Mendota Heights

Theft—A suspect was arrested after police discovered him parked in a stolen vehicle in a park on the 1700 block of Lilac Lane at 1:15 a.m. Friday, November 6.

—Thefts from vehicles were reported on the 1700 block of James Road and the 1300 block of Second Street on November 6, and the 2100 block of Fox Place on November 8.

Assault—A road rage incident was reported on Dodd Road and Marie Avenue at 3:07 p.m. Monday, November 2. The victim said that after he passed another vehicle, the suspect began tailgating him, then got out of the car and assaulted him.

—An assault with a gun was reported on the 1400 block of Mendota Heights Road at 6:02 a.m. Monday, November 9.

Miscellaneous—Officers responded to a report of people dragging another person out of a vehicle on the 900 block of Highway 13 at 1:27 a.m. Saturday, November 7. One of the males was arrested for DWI.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 1500 block of Marshall Avenue at 10:35 a.m. Thursday, November 5.

—Burglaries were reported on the 2200 block of Marshall Avenue and the 100 block of Montrose Place on November 7, and the 2000 block of Gilbert Avenue on November 10.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 2100 block of Selby Avenue and the 1700 block of University Avenue on October 30, the 2200 block of Riverwood Place on November 2, the 1900 block of Iglehart Avenue on November 7, the 2100 block of Marshall Avenue and the 400 block of North Roy Street on November 8, the 400 block of North Wheeler Street and the 1700 block of Ashland Avenue on November 10, and the 1800 block of University Avenue on November 11.

Summit Hill

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 900 block of Goodrich Avenue at 6:33 p.m. Wednesday, November 4.

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 1100 block of Goodrich Avenue at 1:30 a.m. Friday, November 6.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on Chatsworth Street and Grand Avenue on November 7, and the 1100 block of Grand on November 10.

Summit-University

Burglary—A residential burglary was reported on the 600 block of Laurel Avenue at 3:21 p.m. Wednesday, November 4.

—A home break-in was reported on the 1000 block of Portland Avenue at 5:52 p.m. Sunday, November 8.

Theft—Three vehicles were reported sto-

len on the 700 block of Holly Avenue between October 30-November 2. Other vehicles were reported stolen on the 300 block of North Lexington Parkway and the 100 block of Kent Street on November 8, and the 600 block of Laurel Avenue on November 10.

—A theft of items valued at more than \$1,000 was reported stolen from a vehicle on Farrington Street and Selby Avenue on Monday, November 2.

Sex crime—Rapes were reported on the 400 block of Marshall Avenue on November 2, and the 300 block of North Victoria Street on November 5.

Assault—Aggravated assaults with weapons were reported on the 800 block of Dayton Avenue on November 2, and the 300 block of North Dale Street on November 10.

West End

Robbery—Robberies at gunpoint were reported on the 400 block of Spring Street on November 4, and on Chestnut Street and Eagle Parkway on November 7.

Burglary—Burglaries were reported on the 200 block of Grand Avenue on October 30, the 100 block of Forbes Avenue on October 31, the 800 block of Jefferson Avenue on November 1 and 2, the 800 block of Montreal Avenue on November 1 and 3, and the 900 block of West Seventh Street on November 2.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on Goodrich and Smith avenues on October 29, the 200 block of South Exchange Street on November 1, the 600 block of Canton Street on November 2, the 1700 block of Race Street on November 6, and the 300 block of Arbor Street on November 8 and 10.

Assault—An aggravated assault at gunpoint was reported on the 700 block of Otto Avenue at 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, November 4.

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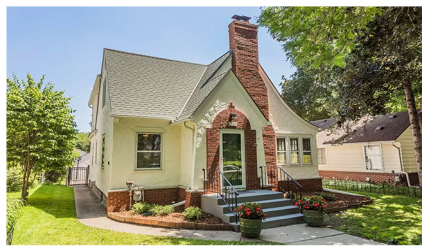
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ON THE TOWN

Shelter from above

Dittberner-Jax finds comfort being nestled anew under city's canopy

BY ANNE MURPHY

Norita Dittberner-Jax's new collection of poetry, *Now I Live Among Old Trees* (Nodin Press), is deeply rooted in love—love for her late husband, Eugene, and for Saint Paul with its oak trees on Goodrich Avenue and maple trees on Lombard Avenue.

In this, her sixth poetry collection, Dittberner-Jax reflects on the last year of her husband's fight with ALS and her own diagnosis with cancer while she was caring for him. Beyond that, she reflects upon her new life without him in the city that still invigorates her.

Her previous work, *Crossing the Waters*, which won a 2018 Midwest Book Award for poetry, recounts the waves of disbelief, devastation, acceptance and ultimate determination she experienced with her husband's fatal illness. As with that collection, Dittberner-Jax said she hopes readers will benefit from her new book.

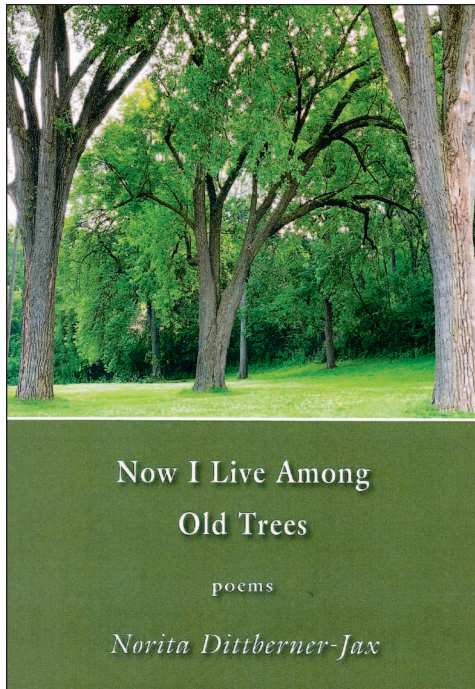
"I'm finding that the book has hit a nerve for many people who are either caregiving parents or spouses, or have dealt with sickness and loss themselves," she said. "I hope the book shows the arc of grief gradually moves to acceptance and even joy. I didn't set out to do anything didactic. I just wrote the poems as they came."

And the poems for *Now I Live Among Old Trees* came quite naturally. "The Eugene Letters" in the collection came afterward, but also quite naturally, Dittberner-Jax said, referring to the series of letters she penned to and for her husband.

"It was so terrible for me to have the cancer diagnosis in the middle of his ALS," she said. "I said to the doctors, 'You have to take care of this fast because I have to see this guy out.' Those poems came while I was going through it, but I put them aside at the time. I just packed them away with my wig. And when I saw that this was a book, I brought them out. I'm pleased at how it worked out. I think they needed to be there."

After her husband's diagnosis, the couple moved from their beloved Goodrich Avenue home. "Actually, we were going to move to a condo on Goodrich, but Gene needed a living situation that was adaptable to his illness and we found that in Lilydale," she said.

Today Dittberner-Jax is back in Saint Paul, in Highland Park, with a cottonwood visible



from her windows. That tree she has named Prosper. Nearby at Lexington Parkway and Montreal Avenue, she found the tree that is pictured on the cover of *Now I Live Among Old Trees*.

"My daughter, Jessica Johnston, is a photographer," she said. "She and I went out over the summer looking at trees. I thought we had the right photo and I sent it to my publisher and he said those trees aren't old, so we went back out and found some truly old trees."

In the poem "Now I Live Among Old Trees," Dittberner-Jax recalls her days at what was then the College of Saint Catherine:

The college could have been another country, unfamiliar streets, so many beautiful trees, old trees, trees allowed to widen into sky bluer in that part of town.

Dittberner-Jax grew up in Frogtown and attended Saint Agnes High School before going to Saint Catherine's to study literature and education. Following college, she got married and had three children while beginning her teaching and writing careers.

"I taught in a variety of capacities," she said. "I taught preschool Montessori. I was a writer-on-loan to the Saint Paul Public Schools and later worked briefly at Highland Senior High. I taught with the COMPAS



Norita Dittberner-Jax has returned to her native Saint Paul and has come out with a new collection of poetry, *Now I Live Among Old Trees*. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

"I hope the book shows the arc of grief gradually moves to acceptance and even joy. I didn't set out to do anything didactic. I just wrote the poems as they came."

Writers & Artists in the Schools Program. I was at the Perpich Center for the Arts. And I taught creative writing for elders at the Saint Paul Jewish Community Center. I taught right through the life cycle."

When her youngest child was about 3, she said there was a great burgeoning of writing in the Twin Cities. "I came into that at a very good time," she said. "There was a lot of literary activity. I started to write and get some poems published. But it wasn't easy. I think it took at least 10 years to get my first book published."

Dittberner-Jax said one thing that really made a difference when she came to writing poetry was that there were mainly male poets

before. "That had changed very much by the time I came into it," she said.

From the beginning, Dittberner-Jax said, she always kept a journal. "I wrote so many times that 'It's hard to write when you have three children,'" she said. "I would start a new journal and would put that at the top."

"What I found was that teaching and writing kept me resilient," she said. "When my teaching wasn't going well, I concentrated on my writing and when my writing wasn't going well, I concentrated on my teaching."

Now, during the pandemic, Dittberner-Jax said, is a financially challenging time for writers, publishers and bookstores.

"There are no in-person readings and I miss that," she said. "You could go to a reading, see friends, buy a book, hear a poet or author and be in bed by 10 p.m. Now I go to Zoom readings. While that's good, it was better going to a bookstore. Still, we have opportunities."

Most immediately, that includes a virtual reading with other authors at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 10, hosted by Next Chapter Booksellers. For the Zoom link, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com/event/2020-12.

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Books

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host free online readings and discussions with authors Adam Falkner and his poetry collection, *The Willies*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 1; Fred Guttenberg and his book, *Find the Helpers: What 9/11 and Parkland Taught Me About Recovery, Purpose & Hope*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 3; Jerri Chisholm and her dystopian novel for young adults, *Escaping Eleven*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 8; Rachel Gold and her novel, *Synclair*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 9; and poet Margaret Hasse and illustrator Sharon DeMark and their new collection, *Shelter*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 10. To register, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

Music

“French Dreams and Games,” music of France during the reigns of Louis XIV and XV, will be streamed online at 11 a.m. Saturday, December 5. Violinists Miriam Scholz-Carlson and Marc Levine, harpsichordist Paul Boehnke and viola da gamba player Julie Elhard will perform compositions by Marin Marais, Antoine Dornel and Jean-Marie Leclair that were intended to accompany a variety of activities, from the epic to the mundane. For tickets or more information, visit lyrbaroque.org or call 651-321-2214.

Jazz guitarist Mimi Fox will perform at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 5, on the Minnesota Guitar Society’s YouTube channel. Fox has headlined jazz festivals from Montreal to Monterey and composed and performed original scores for orchestras, films and dance projects. Her December 5 concert will feature songs off her 2019 CD, “This Bird Still

Flies,” an acoustic recording that showcases her skills as a composer and performer. The concert is free, but donations are welcome. Visit mnguitar.org.

“A Copasetic Christmas Carol,” a jazz adaptation of Charles Dickens’ classic holiday story created by Doug Haining and Charmin Michelle, will be performed in a virtual concert by the Twin Cities Seven at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 10. Recorded live at the Dakota in Minneapolis, the seven performers are singer Charmin Michelle, Doug Haining on alto and soprano saxophone and clarinet, Steve Wright on trumpet, Dave Graf on trombone, Rick Carlson on piano, Kent Saunders on guitar, Steve Pikal on bass and Trevor Haining on drums. Ben Sidran narrates the tale, which uses a suite of jazz compositions with “hep cat” lyrics to tell of the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge. The link to the concert is free of charge. Visit crowdcast.io/e/5b6zobyl.

“A Bass Viol Journey” featuring selections from Schenck’s *Nymphs of the Rhine*, Gottfried Finger’s *Pastorale from Puer Natus in Bethlehem*, Marais’ *Le Bijou* and other music will be performed online via Zoom by the bass viol duo of Eva Lymenstull and Malachai Komanoff Bandy at 7 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Saturday, December 11-12. For tickets or more information, visit lyrbaroque.org or call 651-321-2214.

Lessons and Carols for Our Time, a contemporary take on the British holiday tradition, will be performed by the eight-man vocal ensemble Cantus in online concerts in December. Weaving together poetry and song, the program draws upon such classic songs as “Silent Night” and “A La Nanita Nana,” Franz Biebl’s “Ave Maria” as well as

modern works by Abbie Betinis and Saunder Choi. The first half of the Christmas with Cantus program will be available from 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 11, through 7:30 p.m. Sunday, December 13. The second half will be available from 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 18, through 7:30 p.m. Sunday, December 20. Tickets are by donation with \$20 suggested. To receive the link, visit cantussings.org.

Exhibits

Northern Clay Center, 2424 E. Franklin Ave., is holding its annual holiday exhibition through December 30. Eighty-five artists are displaying for show and sale their handmade pottery, sculpture and ceramic jewelry. Visit northernclaycenter.org or call 612-339-8007.

Find the perfect gift at Landmark Center’s Old-Fashioned Holiday Bazaar. The 42nd annual event is being held online from December 3-13 at landmarkcenter.org/old-fashioned-holiday-bazaar/. There you will find jewelry, household decor, woven and wearable art, children’s toys and clothing, handmade soaps and lotions, edible goods and more. Links to popular holiday music will be available along with recipes for a festive holiday cocktail and mocktail.

Theater

Two virtual holiday programs are being offered by the Ordway. *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, contemporary dance set to Tchaikovsky’s timeless score, will stream at 7 p.m. Friday, November 27. Tickets are \$20. “Christmas with the Griswolds,” a conversation with *National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation* stars Chevy Chase and Beverly D’Angelo, will stream live at 7 p.m. Saturday, November 28. Tickets are \$25. To

register, visit ordway.org.

Rhapsody in Black, playwright and actor LeLand Gantt’s one-person journey for understanding and transcending racism in America, is being streamed online by the Ordway from November 30 through December 6. The screening is free and so is the live Q&A with Gantt at 7 p.m. Saturday, December 5. Visit ordway.org.

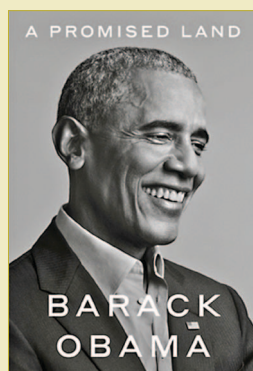
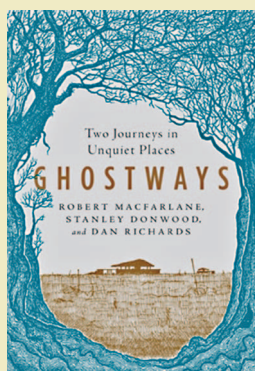
Et cetera

The European Christmas Market has gone virtual this year. Instead of the usual festive outdoor setting in downtown Saint Paul, the market is operating a website with 23 vendors offering handmade treasures and the market’s own limited-edition gift boxes. Holiday entertainment is also periodically available on European Christmas Market’s Facebook page. For more information, visit stpaulchristmasmarket.org.

“Keeping the Weather Out,” a how-to webinar on winterizing your home, will be offered via Zoom from 10 a.m.-noon Thursday, December 3. Sponsored by Rethos, the class will demonstrate how to seal up cracks and drafts, perform basic window and door repairs and other simple weatherization techniques. The cost is \$10 or whatever you can afford. To register, visit rethos.org.

A holiday tree-lighting ceremony will kick off Union Depot’s seasonal programming with an online video special at 7 p.m. Friday, December 4. The tree will be lit throughout the month of December on the plaza in front of Union Depot. The holiday bake sale is also online. Small, medium and large bags filled with treats and sweets from local vendors may be ordered for pickup on December 12. Visit uniondepot.org.

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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Prep sports adjust to new world again

The signs had been there for a while. All one had to do was watch the news on television or glance at the newspaper or the internet. With COVID-19 cases and deaths on the rise, Governor Tim Walz found himself backed into a corner where no politician wants to be.

Still, it stung when the governor's pronouncement came on November 18 that high school and other youth sports will be forced into a four-week lockdown. Some schools were able to scramble and get in one last football or volleyball game. For people like Highland Park High School athletic director Pat Auran who had no teams still competing, it meant a further delay in getting students back playing again.

"With the number of teams who had to quarantine, it just didn't work anymore," Auran said. "If one player comes to practice and tests positive, everybody is out for 14 days."

The lockdown is currently scheduled to run through December 18. Minnesota State High School League bylaws state that there must be two weeks of practices before games can be played, so that pushes the start of winter sports out to at least early January.

Auran and other Saint Paul City Conference athletic directors spent a lot of time on the phone on November 19 figuring out their what their next steps will be. "We'll probably be limited to just conference games," Auran said, once play resumes. "Historically, that (early January) is when the conference started anyway. You might be able to sneak in one or two nonconference games."

The same is likely to be true for the other local schools in other conferences. Time is simply not on their side if there's to be any hope of still holding state tournaments for winter sports.

Hockey is tricky because of ice time availability, but Auran has an even bigger problem. The Highland boys' team is now an independent. New head coach Brandon Ferraro is still hoping to find a conference that will take his team, even if it's just for one season.

The winter prep tournament schedule has some significant unknowns. Skiing, for example, is obviously dependent on cold weather and snow. That state tournament is currently slated for the last weekend in February. Wrestling, gymnastics, basketball and hockey are all subject to arena availability. Those tournaments are currently slated to be jammed together in March and early April. However, those dates may have to change when the Timberwolves and Wild

WRIGHT CALL ►16

Knights were a bright light in volleyball this season

BY BILL WAGNER

Nova Classical Academy volleyball coach Thomas Dobbs said it was fair to say that his team exceeded expectations in a shortened season that was cut even shorter by Minnesota Governor Tim Walz last week.

The Knights had two regular-season games left to play when Walz announced that all youth sports would come to an end after November 20 due to a surge in COVID-19 cases. Nova was able to squeeze in one last game—a 25-21, 25-14, 25-13 win at New Life Academy—the day before the deadline.

Nova finished the season 8-3 overall and 7-2 in the Skyline Conference.

The Knights were expected to be a good team this season, but they were showing that might have been an understatement.

"We're a great ball control team," Dobbs said. "We don't have a lot of height, but we're scrappy. We play great defense and we never give up on a play."

The Knights certainly logged their share of signature wins throughout the fall. One was a tight 3-2 victory at home on November 10 over Saint Croix Prep, which had beaten Nova by the same margin in the second game of the season. Dobbs liked what he saw in the rematch.

"It was a case of us gutting it out and not quitting," he said.

Another big win was a 3-0 pasting in an away game against Maranatha Christian Academy at the end of October. The Knights also took the measure of New Life Academy 3-1 and Trinity 3-0.

Their only other losses came against conference-leading Concordia Academy in mid-October and undefeated Legacy Christian on November 16. Despite the loss against Legacy, Dobbs was pleased in the team's 25-17, 18-25, 18-25, 24-26 effort.

"They play a solid team game and



Sophomore Samantha Ball returns a volley during Nova Classical Academy's three-game sweep of New Life Academy on November 19. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

have some very talented upperclassmen," Dobbs said about the Lady Lions. "We tried to get back in it. We just came up a little short at the end. However, we have only one senior starter and we had quite a few players graduate from last year's team."

The Knights are a squad that plays well together and recognizes what winning volleyball is all about. Sophomore twin sisters Samantha and Ally Ball are two good places to begin with in the starting lineup. Ally is a setter and led the team with 242 assists and 36 aces, and was third with 79 digs. Samantha plays outside hitter and led the team with 129 kills and was second with 84 digs.

Their sister Ava Ball, who is just an eighth-grader, plays outside hitter with a lot of savvy for a youngster. She led the team with 86 digs and was second in kills with 113.

Middle hitter Katrine Kompanets, the

only senior starter, lent good leadership to the Knights' cause and led the team with 17 total blocks. Sophomore middle hitter Cordelia Thomas is agile and added 11 total blocks.

Sophomore libero Katya Morse is explosive and athletic with 68 digs on the season, while seniors Maddie Ritenour and Tiffany Kabanuk are also defensive specialists. Freshman Fern Fisher starts on the right side, and also logs time as a backup setter.

When it comes to team stats, it doesn't take much to realize just how dominating Nova has been for most of this season. Through match 10, the Knights had outkilled their opponents by a whopping 274-79 margin, and had a 121-18 advantage in serving aces. Perhaps most impressive of all is that the Knights had a 312-161 edge in digs.

According to Dobbs, it was an exciting season. "I'm happy with the way we progressed," he said.

STA runs past Sibley in section final to finish undefeated football season

BY BILL WAGNER

Saint Thomas Academy capped off its undefeated football season with a 42-7 victory over Henry Sibley to claim the Section 3AAAAA title at home on November 20.

The game represented the end of an already shortened season in which the coronavirus prompted change after change in high school sports. Instead of playing a section final after Thanksgiving, teams had to scramble to wrap things up before Governor Tim Walz's four-week shutdown of all youth sports took effect at the end of the day on November 20.

The top-seeded Cadets were supposed to have played second-seeded Apple Valley for the section title that day. However, the Eagles had to drop out due to COVID-19 concerns. Third-seeded Sibley then stepped up into the final. The Cadets (6-0) had defeated Sibley (2-5) earlier this fall, so STA coach Dan O'Brien

had a good read on what the Warriors would be trying to do.

STA came out and showed almost immediately that any thoughts of a Sibley upset would be overly optimistic. The Cadets were up 21-0 nearing halftime. Sibley did manage to get a 76-yard touchdown run from senior Cameron Latvis against STA's almost impenetrable defense to make things a little bit more interesting at intermission. However, that was as close as it would get as the Cadets went on to score three more touchdowns in the second half.

Sophomore running back Love Adebayo and senior running back Danny McFadden did most of the damage for the Cadets. Adebayo scored on runs of 1 and 10 yards, while McFadden scored on runs of 8, 2 and 73 yards. Both running backs suffered injuries this year, but there appeared to be little if any rustiness to their game against Sibley.



STA's Love Adebayo scampers into the end zone despite the efforts of Sibley defender Cameron Latvis during the Cadets' 42-7 win for the Section 3AAAAA championship on November 20. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

The other Cadet score came on a 41-yard touchdown from senior quarterback Baker Reding to classmate Simon Kotok. Junior Seth

Moore kicked four extra points in the game.

STA OVER SIBLEY ►16

15◀ WRIGHT CALL

schedules are released.

To quote Bette Davis, “Fasten your seat belts. It’s going to be a bumpy ride.”

Time for MIAC presidents to make a decision

Although university presidents ReBecca Koenig Roloff, Suzanne Rivera and Julie Sullivan have all seen their names in this newspaper before, this will be their first appearance in its sports pages. It’s likely they wish that wasn’t the case, but there’s nothing that’s not novel about 2020.

Roloff is the president of Saint Catherine, Rivera is the new boss at Macalester and Sullivan has the same gig at Saint Thomas. They and their counterparts at the other MIAC schools are scheduled to meet soon to discuss what’s next on the horizon for the athletic conference.

The time for equivocating is past. The presidents must quickly decide to get on with a winter sports season amid a surge in COVID-19 cases or simply call the whole thing off.

There are plenty of precedents the presidents can refer to. Eight Division III conferences as well as the Division I Ivy League have already put the kibosh on their winter sports seasons. Two MIAC colleges—Saint Olaf and Carleton—have also announced they’re out. That leaves 11 MIAC schools that are still practicing without knowing if their winter sports seasons will continue.

That’s getting tiring.

Hockey players can only work on skating and shooting drills, with no scrimmaging or contact allowed. Basketball teams can practice, but no scrimmaging can take place. The

other noncontact sports, such as swimming and track/field, are also holding practices with restrictions.

While they’re doing so, the athletes can only look longingly at other leagues, such as the Big Ten, WCHA and NCHC, that are starting to play games and wonder why they’re still stuck in neutral.

The coaches can only tell their teams so many times to behave and practice distancing, wear masks, etc. You’re talking about restricting 18- to 21-year-olds.

As one college coach put it, “You’re asking social butterflies not to use their wings.”

For those reasons, the presidents need to make a decision soon. Going through with an abbreviated season has obvious risks—and money—involved. Constant testing for the coronavirus is not cheap. Scheduling needs to be completed ASAP. The NCAA winter tournament dates are set and won’t likely be changed.

As has been the case with governors and mayors this year, there is a time when you either fish or cut bait. It’s now time for the MIAC college presidents to do the same. The winter holidays are fast approaching. The players and coaches have done their jobs about as well as could be hoped.

Make a decision and move on, folks.

Bad Behavior 101

Do you ever wonder why athletics produce so many bad apples? It’s because players see what some coaches do and think it is OK to act out.

Consider the silliness shown by Iowa’s Kirk Ferentz and Minnesota’s P.J. Fleck in their November 13 game in Minneapolis. Fleck went first, drawing a 15-yard penalty for

running on the field to protest a call against his team. It was selfish and stupid because it ended up knocking the Gophers out of field goal range.

With the game winding down and Iowa ahead 35-0, Minnesota had a chance to get a late score and avoid a shutout at home. Fleck, quite properly, called a timeout to set up a play to get the possible score.

Not to be outdone, Ferentz then called three consecutive timeouts. Minnesota did score the touchdown it wanted. As odd as it may sound to some folks, 35-7 is still better than 35-0. Asked about the timeouts afterward, Ferentz offered a boorish comment about not wanting to allow the Gophers on the scoreboard.

Coaches, even at the Division I level, are supposed to be teachers and role models. One wonders what kind of lesson was learned on that night.

Fleck, for example, could have chosen the verbal route that the late and legendary Saint John’s football coach John Gagliardi took one afternoon in Collegeville. The Johnnies were involved in a tight tussle when referee Don Wheeler flagged an SJU player for holding. Gagliardi was upset and demanded a conference. Wheeler went over to the sideline, explained the call and told Gagliardi the game would now resume without further discussion. Gagliardi fumed some more and finally yelled at Wheeler in a voice that could be heard in the Saint John’s Abbey, “You stink!”

Wheeler dropped his flag and marched off an additional 15 yards against the Johnnies. He then looked over at Gagliardi and calmly asked, “How do I smell from here, John?”

Dave Wright can be reached at dwright53@msn.com.

15◀ STA OVER SIBLEY

O’Brien singled out several defensive players for their performance in the win. Senior defensive tackle Oscar Berg got after it well, as did senior inside linebacker Jamie Smith, senior defensive back Ryan Creamer and sophomore inside linebacker Jackson Cercioglu. Smith led the team in tackles for the game.

Despite the victory, O’Brien said his play-

ers were quite emotional in the locker room afterward, especially the seniors who had to deal with the fact that their season would not include the chance to compete for a state title, despite their undefeated record.

“It was a strange year,” O’Brien said. “Our kids have gone through a lot of adversity, and it’s been tough. We were just lucky to have a chance to play.”

He pointed out that there were some teams

that weren’t so lucky because of the virus. Andover, another undefeated squad this year, was unable to even play for a section title because it ran out of healthy opponents to compete against.

The Cadets met every test they were faced with this fall. They defeated Mahtomedi in a thrilling game that went to four overtimes in week three. And they shut out a stout Apple Valley team 15-0 in an exciting battle between

two teams that both had good offensive and defensive lines.

In the second half of the Apple Valley contest, O’Brien said he noticed that the Cadets started to impose their will a little more. And the STA defense was its usually dominating self as the Eagles couldn’t sustain any drives.

The Cadets finished the season having out-scored their opponents 214-63.

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Holiday of Hope—The public is invited to check out the Highland Business Association’s holiday displays in Highland Village, including a newly erected holiday tree on the southwest corner of Ford Parkway and Cleveland Avenue.

Lexington Parkway extension—Ramsey County is in the process of extending Lexington Parkway to connect to Shepard Road. A virtual open house to hear from project staff, ask questions and offer comments will be held from 5-6 p.m. Tuesday, December 1. Register at tinyurl.com/lexingtonpkwy. For more information, visit ramseycounty.us/LexingtonExtension.

Highland Bridge park names—The Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation is seeking ideas for naming the four city-owned parks that will become part of the Highland Bridge development. Suggestions may be submitted to Ellen Stewart at ellen.stewart@ci.stpaul.mn.us by March 1. Learn more at bit.ly/10282020Meeting.

Upcoming online meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, November 30; and Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 8. All HDC meetings are currently being conducted online via Zoom. Links to the meetings are posted on the HDC’s website.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Shop locally this holiday season—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Macalester College’s High Winds Fund are encouraging customers to patronize small local businesses this holiday season. Between November 28 (Shop Small Saturday) and December 19, those who make three purchases from Macalester-Groveland businesses may enter a drawing to win one of five \$100 gift cards. Full entry details are available on the website.

Show your neighborhood pride—Locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts can be ordered online for home delivery. The shirts come in kiwi, heather indigo and dark heather in a variety of sizes. Visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

Join the snow team—Volunteers are needed to help keep the community council’s organics recycling drop-off site on Grand Avenue free from snow and ice this winter. Volunteers

can expect to shovel two or three times during the season, or fewer if enough people sign up. Learn more or register by emailing mgcc@macgrove.org.

Century plaque—The owners of homes and businesses in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood that were built in 1925 or before are eligible to purchase an engraved plaque for their building to identify its age. Order by November 30 to receive one by the holidays by visiting macgrove.org/100years.

Upcoming online meetings—Housing and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 25, via Zoom. Email alexa@macgrove.org for meeting information or learn more at macgrove.org/development. There are no council board or committee meetings in December.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Crime awareness—The Summit Hill Association has introduced a new crime awareness page on its website. The page includes a list of police reports from Summit Hill that is updated weekly. It also includes a list of the city’s emergency and nonemergency phone numbers that residents can call to report suspicious activity, as well as nuisance incidents such as illegally parked cars and noise complaints. The page is at summithillassociation.org/crime-prevention.

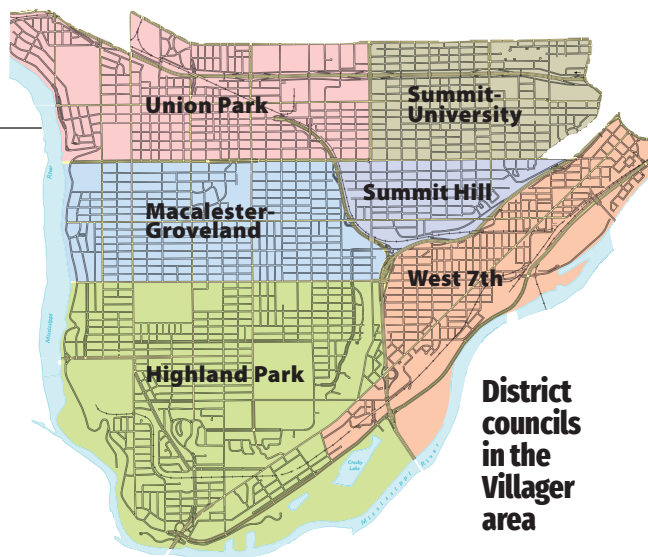
Conversation on racism—The SHA’s Racial Dialogue & Action Committee will host a virtual “Community Conversation: A Dialogue about Race, Anti-Racism and More” at 7 p.m. Monday, November 30. The session will be facilitated by local artists, writers and performers Shá Cage and E.G. Bailey. A link to the event is on the SHA’s calendar page on its website.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Park improvements—The Union Park District Council’s Environment and Parks Committee makes recommendations for the spending of city park funds for both capital improvements and programs. Those who see a need at their neighborhood park can help make it better by filling out a funding request at tinyurl.com/y24zvvg2.

Upcoming online meetings—Neighborhood Involvement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, November 30; board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 2; and Transportation



District councils in the Villager area

Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 14. For information on joining any of the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or click the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Board update—On November 9, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation board of directors approved a resolution in support of the Saint Paul Public Library in upcoming city budget deliberations. The board supported a variance for a home business at 284 Nugent St. It also reviewed a draft of an updated fiscal sponsor policy for the Fort Road Federation.

Yard signs—Orders are still being accepted for yard signs with the message “West 7th Believes: Black Lives Matter, Fort Road Together, LGBTQ Lives Matter, Women’s Rights are Human Rights, Immigrants & Refugees are Welcome, All Abilities are Celebrated.” Order at fortroadfederation.org/yardsign.

Virtual trivia night—A West Seventh virtual trivia fundraiser will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 10. Neighbors are being invited to test their knowledge of the history of the West Seventh area. A traveling trophy from local KRL Foundry will be awarded to the winning team. Individual and team tickets are available for purchase on its website.

Upcoming virtual meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 2; Joint Riverview Task Force, 6 p.m. Thursday, December 3; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, December 14. Links to the Zoom meetings can be found at fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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Minnesota Limited Liability Company/Articles of Organization Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 322C
The individual(s) listed below who is (are each) 18 years of age or older, hereby adopt(s) the following Articles of Organization:

ARTICLE 1 - LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY NAME: Dancers Studio LLC
ARTICLE 2 - REGISTERED OFFICE AND AGENT(S), IF ANY AT THAT OFFICE:
Name: Gordon Bratt
Address: 731 Saint Anthony Avenue Saint Paul MN 55104 USA
Name: Kathryn Bratt
Address: 731 Saint Anthony Avenue Saint Paul MN 55104 USA
ARTICLE 3 - DURATION: PERPETUAL
ARTICLE 4 - ORGANIZERS:
Name: Kathryn Bratt
Address: 731 Saint Anthony Avenue Saint Paul MN 55104 USA

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SIGNED BY: Kathryn Bratt
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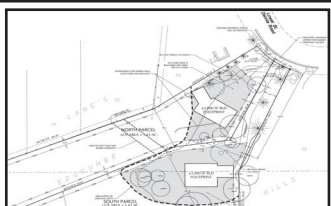
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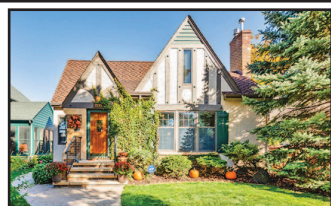
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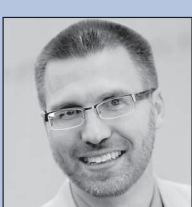
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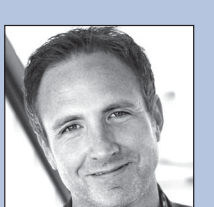


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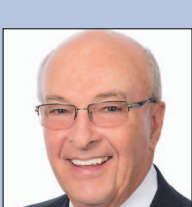
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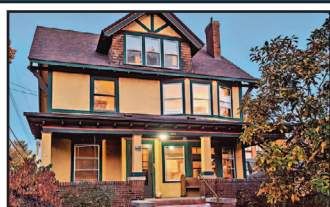
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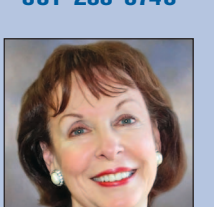
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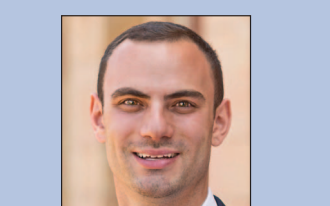
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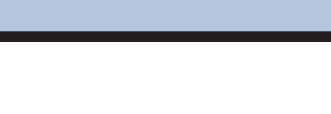
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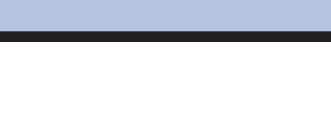
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