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Spinning into 2021. Claire Crist, 6, and Sasha Berquist, 5, took a ride on January 13 with a ready supply of snowballs and a boost from parents Jim Crist and Laura Berquist at the Wabun Park playground in Minneapolis. The Crists hail from Highland Park and the Berquists from Macalester-Groveland. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Teachers rally against school reopening plan

District officials defend safety of Feb. 1 return to in-person learning

By CASEY EK

Less than two weeks before the Saint Paul Public Schools' return to in-person learning, school district educators continue to voice their dissatisfaction with the reopening plan. Seated in cars, teachers and staff rallied in opposition on January 12 in a parking lot outside the school district's headquarters at 360 Colborne St.

The educators listened from their vehicles as speakers, including Minnesota Nurses Association president Mary Turner, criticized the district's reopening plan as being incomplete and unsafe given the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. Rally speakers and protest signs demanded that educators be vaccinated against the coronavirus prior to the return to in-person learning.

The school district's plan is to have students in grades PreK-2 and special education students back in the classroom full-time beginning February 1. Students in grades 3-5 would return to

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Groveland's outdoor ice rinks are a cut above the rest

Volunteers create a paradise for skaters and pucksters alike

By CHAS JENSEN

When Jim Accurso moved to Highland Park 10 years ago, one of the first things he did was search for a skating rink where he could play outdoor hockey once winter set in. "I asked around for recommendations," he said. "The response was unanimous: You want to go to the rinks at Groveland."

That winter Accurso headed to Groveland to see for himself. He found what he was looking for, and he has taken part in pickup hockey games just about every Saturday morning in winter since. On one of those mornings, Accurso spotted a flyer on the warming house wall asking for volunteers to help maintain the rinks. He contacted the rink flooding coordinator and signed up.

Groveland, 2021 Saint Clair Ave., is one of seven recreation centers in Saint Paul that are operating outdoor ice rinks this winter. Other local ones are at Edgcombe, 320 S. Griggs St.; Desnoyer, 525 Pelham Blvd.; and Palace, 781 Palace Ave.

All of the rinks rely on volunteers who are willing to give up the warmth and comfort of their homes



Groveland Ice Rinks volunteers J.B. Stender, Jim Accurso and Erik Duffy turned out on a recent evening to resurface the ice with the recreation center's refurbished Zamboni. PHOTO BY CHAS JENSEN

on a winter evening to help prepare the ice for the following day. With two hockey rinks, two other skating rinks and a sixth-of-a-mile oval that circles the four rinks, Groveland's ice is a cut above the rest, although that has not always been the case.

Groveland's playground has alternated for years between youth baseball in the summer and ice skating in the winter, but interest in skating there declined in the 1980s and '90s. Boards were still erected for hockey and the rinks were regularly

flooded, but the task of clearing the snow from the ice was left to the users and the main rink was notorious for pits and patches of dirt and dead grass.

Then about 23 years ago, former Groveland rec director Eric Stokes and some friends from the neighborhood enlisted the help of the Groveland Booster Club and Parks and Rec staff in returning Groveland to the prime outdoor skating experience of old. The city purchased an ice sweeper for the rec center. A new shed was built adjacent to the warming house with donated materials and volunteer labor, and it was used to store the used Zamboni ice resurfacer that was purchased in 2004 and refurbished through donations to the booster club.

With volunteer labor and the assistance of local businesses, radius corners for the Zamboni were designed, fabricated and installed on the hockey rinks. Screens were added above the hockey boards so that flying pucks didn't pose a threat to skaters on the adjacent rinks.

Groveland has a core group now of six to eight volunteers who work on improving the rinks. The

GROVELAND ICE RINKS ►2



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1◀ RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

in-person learning beginning February 16. Superintendent Joe Gothard has said he will pressure public health officials to give teachers and educational support staff higher priority for receiving the coronavirus vaccine, but as of January 13 the district had not heard if that could happen, according to its spokesperson Kevin Burns.

“We cannot wait for all teachers to be vaccinated before opening,” the district announced in a statement. “Our students cannot wait.” Even without a vaccine, the statement added, Governor Tim Walz’s administration has said it was safe for elementary schools to reopen as of January 18.

Citing an October report from the World Health Organization that showed that the incidence of coronavirus transmission among elementary-age children is low, district officials are confident about the safety of in-person learning. “Real-world experiences from other school districts in Minnesota and around the country show that schools being open does not equate to higher rates of community spread,” the school district stated.

A district report indicated that the academic performance of elementary students in distance learning during the first quarter of the school year was satisfactory. However, the performance of middle school and high school students suffered with about half of high school students failing at least one of their classes.

“Distance learning has not been optimal for many of our students,” the district stated.



An unidentified student lends support to the carloads of teachers and staff who rallied outside of the Saint Paul Public Schools’ administration building on January 12 to protest the reopening of elementary schools in February without taking additional measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

PHOTO BY CASEY EK

“We cannot simply hope that students will improve in the current learning model. We must act. We must use the best information we have to open our schools. The disparities in our children’s education are too large to ignore and too consequential to continue in a manner that serves some and not all.”

The state of Minnesota’s Safe Learning Plan offers a host of guidelines for schools returning to in-person learning. They include COVID-19 testing every other week for all staff (tests kits are provided by the state), the wearing of face masks or face shields, and maintaining three feet or more of social distancing. The plan also recommends daily education about hygienic practices, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces, a limit on nonessential visitors and gatherings, and close monitoring

for symptoms of the illness.

According to its website, the Saint Paul Public Schools will be following all of the recommendations in the Minnesota Safe Learning Plan. A video presentation on the website describes the other safety measures that will be taken in district buildings.

The schools have posted informational signs about COVID safety throughout their buildings. They have installed plexiglass in main offices. Each school will have a COVID isolation room for any students who are exhibiting symptoms. The schools also have improved air filtration systems.

The school district has acquired thousands of MERV 11 air filters for its buildings. However, the federal Environmental Protection Agency recommends a MERV rating of 13 or

higher to more effectively trap particles as small as the coronavirus.

Although the standards of Minnesota’s Safe Learning Plan are universal, their implementation is likely to vary depending on student population, space limitations and architecture, according to one speaker at the January 12 rally. Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) president Nick Faber is concerned about the schools’ ability to maintain social distancing between students. “The district has told us flat out that they can’t guarantee kids will stay three feet from each other,” he said.

SPFE representatives and district administrators were scheduled to continue their discussions of COVID safety measures on January 13. Of the roughly 17,800 students enrolled in the district’s elementary schools, about 6,600 or 37 percent have opted to continue learning from home during the spring semester via their laptop or desktop computers, according to district data.

Jose Castillo, a single father of three district students, has chosen to keep his two elementary school children learning from home for the time being. “There are too many unknowns,” he said.

Castillo thinks the safety measures the school district has put in place, while they may reduce the risk of transmission, may be detrimental to students in the long run. He saw a presentation on the safety measures at Adams Elementary. “It was shocking” he said. “It kind of sounded like a juvenile detention military school. It’s so strict that the emotional fun time has been taken away.”

1◀ GROVELAND ICE RINKS

city’s Parks and Rec Department staffs a warming house where skates of all sizes, hockey sticks and pucks may be rented free of charge.

The volunteers at Groveland are led by local resident and businessman John Hoeschen, the owner of Saint Paul Corner Drug at Snelling and Saint Clair Avenue. “I grew up on a farm,” Hoeschen said. “That really helps, because problem solving is huge around here. For example, when we purchased the Zamboni, the water tank was in serious need of repair. You don’t just run over to Menards and pick one of those up. We had to completely rebuild it.”

Hoeschen’s crew has a wide variety of talents. They have worked on rebuilding, repairing and painting the hockey boards. Hoeschen is especially proud of the additional rinks that have made for a better skating experience for everyone, including the large oval and “The Pond,” an open rink for novice hockey players.

“I saw that the little kids were being left out of the hockey rinks because they were filled with bigger and faster skaters,” Hoeschen said. “So we cleared out an area and designated it for kids to have a place to practice.”

Hoeschen and his crew also built a wind break on the east side of the warming house to protect skaters from the cold while they laced up their skates. The warming house is

not open this winter due to COVID-19, but wooden benches have been placed beside the rink where skaters can take a breather. A porta-potty is also available.

With the warming house closed and many local residents sheltering at home, Hoeschen wasn’t sure if the usual crowds would turn out at the rink this year. Early on January 2, the first day that the rinks were open, “I was standing by the warming house wondering if anyone would show,” he said. Moments later, he was shocked and delighted to see people streaming in from all four corners of the park.

“It was like that scene from *Field of Dreams*,” Hoeschen said. “They just kept coming.”

Among the skaters were Jason and Anna Kirkness with their children in tow. “We love coming here,” Jason said. “It’s a very important place for building community, building family. And it gives the kids a chance to stretch their legs.”

Other visitors were just as enthusiastic. While setting up a table of hot chocolate and doughnuts for their party, Paige Bartholome and Diane Johnson were quick to recognize the volunteers who turn Groveland’s playing fields into a winter wonderland. “We’re so appreciative; it’s a big contribution,” Johnson said.

Of course, none of the volunteers were there to hear the compliments. Except for a brief appearance by the Zamboni driver to perform a



A trio of young pucksters had free rein on the Pond at Groveland Playground. PHOTO BY CHAS JENSEN

quick midday resurfacing of the rinks, most of the volunteers were at their day jobs.

“The majority of our volunteers’ presence is after hours,” said Alex Rodriguez, manager of Recreational Services in the city of Saint Paul’s Department of Parks and Recreation. “They come out after the rinks close and prepare the ice for the next day.” That is true at Groveland and at the city’s six other outdoor rinks. “It’s a huge gift for (the city) that we appreciate,” Rodriguez said.

One of those volunteers, Jim Kimlinger, was shoveling snow and putting down a new layer of ice on the rinks at the Edgcombe Recreation Center during the second week of January.

Asked why he was willing to give up his evening to be standing out in the cold, he gave the same answer as the volunteers at Groveland.

“It’s very satisfying to be out here on a quiet night,” Kimlinger said. “It’s a break from the work day. And when the sky is clear and the moon is out, it’s beautiful.”

This winter Groveland is asking all skaters to wear face masks at the rinks. For more information about outdoor skating, contact Groveland (grovelandicerinks.org or 651-695-3714), Edgcombe (651-695-3711), Desnoyer (651-266-6400) or Palace (651-298-5677) recreation centers.

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Committee supports site plan for much-debated Lexington Station

By JANE MCCLURE

The site plan for a mixed-use building near Lexington Parkway and University Avenue was recommended for approval by the Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee on a 5-2 vote on January 14. Alatus Development's proposed Lexington Station will go to the full Planning Commission for a decision on January 22.

Site plan reviews are typically done by city staff. However, years of controversy over the proposed development prompted the public hearing. Commission approval is final unless the plan is appealed to the City Council.

Minneapolis-based Alatus is looking to construct a six-story, building on vacant lots at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy. The site is just east of Wilder Foundation's headquar-

ters. Wilder has been trying to sell the site for development for years.

Plans call for 288 apartments, 3,000 square feet of ground-floor commercial space and 254 structured parking spaces at grade level.

Along with alcove, studio, and one-, and two-bedroom units, the project will include 15 four-bedroom units designed for co-living, with shared kitchen and living room space. Those units would rent at \$800-\$900 per bedroom.

Chris Osmondson of Alatus said 155 of the apartments will be offered at or below affordability levels for people at 60 percent of the area's median income (AMI). Last year's AMI in the Twin Cities ranged from \$72,350 for one person to \$103,400 for a family of four.

The Union Park District Council has hosted several meetings on the project, but has not taken a posi-



An aerial view of the six-story Lexington Station building being proposed by Alatus Development for the vacant lots at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy.

tion on it. The Lexington-Hamline, Summit-University and Frogtown community councils, Aurora-Saint Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, and a coalition of groups called the Alliance have raised objections to the project, in-

cluding the amount of affordable housing, traffic impacts, and the height and scale of the building.

The property is zoned for Traditional Neighborhoods 4, and no zoning changes or variances are required. City Department of Safety

and Inspections staff recommended approval of the site plan, noting it was consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, the Union Park district plan and plans for the Green Line's Lexington station area.

Supporters noted that the project would make use of a site that has been vacant for more than a decade. Opponents cited concerns with traffic and access plans, and wanted more details on the city's plans to continue some kind of bike/pedestrian connection through the site to the west on Fuller Avenue.

The 365-page site plan application included a traffic study and recommendations, including providing incentives for residents to use mass transit, promotion of ride sharing programs, and providing space for residents to store bicycles. The building would be a short walk to light rail and two bus lines.

Condo sellers will need to disclose building's smoking rules

By JANE MCCLURE

Prospective buyers of condominiums, townhouses, co-ops and other common-interest dwellings in Saint Paul will be informed prior to the purchase of the building's rules on smoking beginning January 1, 2022.

The City Council on January 6 unanimously approved a new ordinance that requires the disclosure of smoking rules to be included with the city's Truth in Sale of Housing (TISH) reports. A smoking policy disclosure form for common-interest dwellings also must be filed with the city's Department of Safety and Inspections.

The requirement was brought forward by Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker in response to concerns raised by a couple who bought a condo four years ago in downtown's Gallery Towers believing it was a nonsmoking building. The building had been nonsmoking, but the condominium association elected a new board that reversed the policy around the time of the sale.

Noecker said the new requirement not only lets prospective home buyers know up front about smoking policies, it encourages homeowners' associations to make healthier choices about smoking in their buildings.

The ordinance has the support of the As-

sociation for Nonsmokers-Minnesota and the American Lung Association. According to Noecker, it was reviewed by the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association and the Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors, and they raised no objections.

Health advocates and condo residents said the ordinance is needed. "Although its passage will not be the end of our fight to rid second-hand smoke from our building and other buildings, it's a huge step in the right direction," said Gallery Tower residents Jeff Tentinger and Robin Werrbach, the couple whose situation led to the ordinance. Tentinger and Werrbach said they have an elderly neighbor with asthma who is greatly affected by second-hand smoke.

"Second-hand smoke is a significant health hazard," said Kathy Klimoski, a resident of Regency Condominiums, 2275 Youngman Ave., who was involved in having that building designated non-smoking. "Second-hand smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals, 70 of which are known to cause cancer in humans. Second-hand smoke also moves easily from unit to unit."

"Building design can't control exposure to second-hand smoke," said Dr. Thomas Kottke, immediate past president of the Twin Cities Medical Society and a resident of Merriam Park. "A building's heating, ventilating

The smoking disclosure form will be... attached to the TISH report and will be the responsibility of the home seller to provide.

and air conditioning system can distribute second-hand smoke throughout the building. And third-hand smoke—the residue and chemicals that are left behind when smoke settles in a room—is also hazardous to health. These chemicals can be absorbed through the skin or ingested by young children and pets."

Margaret Etta Meyer of the Ninth Street Lofts worked to have her downtown building designated nonsmoking. "The most important reason for the ordinance is that people looking to buy or rent a home deserve to know if they and their children will be exposed to second-hand smoke," she said. "Both of my parents smoked a pack a day, and now my sister and I, who chose to be nonsmokers, live with chronic lung issues."

The ordinance was opposed by Saint Paul's TISH Board of Evaluators. The eight-member board meets quarterly to make sure that the city's real estate disclosure requirements are met. It develops guidelines for enforcing the city's building and maintenance codes, and

it oversees testing and renewal standards for TISH-licensed evaluators.

In a letter to the City Council, TISH board members criticized the ordinance's language for being vague and potentially problematic. They asked to have a formal hearing before the council acted on the ordinance, but were denied. As an alternative, the TISH board recommended that TISH reports inform prospective buyers that they should ask building management or the home seller about the building's smoking policies.

TISH board member Vicki Baucom said the appropriate place for disclosing smoking restrictions is in legal association declarations, which are public documents filed in the Ramsey County recorder's office. According to her, home buyers ought to perform their own due diligence. "Smoking choices are a personal preference and a personal responsibility," she said.

Other TISH board members were worried that licensed TISH evaluators would be held liable if information about smoking is not properly conveyed on TISH reports. However, Noecker said, the smoking disclosure form will be provided by the home seller in a separate section attached to the TISH report. The disclosure will be the responsibility of the seller, she said, and it will not be part of the TISH evaluator's work.

Assistance tops \$6.3M for St. Paul businesses affected by unrest, pandemic

By JANE MCCLURE

City and nonprofit programs have provided \$1.6 million for Saint Paul businesses needing help to recover from last summer's civil unrest. Another \$4.7 million has been distributed to help small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saint Paul City Council members want to see those efforts continue, with one focus being on helping small business owners buy their own properties. That is especially true of the civil unrest recovery funding, of which \$1.98 million is still available.

The City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), reviewed the business assistance programs on January 13. The Union Park District Council (UPDC) also heard an update on January 6 regarding the Neighbors United Fund that it oversees.

Both the HRA and district council discussions focused on commercial building ownership as a priority for businesses that were damaged or displaced by the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police.

One of the most high-profile efforts to support businesses affected by civil unrest is the Neighbors United Fund, which was set up by the Minnesota United soccer team, the UPDC and the Hamline-Midway Coalition. The city's totals show that Neighbors United has targeted 22 businesses, including 15 that are still awaiting final action. A total of \$1.58 million has been raised, with \$515,700 committed and \$145,700 disbursed.

Some of the businesses receiving grants ranging from \$10,700-\$50,000 were Double V Spirits/Snelling Fine Wines and Spirits, Great Health Nutrition, 7 Nails and Zany's Boutique. Several more grants were awarded through Nexus Community Partners, a nonprofit organization working with Neighbors United.

The Neighbors United advisory committee is also considering a request from Bole, an Ethiopian restaurant that lost its building at University Avenue and Syndicate Street to arson. Bole sought \$50,000 and has been recommended to receive \$25,000. The restaurant is reopening, but in the Como neighborhood.

The We Love Midway and We Love Saint Paul funds overseen by the Midway and Saint

Paul chambers of commerce has assisted 81 businesses in the city, including four in the approval pipeline. More than \$1 million has been raised, with \$890,000 disbursed.

Let's Rebuild: African Immigrant Businesses in Minnesota is overseen by African Economic Development Solutions. It has raised \$487,000 and disbursed \$165,000 while assisting 85 Saint Paul businesses.

The Asian Business Recovery Fund overseen by the Asian Economic Development Association has raised \$504,000 and disbursed \$428,600 to 38 businesses in Saint Paul. Both the Asian- and African-focused groups disperse funds to businesses throughout the Twin Cities.

The East Side Business Association raised and disbursed more than \$15,000 to 15 East Side businesses.

City staff continue to monitor businesses affected by the civil unrest, said Mary Rick, business development director for the city's Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED). Of 261 businesses directly impacted, 131 have been repaired and another 73 still need repairs. Other buildings have

been condemned, are vacant or boarded up.

The HRA also reviewed pandemic-related spending. Grants from the Bridge Fund, supported in part by federal CARES Act dollars, have gotten out quickly. The fund provides one-time \$7,500 grants for retail businesses with under \$2 million in annual revenue, said Andrew Hestness, principal projects manager for PED. Eligible businesses must have been impacted by an order by the governor related to the pandemic.

The initial 10-day application period drew 2,107 requests, which Hestness said was far more than the city could assist. A total of 555 businesses received funds, with \$2.85 million distributed to 380 businesses during the summer and \$1.31 million to 175 businesses in the fall.

Hestness said a third round of grants is now underway, with \$562,000 to be split among 75 businesses. City officials will continue to direct businesses to other sources such as the federal Paycheck Protection Program, and other pandemic-related programs as they become available.

Expanded programming in offering with merger of JCCs

New Minnesota JCC will keep centers in St. Paul and Mpls.

By CAROLYN WALKUP

In an effort to expand its programming and membership, the Jewish Community Centers of Saint Paul and Minneapolis have merged. The new Minnesota Jewish Community Center will continue to operate its long-standing facilities at 1375 Saint Paul Ave. and 4330 S. Cedar Lake Road. “But by combining, we’ll have more resources for programs, scholarships and facility development,” said Michael Waldman, CEO. “It’s all about reaching more people.”

JCC membership and programming is open to everyone regardless of religion, race or national origin. Following the merger, “everything that people love about the JCC will remain the same,” Waldman said. “The merger allows us to grow and to do new things.”

Waldman did not specify any new programming as the result of the merger. For the present, the JCC is focused on transitioning from COVID-19 precautions to a more normal schedule. The fitness centers recently reopened at 25 percent capacity, but the locker rooms and the day care programs remain closed, and so do the running track and gymnasium.

With the merger, the Minnesota JCC’s Saint Paul and Minneapolis locations will retain their traditional names, which recognize

major benefactors. The Capp Center in Saint Paul honors the late Martin and Esther Capp, Highland Park residents who donated funds for the building of the current JCC in 1964. Martin Capp was a pioneer in prefabricated housing who also built and leased commercial properties.

The Sabes Center in Minneapolis is named for native Minneapolitan Robert Sabes, chairman and CEO of RW Sabes Enterprises of Las Vegas and chairman of the Sabes Family Foundation.

Waldman joined the JCC staff in 2001 as a program director at Camp Butwin, the summer day camp for children in Eagan. He grew up in Highland Park and attended JCC programs from a young age. In 2005 he left Camp Butwin and moved to San Antonio where he was named chief operating officer of the JCC there. He returned to the Twin Cities in 2010 to accept the CEO position at the Capp Center.

The Minnesota JCC will build on the legacy of the past to meet the needs of current JCC members, Waldman said. The Capp Center illustrates that legacy with a permanent exhibit of photographs highlighting the JCC’s history in Saint Paul.

The Saint Paul JCC was founded in 1930 as the Jewish Education Center at 741 Holly Ave. The center helped Jewish immigrants adapt to their new home in the Twin Cities. Renamed the JCC, it moved to the corner of Juno and Cretin avenues in the 1950s before moving to its current location.

Camp Butwin was founded in 1958 on 88 wooded acres on the shores of Lake O’Brien in Eagan. In the 1970s and ’80s, the JCC introduced early childhood education, services for



Former Jewish Community Center of Saint Paul CEO Michael Waldman is serving as CEO of the new Minnesota JCC with his office at Saint Paul’s Capp Center. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

seniors and the disabled, and new programming to help resettle two waves of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

In the 1990s the JCC added a child care wing, a health and fitness wing, a teen lounge and new administrative offices. A larger \$16 million renovation was completed in 2018. It included a state-of-the-art fitness and wellness center, new facilities for cultural performances and exhibits, upgraded security and technology systems, and a new aquatics center with swimming pools for adults and children, a water slide and splash pool.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 last spring, the JCC had to pivot from in-person to virtual gatherings, according to Waldman. However,

the online presentations of many programs worked quite well, he said. For example, the monthly speaker series that regularly attracted between 30 and 40 adults in-person has drawn as many as 100 viewers when presented virtually. Virtual programming has proven to be especially beneficial to JCC members who are homebound or otherwise isolated, Waldman added.

The JCC is planning to hold its summer camp in 2021 in-person at both Camp Butwin and the Sabes Center, Waldman said. The camps normally enroll between 700 and 1,000 children, and every effort is being taken to make them COVID-19 safe, he added.

For information, visit minnesotajcc.org.

Ramsey County, city’s public schools release legislative wish list

More pandemic relief, criminal justice reform, money for new transit among top requests

By JANE MCCLURE

Both Ramsey County and the Saint Paul Public Schools will be lobbying the Minnesota Legislature this year for additional funds to address the added costs and reduced revenue resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the 2021 legislative agendas reviewed by the County Board and School Board in the past month.

Governor Tim Walz is expected to submit his proposed budget for the 2021-23 biennium in February using the state budget forecast from November 2020 as a base. The fiscal challenges will be great, local officials agree. Though a state surplus of \$641 million is projected for the current biennium ending

June 30, a deficit of \$1.27 billion is expected for the following two years. However, the outlook could change with the release of the next state budget forecast in February.

Ramsey County’s 12-page legislative agenda includes a request for ongoing pandemic support. This involves more money for community education, COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing, COVID tests and the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Criminal justice is another focus of the agenda. Ramsey County supports legislation proposed by the People of Color and Indigenous Caucus to reform the investigation and prosecution of officer-involved deaths and wrongful actions, to increase police accountability and transparency, to raise standards of police conduct and to rebuild the local community’s trust in police forces.

Ramsey County is calling for efforts to reduce the possible harm to offenders from strict penalties for lower-level crimes. Among the proposals is more flexibility in waiving criminal fines and the suspension of drivers’ licenses for failure to pay fines. Another pro-

posal is to enable prosecutors to initiate motions to reduce a criminal’s sentence based on his or her success in rehabilitation programs or abiding by the conditions of supervised release.

The county is also requesting reforms to the cash bail process to include a new risk assessment tool and to release individuals back into society if they are determined not to be a risk. There is also a call for legislation to automate the process of sealing a person’s criminal record for low-level felonies and lesser crimes following a specific waiting period.

“Criminal records and the collateral consequences long after people have fulfilled their obligations to the justice system serve as barriers to jobs, housing, education and more, preventing people from serving as productive members of our community,” the county’s legislative agenda states.

Other county priorities for the current legislative session include better access to health care, more support for mental health services, more support for programs serving children and families, and more funding for

transportation projects. Although 2021 is not a bonding session, Ramsey County has three bonding requests—\$40 million to build a pedestrian deck overlooking the Mississippi River along Kellogg Boulevard, \$2.5 million for Rush Line bus rapid transit and \$2.5 million for ongoing transit studies in the Riverview Corridor between downtown Saint Paul and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.

Both the Ramsey County Board and the Saint Paul School Board are seeking a reduction in state government mandates that add costs and complexities to their operations.

The Saint Paul Public Schools will be seeking more funds from the state to address the effects of the pandemic, including the added costs of providing student transportation and school lunch and a drop in enrollment and the resulting reduction in state per-pupil aid.

The school district is also seeking legislation to promote the racial diversity of teachers, provide more mental health services for students, fully fund early childhood screening mandates, and provide more resources to stabilize families and serve homeless students.

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HPC supports historic status for Lex-Ham building

By JANE MCCLURE

The former Saint Paul Casket Company, 1222 University Ave., won the unanimous support of the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on January 11 for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The status could help the building's owners receive state and federal historic tax credits when they convert the four-story building to new uses.

The State Historic Preservation Board will consider the nomination on February 16. The decision is ultimately in the hands of the National Park Service.

Saint Paul-based developer JB Vang and Duane Lund of the commercial real estate firm NAI Legacy purchased the distinctive building for \$2.15 million in 2019. Last year, the Metropolitan Council awarded the developers a \$49,200 grant for an environmental assessment and hazardous material abatement, a vapor mitigation test and other activities. At that time, the plans called for the building to be converted into 62 affordable housing units.

HPC staff recommended approval of the designation, stating that the Saint Paul Casket Company building "is locally significant as the home of the most important casket manufacturer in Saint Paul and one of the most important in Minnesota."

Commissioners agreed that the building is worthy of the National Register. It is one of the few remaining buildings from what was once a largely industrial area south of University and west of Lexington Parkway.

"It would be wonderful to see it preserved," said commissioner Leeta Douglas.

Commissioner Joseph Peroutka agreed, noting that the former casket company is in an area that has seen its third wave of building demolitions. "It's an important piece of architecture," he said.

The building's original occupant started out as the North Saint Paul Casket Company in 1887. The company moved to Saint Paul and changed its name in 1923.

The four-story, concrete and stucco building is located on the south side of University between Griggs and Syndicate streets. It was

built in 1922-23 and designed with Modern Gothic details by the Saint Paul architectural firm of Allen H. Stem and associate architect Roy H. Haslund. Stem was a noted architect whose work included several railway terminals, institutional buildings and mansions.

The building, which cost \$150,000 to construct, according to the National Register application, has piers modeled as buttresses and its 104-foot-tall central tower houses a water tank for fire suppression. The structure is an example of a vertical manufacturing building with different floors used during the casket manufacturing process.

The building housed various commercial functions after the casket company moved out in 1951. During the 1950s and early '60s, it served as the office and warehouse for the Snyder Drug Stores chain. The building sat vacant from 1962 until the '70s and later housed other businesses, including Landfill Music and Books.

The building's exterior has not changed much over time, and most windows and doors appear to be original. Inside it still has its open



The central tower of the former Saint Paul Casket Company building at 1222 University Ave.

floor areas and mushroom-shaped columns, a large freight elevator, terrazzo floors and a spiral staircase with ornate metal railings.

Federation debates new look for 7-story Alvera building on West 7th

By JANE MCCLURE

A controversial seven-story, mixed-use building at 337 W. Seventh St. is again generating neighborhood debate, this time over its exterior materials and public art. After more than an hour of discussion on January 11, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation postponed a vote on whether or not a synthetic stucco material called EIFS should be allowed to be used on the building.

After a wide-ranging debate over the durability of materials and what kind of public art would be appropriate in the neighborhood, board president Dana de Master said more information was needed. The board could make a decision at its February meeting or do an online vote.

Last year, the Ackerberg Group and North-

land Real Estate Group got city approvals for the Alvera, a \$40 million project that is expected to be completed later this year on the former site of Bonfe Auto Service's Mechanical Center. It will have 192 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartment units, 1,400 square feet of retail space and 110 structured parking stalls. The project was opposed by many neighbors because of its height and massing. Federation board members recommended approval.

One approval was for traditional neighborhoods zoning, which requires building exteriors to be finished with materials such as brick, stone, concrete, glass or metal. Materials not considered acceptable include vinyl, fiberglass, fiberboard and synthetic stucco, which is known as exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS).

Architect Aron Johnson said the variance for materials is needed so that areas of the building can be adorned with large-scale murals painted onto the EIFS. Federation board members said that while they do not want to see the same cookie-cutter apartment building design that is popping up throughout the city, they also did not like the idea of changing building materials.

Some board members said the EIFS looks cheap. Previous discussions of the building called for more use of metal panels and glass.

The debate also included criticism of the developer's decision to hire an artist from San Francisco to create the art installations rather than a local artist.

While the choice of the artist is not an issue the district council has any say in, hiring an out-of-state artist rankled some board mem-

bers. They noted that the neighborhood includes many artists, including a large art community in the Schmidt Artists' Lofts.

The developers worked with the nonprofit Forecast Public Art and its consultant, Tricia Heuring, to find an artist for the building. Artist Aaron De La Cruz was chosen for his past work. He described how he drew on the nearby United and Children's hospitals for inspiration, with a "mother's embrace" as one theme. Another idea is to replicate the colors of a serape.

"I don't feel as if that really reflects the community and its history," said board member Elyse Jensen.

Johnson and Heuring said the work of local artists would be featured around the building's base and that De La Cruz would be willing to coordinate those efforts with them.

News Briefs

Proposed mixed-use building may grow at Randolph-Snelling

A six-story, 115-unit mixed-use building being proposed at the southwest corner of Randolph and Snelling avenues could end up being even larger.

The project was initially eyed for the Highland Service/Minnoco gas station and car wash at 485 S. Snelling Ave. Developer Oppidan has since been offered the chance to buy two additional commercial properties east of the site.

Almost 50 people reviewed the project plans on January 13 during a virtual meeting of the Highland and Macalester-Groveland community council's land use committees. No action was taken, but area residents had the chance to ask questions about traffic, construction and parking impacts.

The latest proposal calls for a 68-foot-tall building, which will require a conditional use permit. The property is zoned for Traditional Neighborhoods 3 use, which allows a height of up to 55 feet.

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, commercial and tenant amenity spaces. Floors two through six would be a mix of apartments, with studios, alcoves, one- and two-bedroom units.

Traffic and parking were the big concerns expressed on January 13, with neighbors raising issues about spillover parking, construc-

tion worker parking, potential traffic conflicts with the Walgreens store across the street and the possibility of residential permit parking on streets to the south. The building plans currently do not have access to the Randolph-Juno Avenue alley, but that could change if the two properties to the east are added.

Neighbors and committee members also asked about affordable housing. Oppidan's Paul Tucci said the apartments will be market-rate.

Rezoning recommended for new Marshall-Cleveland apartments

A proposal to rezone 2069 Marshall Ave. to make way for a five-story apartment building on the northwest corner of Cleveland and Marshall avenues has cleared its first hurdle with a 5-0 recommendation from the Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee on January 14. The full Planning Commission will consider the rezoning on January 22 before it heads to the City Council for another public hearing and final vote.

Developers David Kvasnik and Robert Page wish to tear down houses at 2063 and 2069 Marshall to make way for the 48-unit apartment building. The corner house at 2063 Marshall was rezoned to Traditional Neighborhoods 3 (TN3) in 2018 as part of a West Marshall Avenue rezoning study. The house next door at 2069 Marshall is zoned TN2.

City staff recommended approval of the rezoning, citing consistency with development trends and with city and neighborhood plans. What has frustrated neighbors and members

of the Union Park District Council (UPDC) are the lack of details and the speed at which the project is being pushed through the city approval process.

UPDC land use committee cochairs Sarah Dvorak and Dean Cummings said the council has not received enough information to weigh in on the proposed zoning change. "We do want to see development there, but what will it look like?" Cummings asked. The land use committee laid the request over in December, asking for more project details and more time for neighbors to comment.

Kvasnik said the project needs to move forward to meet his and his partner's timeline. They would like to tear down the houses this summer and complete the new building by the fall of 2022. A lot of money has been invested in planning this development, Kvasnik added.

"I'm not sure that Union Park District Council has the right to stop my process at this point," he said.

The five-story building would include structured parking and commercial space on the first floor and four floors of apartments above. Kvasnik has told UPDC members that the developers have a second plan for a smaller apartment building if the property cannot be rezoned.

Kvasnik and Page have promoted their apartment building as workforce housing. UPDC members have pushed for more affordable units. The developers stated on their zoning request forms that they "may pursue a parking variance to accommodate additional, more affordable studio apartments."

Reparations for city's Blacks to be studied by new commission

The Saint Paul City Council voted on January 13 to appoint a commission to study public reparations to Black Americans for the slavery and racist conditions endured by their ancestors before and after the Civil War. The vote creates a Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission.

All seven council members, led by Jane Prince, signed onto the resolution. Prince said the intent is to figure out how to make investments that help the city's Black community and address disparities. One source of funding might be a special tax on tobacco or legal cannabis products.

Prince worked on the initiative with former mayoral candidate Trahern Crews, journalist Georgia Fort and a larger group. Ideas were shaped in discussions over a two-year period. The three spoke on January 13 of the need for racial healing through reparations.

The council apologized for past actions, ranging from the landmark Dred Scott pre-Civil War dispute over slavery, redlining of neighborhoods to keep Blacks out, and the destruction of the Rondo neighborhood to make way for I-94.

Council members said the newly created commission will look broadly at possible solutions. One key issue to be addressed is the inequity in city resources between largely white neighborhoods and other more diverse parts of Saint Paul.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.



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VIEWPOINT

INBOX

Poor response to failing grades

As parents of students in the Saint Paul Public Schools, we were disappointed to read that Kate Wilcox-Harris, the school district's chief academic officer, is advocating a change to the grading system in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (*Villager*, January 6). This appears to be a move to obscure the fact that the number of failing grades has increased dramatically across the district during distance learning. Changing the grading system might reduce the number of failing students, but it will not address the heart of the matter.

We can debate whether the shift to distance learning has been an appropriate response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a public health measure. But let's acknowledge that distance learning has been a total failure in educational terms, especially for the district's American Indian, Asian, Hispanic and Black students, who are failing at record rates. Long-standing achievement gaps have gotten even worse.

Let's not use the pandemic as an excuse to further water down achievement standards for our students. They all deserve a rigorous, high-quality education.

*Eric Carter
Neela Nandyal
Macalester-Groveland*

A season for love, peace and joy

In response to the letter, "Christmas fatigue" by Kathleen Deming (*Villager* Inbox, January 6): We all strive to attain sanity in our country—especially after 2020—by way of peace and love, as all of the yard signs state to do, right? Yes, the holiday season advertisements start earlier than ever, but that is expected in a consumer-happy and capitalistic society. In my home, the commercials are put on mute. Packages arrive, but not so that one can't have a peaceful moment, but so that the recipient is given a gift by another. The smiling delivery driver understands.

Great it is that Ms. Deming gave many of her gifts away to charity out of love. As for her sympathy for those not of the Christian faith, they do see the Christmas displays. We see their holiday displays, especially in Highland Park, and it doesn't bother me. As for the Christmas music, it's beautiful and mostly sacred. With all of the noise we hear each holiday season, I'd rather have Christmas music than the commercials, political ads and other music that is so often vulgar.

Isn't Christmas Eve just a beautiful, quiet night when just about all is closed in observance of the Holy Night that billions around the world have celebrated since His birth? Be grateful you receive gifts; some people don't receive any. As for those glittery cards and foil-lined envelopes, aren't they lovely and well-crafted? Someone took the time to think of you and express their greeting at a time when in-person contact and

communication is discouraged due to overreaching COVID mandates. If the cards are non-recyclable, turn them into a craft or burn them in your fire pit this spring and summer.

The holiday season is not all about the planet. It's about love, peace, joy, and giving and receiving. Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

*Michael Janiski
Highland Park*

Nation in need of healing

On January 6, a neighbor told me that a riotous mob was storming the U.S. Capitol. When I turned on MPR, I learned that President Trump had claimed yet again that the election had been "stolen" and urged "his people" to advance on the Capitol where Congress was about to certify the votes of the Electoral College.

As the news unfolded, I cried. In 1966 when I was 22 years old, I raised my right hand as a new second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and promised to uphold the Constitution—a variation of the same oath taken by all federal employees, members of Congress, the president and vice president.

In the Capitol, while members of Congress were being hustled by attendants to hidden locations, several staffers had the presence of mind to haul off to safety the two wooden chests that held the paper electoral ballots so that those wouldn't fall into the hands of the mob. The armed rioters overpowered Capitol police and forced their way into the chambers of congress and congressional offices. The world looked on and asked how our nation, the epitome of democracy, had turned into a banana republic.

When President-elect Biden urged President Trump to go immediately on television and urge people to leave the Capitol, the response was yet another idiotic video in which he told his followers that even though the election had been stolen, they should all go home. It made me sick.

Let's pray that we can begin a time of national healing and sanity.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

New direction for Mendota Hts.?

The Mendota Heights City Council welcomed the New Year with new council member John Mazzitello and new Mayor Stephanie Levine. There is reason to believe that the city's special character as a largely residential community and its long tradition of prudent, responsible governance will be severely compromised with the installation of these two individuals. This claim is based on their recent decisions and stated preferences pertaining to the city's future.

Mr. Mazzitello's public record indicates support for dense development aligned with the Metropolitan Council's priorities for the city, halving the city's minimum lot sizes, pandering to developers and selling property in the city's Wentworth Park at a fraction of its worth. His appointment

to the council was made possible by the support of Mayor-elect Levine. In a special City Council session on December 8, almost a full month before being sworn in, Levine was asked by the three sitting council members to offer advice on the selection of the finalists for the vacant council seat. Mr. Mazzitello was her top choice.

*Thomas Smith
Mendota Heights*

Know Sibley's history—indeed

Regarding the letter, "Know the history behind the name" (*Villager* Inbox, December 23) about former Minnesota governor and military leader Henry Sibley:

Readers need to understand the epic, violent and often corrupt time in which Sibley lived. For example, Fort Snelling was truly a center of Sibley's professional career. His connection to the fort enriched him through interests in government contracts, including providing supplies for the benefit of the Dakota people held in the federal concentration camp at the fort.

Sibley used his position at the fort to participate in the dispossession of the captive Dakota of their land scrip in one of the most outrageous land thefts in state history. He also oversaw the military tribunal that, without any semblance of due process, sentenced more than 300 Dakota soldiers to death, resulting in the hanging of 38 Dakota soldiers on the day after Christmas in 1865 in the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

Sibley also played a role in the 1841 Doty Treaties that sought to dispossess the mixed-ancestry Dakota of the land guaranteed to them under Article IX of the 1831 Treaty of Prairie du Chien. The efforts were so flawed that the U.S. Senate refused to ratify them—twice.

History matters. Perspective matters. Learning history is not a practice of cancellation culture, but of being an informed citizen. The history is there. Please, seek it out.

*Joseph Halloran
Macalester-Groveland*

When hatred is left to brew

Watching the insanity in Washington, D.C., as Trump supporters stormed the Capitol reminded me of my days as a counselor, when those who couldn't let go of their hatred would have that hatred brew in them forever.

*Paul Paulos
Macalester-Groveland*

The *Villager* welcomes letters to the editor and guest editorials. To be considered for publication, all commentary must be signed, indicate the neighborhood in which the writer lives and provide a phone number for verification purposes. Send your commentary to the *Villager*, 757 S. Snelling Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55116; email it to letters@myvillager.com; or submit it at myvillager.com/editorial.

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Winter Carnival serves up traditions with a twist

Drive-through sculpture park among new events

The 135th edition of the Saint Paul Winter Carnival will be held from January 28-February 7 with safety precautions in place to stem the spread of the coronavirus pandemic while still encouraging revelers to embrace the season.

"The majority of our 2021 events will be held outdoors and all will abide by COVID-19 protocols, such as social distancing and mask wearing," said Deb Schaber, president and CEO of the Saint Paul Festival and Heritage Foundation, the producer of the carnival.

Some of carnival's annual events have been cancelled this year due to the pandemic, including the parades. However, there will be new twists on some of the other signature activities. That includes combining the ice carving and snow sculpture contests into a drive-through event that will be held on each day of the carnival at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$20 per vehicle.

A new Saint Paul Scavenger Hunt will be held daily from January 28-February 7 to encourage people to explore the city's parks and other attractions.

There will also be a new Crafted: A Winter Carnival Craft Drink Experience. An exclusive passport will admit participants to local breweries, distilleries and artisan coffee shops daily through Sunday, February 14.

The fifth annual Fire & Ice: Winter Carnival Art Show, featuring the work of Minnesota artists, is running from now through Sunday, February 21, at AZ Gallery in the Northern Warehouse



Building, 308 Prince St.

And a digital Winter Carnival Ice Fishing Contest is running from now through Sunday, February 7, offering prizes in a wide variety of categories at a cost of \$10 per entry.

Other highlights of the 2021 Saint Paul Winter Carnival include:

Saturday, January 30—The Winter Carnival Puzzle Competition will be held in-person during the morning of January 30 at Landmark Center. This year's puzzle art was designed by Adam Turman, who also created the images for this year's carnival buttons.

—The 36th annual Securian Financial Winter Run will be held both in-person with a 5K at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. around Lake Phalen, and virtually with a 5K, 10K and half marathon.

—A virtual Winter Carnival Family Day will take place with performances,

seminars, storytelling, and arts and crafts lessons.

—The Saint Paul Hotel Hot Cocoa Drive-Up will be held from noon-3 p.m. at the hotel.

—The 47th annual Winter Carnival Orchid Show at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory will take place on Saturday and Sunday, January 30-31. Visit comozooconservatory.org.

—The Klondike Kate Cabaret will be shown on the carnival's Facebook page and YouTube channel beginning at 10 a.m. as the Kates celebrate their 50th anniversary in story and song. The 2020-21 Kate is Shelley Pabst.

Sunday, January 31—The Winter Carnival Puzzle Competition will be held virtually with teams taking part from home via Zoom.

Thursday, February 4—A Frozen Family Fun Night will be held from 5-8 p.m. at the Keg & Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St. The event will include performances, snow princesses, a bonfire, family-friendly activities, and more.

Saturday, February 6—A virtual Winter Carnival Family Day will be held for a second Saturday filled with performances, art lessons, stories and more.

—Union Depot's Doggie Depot has gone virtual this year, but will still include the crowning of the Canine King and Queen, giveaways, virtual marketplace, pet experts and canine yoga. Visit uniondepot.org/doggiedepot.

Winter Carnival buttons cost \$5 for one and \$19 for a collector's four-pack, and are available at Cub Foods, participating retailers, and the carnival website. Visit wintercarnival.com.

Army Corps suspends hearing on Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock sale

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has suspended the public review of an Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam disposition study to allow the study team to update the draft report to reflect new legislation that authorizes the Secretary of the Army to convey land adjacent to the lock to the city of Minneapolis for recreational purposes.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 was approved by Congress

and signed into law on December 27. In addition to the land conveyance, it provides licenses pertaining to the lock structures for recreation, tourism and interpretative purposes. The Army Corps will also conduct a survey to determine which portion of the land can be transferred to the city as soon as possible.

The Corps released the initial disposition study for two months of public review beginning on December 16. In it,

the Corps recommended complete disposal of the federal government's interest in the Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock, along with a monetary incentive to sweeten the sale of the lock. The new legislation does not change that recommendation.

Once updated, the draft report on the lock and dam disposition study will be reposted on the Army Corps' website at mvp.usace.army.mil/MplsLocksDisposition/.

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EDUCATION

CDH plants seeds of social change with Justice Week

Students will delve into dynamics of race through host of special programs

BY ANNE MURPHY

Winter is a time for planting at Cretin-Derham Hall. Every February for the past 20 years, students have been given the seeds of understanding to help them cultivate a more just society. The harvest is not expected right away, according to Lou Anne Tighe of CDH's Religious Studies Department. "The change may not come until later in a student's life," she said. "To move from pondering and reflection to a change in attitude—that's what we hope for from Justice Week at CDH."

Tighe serves as the moderator of Justice Week, scheduled from February 8-12 at the high school, 550 S. Albert St. The theme this year, the Dynamics of Race, comes in response to the death of George Floyd last May. "We've been doing race and diversity work for decades," Tighe said, "but the death of George Floyd was a turning point. It went from 'this would be a good thing to do' to 'we cannot not do this.' It would be irresponsible to not do this."

CDH's attention to social justice stems from the school's dedication to Christian values and academic excellence, according to Tighe. It is an extension of the values of CDH's co-sponsors, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. "The Christian Brothers are dedicated to education for social transformation," Tighe said. "The Sisters of Saint Joseph are devoted to the love of neighbor without distinction."

Past Justice Week themes have included immigration, gender equity, environmental justice, human rights and seeking justice through the fine arts. Among the speakers were Jackson Katz, author of *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity*; the late Reverend Samuel Billy Kyles, who was on the Memphis motel balcony with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he was assassinated; and young women who have been victims of sex trafficking.



Cretin-Derham Hall sophomore Greta Cunningham and junior Annie Noyes create a poster for the high school's upcoming Justice Week programming on The Dynamics of Race. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Planned by students as well as faculty, this year's Justice Week will cover Pope Francis' message about dismantling racism; student experiences of racism in college; race and the COVID-19 pandemic; race and law enforcement; racial identity, social perceptions of race and their impact on mental health; and race and neighborhood development.

Featured speakers will include Black author and professor Carolyn Holbrook, who will read from her new collection of essays, *Tell Me Your Names and I Will Testify*; and Bemidji State University professor Dr. Anton Treuer, who will address the topic, "Thriving in Indian Country: What Gets in the Way and How Do We Overcome?" There are also plans to have students read from *The Highwaymen*, a play produced by the History Theatre that documents the construction of I-94 through Saint Paul and the resulting destruction of much of the largely African American Rondo

"The most powerful manifestation of school spirit—and on a larger scale, patriotism—is to want to make the place you love better, to never be satisfied but to continue pushing for radical empathy."

neighborhood.

Students will also be creating a "Say Their Names" display. "The students and I will fabricate headstones and include the names of (people of color) who have been killed," Tighe said. "In addition to those who were killed by police, it will include the names of those who have died because of systemic racism, the Na-

tive Americans hanged in Mankato, the casualties of Wounded Knee."

"Racism has been an issue for a long time, but it's been getting more attention lately due to the protests of police brutality against people of color," said CDH junior Annie Noyes, a Highland Park resident. "We thought Justice Week would be a good opportunity to take action and become more involved."

"There isn't a moment in American history when racism hasn't been necessary to address," said CDH sophomore Greta Cunningham, a Macalester-Groveland resident. "But it's doubtless that in the wake of George Floyd's murder, there's a new willingness and readiness to examine and dismantle racism. By focusing on the dynamics of race, there's a unique opportunity to explore other elements of social justice."

"At CDH we've set up some protocols through the student council on how to have conversations on difficult issues," Tighe said. "That involves practical things: listen, be prepared to feel uncomfortable, be open to ambiguity. It's something we need to work on all of the time."

"The focus on race is important for CDH students, teachers and staff because it's a necessary action for justice and peace to be possible," Cunningham said. "To fully and accurately represent Catholicism as a school, we have to be committed to equality and equity. Anti-racism is a vital actualization of that commitment."

"We need to take leadership and come together as a community to fight for what we believe is right for the people around us who feel oppressed," Noyes said. "It's important to have everyone at CDH on the same page."

"The most powerful manifestation of school spirit—and on a larger scale, patriotism—is to want to make the place you love better, to never be satisfied but to continue pushing for radical empathy," Cunningham said. "This initiative is intended to strengthen, vitalize and expand the work we're doing as a school to support racial justice. As Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to be Antiracist*, explained, racist ideas can rain on us without us even realizing we're wet. We've worked to create an umbrella, but we have to check for leaks and execute plans to patch them."

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District Councils

Highland Park

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Taste of Ward 3—Help save the restaurants in Ward 3, which includes the Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland neighborhoods, by ordering takeout food from them through Saturday, January 23. Every two receipts submitted by January 27 will be entered into drawings for gift cards. Learn more by visiting tasteofward3.com.

HDC's impact in 2020—Watch a short YouTube slideshow of everything the Highland District Council was able to accomplish in 2020 with the help of neighborhood volunteers and board members by visiting bit.ly/HDC2020inreview.

At Home in Highland—Fun Highland Park-related activities that can be done from home will be featured in upcoming editions of the HDC's e-newsletter. Subscribe at bit.ly/HDCenews. This month's activity includes activities for enjoying winter. Get the list at bit.ly/HighlandWinterActivities.

Highland Business of the Month—The 5 Star Cafe in Sibley Plaza has been named the Highland Park Business of the Month for February. The cafe is reopening soon at 2469 W. Seventh St. following a two-month renovation project. Read an interview with the owner on the HDC's website.

Upcoming meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, January 25; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, February 4. All HDC meetings are currently being conducted online via Zoom. Links to access the meetings are being posted on the HDC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Taste of Ward 3—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council, together with the Highland District Council and others, are encouraging people to support local restaurants. Those who order from Ward 3 restaurants through January 23 may submit photos of their receipts to be entered in a drawing for restaurant gift cards. Learn more by visiting tasteofward3.com.

Community Building Team—Formerly the Community Building Committee, the newly named CBT has changed its meeting structure for 2021 to allow for more voices and informal participation. The CBT will meet quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for April 12. Smaller subgroup meetings relating to events and initiatives in the neighborhood will be held in between. To learn more, email mgcc@macgrove.org or sign up to receive meeting notices at macgrove.org/participate.

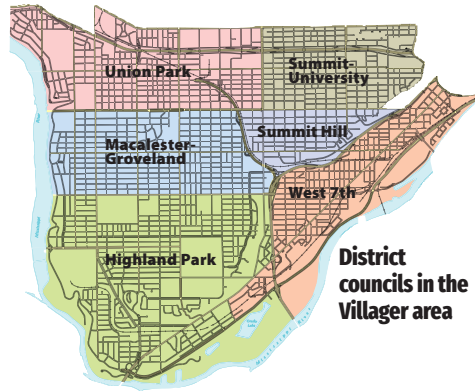
Show your neighborhood pride—Locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts can still be ordered online for home delivery. The shirts come in kiwi, heather indigo and dark heather in a variety of sizes. Visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation Committee on Monday, January 25; Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, January 27; Inclusivity Task Force on Thursday, February 4; and board of directors on Thursday, February 11. The meetings will be held virtually via Zoom beginning at 6:30 p.m. Sign up by visiting macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Summit Hill Plan—A Summit Hill Comprehensive Plan survey, which allows Summit Hill residents, business owners and visitors to have a hand in shaping the future of the neighborhood, will be available on the Summit Hill Association's website beginning the week of January 17. The plan is a compre-



District councils in the Villager area

hensive overview of every important aspect of Summit Hill, including housing and business regulations, zoning, parking, transportation, open areas and historic preservation. City officials will refer to the plan when making decisions on such issues as zoning and land uses. People can keep abreast of the plan's progress at summithillassociation.org/survey.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Helping the homeless—Numerous homeless camps have emerged across Union Park's neighborhoods. The Union Park District Council is working to help ensure that homeless people have the resources they need. The Saint Paul Camps Hub (linktr.ee/StpCampsHub) will connect people to different sources for making donations. An Amazon wish list (tinyurl.com/y6hj8wnf) has also been assembled for a Union Park encampment. People also may join Hamline-Midway Neighbors Helping Homeless Neighbors (tinyurl.com/yys3ur6p).

Upcoming online meetings—Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 20; Committee on Land Use and Development, 6:30 p.m. Friday, January 22; and Neighborhood Involvement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, January 25. To access the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or click on the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

COVID-19 resources—Union Park neighbors who need assistance related to the coronavirus are invited to call the UPDC office, visit its website or email info@unionparkdc.org.

Contact us—The public is invited to "like" the Union Park District Council on Facebook, follow it on Twitter at @UnionParkDC, and subscribe to its e-newsletter, "Neighborhood Matters," by emailing info@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Board update—At its meeting on January 11, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation board of directors heard a request for support of changing a portion of the exterior material of the Alvera apartments being built at 337 W. Seventh St. from metal panels to an exterior insulation finishing system, or EIFS. The change of building materials is to allow for hand painting a mural on four sides of the building. The board also reviewed initial concepts for the mural.

Freedom House update—A second public meeting has been scheduled for an update on Freedom House now that the day shelter for homeless people has begun operating out of Fire Station 51, 296 W. Seventh St. The virtual event will be held on the evening of Tuesday, January 26. For the log-in link, visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

Upcoming virtual meetings—Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, January 21; Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 3; Joint Riverview Task Force, 6 p.m. Thursday, February 4; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, February 8. Updated agendas and links to the Zoom meetings can be found by visiting fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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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—A robbery was reported on the 1200 block of East Maynard Drive at 3:31 a.m. Tuesday, December 29.

Burglary—Commercial break-ins were reported on the 1100 block of Rankin Street on December 24 and the 2000 block of West Seventh Street on December 28.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 400 block of South Snelling Avenue on December 24, the 1800 block of Graham Avenue on December 25, the 1400 block of Randolph Avenue on December 25, the 800 block of Montreal Circle on December 31, the 2300 block of Stewart Avenue on January 1, and the 2000 block of Scheffer Avenue on January 6.

—At least a dozen vehicles were stolen between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. The thefts were reported on the 800 block of South Cleveland Avenue on December 24; the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive, 2300 block of West Seventh Street and 1700 block of Field Avenue on December 25; the 2000 block of Worcester Avenue, 1700 block of Field, 600 block of South Snelling Avenue and 2300 block of West Seventh on December 26; the 1900 block of Montreal Avenue on December 27; the 600 block of South Lexington Parkway on December 30; the 1500 block of Saint Paul Avenue on December 31; and the 2100 block of Benson Avenue on January 1.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—A commercial burglary was reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 4:50 p.m. Monday, December 28.

—A residential break-in was reported on the 1200 block of Saint Anthony Avenue at 2:12 a.m. Tuesday, January 5.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1200 block of Dayton Avenue on Thursday, December 31.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A robbery was reported on the 1200 block of Saint Clair Avenue at 9:35 p.m. Saturday, January 2.

—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 400 block of Brimhall Street at 12:42 p.m. Monday, January 4.

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 2100 block of Princeton Avenue at 8:58 p.m. Saturday, December 26.

—A commercial break-in was reported on the 300 block of South Snelling Avenue at 2:57 a.m. Friday, January 1.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1400 block of Stanford Avenue on December 25 and the 1400 block of Goodrich Avenue on December 26.

—One vehicle was reported stolen on the 1500 block of Randolph Avenue on December 27, and three vehicles were stolen on the 2000 block of Fairmount Avenue on January 4-5.

Mendota Heights

Theft—Mail was reported stolen and a credit card was used to steal money from an account at 12:26 p.m. Wednesday, December 30, on the 600 block of Fourth Avenue.

—Several items were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1000 block of Douglas Road on Sunday, January 3.

Miscellaneous—A police officer activated his squad car's lights and siren in an attempt

to stop a vehicle that was seen weaving on southbound I-35E near Highway 62 at 9:47 p.m. Monday, January 4. The driver continued onto westbound I-494 and then southbound Highway 77, eventually ending up in Burnsville. A helicopter helped locate the vehicle and the driver was taken into custody.

Merriam Park

Robbery—Five University of Saint Thomas students were robbed at gunpoint by three suspects in black ski masks around 3 a.m. Saturday, January 16, on Cretin Avenue between Selby and Dayton avenues, according to the school's public safety officials. The students were walking when a vehicle pulled up next to them and the suspects got out, with one displaying a gun. The students were forced to turn over personal property. A single gunshot was fired into the air. The suspects drove off northbound on Cretin. None of the students was physically harmed and arrests were reportedly made regarding the incident.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1800 block of Feronia Avenue on December 25, and the 1900 block of University Avenue on December 27.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 1500 block of University Avenue at 11:07 p.m. Saturday, January 2.

Summit Hill

Burglary—Garage burglaries were reported on the 700 block of Osceola Avenue on December 24, and the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue on December 26.

Theft—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 900 block of Fairmount Avenue on Tuesday, December 29.

Summit-University

Burglary—Burglaries were reported on the 400 block of Holly Avenue on December 24, the 200 block of Fisk Street on December 29, the 500 block of Selby Avenue on January 4, and the 400 block of Dayton Avenue on January 5.

Theft—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 300 block of Portland Avenue on Saturday, January 2.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 700 block of Holly Avenue on December 31, the 800 block of Laurel Avenue on January 1, the 1000 block of Dayton Avenue on January 2, and the 700 block of Iglehart Avenue on January 5.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon was reported on the 700 block of Saint Anthony Avenue at 12:24 p.m. Wednesday, January 6.

West End

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 500 block of Jefferson Avenue at 11:16 a.m. Wednesday, December 30.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1100 block of West Seventh Street on December 27, the 800 block of Montreal Circle on December 27, and the 1000 block of Bayard Avenue on December 31.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1000 block of West Seventh Street on December 23, the 200 block of Wilkin Street on December 28, the 200 block of Duke Street on December 29, the 200 and 600 blocks of West Seventh on December 31, the 200 block of Duke on January 4, and on Douglas Street and Harrison Avenue on January 5.



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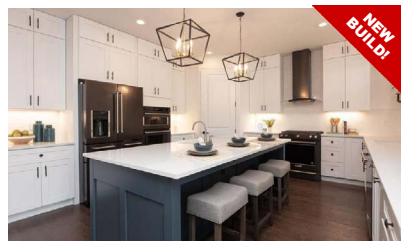
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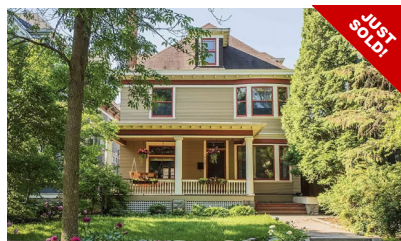
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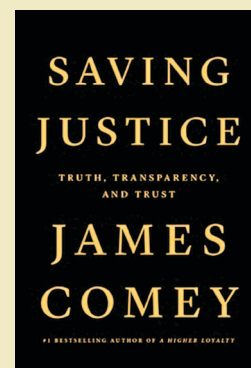
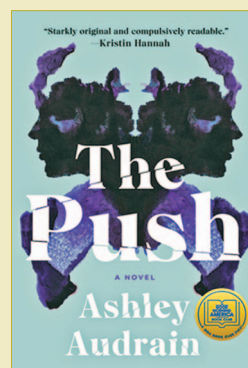
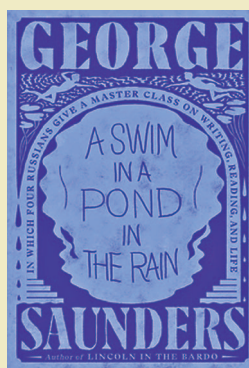
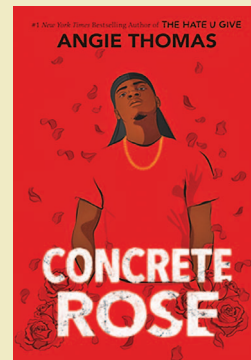
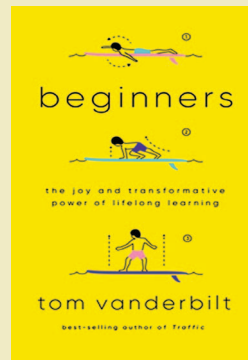
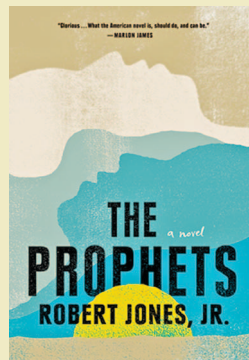
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ON THE TOWN

Our place in the Sundance

St. Paul's FilmNorth serves as a regional satellite for celebrated indie film fest

BY ANNE MURPHY

Due to COVID-19, the Sundance Institute's annual festival of independent films is being shown online this year from January 28 through February 3. Six of the films will be screened at Minneapolis' Riverview Theater through a partnership with the Saint Paul-based organization FilmNorth.

FilmNorth, 550 N. Vandalia St., is one of 30 organizations serving as regional satellites to bring Sundance's lineup of feature and short films to audiences across the United States. "Usually you'd have to go to Sundance to experience the festival," said FilmNorth executive director Andrew Peterson, referring to the Utah resort where the film festival was founded by actor Robert Redford in 1981.

FilmNorth will host the COVID-safe screenings at Riverview, 3800 42nd Ave. S. in Minneapolis (see story below). It has also organized four virtual panel discussions as part of the seven-day festival.

"Minnesota Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr.'s debut feature film *Wild Indian* will be included in our in-person screenings at the Riverview," Peterson said. "Corbine will be there to discuss the film. We'll also present an online conversation with Lyle and Sundance programmer Adam Piron.

"FilmNorth has a long history of partnering with the Sundance Institute on workshops and seminars," Peterson said. "We've done at least one seminar a year for the past eight years with Sundance senior staff and selected filmmakers visiting Saint Paul. We've also hosted screenings of Sundance films at the Walker Art Center."

This year's film festival "deepens the connection with Sundance,"

said FilmNorth business director Bethany Gladhill, a resident of the Summit-University neighborhood. Gladhill and Peterson joined FilmNorth in 2012, and according to her, the 2021 Sundance partnership represents how far FilmNorth has come since then.

"It was a very different organization (in 2012), one that was facing a lot of challenges," Gladhill said. "Back then our name was IFP Minnesota and our tagline was 'Find Your Voice.' What that really meant was that we had to find our voice and become more relevant to our constituency while reaching out to more people and empowering them to tell their stories.

"As we did that, we found ourselves becoming more and more authentic, more true to ourselves and our original impetus from decades ago," Gladhill said. "I think we thought that would make us hone and trim back our programming. Well, that hasn't really worked. We do more now than ever before. We're still serving mid-career and experienced filmmakers, but we're reaching a much wider range of people now."

"FilmNorth has grown a great deal over the past few years," Peterson said. "Registrations for classes have increased dramatically. We've almost doubled the number of youth summer camps we offer. We've created new programs that target artists age 55 and older and those between age 19 and 24. Perhaps most important, we've seen our members experience unprecedented success with national awards, top-tier film festival selections and prestigious fellowships."

FilmNorth's mission has helped it flourish even as COVID-19 threatened and continues to threaten the viability of local



Film North executive director Andrew Peterson stands outside the Riverview Theater in South Minneapolis where his organization will be hosting six screenings of independent films as part of the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

"I expect Wild Indian to be one of the great stories coming out of this year's festival," Peterson said. "It's an amazing film. The entire team behind the film is top-notch and very well known, so the eyes of the industry will definitely be on Wild Indian."

arts organizations, according to Gladhill. "I'm the original Saint Paul girl," she said. "Four generations of my family are Saint Paulites, and it's deep in my blood. I love this city's scrappiness, the way we dig deep to build what we need, and I think that matches FilmNorth's vision.

"When we look back over the last year, I think it's the arts that have kept us alive, that have nurtured hope and spirit," Gladhill said. "For a lot of us, that art has been film and media on the small screen. We've all learned a little more about what we value in that. So I hope FilmNorth can be an even bigger part of the city's identity as we slowly emerge (from COVID) and come together."

"Obviously, we've all struggled with COVID in ways that are both shared and unique," Peterson said.

"Our facility has been closed since March 12, 2020. Happily, we're experts in media arts, so we were able to quickly transition all of our programs online. Attendance in our classes and youth programs has actually increased during this period, and our reach has expanded with students from Tennessee, Utah and even internationally.

"Like all nonprofits in the state, we've taken financial hits due to COVID," Peterson added. "But we're proud of the way we've weathered this storm, even launching an Emergency Relief Fund for filmmakers and film crews, many of whom are independent contractors."

All Sundance screenings at the Riverview will be in keeping with prescribed safety guidelines, according to Peterson, from mask wearing to social distancing.

"Everything we're doing is grounded in safety," he said. "We're prepared to cancel and refund tickets for any in-person event based on close communication with the city, the state, Sundance and the Riverview."

"We're beyond thrilled that one of the films we'll be showing at Riverview is Corbine's *Wild Indian*," Peterson said. "The filmmaker from Garrison is a past McKnight Media Arts Fellow, a fellowship administered by FilmNorth, so we've been actively engaged with Lyle's career for years.

"I expect *Wild Indian* to be one of the great stories coming out of this year's festival," Peterson said. "It's an amazing film. The entire team behind the film is top-notch and very well known, so the eyes of the industry will definitely be on it. Lyle has had two short films in past Sundance Film Festivals, which led to a Sundance Fellowship as well as financing for his debut feature film. You'll be hearing a lot more from Lyle in the years to come."

For more information about FilmNorth and the Sundance Film Festival, visit myfilmmnorth.org and festival.sundance.org.

Six films in Sundance Fest will light up the silver screen at Riverview

FilmNorth has partnered with the Sundance Film Festival to present six of the festival's 72 independent feature films from January 28 through February 2 at the Riverview Theater, 3800 42nd Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The schedule includes:

Son of Monarchs by Alexis Gambis. About a biologist from New York who returns to his hometown in the monarch butterfly forests of Mexico and confronts traumas of his past. In English and Spanish with English subtitles. 8 p.m. Thursday.

How It Ends by Daryl Wein. About a woman who on the last day before the end

of the world heads to a final party and runs into an eclectic cast of characters on the way. Starring Olivia Wilde, Helen Hunt, Zoe Lister-Jones and Fred Armisen. 7:15 p.m. Friday.

Wild Indian by Minnesota writer-director Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr. About two men who as boys covered up the savage murder of a schoolmate and meet up years later to confront how the secret has irrevocably shaped their lives. Chaske Spencer, Michael Greyeyes, Jesse Eisenberg and Kate Bosworth star. 7:15 p.m. Saturday. Followed by a Q&A with Corbine.

The Blazing World by Carlson Young.

Decades after the accidental drowning of her twin sister, a young woman returns to her family home and is drawn to an alternate dimension where her sister may still be alive. Starring Vinessa Shaw, Dermot Mulroney and Udo Kier. 6:30 p.m. Sunday.

Judas and the Black Messiah by Shaka King. FBI informant William O'Neal infiltrates the Illinois Black Panther Party led by the charismatic Fred Hampton and lives in fear of discovery. Starring Daniel Kaluuya, Lakeith Stanfield, Jesse Plemons, Dominique Fishback, Lil Rey Howery and Martin Sheen. 8 p.m. Monday.

Writing With Fire by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh. A documentary about India's only women-run newspaper and its stories of police incompetence, caste and gender violence, injustice and intimidation. 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Tickets to the screenings are \$25. Seating is limited to 70 persons or 10 percent capacity. Facemasks will be required. Concessions will not be available, and outside food will not be allowed. Visit myfilmmnorth.org.

Sundance's entire selection of films is being shown online from January 28 through February 3. Visit festival.sundance.org.

ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Film

Rock Camp: The Musical. Summer camp meets *Spinal Tap* in this documentary about a rock 'n' roll fantasy camp where aspiring rock stars from around the world learn how to make music like their heroes. A cultural phenomenon since 1996, Rock Camp boasts a jaw-dropping staff that includes such luminaries as Roger Daltrey, Alice Cooper, Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Nancy Wilson, Jeff Beck, Joe Perry and Slash. The movie is available for streaming through January 28. Everyone who buys a ticket will be entered in a contest to win merchandise autographed by a few rock 'n' roll legends. Tickets are \$12. Visit soundunseen.com.

A five-week series of film noir will open with Stanley Kubrick's early masterpiece, *The Killing*, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, February 4, at the Heights Theater, 3951 Central Ave. NE. in Columbia Heights. Sterling Hayden stars in this 1956 film as a long-time crook who plans one last heist with a motley crew made up of a corrupt cop, a former pro wrestler, a bartender, a betting window teller and a loony sharpshooter. Tickets are \$12. Masks are required. The auditorium is limited to 25 percent capacity. Seats will be assigned for proper distancing between individual groups. For reservations, visit heightstheater.com.

Music

From salsa to rockabilly, a cappella orchestration to zydeco, the Ordway will offer five concerts online Fridays through Sundays from January 22 through February 21. Patrons can enjoy one concert each weekend or all five concerts on the same weekend.

Tickets are pay-what-you-wish. Featured acts include Stray Cats founder and Bass Player Hall of Fame member Lee Rocker; the a cappella group Naturally 7; the bagpipes, guitars, keyboards and drums of the Red Hot Chili Pipers; the 11-piece Williamsburg Salsa Orchestra; and MOJO and the Bayou Gypsies. For tickets, visit ordway.org.

From the Cellegbroederskapel in Maastricht in the Netherlands, Lyra Baroque Orchestra artistic director and harpsichordist Jacques Ogg will perform the music of 17th-century composers Philips, Frescobaldi, Froberger and Muffat in a recital live-streamed at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 23. Tickets are \$15, \$5 for students. To register for the link, visit lyrabaroque.org.

Four Minnesota artists of renown, harp guitarist Dan Schwartz, jazz guitarist Chris Olson, and finger-style guitarists Phil Heywood and Tim Sparks will perform in a Minnesota Guitar Society program at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 23, on the society's YouTube channel. Each performer will present a solo set. Heywood and Sparks hope to do a set of duets as well. The concert is free, but donations are welcome. For reservations, visit mnguitar.org.

The Minnesota Orchestra continues its winter series of free concerts at 8 p.m. Friday,

January 29, with a performance of Bach's Concerto in C minor and Herbert's Elegy: In Memoriam on television (TPT MN), radio (99.5 FM) and the internet (classicalmpr.org and minnesotaorchestra.org). Music director Osmo Vänskä will conduct the concert. Principal oboe John Snow and principal second violin Peter McGuire will be the featured soloists.

"Get Grounded on Bach," an all-Bach concert with two arias, a prelude, a cello suite and a chorale, will be presented online on January 29 and 30 by members of the Lyra Baroque Orchestra. Performers include Jacques Ogg, harpsichord and organ; Julie Elhard, bass viol and violone; Eva Lymenstull, cello and bass viol; Tulio Rondón, cello and piccolo cello; and Sara Thompson, bass and violone. Tickets for the Zoom concert are \$10, \$5 for students. To register for the link, visit lyrabaroque.org.

Theater

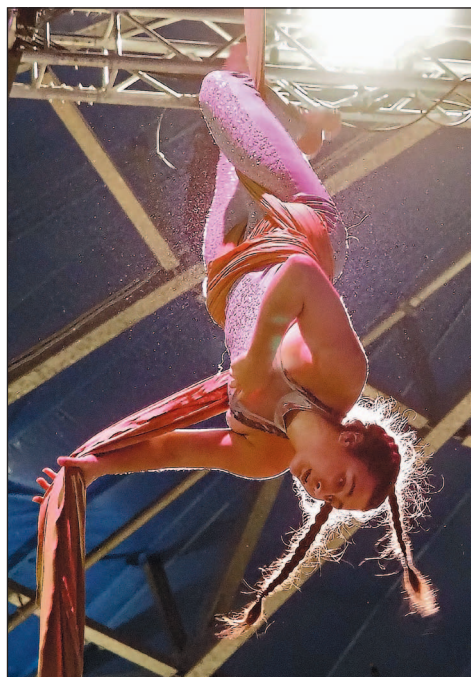
"Cold Terror," chilling tales about humanity's struggle against snow and ice, will be performed by the Mysterious Old Radio Listening Society in an online program at 7:30 p.m. Monday, January 25. Presented in the style of a vintage radio broadcast with commercials, music and sound effects, "A Study in Wax" (1953) is a psychological thriller about two Canadian survey workers snowbound in a frigid wilderness, and "Northern Lights" tells of two scientists who discover the gateway to a frozen dimension. Shanan Custer, Joshua English Scrimshaw, Tim Uren and Eric Webster star. The live stream includes introductions and post-show discussions. Tickets are \$15. For reservations, visit parksquaretheatre.org.

"Miniatures," newly commissioned operas by Minnesota artists that run between 8 and 10 minutes, will be streamed from February 5-19 by the Minnesota Opera. The collaborative effort will feature works by Kashimana Ahua and Khary Jackson, Ritika Ganguly and Roshan Ganu, Asoko Hirabayashi and Rebecca Nicholson, and Charlie McCarron and Oanh Vu. The program is free, though donations are welcome. To sign up for digital access, visit mnopera.org.

Books

Subtext Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will host free online readings and discussions with authors Charles Baxter and his novel, *The Sun Collective*, and Matthew Duffus and his book, *Dunbar's Folly and Other Stories*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 20. To register for the link, visit subtextbooks.com.

Five poets will recite their verse in a virtual reading at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, January 21. The program is part of the monthly Bridges series hosted by Stan Kusonoki. The word-smiths, who hail from both coasts as well as the Twin Cities, include Alan Walowitz, Betsy Mars, Brett Elizabeth Jenkins, Mikaela Pavlicek and Morgan Kerber-Folstrom. To receive a link for the Zoom program, visit



'A Hygge Holiday'

Emme Martini, 18, rehearses on the aerial silks for Circus Juventas' winter show, *A Hygge Holiday*, which will be presented live and in-person on January 28-31 under the big top at 1270 Montreal Ave. Advanced students of the circus school will play the part of unicycling elves, daredevil lumberjacks and amazing acrobats. A host of precautions have been taken to ensure a COVID-safe environment. The 90,000 cubic feet of air in the big top is well-ventilated with HEPA filters and industrial fans. The audience will be limited to 250. Seats are socially distanced, and face masks are mandatory. High-touch areas will be cleaned between shows. Show times are 7 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and 1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$40, \$30 for children ages 3-10. Visit ticketworks.com. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

nextchapterbooksellers.com.

Author Robert Mrazek will discuss his best-selling book, *The Indomitable Florence Finch*, from 10 a.m.-noon Sunday, January 24, in an online program sponsored by Or Emet, the Minnesota congregation for humanistic Judaism. Mrazek is a former congressman from New York. Finch was a Filipino-American who served in the resistance against the Japanese occupation of the Philippines from 1942-44. She saved the lives of numerous prisoners of war before she was caught and imprisoned by the Japanese. She was rescued by American troops in 1945. To register for the free program, email president@oremnet.org.

Exhibits

Friends of Highland Arts is hanging the original works of local artists in the windows of Highland Park businesses now through February 19. A virtual opening reception for the exhibit, "Sending Hope for 2021," is tentatively scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, January 22. For more information, visit friendsofhighlandarts.org.

"Fire & Ice," 78 works by regional artists inspired by the properties of the two disparate elements, are being displayed through February 28 at AZ Gallery, an artist

cooperative at 308 Prince St. The gallery is open from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Images of the art may also be seen at theazgallery.org.

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, several Twin Cities museums have reopened or will be reopening soon. The Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Pkwy., is now open from Thursdays through Sundays but at limited capacity. Timed-entry tickets may be reserved by calling 651-259-3015 or visiting mnhs.org. The Bakken Museum of science, technology and the humanities, 3537 Zenith Ave. S. in Minneapolis, is now open from Tuesdays through Sundays. Reservations are required, and so are masks for ages 3 and older. For information, visit thebakken.org or call 612-926-3878. The Museum of Russian Art, 5500 Stevens Ave. S. in Minneapolis, is open daily. No reservations are necessary. For more information, visit tmora.org or call 612-821-9045. The Minneapolis Institute of Art will reopen at limited capacity on January 28. Timed tickets are required. They are free and may be reserved in advance beginning January 21 by visiting artsmia.org or calling 612-870-3000.

Family

The Children's Museum of Minnesota, 10 W. Seventh St., has reopened at limited capacity from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays. Reservations are required. Masks are required for children ages 5 and older. Admission is \$14.95. Visits are limited to two hours. Strollers are allowed, but elevator usage is limited. Patrons are invited to bring their own water bottles. Call 651-225-6000 or visit mcm.org.

Et cetera

The League of Women Voters Saint Paul will offer "Journalists' Perspectives on the 2020 Election" in a free online program from 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, January 26. Panelists include reporters Briana Bierschbach of the *StarTribune*, Hana Irkramuddin of the *Minnesota Daily* and Bill Salisbury formerly of the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*. To register, visit lwvsp.org.

The Twin Cities Jewish Humor Festival, a weekend of laughter, human connection and joy, will be presented from January 28-31 by the Minnesota Jewish Community Center. The virtual festival opens at 7 p.m. Thursday with standup comedy from Israel featuring host Jonathan Gershberg and comedian Benji Lovitt. Queer Comedy Night starring Dana Eagle and guests Lisa Geduldig, Liz Stone and Geulah Finman may be watched at anytime on those days. So may the Night of Jewish Storytelling with Kim Kivens, Avi Aharoni, Galit Breen, Elise Cole, Suzanne Fenton, Gershberg, Jessi Kingston, Judy Victor, and Anthony and Haley Sisler-Neuman. An all-fest pass is available for \$18 at tcjhumorfest.org. A workshop for teenagers in writing satire with Anthony Sisler-Neuman will be available at 2 p.m. Sunday for \$5. For information, call Robyn Awend at 952-381-3416.



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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Colleges learning to cope during COVID

Playing any sport at any college level has always required sacrifices. However, to do so in 2021 requires more than just the time it takes to combine practice, travel on game days and schoolwork. Just ask Concordia-Saint Paul athletic director Regan McAthie. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7 a.m., the Golden Bear basketball players and track and field athletes must check in to get COVID tests. The results so far have been good—no positives.

Amanda Johnson's women's basketball players at Concordia have brushed off a preseason pick of seventh place in the conference by roaring out of the gate with sweeps over Minnesota-Crookston and Wayne State before heading into a home series last weekend against Augustana. The men's team, under new head coach Neil Fletcher, are off to a 1-3 start. The track and field teams were scheduled to start their indoor season last weekend.

Women's basketball played at home the first weekend and the men played at home the second. "A few NSIC games had to be moved, but everything went OK for us," McAthie said. "It's not convenient, but you do what you have to. The kids just want to play."

Just having some games to play is a bonus of sorts. As was the case at all local colleges, it was a very quiet fall at Concordia. The highly rated Golden Bear volleyball team was sidelined, along with the football, women's soccer and cross-country teams. The NSIC shut down all fall sports and has decided they won't be pursued in the spring. If any football, volleyball or soccer games are played, it will be because the schools did it on their own.

It took a while for the decision-makers to agree, but the MIAC has finally decided to play a truncated basketball and hockey schedule. Each school will have seven conference games, alternating on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Starting January 29, a school can schedule up to four nonconference games. No spectators will be allowed, and no MIAC postseason tournaments will be held. Presuming a school has played at least four conference games, the regular-season champ will be the league's designated representative for any possible NCAA playoffs.

Conference basketball games will start on February 6 and conclude a month later. The hockey season will start on the same date, with the final games on March 13. The University of Saint Thomas, now in its final year as an MIAC school, is on board for both sports. Saint Catherine opted out of basketball and hockey. Macalester, which does not compete in hockey, passed on basketball.

Swimming and the indoor track and field meets will be left up to individual schools. There will be no conference postseason competition in those sports either. The league's reticence to play any games wasn't surprising. Several MIAC schools look at themselves as smaller Midwest versions of the Ivy League, which canceled its winter sports schedule two months ago. Around the same time, Carleton and Saint Olaf announced they wouldn't participate in winter sports.

The NCAA has indicated it still intends to have a 64-team Division III basketball tournament, with the semifinals and championship game set for Fort Wayne in mid-March. The bigger problem is likely to be finding schools that are willing to host regionals. As of now, there's no word about any NCAA postseason activity for hockey, swimming or track and field.

The league has issued an 18-page memo outlining what it will take just to play these games. The policy includes daily temperature checks for athletes as well as all appropriate COVID screening procedures.

As for playing this spring, one longtime conference member described how difficult it is to arrive at a decision. "You have a hard time getting some of these folks to agree the sky is blue," he said.

It's been a juggling act for coaches to keep their players interested while waiting to find out if any games were going to be played. In addition to that issue, UST men's hoop coach Johnny Tauer finds himself thinking ahead to next year when

WRIGHT CALL ►16

Prep hockey previews

Boys adjust to season's delayed start, safety protocols

BY DAVE WRIGHT

High school boys' hockey coaches usually expect their teams to be going full blast by mid-January. They normally are well into conference play while starting to gather information on potential section foes. The COVID-19 pandemic threw a hip check into that this year. Games were not allowed to start until January 14, and coaches and players were still adjusting to new protocols, such as mask wearing and when they can use the locker rooms.

"The first couple of days were rough," said Cretin-Derham Hall coach Matt Funk. "The kids had to adjust."

Saint Thomas Academy coach Trent Eigner agreed. "Technical adjustments had to be made, but the kids' excitement to be back on the ice superseded everything," he said.

Coaches had to keep their teams focused on getting ready for the season when practices began on January 4 and ignore such things like the lawsuits being filed to free winter athletes from wearing masks. Funk described the routine for players this month as "School, practice, home. Rinse and repeat."

For coaches like Josh Hoekstra at Minnehaha Academy and Brian Murphy at Saint Paul Academy, there was also the issue of mixing in players from other schools. Hoekstra has skaters from two other schools (DeLaSalle and North Saint Paul), while first-year coach Murphy has players from another four (Nova, Saint Agnes, Saint Croix Lutheran and Great River Academy).

Highland Park-Central's Brandon Ferraro, also a first-year coach, had a different problem. His team didn't have a conference to play in this season and had to scramble at the last second to put a schedule together.

Here's a look at the local teams as the 2021 season takes the ice:

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East
Last year's record: 20-5-1
Coach: Matt Funk

Masks can't hide girls' excitement to be back on ice

BY BILL WAGNER

Despite the guidelines requiring face coverings, limits on the number of spectators and other prescribed safety precautions due to the coronavirus pandemic, local high school girls' hockey coaches say they and their players are doing their best as they are finally allowed to get back on the ice this month.

"Our kids are adjusting," said Sibley/Saint Paul Riveters coach Allie Duellman. "I think it's going to be OK. We've had a whole lot of practice time already and we're ready to go."

Minnehaha United coach Dan Berthiaume was a little bit more hesitant when talking about requiring players to wear masks during practices and games. "We can only hope that (the guidelines) change," he said. "Some masks are hard to breathe through, period. It's hard to



Highland-Central senior defenseman Jackson Mitchell lifted two masks to stay hydrated during a varsity boys' hockey practice last week. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Key players: junior goalie Marco Belak, sophomore defenseman Simon Houge, junior defenseman Zack Sondreal, junior forwards Drew Fisher and Jake Sondreal, and senior forward Chuck Altier.

Outlook: Matt Gleason, the Raiders' top gun for the last couple of years, is now at Colorado College. However, coach Funk said Gleason's legacy on the ice lives on with the current team, which was ranked eighth in the state in Class AA in a preseason poll. "The firepower is more spread out this year," he said. "We should be able to play three lines consistently." What also helps was that several players got on the ice in October and November before the delayed start of winter sports. Belak was terrific in goal last year for CDH.

HENRY SIBLEY

League: Metro East
Last year's record: 6-19-2
Coach: Ted Cheesebrough

Key players: senior goalie Keaton Woolsey, and senior defensemen Joe Booth and Aaron Marschinke.

Outlook: The Warriors graduated their top goal scorers from last season. Cheesebrough is hoping sophomore forwards Casey Ball and Joe Shepherd can step up and lead the offense. Until more shooters are developed, defense is the name of the game for Sibley. Woolsey was a stalwart in goal last year, starting 25 games and notching two shutouts. The Warriors look to build on their 5-2 sectional win over Red Wing in 2020, their first postseason victory in five years.

HIGHLAND PARK-CENTRAL

League: Independent
Last year's record: 8-18-0
Coach: Brandon Ferraro

Key players: junior forwards Javier Hamlin and Sam Bell, senior defenseman Jack Malek, and senior goalie Caden Frahm.

Outlook: Ferraro takes over as head coach after running the JV team when the Scots revived its boys' hockey program years ago. He garnered some

BOYS' HOCKEY PREVIEW ►16

catch your breath. Inhaling is especially difficult."

Ellie Tabaka, who stepped up to lead Visitation this season after its head coach resigned due to COVID-related challenges, said it has been challenging. "But our girls are just excited to go out there and play," she said. "Everyone is dealing with this, but I think we're learning a lot."

Here's a look at the local girls' hockey teams as they mask up for the 2021 season:

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East
Last year's record: 12-13-1
Coach: Tony Scheid

Key players: senior center Lexi Bonfe; senior forwards Erin Anfang, Ella Klein and Frances Staples; senior defender Lily Barrett; and junior forward Lily Geist.

Outlook: The Raiders hope to crack

into a top tier headed by Stillwater, Forest Lake, Roseville and perhaps others, said new head coach Scheid, who won two Class AA state titles with Stillwater and has a 260-112-21 career coaching record. "We have a great senior nucleus," he said. "We have a very strong skating team and we're well-balanced."

MINNEHAHA UNITED

League: Independent Metro Athletic
Last year's record: 10-16
Coach: Dan Berthiaume

Key players: junior center Lucie Bond, and junior right wing Ava Wasserman.

Outlook: The Minnehaha Academy cop now includes skaters from Saint Paul Academy, Providence Academy, DeLaSalle and Saint Agnes. There's reason for optimism going into the season, coach Berthiaume said, even though his club

GIRLS' HOCKEY PREVIEW ►16

Daily Champions helps Sibley athletes stay strong during pandemic

By BILL WAGNER

Late last year, Henry Sibley softball coach Jenny Carpenter and volleyball coach Katie Naughton had grown increasingly concerned about the toll that COVID-19 restrictions had taken on the mental well-being of the student-athletes they mentored at the high school.

It was bad enough that the fall sports season was shortened. Then the winter season was put on hold until January, leaving a void in the lives of many students whose personal interaction with their peers had almost slowed to a crawl.

"It sucked," both women said during a recent telephone interview.

As Carpenter pointed out, teenagers can have myriad problems in their lives even without a global pandemic, which can multiply those problems several times over.

"Athletics was a huge lifeline for many of these girls. I felt a strong tug on my heart that it was time to take action," Carpenter said.

So she rolled up her sleeves and with the assistance of Naughton and other supporting staff at Sibley launched Daily Champions, a six-week, interactive program designed to teach simple, self-care habits that female



Henry Sibley softball coach Jenny Carpenter checks in with students during a Daily Champions session.

athletes can use every day to strengthen their spirits while struggling with current challenges.

The program was conducted remotely and was scheduled to run through mid-January when winter sports competitions were finally being allowed to begin. Still, Carpenter was

optimistic that the Daily Champions format may continue beyond that.

Some 60 varsity girls signed up for the program when it was introduced in December. Two sessions were held every Wednesday for about an hour each, once during the day and another in the evening.

The concept was pretty basic. Carpenter and Naughton were always available as facilitators and would check in on how the students were doing, how school was going and if there was something they could do to help them get further assistance.

Student-athletes were discouraged from using social media if it was not a positive experience. They also were asked to do an exercise in which they named three things that they were grateful for, along with three things that they would like to see come to pass.

Participants were encouraged to create a journal of their experiences, using pen and paper instead of a computer. They also were asked to assess their own physical health and well-being, along with their hopes for helping their teams have successful seasons.

Some of the participants were more willing to open up with their concerns than others, but the general idea was that the kids and the coaches were all in the same boat.

"We need to embrace the suck," Carpenter said. "These weren't therapy sessions, but it did get emotional—sometimes on both sides.

"We all have our own hearts," she added.

"We have to have empathy for others where we can, but you can't ignore your own feelings. This structure introduced them to habits that are easy to build into everyday life to help bring energy into their lives."

Naughton said the pandemic took away the students' social relationships and left them stuck at home. She felt the isolation of her volleyball players last fall when they were so happy merely to be able to hold practices again. "They'd say that it was the only interaction they had to lean on," she said.

Sibley softball player Katie Lyford and basketball/softball player Anna Wilson both offered ringing endorsements of the Daily Champions program.

"It's definitely been different," said Wilson about the improvement in her mental outlook since the program began. "Before I felt that I couldn't grow at all. But you know that there are other people out there who've struggled just like you have. I've decided that I'm just going to go out there and have fun."

Lyford added, "It made me aware of not only the problems I've been having, but that there are other people who've had it worse than I have. It's important that we work together through this."

Both Naughton and Carpenter agreed that the program could potentially help other school districts keep up the spirits of their students. "It's not just our kids," Carpenter said. "Everybody is going through this."

15◀ BOYS' HOCKEY PREVIEW

top assistants, including Jimmy Funk. Though he has seen only a few players skate, Ferraro ran the Scots through a dry land program and said about 40 skaters were expected for the first practice. He said it is a veteran team with "good, competitive kids." Hamlin is the top scorer back.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic

Last year's record: 4-22-0

Coach: Josh Hoekstra

Key players: senior forwards Connor Nelson, AJ Beugen and Rutger Hoekstra; junior goalie Patrick Anderson; and senior defensemen

Connor Dworshak and Robert Provost.

Outlook: Nelson and Beugen each had 40-plus points last winter and will lead an offense that figures to be more productive this season. Anderson did the majority of the work last year in goal. It's the second year of Minnehaha, DeLaSalle and North Saint Paul playing together. "We're deeper and more skilled than last year," Hoekstra said, "but we need to stay healthy."

SAINT PAUL ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic

Last year's record: 14-12-1

Coach: Brian Murphy

Key players: senior defenseman Michael Bagnoli, junior defenseman Judah Thomas, se-

nior forwards John Becker and William Schavee, and sophomore forward George Peltier.

Outlook: Coach Murphy started the season with a nice problem. More than 50 players tried out for this winter's team, requiring him to make some cuts. Among the 10 returning players, Bagnoli and Becker each had more than 20 points, while Schavee and Peltier each scored nine goals. "We're still getting used to each other. It's a short season and it'll take time to get acclimated," Murphy said. "The goal is to play better by the end of the year."

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

League: Metro East

Last year's record: 19-10-2

Coach: Trent Eigner

Key players: senior forwards Jackson Hallum, Jared Wright and Tommy Deverell; and junior forwards Max Nagel and Tyler Grahme.

Outlook: Led by University of Michigan recruit Hallum (an NHL draftee by the Vegas Golden Knights) and Colgate-bound Wright, the Cadets could be a handful to deal with offensively this year. "I expect us to create more chances," coach Eigner said. Nine players return from last year's team that shook off a slow start to win nine games in a row, including a Class AA state quarterfinal victory. Eigner said the memory of the first half of last year is on the minds of his returning players. "There's not a lot lost on these guys," he said. Senior goalie Carsten Lardy recorded two shutouts last season.

15◀ GIRLS' HOCKEY PREVIEW

will have to face perennially strong conference foes Blake and Breck, the latter of which was ranked first in the state in Class A in a pre-season poll. "We have some good young players coming into our program," Berthiaume said. Finishing with a .500 or better record would be quite an accomplishment, according to him.

SIBLEY/SAINT PAUL RIVETERS

League: Metro East

Last year's record: 4-22

Coach: Allie Duellman

Key players: junior forward Molly Shetka, junior defender Drew Kuretsky, junior forward Olivia Van Siclen and senior forward Miesse-Solbei Berg.

Outlook: The Riveters, which is a cooperative team with players from Henry Sibley and the Saint Paul Public Schools, know that they'll

probably have to measure their progress incrementally this season. Coach Duellman said that although the team is young, "we hope to get a couple more conference wins under our belt."

VISITATION

League: Independent

Last year's record: 13-14-1

Coach: Ellie Tabaka

Key players: junior forward Hannah Allen, junior goalie Cady Cadel and sophomore defenseman Clare Olsen.

Outlook: The Blazers will be a free-standing team this season after spending decades as a co-op with SPA as Saint Paul United. Tabaka, who previously coached JV girls' hockey at her alma mater Tartan, said her squad looks forward to the experience. "They're excited to represent a whole new team," she said. "We're just trying to figure out who we are and how to have some fun."



Visitation's Hannah Allen controls the puck alongside teammate Caroline Doran in their season opener on January 14 against North Saint Paul/Tartan.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

15◀ WRIGHT CALL

his team will be playing Division I ball.

There are a lot of private universities playing Division I basketball in major markets. Some of them—Marquette, Notre Dame and Villanova come to mind—are consistent contenders for national championships. Schools like Loyola and Dayton have made inroads on the national scene from time to time. On the flip side, there are schools like the University of Detroit and Southern California that are rarely heard from come tourney time.

Looking for a role model from the above group in how to proceed is tricky because all of those programs have been around for decades. UST is making the rare jump

from Division III to Division I. "How often do you get to do something that no one has ever done before?" Tauer asked. "That's what we have here."

Thinking ahead, the Tommies didn't bring in any freshmen this season. The current men's basketball roster has two seniors, five juniors and six sophomores. Tauer's task is to work for one last title while thinking ahead to 2021-22. Next year's team will have several fresh faces, and some of this year's group won't make the cut. Decency requires helping those who won't be around to find another place to play if they want to transfer.

While thinking about that issue, Tauer and his staff are working on scheduling and complying with the COVID protocols that all Division I schools must follow. "COVID has

changed scheduling," Tauer said. "Games that were supposed to be played this year are now being set for next year."

Unlike football, basketball schedules are only set a year or two in advance. "Some of this year's games weren't set until the summer," Tauer said. "It's a different world."

However, all of that is small potatoes in the big picture. "We practiced in small groups for the first time the other day," Tauer said. "We won't be able to scrimmage in advance. Nothing is going to be perfect. The first games of the year are always rough anyway, but we're just happy we're getting a chance to play."

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

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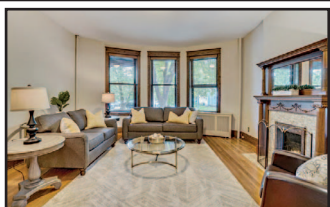
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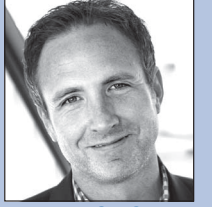
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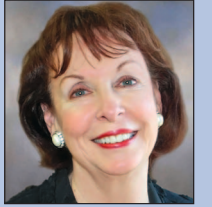
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