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Plan for mixed-use building resurfaces at Dixie's on Grand

Previous idea dropped in 2018 due to backlash from Summit Hill neighbors

By JANE McCLURE

A five-story, 81-unit apartment building with first-floor restaurants and retail space is being proposed for the current site of Dixie's on Grand, Emmett's Public House and Saji-Ya at 695 Grand Ave. The developers have set two virtual meetings on their proposal, with outreach help from the Summit Hill Association (SHA).

A meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18, will include a presentation of plans for the property at the northwest corner of Grand and Saint Albans Street. A second meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, April 8, will allow the developers to respond to residents' questions from the first session. Both meetings require people to register before attending.

Peter Kenefick's family has owned the 1930s-era building at 695 Grand for 38 years. In early 2018, Kenefick and Saint Albans Partners proposed a plan to replace it with a four- or five-story building with underground parking, restaurants and retail space on the first floor, and apartments above. That plan was dropped after a meeting with more than 90 Summit Hill residents, many of whom vehemently opposed the development.

The difference this time? "I'll be 65 in June," Kenefick said. "I'd like to leave a legacy that's positive for Grand Avenue."

This time around, about a dozen development part-

DIXIE'S DEVELOPMENT ▶2



Lloyd's Pharmacy owner Jim Stage, his wife Cally, contractor Joe Beitler and Stage's children stand inside the drug store he is rebuilding at Snelling and Minnehaha avenues.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Businesses struggle to rebuild in wake of last summer's riots

State lawmakers consider \$300M to aid in that effort

By CAROLYN WALKUP

As the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin got underway last week, Twin Cities businesses that were looted, torched and otherwise vandalized in the wake of George Floyd's death last May were making preparations in the event the verdict sparks another riot. However, 10 months after the initial riots laid waste to South Minneapolis' Lake Street business district and the Midway district of Saint Paul, many of those

businesses have yet to reopen.

Governor Tim Walz has called for the state to allocate \$150 million to help riot-damaged businesses in both cities. Meanwhile, the Minnesota House is considering a bill that would provide \$100 million to Saint Paul businesses and \$200 million to Minneapolis businesses that were damaged or destroyed in the riots.

The House bill has passed the DFL-controlled Capital Investment Committee. Representative Dave Pinto (DFL-District 64B), a member of that committee, said he supports the bill because insurance coverage and private donations have fallen far short of the hundreds

THE STRUGGLE TO REBUILD ▶4

Historical Society recalls state's 'Extraordinary Women'

Exhibit strives to inspire next generation of women

By ANNE MURPHY

Debbie Montgomery is commonly recognized as Saint Paul's first female police officer and first Black woman to serve on the City Council. "But there were firsts long before those," she said. "Those were not my first firsts."

Before she patrolled solo in a squad car through the Rice Street neighborhood, before she thwarted enough bar brawls to earn her two "bionic knees," Montgomery served on the front lines of the civil rights movement in the U.S.

A longtime resident of Summit-University, Montgomery grew up in what was then known as Rondo, Saint Paul's largely Black neighborhood. She joined the NAACP's national youth group at 13, and at 17 became the first high school student elected to the NAACP's national board. She was present for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington, D.C., in 1963, and as a University of Minnesota student in 1965 she marched in Alabama to protest Black voter suppression.

Montgomery is one of 22 individuals profiled in "Extraordinary Women," an exhibit now on display at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Pkwy. Close to half of the women have Saint Paul connections. Collectively, they led efforts to expand voting rights and to promote equal rights, fair

housing and other social justice initiatives.

"Extraordinary Women" is intended to educate and inspire, according to Merriam Park resident Katie Roberts, who designed the exhibit. The exhibit comes on the heels of the Historical Society's 2020 exhibit "Votes for Women," commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment that granted women the right to vote.

Roberts and her staff selected 22 of the 43 women featured in the 2020 exhibit. "We looked for lesser-known stories, where people might say, 'I knew of that person, but I didn't know this about her,'" she said. "We looked for stories of hope and inspiration. We wanted everyone to leave the gallery

'EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN' ▶3



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Saving Memories

Revised plan for James-Lexington apts. recommended for approval

By JANE MCCLURE

The plan for a 91-unit apartment building on the southeast corner of Lexington Parkway and James Avenue will be reviewed by the Saint Paul Planning Commission on March 19. The commission's Zoning Committee voted 5-1 on March 11 to recommend approval of the project with a needed conditional use permit and several variances.

The latest plan for the apartments at 1076-1094 James Ave. looks different from the plan that received the support of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council earlier this year. Developers Chet Funk, Erich Leidel and Nathan Jameson worked with city staff to revise the plan after an initial staff recommendation to deny the conditional use permit and all variances for the project.

The building's entrance has been moved from James to Lexington. The western part of the building is now five stories tall. The eastern part is four stories. The building's footprint has also been shifted to the east. The

plan is to provide a variety of apartments, common spaces for residents and a rooftop deck. Two levels of structured parking would accommodate 88 cars. There would also be a surface lot with seven parking spaces.

Senior city planner Mike Richardson is recommending the approval of some of the developers' requests and the denial of others. According to him, some requests still fail to meet required technical findings.

Conditional use permits and variances must meet a series of technical findings for approval, including compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, consistency with the city's comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans, traffic ingress and egress, and hardship for the developer to meet the zoning code.

According to Richardson, the building is not compatible with the smaller-scale residential buildings nearby and is out of character with the surrounding area. He recommended denial of the conditional use permit for height as well as the variance for frontyard setback. The

tallest part of the building is 65 feet, 8 inches. A height of only 50 feet is normally allowed in the Residential Multi-Family 2 (RM2) zone. The frontyard setback is 18 feet, and a minimum of 25 feet is normally required.

Richardson recommended approval of a zero rear-yard setback (a 1-foot variance), a 10-foot setback for the north side (7-foot and 2-foot variances), and a 10-foot setback for the south side (a 7-foot variance).

Funk said the variances and conditional use permit are needed because of the site's unique character. The site slopes and is irregularly shaped at its eastern boundary. He told the Zoning Committee that the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and would not negatively affect its character.

Commissioner Simon Taghiouf cast the sole vote against the project. "The developer wants to build a taller, wider, deeper building than is allowed," he said. However, a majority of committee members said they wanted to move the project forward.

The Zoning Committee's support did come

with conditions, including a commitment to provide some affordable apartments and to consider vacating part of the L-shaped alley that leads east from Lexington and south from James. Funk said it is likely the entire alley will be vacated at some point.

The development site is bounded by the alley, an I-35E frontage road, James Avenue and Lexington Parkway. Six single-family homes on James would be demolished to make way for the building. The six properties were rezoned last year from single-family to RM2 after the city amended RM zoning to encourage more density and provide more affordable housing. One RM change allows more density if at least 10 percent of the apartments are affordable for at least 15 years for households making 60 percent of the area median income.

The Planning Commission's decision on the project's conditional use permit and variances will be final unless it is appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

14 DIXIE'S DEVELOPMENT

ners were interviewed before the Minneapolis-based firm Reuter Walton was chosen. ESG Architecture & Design, which also worked on the 2018 plan, is back.

"By far and away, these are the best partners for the project," Kenefick said. The current owners would continue to own the property after redevelopment.

If all goes as planned, the restaurants would close this summer, with work starting on the site in the fall. Emmett's and Saji-Ya would return, but the Dixie's name would not. While some of its southern menu items might stay, Kenefick said he is sensitive to the negative connotations the name Dixie's has with the Civil War South.

Kenefick's vision is for an attractive building that has some open space and public art. He said the property would reflect the Summit Hill neighborhood's historic charm and yet meet the needs of today.

"This building is tired," Kenefick said, and in need of major upgrades.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has had an impact on the three businesses, which are owned by a group called Monkey Boys Inc. Kenefick said the restaurants had about 100 workers combined when the pandemic hit. About 30 work there now.

Ari Parritz, a developer with Reuter Walton, said the proposed project is a good comple-



A five-story building with 81 apartments above first-floor restaurants and retail space is proposed for the current site of Dixie's, Emmett's and Saji-Ya at 695 Grand Ave.

ment for the neighborhood. "We're excited to partner with the property owners," he said. "It will bring the site to life and be a really good fit for the community."

Kenefick said the mix of market-rate apartments has not been finalized, but the development team hopes to appeal to empty nesters who want to stay in the neighborhood, yet move out of their larger homes.

Some neighbors are eyeing the project warily, saying it could block light and air for surrounding homes.

M.L. Kucera, who has lived on Saint Albans since 1974, said the scale of the planned building at 695 Grand would be too much for the surrounding area. "Three stories would fit in

this historic neighborhood, but five stories will change the character and the charm of the entire neighborhood, plus create congestion and other problems," she said.

Saint Albans has been a one-way street between Grand and Summit avenues since the late 1970s, Kucera said. Adding more traffic and parking demand on that block are a worry, according to her, since the street is typically lined with resident and employee vehicles.

Access to the proposed building's underground parking via the Summit-Grand alley also is an issue for some.

Parritz said the development team is aware of the neighborhood concerns. "We're very sensitive to the impact of additional traffic in

the alley," he said. One suggestion that has been made is to work with neighbors on alley maintenance and improvements.

The number of underground parking spaces for the development has not been set. The parking area would have entrances on Grand and Saint Albans for the businesses, and the alley for building residents.

The development team has included members of the SHA in weekly conference calls to discuss the project and broader issues.

"We have to consider what the future looks like for Grand Avenue," Kenefick said. "How do we grow and how do we change? How do we design something that's attractive? I want this building to be gorgeous. I don't want to be known as the guy who left Grand in a blighted condition."

The SHA will not make a recommendation on the project until after the two public meetings. The property is zoned for commercial use and could be rezoned for traditional neighborhoods mixed use. The property is in the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District, which limits building heights to three stories. Parritz said a variance to the overlay district would be needed.

It is not yet known what other city approvals will be sought. Kenefick and Parritz said the developers are talking to city staff to determine what would be needed.

For more information on the project, go to summithillassociation.org/695grandave.

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feeling that they can take the next step, because every one of these women were ordinary women who did extraordinary things."

Montgomery, 75, hopes her story encourages people to "give your best at whatever you can do to improve society," she said. "Each of us has so much we can bring to the table to help in the areas of racial injustice and social disparities." For her part, Montgomery said, "it was never about me. It was about what I could do for others."

Working for the common good was also the motivation for Claire O'Connor, a native Saint Paulite whose efforts in the civil rights movement are also chronicled in "Extraordinary Women." As a university student in 1961, O'Connor was one of six Minnesotans who joined Freedom Riders from across the U.S. to protest racial segregation in Mississippi. O'Connor was arrested and jailed for weeks on a charge of disrupting the peace. In 1964 she returned to Mississippi to register Black voters in the wake of the Civil Rights Voting Act signed that year by President Lyndon Johnson.

"Here I was, blonde-haired and blue-eyed, sitting in Minnesota," recalled O'Connor, who has remained an activist and educator while working as a potter in the Twin Cities. "How did I find myself in Jackson, Mississippi? It doesn't seem like a normal path. But I was brought up by parents who were very aware of political situations. They were devoted to equality. My hope was to help change a system that impacted all of us.

"I always remind myself of that," O'Connor said. "There's this assumption that I risked my life. But I also learned so much. I wouldn't be the person I am now if I hadn't. What an opportunity! I learned so much about the penal system, the people in Mississippi and the people who said, 'We're not going to take this any more!'"

Students at Saint Catherine University who were enrolled in honors seminars taught by Rachel Neiwert and Elizabeth Otto helped perform research for the exhibit and create some of its video segments. "Our students had the opportunity to research women and organizations in Minnesota who are rarely represented in the mainstream narrative of the (women's) suffrage movement," said Otto, a Highland Park resident.

One Saint Catherine student's research focused on Nellie Griswold Francis, a suffragist who authored and successfully lobbied for a



Deb Montgomery poses with photos, badges and awards from her 28 years with the Saint Paul police, rising from patrol officer to senior commander. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

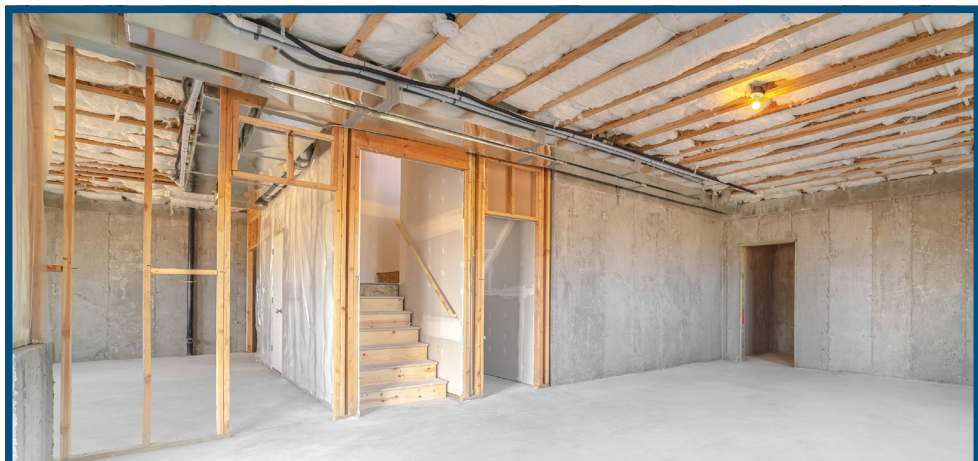
bill prohibiting lynching following the hanging of three Black men in Duluth in 1920. Francis bought a home on Sargent Avenue in the 1920s with her lawyer husband William Francis. The couple were Black, and they were threatened by neighbors who tried to keep them out of the Groveland Park area.

"This student drove to the house (on Sargent) and parked in front of it to think about her project for the class," Otto said. "That experience of being in the same physical space where Nellie Francis lived inspired her to argue in her final class presentation that the Francis should be honored by having that house added to the National Register of Historic Places."

"Being able to work with the Historical Society was such a great opportunity," said Saint Catherine junior Anastasia Rousseau. "We learned so much about our own history in our own community. I'm anxious to see how the community responds to the exhibit."

"What I found most inspiring in the experience was the reminder that we need to broaden our history to include more people," Neiwert said. "We should be able to see ourselves reflected in the histories that we tell. I think it will make a difference in our community."

The Minnesota History Center is open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$12, \$10 for seniors and college students, \$6 for children ages 5-17. For more information, visit mnhs.org or call 651-259-3000.



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14 THE STRUGGLE TO REBUILD

of millions of dollars needed to rebuild the 1,500 damaged properties. The money in the House bill would come from the sale of bonds that would be repaid by the state with an appropriation of \$20.7 million per year for 20 years.

Outstate legislators have been reluctant to support the legislation. Senator Andrew Lang (R-Olivia) called the governor's proposal a "\$150 million bailout" that the taxpayers of Greater Minnesota should not have to pay. Representative Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) said, "it's not so much the amount" of the appropriation. What concerns him, he said, is the inadequate coverage by insurance companies and the failure of the city of Minneapolis to prevent last summer's protests from getting out of control.

Several local business people testified in favor of the House bill. Among them were Louis and Mary Lau, co-owners of Peking Garden, 1488 University Ave., which was severely damaged by fire, smoke and water. They said the money they received from the Midway Chamber of Commerce and from two GoFundMe accounts was not enough to allow them to rebuild the restaurant.

More than 260 businesses and institutions were badly damaged along University Avenue in Saint Paul. While most have reopened, a large number have not. Businesses in the Midway Center strip mall that were damaged and shuttered in the wake of the riots include Golden Gate Cafe, Thien's Cajun Boiling Seafood, Big Top Wine &



One of the most promising signs of rebuilding in Saint Paul is the new Lloyd's Pharmacy under construction on the southeast corner of Snelling and Minnehaha avenues—on the same site as the old Lloyd's, which was looted and burned to the ground on the night of May 28-29, 2020. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Spirits, Le Nails, Great Clips, Foot Locker, GameStop, To New York, Family Dollar, T-Mobile and Bank of America.

Those businesses will need to find new locations. Midway Center landlord RK Midway terminated their leases last summer and evicted all tenants as it prepares to redevelop the shopping center with new residential and commercial uses adjacent to Major League Soccer's Allianz Field.

Some damaged Midway businesses that lacked insurance cov-

erage have received assistance through the Neighbors United Funding Collaborative, which has raised \$1.58 million for that purpose.

Another \$2 million in direct aid has been raised by the Asian Economic Development Association, African Economic Development Solutions, Midway Chamber of Commerce and the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and East Side Area Business Association, according to Hannah Burchill, a spokesperson for Saint Paul's De-

partment of Planning and Economic Development (PED). PED has an additional \$1 million available, and is working to determine how best to allocate these resources to benefit businesses impacted by civil unrest, Burchill said.

Midway pharmacist Jim Stage credited his insurance company and a GoFundMe account for making it possible to rebuild his Lloyd's Pharmacy. The business at 720 N. Snelling Ave. was looted and burned to the ground on the night of May 28-29. Stage has been operating in rented quarters just down the block as the new pharmacy is constructed.

"The Midway community and surrounding area have been so gracious. They stood by us. We couldn't have done it without community support," said Stage, who expects to open his new drugstore sometime this summer.

Businesses near the destroyed Third Precinct police station at Minnehaha Avenue and Lake Street in Minneapolis are still struggling to rebuild. The neighborhood has formed a coalition called Longfellow Rising to help local small businesses overcome the devastation, according to Ruhel Islam, who operated Gandhi Mahal at 3009 27th Ave. S.

Islam is still cleaning up the site of his restaurant, which was reduced to rubble last May. He and his wife are now operating a smaller restaurant called Curry in a Hurry at 3025 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis. The restaurant he hopes to rebuild is at least two years from fruition. "When funding comes, we want to make sure it makes sense for the next 100 years," he said.

DuNord Craft Spirits, a distillery at 2610 E. 32nd St. in Minneapolis that suffered fire damage in the riots, has been able to continue production, but its cocktail bar remains closed.

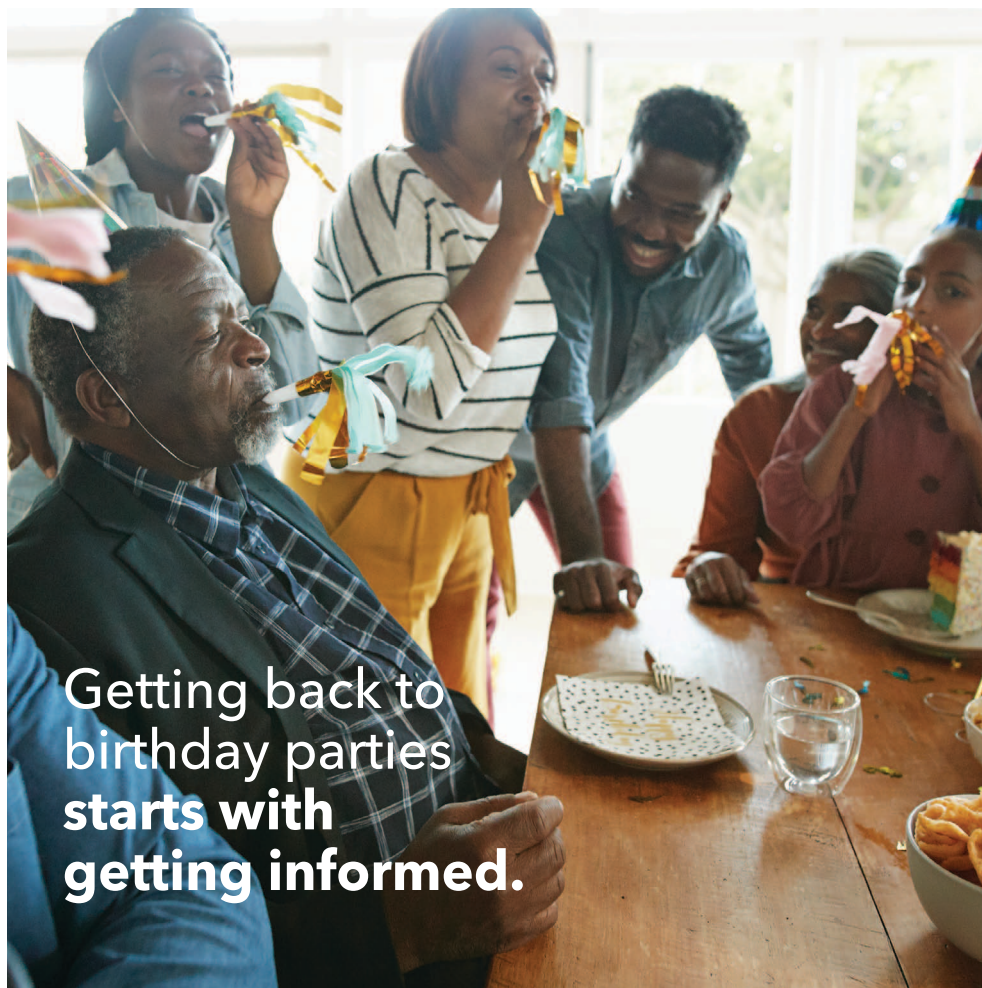
Schooner Tavern at 2901 27th Ave. S. sustained broken windows and other damage in the riots last May, but would have fared much worse if it was not for vigilant neighbors, according to owner Wendy Kremer. The historic tavern has since reopened with the help of a grant from Longfellow Community Council.

The comparatively few businesses on Grand Avenue and in Highland Village that were looted and vandalized on May 28 and 29 were able to reopen and in recent weeks have stepped up security to prevent further losses in conjunction with Chauvin's trial.

Walgreens drugstores on Grand Avenue, Ford Parkway and Randolph Avenue have installed locks on glass cabinets containing such high-theft items as perfumes, cosmetics and pregnancy test kits.

John Hoeschen, owner of Saint Paul Corner Drug, 240 S. Snelling Ave., has installed security film on his windows to prevent them from falling out if vandals succeed in breaking the outside panes.

As the Chauvin trial progresses in downtown Minneapolis, "somebody will be at our shop 24 hours a day," said Mark Wilsey, manager of the Fixery at 760 S. Cleveland Ave. "The businesses are ready to defend themselves. I think those who cleaned us out last time will find it's not going to be so easy this time."



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News Briefs

Saint Paul's guaranteed income program has become permanent

The Saint Paul City Council voted on March 10 to transition a guaranteed income pilot program to permanent status via city ordinance. The program is providing 150 struggling families with 18 payments of \$500 a month.

Mayor Melvin Carter set up the People's Prosperity Pilot program last year by executive order tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. In September, the City Council approved the use of federal CARES Act funds for the effort. Private donations and foundation grants are also part of the program. The March 10 vote allows the program to continue after the state of emergency ends.

The council's decision does not expand the program beyond the 150 families. It also does not commit the city to additional funding beyond philanthropic and federal dollars.

The program aims to assist randomly selected families from racially diverse and low-income neighborhoods who have been adversely affected by the pandemic. More than 80 percent are people of color. Participants will exit the program by spring 2022.

The families were chosen from those enrolled in CollegeBound Saint Paul, a city program that provides a \$50 college savings account for each child who lives in Saint Paul and was born in 2020 or later. Families chosen for the guaranteed income program will receive a \$10 monthly bonus in their child's CollegeBound account for the 18 months.

Saint Paul is one of the first cities in the United States to have a guaranteed income program.

Interfaith Action gets permit for Randolph Ave. homeless shelter

Project Home can open a shelter for 22-30 families at the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet's old Provincial House at 1880 Randolph Ave. following Saint Paul Planning Commission approval of a conditional use permit on March 5. The facility, which will be leased by Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul, will be used to help families transition from homelessness to permanent housing.

Interfaith Action hopes to open the facility soon. Families staying at the shelter will have to follow several rules. Visitors will not be allowed and the facility will not function with any kind of drop-in services.

The permit request enjoyed widespread support, including from the Highland and Macalester-Groveland community councils, faith-based groups and Project Home volunteers. More than 80 pages of public comments were received by the city.

A few neighbors did contact the Planning Commission with concerns, including whether the shelter belonged in the middle of a largely residential neighborhood, what the transit options will be for residents and the shelter's potentially negative impact on property values.



Sydney Colquitt sported a shamrock hair band as she enjoyed music by Todd Menton during a special Irish edition of Music from the Porch on March 14 outside Landmark Center. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

The Provincial House has been owned and operated by the Sisters of Saint Joseph for about a century, but has sat largely unused since the sisters moved into the adjacent Carondelet Village senior housing facility several years ago.

Plans for West 7th apartment building move one step closer

The Saint Paul Planning Commission unanimously approved a request on March 5 to rezone 1164 W. Seventh St. from townhouse residential to multifamily residential as part of plans to construct a new apartment building on the site.

The final decision is in the hands of the City Council. If the zoning is changed, a brick dwelling on the property will be torn down and replaced with a multifamily building with 10-14 market-rate, one-bedroom apartments. A concept plan showed nine off-street parking spots. Detailed building plans were not available.

The residence on the irregularly shaped lot has served as sober housing for up to 11 people. It is owned by a California-based trust.

Local developer Tom Distad is leading the project to construct the new apartment building. At neighborhood meetings, he has represented the project as helping address a need for multifamily rental housing that fits into the existing neighborhood.

Problem property in Highland must be rehabbed in 100 days

A house at 1629 Hartford Ave. that has been in an unfinished condition for many months must be rehabilitated in 100 days, the Saint Paul City Council decided on March 3. Neighbors contend the property has been a magnet for illegal squatters and crime, and an eyesore.

Current property owner Lima One Capital had asked for 180 days to complete work on the single-family home, but Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert said the work

needs to be done sooner. He noted that neighbors have waited for a long time for the house to be rehabilitated and reoccupied.

In late 2018, a previous owner sought to expand the house from 1½ to two stories, but the city's Board of Zoning Appeals denied a height variance. The building permit was modified to reflect a lower height, but the check for the permit was returned for insufficient funds. The city, owner and contractor went back and forth until a stop work order was issued by the city in October 2019.

Lima One Capital, the mortgage lender, foreclosed on the property in December 2019. A prospective buyer came forward last year, but was unable to obtain financing.

The property was classified by the city as a Category 3 structure, meaning it needs extensive work to be reoccupied. A city inspector also found that the height of the roof on the partially completed structure is still higher than allowed. That will require a return to the BZA or modifications to the structure.

City Council OKs rezoning for five-story Merriam Park building

The Saint Paul City Council voted 6-1 on March 10 to rezone 2069 Marshall Ave. from Traditional Neighborhoods 2 to TN3 to make way for a five-story mixed-use building.

Property owners David Kvasnik and Robert Page plan to tear down a single-family home and duplex at 2063 and 2069 Marshall to make way for a 48-unit apartment building with first-floor commercial space. The zoning change will allow a taller building on the site. The corner house at 2063 Marshall was already zoned TN3, which allows a building height of up to 55 feet.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the zoning change in January. The proposed building was met with strong objections from neighbors to the north, who were concerned about the building casting a shadow over their homes. They were concerned about increased traffic if the alley is used as

access to underground parking. There were also worries that having vehicular access on Cleveland Avenue would be a hazard because of the bike lanes there.

Ward 7 council member Jane Prince cast the sole vote against rezoning, saying the developers should have had more neighborhood engagement before seeking the change.

Commission approves permit for new Snelling-Hamline apartment

Developer James Tindall's plans to construct a 60-unit apartment building at 1509 Marshall Ave. cleared its final hurdle by obtaining a conditional use permit on March 5 from the Saint Paul Planning Commission.

The permit was needed to increase the maximum height of the building at the rear property line from 25 feet to 38 feet. The project had the support of the Union Park District Council, but raised objections from some neighbors to the north who were concerned about increased alley traffic.

Plans call for demolishing an old one-story commercial building on the property that has been vacant for several years. The building previously served as a roller skating rink, paint store, offices and place of worship.

Plans call for a 4½-story building with 43 tuck-under and surface parking spaces. The project received a setback variance earlier this year. The property was rezoned to Traditional Neighborhoods 3 in 2018, so no zoning change was needed.

Committee favors higher height for 2nd Lexington Landing phase

The Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee has recommended approval of a conditional use permit that would allow a building height of up to 50 feet for the second phase of the Lexington Landing senior housing complex in Highland Park. The recommendation will be taken up by the full Planning Commission on March 19.

The Highland District Council and city staff recommended approval of the permit.

The proposed four-story building will be the second of two taking up the 5-acre triangular parcel that was the former home to Riverside School. The J.A. Wedum Foundation is proposing a building of up to 48 feet. A height of 45 feet is allowed under the current TN3 zoning. The 50-foot permit is proposed to provide some flexibility.

Lexington Landing's first phase was a five-story, 170-unit building at the corner of West Seventh Street and Montreal Avenue. It offers a mix of independent, assisted living and memory care units. The building opened in December and most of it is now occupied.

The second phase is a four-story building with 91 independent living units, underground parking and a guest suite. It will be similar in appearance to the first building.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

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St. John Vianney seminary plans five-story expansion, renovation

By JANE MCCLURE

Saint John Vianney Seminary is planning to renovate and expand its five-story building on the University of Saint Thomas campus. The project, which would add about 22,000 square feet to the building on Selby Avenue, has been in the works for about 18 months. The goal is to submit it for city site plan review in April. Construction would begin in the spring of 2022 with completion in the spring of 2023.

Neighbors got their first look at the project on March 9 at a meeting of the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WS-NAC). The intent is to renovate the existing building and turn a one-story chapel into a five-story addition with a small roof deck.

A minor seminary, Saint John Vianney is lo-

cated at the southeast corner of Selby Avenue and Finn Street. It opened in 1982, and is now one of the largest undergraduate seminaries in the country. It enrolls between 100 and 115 students from about 20 dioceses. Most are between the ages of 18 and 24, and about 35 percent of them progress to a major seminary and become ordained priests.

The seminary building includes offices, classrooms and living space for students and seven priests. The renovation would include a redesigned entrance on the Selby side of the building to make it more visible and accessible. The building's basement would be extensively renovated with classroom and music performance spaces, an exercise room, recreation room, workshop and showers.

The seminary chapel would be expanded with a larger sanctuary, sacristy and choir loft.



An artist's rendering of the five-story addition to the one-story chapel on the north side of Saint John Vianney Seminary, as viewed from Selby Avenue.

The five-story addition would also include a new lobby and reception area, offices, a conference room, additional housing for priests and the rector, another smaller chapel and guest rooms.

The building expansion and added landscaping would require the removal of some

off-street parking. That and the need to reconfigure the parking lot would reduce the lot from 71 to 53 spaces.

The cost of the expansion project has not been announced. It appears to meet the height and setback limits of the University of Saint Thomas' conditional use permit.

City Council approves bike lanes for half-mile stretch of Hamline Avenue

By JANE MCCLURE

Despite the objections of local businesses over the loss of 66 on-street parking spaces, bike lanes will be striped this year on Hamline Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Highland Parkway as part of a city mill and overlay project. The Saint Paul City Council approved the bike lanes on March 10.

"I think this is going to be a great bike connection," said Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert. According to him, not only will it complete a segment of the citywide bicycle network, it will slow down motor vehicle traffic on Hamline.

The bike lanes have the support of the Highland District Council (HDC) Transportation Committee. However, they were opposed by several of the businesses at Randolph and Hamline avenues.

"Less parking is less parking," said Ted Casper, co-owner of the Nook bar and restaurant, 492 S. Hamline Ave. While bike lanes are nice to have, he said, thriving businesses are essential. He asked that Edgumbe Road be considered as an alternative bike route between Highland Parkway and Randolph.

A few local residents also asked that an alternative bike route be considered, given the heavy demand for parking on Hamline. "Sometimes the city is so focused on thinking

forward and making changes, it fails to think about the things that are working and need to remain the same," said Tracy Schmitz of Highland Park. "I want to be able to go to the Nook, the Coffee Cup, Schmidty's or Elite Repeat and park nearby, especially in the winter."

Hamline, which carries about 4,300 motor vehicles per day on that stretch, will be restriped with two six-foot bike lanes and two 11-foot traffic lanes. The project area has 150 on-street parking spaces in all, with 70 on the east side of Hamline. All but four of the spaces on the east side will be eliminated, including 28 spaces in a residential permit parking district.

Hamline is 42 feet wide for most of its

length, but it is 46 feet wide for about 100 feet near Randolph and Hamline. The street's wider width allows space for four vehicles to park by businesses on the east side of Hamline between Randolph and the alley to the south. Those four spaces are limited to one-hour parking from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily to promote frequent turnover. The 10 spaces directly across Hamline are limited to two-hour parking from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays.

As part of the Hamline mill and overlay project, new sidewalk ramps that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act will be installed at all corners and any cracked sidewalk panels will be replaced.



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VIEWPOINT

Finding little pockets of joy, or how I got through the pandemic

BY MARILYN L. BACH

COVID-19 came as a shock. My first inkling that something drastic was occurring was a phone call from my physician son in New York urging me not to let anyone into my condo or have guests over for cocktails, as I often do. I asked why. He answered, “They’ll breathe on you.”

The isolation of leaving home less frequently, walking down deserted streets during the statewide lockdown and being unable to meet with friends or family face to face was a shock to my highly extroverted system initially. During other challenging times, writing books helped me get through the trauma. This time I have not been motivated in that direction. But on a mid-March morning in 2020, I participated in a professionally run Zoom support meeting sponsored by the Saint Paul Jewish Community Center. Participants were women of a certain age nationwide. The topic was gaining resilience through the pandemic.

I told the group my first two acts were getting a bird feeder and setting up weekly Zoom meetings with my personal trainer. Every morning I had my coffee with the birds on my deck, and went forth to navigate these challenging times. Last Christmas a friend gave me a heart-shaped block of bird seed. The birds now happily sit on the block to eat the seeds. This has attracted more birds to my deck, and it is comical to watch them sit on the block and merrily eat the seeds.

Christmas was definitely challenging, with friends and family living far from Minnesota. I decided that it was definitely the time to decorate our building for the holidays. With the help of my neighbors, we decorated the building



especially gaily, which proved uplifting to us all. And my children came through big-time with phone calls, gifts, flowers and creative Zoom calls. Christmas Day was beautiful with trees and streets covered with fresh snow. I took my two cockapoos on a snowy walk to a nearby park.

When the parks near my Summit Hill home were attracting too many people for my social-distancing comfort, I sought other open spaces for outings with my cockapoos. In the Twin Cities we are fortunate to have many lovely dog parks that are heavily wooded. A favorite of mine is Arkwright Dog Park on Saint Paul’s East Side. While the dogs run gleefully free, their owners enjoy the natural setting and a bit of socializing.

The Japanese advocate forest bathing, a practice loosely defined as restful rejuvenation by spending time in nature. My outings at nearby parks and other open spaces are my form of forest bathing.

COVID-19 requires all of us to wash our hands more frequently. For Christmas 2019 I received a gift of gloriously scented hand soap and have been using that to wash my hands multiple times per day. The hand soap fills the air with an uplifting aroma. When I thanked the sender for how much her gift added to my day during this trying time, she said, “it’s all about finding little pockets of joy.”

Working with my personal fitness trainer by Zoom, I found that the pandemic has required a special adherence to challenges. Together we are developing an approach to exercise for this era.

There is a famous book and movie, *Playing for Time*, the story of Fania Fenelon, a French Resistance fighter imprisoned in Auschwitz who survived by participating in the concentration camp orchestra. It would be disrespectful, to say the least, to compare the disruptions faced by a Summit Hill senior during COVID-19 with the life-and-death hardships of internment during World War II. However, writing has been a lifeline for me in trying times. Writing has helped me through many tough patches.

So rather than playing for time, I am writing for time and seeking out little pockets of joy.

Marilyn L. Bach, Ph.D., is a retired member of the University of Minnesota Medical School faculty. She lives in Summit Hill with her cockapoos, Sparkle and JoJo.

INBOX

Motorist, your name is mud

After reading the article about turning some of Mississippi River Boulevard into a one-way street (*Villager*, February 17), it finally hit me what the city’s agenda is. It seems every decision they make concerning roads makes it harder for motorists to get around. They add bicycle lanes that narrow the roads. They eliminate parking spaces whenever they can. They are always lowering the speed limits. They neglect to maintain the roads so the autos take a beating. They put pedestrian crossings in high traffic areas that can endanger pedestrians and scare motorists. They put in light rail, which very few people use, and narrow the roads. What they are doing is pushing motorists into residential areas, which will cause a whole new set of problems.

*Greg Mulally
Highland Park*

Leave river road alone

I read in the February 17 *Villager* that a “majority” want to permanently turn Mississippi River Boulevard into a one-way street going north. What majority? I was never queried, and I have lived here for 66 years. River road was never meant to be one-way. It is a direct route to and from the University of Minnesota and other destinations.

Today, sadly, progress has arrogance about it. Bicycles have become more of a means of transportation than ever before. Hear, hear! I thank those who bike for being cognizant of the environment. The majority of bicyclists are friendly and considerate. For a decade or more, there has been a growing outcry from a select group of the biking community—racers, elite athletes and others. I commend their conditioning, but their wish to impose their perceived right to ride where and how they want is misguided.

As a river road resident and daily motorist, I rarely go more than 30 mph (the speed limit on river road is 25 mph) and my car is passed. I have been spit on, sworn at, flipped off and scared I could hit a bicyclist when they ride two or three abreast and do not yield to a vehicle that could cause great bodily harm. The law says I could be ticketed for running a stop sign. Why, then, is there no enforcement for bicyclists?

Now that the Ford site redevelopment is under way and housing density is going to increase, a one-way river road does not make sense. Make other streets one-way, but leave river road alone for those going both north and south to other destinations. River road is a valued asset for transportation. To create more pedestrian access, explore extending the sidewalks on public property on the residential side of river

road. A new northbound bike lane would make sense by increasing the width of river road.

*Dana Rose
Highland Park*

Get involved in a district council

Some people may feel that their voices are not being heard by their governing bodies. If you would like to change that, consider becoming involved in your local district council.

Saint Paul’s system of 17 district councils was established in the 1970s under Mayor Larry Cohen. This was done to give residents a say in how their neighborhoods are developed and cultivated to best serve the community. The district councils act as unofficial advisory boards to the City Council. They are governed by a board of directors and their own sets of bylaws.

If you live in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood, you may participate in the district council without being elected to the board. By attending three consecutive committee meetings, you obtain voting rights on that committee.

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council will hold board elections in April. Even if you do not wish to run for a seat on the board, you can vote for those who will represent you. For more information, see the District Councils column on page 16 of this *Villager* or visit macgrove.org. For more information on the history of Saint Paul’s district councils and how to participate, visit tinyurl.com/3jrc4ym5.

*Ann Dolan
Macalester-Groveland*

Editor’s note: Ann Dolan is a voting member of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council’s Transportation and Housing and Land Use committees and its Inclusivity Task Force.

Keep the focus on racial justice

We are approaching the trials of the four police officers who are charged with killing George Floyd. I can’t help but think about the days following his death—the protests, cleanups and fervent dedication to racial justice spotted on social media and lawn signs. In the 10 months since, we’ve slipped back into apathy, although with a changed consciousness towards it. My friends who used to message daily about injustices for persons of color have gone silent on the subject, now mostly discussing the impending (fingers crossed) end to COVID-19.

This is both a strength and a weakness for humanity—our ability to adapt. We find ourselves in a new circumstance, we get used to it and we move on with our lives. This is

obviously beneficial when you’re looking to survive and have to quickly pivot to new situations, but it’s not so helpful when addressing long-standing, systemic injustice.

The flurry of action and pledges we saw from allies following the death of George Floyd has died down, but the need for action has not. Many have integrated some of this consciousness into their lives by seeking out Black, indigenous and other persons-of-color businesses or trying to change racist things they do everyday, but we need to continue to press our political and economic systems to work towards racial justice.

Part of the hesitancy comes from the fact that it’s such an overwhelming issue. It touches housing, health care, economic opportunities and nearly everything else. How do you begin to address that? One way is by ensuring that elected officials know that it’s important to you so that they view all decisions through the lens of racial justice.

The world is getting better every day, but that doesn’t mean we can take our foot off the gas.

*Bridget Dinter
Highland Park*

Kudos to Corner Drug

Kudos to John Hoeschen and his Saint Paul Corner Drug staff for their efficient COVID vaccine process. From online registration to the actual shot, it was a smooth process. We understand that John worked hard to become a vaccination site. This is another example of great service from a local business.

*Mark and Margo Dickinson
Macalester-Groveland*

Resist a denser Mendota Hts.

The Mendota Heights City Council convened a work session on February 9 to establish goals for the city to pursue over the next two years. One of these goals—“Create a zoning code in order to meet projected growth and market demands”—opens the potential for higher-density development.

John Mazzitello, who joined the City Council in January, is an advocate for higher-density development. As a former member of the Mendota Heights Planning Commission, he supported smaller lot sizes in the city through changes in the comprehensive plan. Mazzitello has expressed his intention to spearhead the city’s efforts to implement its 2040 Comprehensive Plan. That plan is governed by the

84 INBOX

Metropolitan Council's one-size-fits-all priority for higher-density development.

It is fair to say that a preponderance of Mendota Heights residents live here because of the city's special character. The city is largely residential and fully built out with little space for future development. If the city changes its code to permit higher-density development, construction of multi-unit dwellings in single-family neighborhoods may be allowed. Your neighbor next door could be a multi-unit residence.

I call on every resident of Mendota Heights who treasures its special character to resist this insidious agenda.

*Thomas Smith
Mendota Heights*

Shine bright, Saint Paul

I love to see so many people outside walking, running, strolling, etc. With the warmer weather, hopefully more people will feel safe venturing outdoors. Please, please, wear bright reflective clothing or headlamps. It is very difficult to see individuals, especially at dusk. Just because you see the driver does not mean the driver sees you. Let's all do our part and keep our pedestrians and drivers safe.

Slow down, stay safe and shine bright, Saint Paul.

*Michelle Murphy
Highland Park*

State has failed us in pandemic

With a breathtaking suppression of information regarding the science and data surrounding COVID-19, Minnesota's leaders have sufficiently scared citizens into a belief that if it weren't for the edicts of Governor Walz, carts of dead bodies would be rolling down our streets. The dire consequences of the more than 100 executive orders imposed by our governor over the last 11 months continue to build. Our neighbors' businesses have been decimated, and all of our lives have been upended—economically, psychologically and emotionally. As we struggle to rebuild and bounce back from these harsh impositions, District 64B Representative Dave Pinto should be focused on helping Minnesotans to get back to work, living life and trusting each other again and not adding further insult and injury with a vote to increase taxes.

Governor Walz, with the help of the Legislature, has overstepped the bounds of his office by denying citizens the right to make decisions that are best for us, our families and our neighborhoods. His administration has kept us in the dark about pertinent COVID-19 information, including mask effectiveness, preventive measures, early treatments and seasonality. It has denied us the human right to assess and assume risks for ourselves and our loved ones, to provide for our families, to gather with family and friends in our homes, to worship God in a community and to breathe unencumbered by masks.

There will always be a new variant, a new virus or a new disease on the horizon, and our state leaders do little but continue to foment fear, treating us as walking masses of disease, intent on harming others were it not for their

sweeping, never-ending dictates. We deserve truthful, transparent and trustworthy leaders who believe in the decency of fellow citizens and small-business owners and value us as partners, not problems.

Governor Walz must face political justice for the long-lasting damage he has caused Minnesotans. Representative Pinto needs to stand with the interests of his constituents and vote to impeach Governor Walz.

*Suzanne Turbenson
Highland Park*

Beauty in the eye of a bureaucrat

It could only happen in "America's Most Livable City" that an ice sculpture would be considered a hazard, a city where driving on neighborhood streets that are curb to curb ice is considered a privilege. There may be some misplaced priorities here and tax dollars that are being misspent.

*Julian Loscalzo
Lexington-Hamline*

A musician who can teach

I was delighted to see your piece on Jeff King ("Never-ending challenge," *Villager*, February 17). Jeff is one of those who can both teach and do. I've heard him perform in jazz trios and pop dance bands, and he always adds to the music, whatever the style. I've taken sax lessons from him since 2013, and he always knows how to steer me along. Even when I don't feel ready to play the current assignment, I still look forward to each lesson. They're that much fun.

*Chris Parker
Merriam Park*

Owning up to racism

Anne Collopy writes of reparations for crimes committed centuries ago (*Villager* Inbox, February 17). It may be partly the fault of what we weren't taught in school that she does not mention that crimes of violence and discrimination have been committed from long ago right up to the present. And an admission of guilt for this is not "craven." It can be very brave.

*Jane Thomson
Ramsey Hill*

Unemployed seniors are hurting

As a legislative advocate for AARP-MN, I'd like readers to urge lawmakers to repeal a law that penalizes older workers by reducing or eliminating unemployment insurance benefits for some laid-off workers who either receive, have applied for or intend to apply for Social Security benefits. Minnesota is the only state that has this unfair law.

Hundreds of thousands of laid-off workers have applied for unemployment benefits since the pandemic began in mid-March 2020, and one third of our country's workforce is 50 and older. Currently, 50 percent of the weekly Social Security retirement benefits an applicant has received, filed for, or intends to file for must be deducted from the applicant's weekly unemployment benefit amount unless all of the

applicant's wage credit was earned while the applicant was claiming Social Security.

Social Security benefits average approximately \$1,569 a month in Minnesota. We urge readers to ask their legislators to advocate for HF2 and HF106. This law impacts our elders' income and any additional financial wherewithal that affords them access to prescriptions and peace of mind.

*Deepika Bala
Plymouth*

Repeal tax on Social Security

The majority of senior citizens have had their Social Security benefit income taxed by the federal government for 38 years and by the state government for 36 years. A few years ago, the federal government increased the income thresholds for taxing Social Security benefits for seniors. Minnesota has not yet increased the income thresholds to match the federal thresholds.

During our working years, we seniors paid taxes into the Social Security retirement program. In retirement, we've been paying taxes on our Social Security benefit income.

I expect Governor Walz and the 2021 Legislature to prioritize matching the federal income thresholds and working toward repealing taxation on Social Security benefit income, returning it to tax-exempt status for the majority of seniors. Taxing Social Security benefits is devilish, bullying, severe and malicious elder abuse. We are being cheated out of our earned, full Social Security benefit income.

*Sue Shetka
Macalester-Groveland*

Hodges belongs in Cooperstown

Everybody who is in Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame in Cooperstown belongs there. One glaring omission is Gil Hodges, the Brooklyn Dodgers' first baseman who hit 370 home runs, had a career batting average of .273 and earned seven gold gloves. Hodges' teammate Tommy Lasorda said he was bewildered why Hodges wasn't already in the Hall. What's more bewildering is that Hodges was a member of the 1955 World Champion Dodgers and there are more Hall of Famers connected to that team than any other team in the history of baseball. The last time Gil was on the Hall of Fame ballot he received 55 of the 57 votes needed for enshrinement.

*Steven Hubbell
Downtown Saint Paul*

Do write

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

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All ready for its second century

Totally remodeled Mac-Grove home rolls out carpet for spring showcase

BY CASEY EK

Drs. Sarah Seyfer and Adam Davis had not lived in their home for very long before they set their sights on remodeling it. Built in 1917 on the cusp of the Spanish flu pandemic, the Craftsman home at 2266 Goodrich Ave. brought together styles from multiple decades.

Work on remodeling the home was started by Quartersawn Design Build last March, right as the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns began. The newly finished Macalester-Groveland residence is now one of 34 that will be open for in-person viewing from March 26-28 during the Parade of Homes Spring Remodelers Showcase presented by Housing First Minnesota.

While the home looks fit for public display now, the process of getting it to that point was arduous.

Jeff Nicholson, principal of Quartersawn, thought the Seyfer-Davis family could have just as easily demolished the entire structure, but the family wanted to retain the historic features of the house. Instead, crews essentially brought the building down to its studs, and redid its electrical and mechanical systems in the process.

“To me (knocking the house down) was

never an option,” Seyfer said.

COVID-19 forced Nicholson to get creative with scheduling. For much of the project, workers were separated by floor to facilitate social distancing.

As for the highlights of the construction process, crews added a mudroom that now overlooks the family’s backyard. The original foundation where the mudroom, a new powder room and a walk-in pantry now sit was in such poor condition that crews had to start from ground zero there.

Downstairs, Quartersawn added an exercise room that was dug out about three feet lower than the rest of the basement to accommodate high ceilings. Both the couple’s parents live out of town, so a full-scale guest room was added in the basement.

Above the mudroom, Nicholson added a master bathroom with several nods to the past. That included white subway tile on the walls, cross-handle fixtures on his and hers sinks, and mirrors that evoke the Titanic.

While the house has all but completely been rebuilt, Nicholson was able to keep the home’s original millwork on the main level and had new millwork made to match. Though the windows in the home are now modern, the boxes in which they sit are original.

“We take a holistic examination of the



Truly a survivor, this 1917 home is one of 34 that will be open for in-person viewing during the Parade of Homes Spring Remodelers Showcase on March 26-28. PHOTOS BY DREW GRAY

house and the homeowners’ desires when we do a project,” Nicholson said.

The couple discovered the home in April 2017 while living in Rochester where Davis, a vascular surgeon, was finishing a fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. Seyfer, a dermatologist who was pregnant with their son George at the time, came house hunting to Saint Paul. When she saw the home, she jumped on it.

“Adam didn’t actually even see the house before we put an offer down,” Seyfer said.

According to Seyfer, the home’s location on the bluffs of the Mississippi River made it

perfect for their running lifestyle. The open space at the nearby University of Saint Thomas as meant their children, which now number three, would have access to a quiet and safe area to play.

On the recommendation of their neighbors, the couple contacted Quartersawn. By January 2019, design and planning work kicked off in earnest. In March 2020, the family temporarily relocated and construction began. The work would not stop until January 2021, ending over two years of meetings, design alterations and actual construction. However, getting to move into a virtually brand new home made the wait worth it, Seyfer said.

“Everything is pretty close to perfect with the way we live and how we want our home to function,” she said.

Nicholson said the home is the 30th that Quartersawn worked on for the Remodelers Showcase. He said the showcase affords the company’s crews a chance to reflect on their efforts after being single-minded about construction for extended stretches of time.

“It’s rewarding because you work so hard and so long on a project, and you don’t get feedback for 361 days out of the year,” Nicholson said.

The Remodelers Showcase will run from noon-6 p.m. Friday through Sunday, March 26-28. Admission is free, except for a Dream Home at 633 Ashland Ave. that has a \$5 admission charge to support Housing First Minnesota Foundation’s efforts to build housing for veterans and the homeless.

Free guidebooks of all the homes featured are available at local Holiday Stationstores. For more about the tour, including COVID-19 safety guidelines, visit paradeofhomes.org.



At left, Quartersawn built a new mudroom that overlooks the family’s backyard for this century-old Goodrich Avenue home. Above, the new master bathroom features several nods to the past, including white subway tile on the walls, and cross-handle fixtures on his and hers sinks.

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City redefines what constitutes a single household

Neighbors fear it will allow overcrowding in off-campus housing

By JANE McCLURE

Up to six unrelated adults and any number of minor children in their care may now live in a single dwelling in Saint Paul as a result of City Council action on March 10. Months of debate came to an end that day as the council changed the definition of “family” for purposes of the zoning code.

The change was praised by advocates who contend that the city’s longstanding definition of family is antiquated and out of step with the increasingly multicultural makeup of Saint Paul and the growth of extended families and intergenerational living. In fact, the word “family” is now replaced in the zoning code with “household.”

“This is a significant step toward equity,” said Ward 4 City Council member Mitra Jalali. She and other council members said it will have a positive impact on the city’s housing shortage.

The change generated strong opposition in the Merriam Park and Macalester-Groveland neighborhoods near the University of Saint Thomas. Residents there are concerned that setting aside the longtime limit of four unrelated adults in a dwelling will encourage more students to crowd into off-campus housing. Portions of the two neighborhoods are governed by a student housing zoning overlay district, which was

set up almost a decade ago to limit the number of single-family homes and duplexes that can be rented to college students.

The West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) asked the City Council to exempt registered student rental dwellings in the overlay district from the occupancy change for at least 18 months to allow data to be gathered on student safety, rental rates, the number of affected properties and quality-of-life issues. WSNAC also wanted to know how the city’s Department of Safety and Inspections would monitor the impact of the occupancy change in a neighborhood where over-occupancy is already a problem in off-campus housing.

Jalali, who represents much of the area around Saint Thomas, said she understands the concerns of neighbors. However, she said, other regulations are in place to limit the occupancy of a dwelling. For example, local and state fire codes and building codes limit dwellings to one resident for every 150 to 200 square feet. Jalali added that the effects of the ordinance change will be reviewed after six months and one year. She promised to work with university officials and neighbors on enforcement issues.

Dozens of comments were submitted to the City Council about the change to the occupancy limits. Most of them focused on student housing. Neighbors described overcrowded apartments, deteriorated housing and off-campus parties that attracted hundreds of students. “It’s about balance,” said Merriam

Park resident Michael McDonald. Citing the many dormitory-like apartment buildings now springing up around Saint Thomas, McDonald said “this suggests that the only beneficiaries of this change will be remote landlords who might realize a 50 percent increase in rent. That will create a favorable condition to convert more single-family homes to student housing and destroy the balance we enjoy today.”

Since 1975 Saint Paul’s zoning code has defined family as one or two persons or parents “with their direct lineal descendants and adopted or legally cared-for children (and domestic employees thereof) together with not more than two persons not so related, living together in the whole or part of a dwelling comprising a single housekeeping unit.”

The Twin Cities Fair Housing Implementation Council found the definition at risk of being discriminatory or arbitrary in 2017 and recommended that Saint Paul redefine “family” to more closely correlate to neutral maximum-occupancy restrictions found in safety and building codes.

“Our city has for far too long employed a discriminatory definition of family in its zoning code,” said Macalester-Groveland resident Brian Martinson. “The time is now to rid ourselves of this outmoded definition in favor of the more inclusive definition being proposed.”

“I’m glad we’re replacing the term ‘family’ with ‘household’ throughout this ordinance,” said Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker. “I don’t think it’s the city’s place to determine what a family is.”

UPDC approves grant for aging Merriam Park skate park

By JANE McCLURE

The Union Park District Council (UPDC) voted unanimously on March 3 to approve a \$10,000 grant to get the design and reconstruction process rolling for the Merriam Park skate park, which is now 17 years old.

“The skate park is deteriorating to the point that it could have been shut down,” said Mike Robertson, chair of the UPDC’s Environment and Parks Committee, which has been discussing skate park options for several months.

A new or renovated skate park has been estimated to cost \$300,000-\$400,000. Committee members anticipate working with the nonprofit City of Skate organization and the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation to seek more funding.

City of Skate, a coalition of Twin Cities

skaters and supporters, worked with the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission in 2020 to obtain a \$250,000 grant toward construction of more skateboard parks. It is believed to be the first state matching grant program for public skate parks in the United States.

The UPDC’s allocation comes from a fund that was established in 2004 that allows rent payments from a cellphone tower in Merriam Park to be used for neighborhood park improvements. The tower and skate park were both erected in the park that year.

“We could make this a more dynamic space,” said City of Skate board president Paul Forsline about the Merriam Park facility.

“I was never cool enough to be a skater,” said UPDC board president Henry Parker. He and other board members said they would welcome the proposed

improvements to the skate park, which could eventually tie into other goals for the entire park.

The Merriam Park Community Center and its park facilities were identified in the city’s 2010 parks plan as needing improvements. The center, which is shared with Keystone Community Services, is one of the oldest recreation centers in the city.

The Merriam Park skate park is one of only two facilities of its kind in the city. The other opened about the same time at the North End’s Front Park. There also is a proposal to open another skate park in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood.

In 2019 and 2020, City of Skate worked with the city to open a temporary skate park in the refrigerated ice rink space at the Palace Community Center on the West End. It is not clear if that skate park is coming back this summer.

Highland Bridge water feature gets \$7.71M grant

State gift will aid in stormwater cleanup

By JANE McCLURE

The Highland Bridge development on the site of Ford Motor Company’s former assembly plant got a boost on March 10 with the Saint Paul City Council’s acceptance of a \$7.71 million state grant. The so-called Minnesota Point Source Implementation Grant will help pay for the large central water feature on the 122-acre site. It will also allow the city to reduce its own funding for the project.

The water feature, which will extend north and south through the site, is

designed to capture and clean stormwater runoff on the site and funnel it into a manmade creek that will tumble over Hidden Falls and empty into the Mississippi River.

Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert described the water feature, creek and pedestrian and bike trail alongside it as a “game changer. This provides an amenity that everyone can enjoy, not just the residents of Highland Bridge.”

The state grant program is intended to help local governments upgrade water treatment facilities and improve water quality. The city had applied for more than \$9 million of that funding. The money it did receive will offset expenses that would otherwise be covered

through the Ford site’s tax increment financing district, according to Mike Solomon, city treasurer.

The city recently announced a \$675,000 or 35 percent increase in the cost of the planned 90-foot bicycle-pedestrian connection between Highland Bridge and Hidden Falls Regional Park. Originally estimated at \$1.91 million, the Hidden Falls connection was approved by the City Council last September.

The connection will include a 12-foot-wide bituminous trail and the manmade creek, both of which will extend through a tunnel beneath Mississippi River Boulevard. The tunnel, which will lead to a terrace overlooking Hidden Falls, will be lit and have limestone walls and public art.



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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

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 2100 block of Ford Parkway at 2:09 a.m. Friday, February 26.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on Norfolk Avenue and Wheeler Street on February 25, and the 2200 block of Stewart Avenue on February 26.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1100 block of Rankin Street and 2500 block of Stewart Avenue on February 25, on Highland Parkway and Woodlawn Avenue on February 27, the 1700 block of Graham Avenue on March 1, and the 1800 block of Hillcrest Avenue on March 3.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a knife was reported on the 600 block of South Lexington Parkway at 11:29 a.m. Monday, March 1.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—A burglary was reported on the 1200 block of Jefferson Avenue at 1:57 p.m. Tuesday, March 2.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1300 block of Grand Avenue and the 1500 block of Sargent Avenue on February 25, and the 1200 block of Lincoln Avenue on February 28.

Mendota Heights

Robbery—A robbery and assault were reported on the 2300 block of Lexington Avenue at 10:33 p.m. Saturday, March 6. Police said the male aggressor had fled the scene before their arrival. The investigation determined multiple crimes had occurred. The victim denied medical assistance.

Burglary—Numerous items were reported stolen from an underground parking garage on the 1100 block of Highway 13 at 5 p.m. Monday, March 1.

—A group of suspects were caught on video trying to enter an apartment complex on the 2100 block of Highway 13 at 9:09 p.m. Monday, March 1. Minor property damage was reported.

—An employee reported that an unknown male entered an unsecured door and stole her wallet on the 2500 block of Executive Drive around 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 10.

Theft—Several items were reported stolen from vehicles on the 900 block of Highway 13 on February 23, the 1600 block of Lilydale

Carjacker caught as part of Operation Intercept

A 15-year-old boy who was suspected of committing multiple carjackings and robberies across the metro area was apprehended on Friday, February 26. At 9:39 the previous evening, the suspect reportedly jogged up to a 21-year-old woman who was getting out of her car on the 800 block of Saint Paul Avenue. He pointed a gun at her chest and demanded her purse. The woman did not have any money, so he fled in a nearby black, four-door sedan with silver rims.

Surveillance video showed the suspect's vehicle following a white Audi Q5 across the Ford Bridge into Minneapolis. There the Audi was rear-ended, the driver assaulted and her vehicle stolen.

The next day, the suspect was located in the stolen Audi, but fled during an attempted traffic stop. He was tracked to the East Side of Saint Paul and surrendered after being surrounded by police.

The arrest was part of Operation Intercept, a coordinated, multi-agency effort to end the carjacking epidemic in the East Metro area. Police say the boy had previously been arrested more than 20 times.

Road on February 28, the 1300 block of Northland Drive on March 9, and the 1300 block of Highway 13 on March 10.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen on the 2000 block of Executive Drive and the 2300 block of Pilot Knob Road on February 24, the 1400 block of Northland Drive on February 28, the 2000 block of Timmy Street on March 2-3, the 2100 block of Theresa Street on March 6, and the 1000 block of Dakota Drive on March 8.

—A witness saw someone stealing tools from a vehicle on the 1400 block of Highway 13 at 2:03 p.m. Friday, February 26.

—A purse was stolen from a vehicle while the victim was using the city's dog park on the 1300 block of Acacia Boulevard around 10:40 a.m. Monday, March 8.

—A suspect was reportedly seen stealing items from multiple vehicles near the 1400 block of Highway 13 around 10:39 a.m. Monday, March 8. Officers found the suspect vehicle, but the driver was able to get away.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 1000 block of Chippewa Avenue at 8:44 a.m. Wednesday, March 10.

—Police received a report around 4:12 p.m. Thursday, March 11, that someone was stealing the nuts and bolts from the railroad bridge on the 1600 block of Lilydale Road. The thefts reportedly had been going on for some time and extra patrols were requested.

Assault—Officers responded to a report of a fist fight at a hotel on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 2:23 p.m. Saturday, February 27.

Miscellaneous—Police received a report of a male sleeping behind the wheel of a vehicle with his foot on the gas pedal at 7:16 p.m. Sunday, February 21, on the 700 block of Highway 62. Officers observed the male switch seats with a passenger and arrested him for DWI.

—A male who had not rented a room there was found hiding in the bushes at a hotel on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 3:19 a.m. Thursday, February 25.

—A suspect was cited for dumping construction debris over the bluffs on the 800 block of Highway 13 at 5:35 p.m. Tuesday, March 9. He reportedly told police he thought it was a good place to get rid of the rubbish.

Merriam Park

Burglary—Burglaries were reported on the 1900 block of Laurel Avenue on February 27, and the 1700 block of Marshall Avenue on February 28.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1900 block of Saint Anthony Avenue and the 300 block of North Finn Street on February 27, and the 1600 block of University Avenue on March 3.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Beverly Road and Clifford Street on March 2, the 1900 block of University on March 2, and the 500 block of North Prior Avenue on March 3.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a knife was reported on Fairview and Iglehart avenues at 8:50 p.m. Friday, February 26.

Snelling-Hamline

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Pascal Street and Saint Anthony Avenue at 10:30 p.m. Friday, February 26.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on Carroll Avenue and Pascal Street at 5:55 p.m. Saturday, February 27.

Summit Hill

Burglary—A burglary was reported on Crocus Hill at 3:55 p.m. Wednesday, March 3.

Theft—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 900 block of Grand Avenue at 9:15 p.m. Thursday, February 25.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue on February 27, the 900 block of Goodrich Avenue on March 1, and the 1100 block of Grand on March 2.

Summit-University

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 700 block of Concordia Avenue at 5:31 p.m. Tuesday, March 2.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on Laurel Avenue and Mackubin Street at 1 a.m. Saturday, February 27.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 100 block of North Chatsworth Street at 11:01 a.m. Tuesday, March 2.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 800 block of Carroll Avenue on February 28, and the 800 block of Laurel Avenue on March 2.

Miscellaneous—An incident involving narcotics was reported on Marshall Avenue and Grotto Street at 11:30 p.m. Thursday, February 25.

West End

Car thief caught—The driver of a stolen vehicle with stolen license plates reportedly rear-ended a vehicle at a high rate of speed at 9:28 a.m. Sunday, March 7, on West Seventh Street and Smith Avenue. The suspect driver took off running and shortly afterward was found riding a bike on West Seventh. The 26-year-old male was arrested after he rode the bike into the officer who had gotten out of his vehicle to talk with him.

Robbery—A robbery with a knife was reported on the 1100 block of West Seventh Street at 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 2.

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 1100 block of Elway Street at 8:34 a.m. Saturday, February 27.

—A burglary was reported on the 300 block of Clifton Street at 10:09 a.m. Sunday, February 28.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 300 block of North Smith Avenue and 1900 block of West Seventh Street on February 28, the 600 block of Stewart Avenue on March 1, and the 700 block of Mercer Street on March 2.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 1800 block of Ivan Way on Sunday, February 28.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon was reported on the 200 block of West Seventh Street at 6:09 p.m. Friday, February 26.

Council withdraws proposed restrictions on public assemblies

By JANE McCLURE

Citing First Amendment protections of the right to assemble, the Saint Paul City Council on March 3 withdrew proposed ordinance amendments that would have placed a host of new restrictions on protests, parades, races and other public gatherings.

The amendments were brought forward as a public safety measure in the wake of the protests last year following the death of George Floyd, in advance of the November general election, and in opposition to Governor Tim Walz's emergency powers regarding COVID-19.

New rules regarding the right to assemble could be reintroduced by the City Council in the future. However, that is not likely without robust public discussion beforehand, something that many people said was lacking with the proposal that was shelved.

The city currently requires permits for parades, races, events with street closures, and

outdoor assemblies of 24 or more people. It prohibits the people assembled from carrying any "metal, lumber, wood or similar material" that is more than 2 inches wide or a quarter-inch thick.

The proposed amendments would have required a permit for any gathering of five or more people. Banners, signs and posters at the gatherings were to be made of soft materials such as cloth, paper, thin plastic or cardboard that is no more than a quarter-inch thick. Wood and plastic pipes were banned, except for those with blunt ends needed to support a sign.

Also banned were shields, aerosol spray, tear gas, mace, pepper spray, bear repellent, projectile launchers, laser-light devices, knives, swords, sabers, axes, hatchets, ice picks, razor blades, martial arts weapons, tasers, stun guns, chains longer than 20 inches, bricks, concrete, rocks, chunks of asphalt, pellets, ball bearings, baseball bats, metal pipes, balloons, glass bottles, water cannons, water guns filled with flammables,

body fluids, biohazards or other noxious matter, open flame torches, and lanterns or other combustibles using gasoline, kerosene, propane or other fuels.

The proposed amendments called for police officers and other city officials to issue warnings before enforcing any provision of the ordinance.

City Council president Amy Brendmoen withdrew the ordinance after hearing of the opposition of event organizers, community activists and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Brendmoen has since asked the Saint Paul Police Department and City Attorney's Office to work on a revised ordinance.

The City Council received many calls and emails about the ordinance amendments prior to the scheduled public hearing on March 3. The ACLU of Minnesota stated that the changes were "overly broad, unnecessary and especially dangerous for Black, brown and indigenous communities who are already disproportionately harmed

by criminalization, overpolicing and police harassment."

These proposed amendments "threaten those who pose the least threat to our city," said Macalester-Groveland resident James Wilkinson, "and it'll never be equally enforced." Wilkinson asked that the city instead enforce existing gun laws.

"Saint Paul law already says: 'It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in any parade, race or public assembly that would constitute a substantial hazard to the public safety or that would materially interfere with or endanger the public peace or rights of residents to the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their property,'" Wilkinson said. "That should be enough."

"My main concern is that this will limit protestors' ability to protect themselves from the police," said Macalester-Groveland resident Anneka Munsell. The Saint Paul police have an issue with excessive force, she added, and until that is dealt with there should be no additional restrictions on people gathering.

ON THE TOWN

All of her world's a screen

Virtual productions fill the void for actress Sally Wingert as theaters struggle with pandemic

BY ANNE MURPHY

When the stage is finally set for theaters to reopen safely, no one will be happier than Sally Wingert. For now, the Merriam Park actress, known for her many roles at the Guthrie Theater and other Twin Cities venues, is content with her part in Ten Thousand Things' adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors*. The Shakespearean drama will be presented live online at 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, March 18-20.

There is no substitute for the rewards of a live audience, according to Wingert, be it their laughter, tears or applause. But at a time when theaters are just struggling to survive, virtual productions fill the void, she said.

"We're creatures who search for relevance," Wingert said. "*The Comedy of Errors* is about mistaken identities, parents searching for their children, children searching for their parents, the special bond of twins and ridiculous happenstance. We hope these rather broad characters and their hijinks make folks laugh."

In Ten Thousand Things' adaptation, all of the roles are played by women. After just a few rehearsals via Zoom, Wingert said she could already speak to what is percolating for audiences.

"First of all, with the exception of one fabulous out-of-towner, all of the actors are super-talented colleagues and good friends," she

said. "I've worked with all of them before—Sun Mee Chomet, Cristina Florencia Castro, Mo Perry, Jasmine Bracey and Sarah Agnew. There are always plenty of juicy male parts in classical plays. The parts for women are often fewer and of lesser importance. So having the doors flung open to male parts is fantastic."

Wingert played Emilia the Abbess in the Guthrie's 2002 production of *The Comedy of Errors*. This time she plays both Emilia and Egeon, the second merchant, who "could be played as a woman but typically is a man," she said. "This isn't the first time I've played a man. As recently as last year, at this very time, I was playing Sir Toby Belch in (Shakespeare's) *Twelfth Night* at the Guthrie."

Early in the rehearsal of any play, Wingert said, actors and director "will sit around a table going through the text line by line, deciphering meaning and coming to a shared understanding of just what story we're telling. Shakespeare is endlessly interesting to me. Many words are no longer in our lexicon, so there's a sleuthing element at play."

Ten Thousand Things (TTT) is providing a green screen, microphone and lights for each of the actors performing from their home, "so the Zoom performances will have a few bells and whistles," Wingert said. "Peter Vitale, TTT's resident musical genius, is underscoring quite a bit of the show and helping with some funny



Actress Sally Wingert on the stoop of her Merriam Park home. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

"It's hard to work on a character and not be able to engage your whole body in the storytelling. Any rehearsal room is preferable to a screen. But you work with what you got."

– Sally Wingert

sound effects."

Still, Wingert said, "it's hard to work on a character and not be able to engage your whole body in the storytelling. Any rehearsal room is preferable to a screen. But you work with what you got."

That is how the past year was scripted for Wingert and other theater professionals: "sporadic little bits and bobs of work with long stretches of unemployment," she said. "We're coming up on the anniversary of my last performance in front of a live audience. We were deep into the run of *Twelfth Night* at the Guthrie. There was

more and more news about COVID shutdowns, but nothing had been said. Our audiences were getting a little smaller. We did the show one Thursday night and got an email the next morning saying it was the last—they were closing the show. We didn't even have time to say goodbye."

As disappointing as that was and as hard as the shutdown has been, there were no other choices, according to Wingert. "Theaters operate on a razor's edge as it is, just managing to stay afloat," she said. "I'm very sympathetic to all of the performing arts, but there's been very little talk about how hard it is for theaters to shut down and still pay their rent, their utilities, maybe with a skeleton staff. When might they reopen? Should they plan a season? It's a completely terrifying unknown that we're all working on."

Wingert said she has been fortunate to find work during the shutdown. "I took part in a number of online workshops through the Playwrights' Center," she said. "These are for playwrights to hear a new play and be able to bounce ideas off directors and actors. I just finished taping two continuing

legal education courses for Mixed Blood Theatre where I got to read both the opinions and case work of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It was terrific to be able to read her exact words. These were transcripts from cases she argued before the Supreme Court and decisions she rendered while serving on the Court."


Over the past few months, Wingert has joined with Peter Rothstein of Theatre Latte Da on the development of a play about Frances Cabrini, the patron saint of immigrants and the first American saint. "In the midst of all of this, it's my first time having to write a play, and I'm in awe of the people who do," she said.

"I've had a really long career in theater in the Twin Cities," Wingert said. "I've done over 90 performances at the Guthrie. I've had a really normal life, except I get to do this extraordinary work that brings me such joy. After 40 years, I continue to feel extremely passionate about it. I'm just waiting till I can get back to the theater world as I knew it."

The three performances of *The Comedy of Errors* are free, but reservations are required. Visit tenthousandthings.org.

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Books

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host free online readings and discussions with authors Laura Munson and her debut novel, *Willa's Grove*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 17; and James Canton and his reflection on life and human history, *The Oak Papers*, at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 18. To register for the link, call 651-225-8989 or visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

The Dakota County Historical Society will host a virtual discussion with author Sheila O'Connor about her novel, *Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Facts and Fictions*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18. The program is free, though donations are appreciated. To register for the link, visit dakotahistory.org/events or call 651-552-7548.

Subtext Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will host free online readings and discussions with poets Mary Kay Rummel and Sharon Chmielarz and their new collections, *Nocturnes: Between Flesh and Stone* and *The J Horoscope*, respectively, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 24; and Lauren Fox and her historical novel, *Send for Me*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 30. To register for the link, visit subtextbooks.com.

Music

Artaria String Quartet will perform works by Carlos Simon, Diego Vega and Franz Schubert in a virtual concert at 7 p.m. Friday, March 19. The program includes Simon's *Elegy: A Cry from the Grave*, Vega's *String Quartet* and Schubert's *Quartet in G Major*. The cost of the concert is by donation with \$20 suggested. Visit artariaquartet.com.

The Minnesota Orchestra will close its series of free Friday night concerts with "Lament and Beauty" at 8 p.m. March 19 on television (TPT MN), radio (99.5 FM) and the internet (classicalmpr.org and minnesotaorchestra.org). Conductor Osmo Vänskä will lead the orchestra and pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet in Walker's *Lyric for Strings* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 4*.

Cellists Charles and Cassidy Asch will perform music from the 17th and 18th centuries that was inspired by house pets at 7 p.m. Friday and 11 p.m. Saturday, March 19 and 20. The online concerts will feature the warm and radiant *Suite in E flat for Solo Cello* by Bach, *Sonatas for Two Cellos* by Jacob



A life in clay.

A retrospective of the 50-year career of ceramicist Mike Norman featuring his allegorical and poetic sculpture is on view through April 18 at the Northern Clay Center, 2424 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis. The exhibit includes new works by the Minnesota artist made just for this exhibition. Norman (pictured in 2004) will discuss his life and artistic process in a free online program from noon-2 p.m. Saturday, April 10. For information, call 612-339-8007 or visit northernclaycenter.org.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Klein the Younger, and the exuberant sonatas of Jean-Noël Massart. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for students. For reservations, visit tinyurl.com/3mjpeafp or call 651-321-2214.

The Church of the Lost Souls, a 12-week concert series featuring guitarist Billy McLaughlin, his band SimpleGifts and special guests, will continue at 4:30 p.m. Sundays through May 2 at the Parkway Theater, 4814 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. SimpleGifts includes singers Karen Paurus, Amy Courts and Kathleen Johnson, instrumentalist Laura MacKenzie and drummer Billy O. Joining them will be singer-songwriter Jeff Arundel on March 21; Chris Koza, March 28; Willy Wisely, April 4; Dean Magraw, Carin Vagle and Tim Frantzich, April 11; Turn Turn Turn, April 18; Annie Mack, April 25; and Peter Mayer, May 2. Ninety-two seats are available in the theater (25 percent capacity). Tickets are \$29 in advance, \$39 at the door. The concerts will also be live-streamed with tickets priced at whatever you care to pay. For reservations, visit theparkwaytheater.com.

Five Minnesota lutenists—Paul Berget, Edward Martin, Annett Richter, Phillip Rukavina and Thomas Walker Jr.—will perform solo sets in a Minnesota Guitar Society concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 28, on the MGS YouTube channel. Music from

the Renaissance and Baroque eras will be played. Viewing is free, though donations are welcome. For reservations, visit mnguitar.org.

Exhibits

The Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd., has reopened to the public from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sundays. Due to health and safety considerations, museum capacity is limited and tickets must be purchased in advance. Visit smm.org/tickets.

The Bell Museum of Natural History has reopened to the public at 25 percent capacity and with enhanced cleaning and ventilation. Reservations are required. Hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday through Sunday. All visitors over age 2 must wear a face covering with two or more layers that fit snugly to the face. Among the attractions are the following exhibits: *Minnesota Journeys*; *Climates of Inequality*; *Fifty Nights Under the Stars* with Artist Mike Shaw; *Medicinal Plants and Pandemic Apparel*; *Connecting to Minnesota's Forests*; and the planetarium programs "Out of This World," "Mysteries of Your Brain" and "Minnesota Night Skies." Admission is \$12, \$10 for seniors, \$9 for youths ages 3-21. Visit bellmuseum.umn.edu or call 612-626-9660.

"Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota" is on view through June 20 in window galleries of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, 4th and Robert streets. The exhibition was curated by JoJo Bell, executive director of the African American Interpretive Center of Minnesota. It features photographs by Chris McDuffie and an oral history of Black Minnesotans about their experiences in small towns and living on the margins of society.

"The Secret Life of Objects," ceramic sculpture that tells a story with the help of narrative devices, is being displayed through April 18 in the Main Gallery at the Northern Clay Center, 2424 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis. Artists Natalia Arbelaez, Stephen Bird, Arthur Gonzalez, Valerie Ling, Leslie Macklin and Anu-Laura Tuttelberg use drawing, collage and film to embellish their sculpture and expand on its meaning for the viewer. Bird will discuss his art and how his work has been shaped through animation in a free online program at 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 23. For more information, call 612-339-8007 or visit northernclaycenter.org.

"Meditation on Visual Prayer," a virtual salon that explores the connections between art, healing and spirituality, will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18, as part of the University of Saint Thomas' Sacred Arts Festival. Featured are the artistic and spiritual practices of 19 members of the Interfaith Artist Circle of the Twin Cities. Artists Renanah Halpern, Hend Al-Mansour and Beth Andrews will discuss their work with UST theology professor Corri Carvalho. To register for the link, visit tinyurl.com/hrkb7u78.

Et cetera

"Redistricting: The Good, the Bad and the Dirty Work" will be addressed from 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 30, in a free online program sponsored by the League of Women Voters (LWV). Paul Huffman, redistricting coordinator for LWV Minnesota, will offer the latest on the 2020 census, the experience of legislative redistricting following previous censuses, and the prospects for fairness and transparency in the coming redistricting. The program will be available via Zoom and on the LWV Saint Paul Facebook page. To register for the Zoom link, visit tinyurl.com/ae8bu6u5.

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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Central boys find ski, swim success

If at first you don't succeed, get back on your skis and try again. Such was the case for the Central High School boys' Nordic ski team this winter.

The Minutemen strapped on their skis and took on neighboring Highland Park in four meets from January through February. The Scots won the first 5K freestyle race by 20 points, the second race by 15 and the third race by just three. Highland also won the Twin Cities Championship meet, but Highland coach Brad Moening fretted about the March 1 section meet, noting Central's deep roster.

It turned out that he had good reason to fret. Highland's Davis Isom won the individual championship, but Central's Charlie Ostergren took second, and teammates Elijah Harris (fifth), Adam Swanson (eighth) and Elliott Norton-Brower (10th) all cracked the Top Ten to help the Minutemen win the team title with 379 points, two more than their Saint Paul rival.

Both the Central and Highland boys earned a spot in last week's state Nordic ski meet at Giants' Ridge in Biwabik. (Minnehaha Academy was a close third at sections with 373 points, Saint Paul Academy was fifth and Henry Sibley was seventh.) Central may not be quite back to the level of the early 1990s when its Paul Virgin-coached teams won three straight state titles, but it was a giant stride forward from its fifth-place finish at last year's section meet.

It was all part of a good week for Central athletes. The Minutemen swamped the opposition at the City Conference boys' swimming meet on March 5 with 523 points, 57 better than second-place Como Park. It was Central's first conference crown in swimming since 2014. Jonathan Cordano won the 50 freestyle and 100 butterfly events, Aidan Riehl took the 100 backstroke, and Everett Ries won the 100 freestyle and teamed up with Jacob Banas, Henry Oakes and David Cerkenik to win the 200 freestyle relay.

Central took fifth at the Section 4AA meet at Stillwater on March 13. Qualifying for the state meet on March 19 were Cordano in the 100 butterfly and the 200 freestyle relay team of Ries, Joe Ricker, Campbell Wencel and Cordano.

Spring flag football comes to CDH

In springtime a youngster's mind turns to...football? Well, Cretin-Derham Hall head football coach Chuck Miesbauer certainly hopes so. Miesbauer is part of the Capital City MN coed spring flag football league that will play on Sundays from April 11-May 9 at CDH. Kids in grades K-3 will play from 1-2:30 p.m. and grades 4-8 from 2:30-4 p.m. Youngsters will receive instruction and play two games each Sunday.

"I'm hoping we get six to eight teams," Miesbauer said. "We have several kids signed up already."

An inquiring scribe wondered about the coed designation. "We're trying to be inclusive," Miesbauer explained. "Nike even has a (football) catalogue geared for girls."

The cost of participating is \$60, but Miesbauer noted that financial aid is available. For more details or to register, go to capitalcityfootballmn.ryzerevents.com.

When Miesbauer returns to the high school football field in August, things will be different. Since 2012, CDH has been playing at the Class 6A level, two notches above where its current enrollment of 940 students says it can compete. The school recently announced that this fall it will move to 5A.

Since the Raiders advanced to the 6A semifinals in 2017, their football fortunes have struggled a bit. The team was a combined 9-9 during the 2018 and 2019 seasons, but slipped to 1-6 during last year's truncated schedule. The move to 5A will allow CDH to play football against schools with enrollments of a minimum 1,086 students. No other sports at the school are affected by the move.

Athletic director Phil Archer, a former CDH player, wholeheartedly supports the decision. He noted that if the football team's fortunes improve, the Raiders could apply to move up again to 6A.

WRIGHT CALL ▶ 16

Minutemen come up big in boys' hoops

BY BILL WAGNER

Despite high hopes during their regular seasons for the past few years, a deep play-off run in their rugged section has eluded the Central High School boys' basketball teams. This year, coach Scott Howell has a feeling that could change.

"It'll all start on the defensive end for us," Howell said. "I like our chances in our section. We've gotten better of late and we want to continue to."

The Minutemen were sailing along through March 12 with a 10-1 record, their only loss coming to Johnson by three points at the end of January.

According to Howell, this year's team may not have much height, but it's quick and athletic. The Minutemen, who average about 67 points a game, aren't much for slowing the pace of play. "We're up-tempo," he said. "We want to get up and down the floor."

Central has been restricted to playing only conference foes during the regular season due to the coronavirus. It lost its first meeting with Johnson 65-62 and had 31 turnovers in the defeat.

The Minutemen rebounded in the rematch to win 70-56 and only turned the ball over 11 times. "We took on that second game well," Howell said. "Anytime you play Johnson, it's a signature game."

Central also logged an im-



Ka'Jon Jordan goes up against Como Park's Jountay Kibble during Central's 81-50 road win on March 6. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

pressive 58-40 win over a tough Highland Park team in early February that epitomized their stingy defense.

"Highland has some size and they have some shooters who can definitely make you pay," Howell said. "But we defended and rebounded a lot better against their three-pointers than we have in the past. We played well from beginning to end in that game."

The Minutemen have a balanced offense that doesn't focus on any one player. Senior forward Kaden Doram

and senior guard Gavin Gothard were both averaging in double figures. Howell considers them almost mirror images of the same player.

"Kaden and Gavin have been our most steady players," he said. Doram adds some muscle on the boards, while Gothard is an outside threat who can hit three-pointers.

Junior guard Gedeon Musabyimana was leading the team with around 16 points a game. "He shoots the ball well," Howell said. "If you

leave him alone, he'll hit it."

Senior forward Donnie Preston handles a lot of the work down low, was also scoring in double figures and invariably comes up big when defending the other team's top offensive threat.

Howell raved about Preston's recent play, especially in the February 23 win over Johnson. "(Preston) has probably been our MVP the last two weeks," Howell said.

Junior forward Jaylen Cardenas plays tough down low as well and is especially effective as a rebounder.

Howell is fine with rotating in nine players. Eighth-grade guard Allan Lankford has been effective off the bench and his minutes continue to grow. "He's earned it," Howell said. "He's been a big surprise for us."

Sophomore Ka'Jon Jordan, senior A.J. Taylor and junior Jakobe Baer-Taki are reserve guards who also see action in their roles of holding up Central's defensive end.

Though Howell likes the way his players have been performing, he knows they'll need to continue to improve to make a playoff run. Central's lack of size might prove to be a handicap against some teams when the Section 4AAAA playoffs begin this week.

"We have a potential first-round match against East Ridge," Howell said. "They have guys who are 6-foot-4, 6-foot-5. We have to continue to play big."

CDH seeks strong playoff run in girls' hockey

BY BILL WAGNER

First-year Cretin-Derham Hall girls' hockey coach Tony Scheid wasn't exactly reserved when asked how he expects his team will do when the Section 6AA playoffs begin this week.

"I'll take my club any day of the week," said Scheid, who before joining the Raiders had won two Class AA state titles when he was coaching at Stillwater High School. "I think we're the team that nobody wants to play in the playoffs."

The Raiders were 11-5-2 when the regular season wrapped up on March 13. Scheid thinks his team's chances are good for a deep run during sectional play from March 16-20.

"I'd give our team an A-plus for the way we've played this year," he said. "They're a great group of kids who have great attitudes, and their work ethic is off the charts."

Scheid pointed to victories over tough East Ridge and Roseville teams as being key this winter. He wasn't discouraged by the fact that the Raiders failed to beat top 10-ranked Stillwater in two regular-season games. Even in a 4-1 loss to the Ponies on March 6, there were plenty of reasons to remain positive.

"That game was a lot closer than the score indicated," Scheid said. "The puck luck didn't go our way."

He said he was extremely proud of the way his club came from behind in the third period to manage a 3-3 tie in its first outing against Roseville. The Raiders also lost 2-1 in overtime to Forest Lake and yet Scheid was not dismayed.

"It was a heartbreaker," he said, "but I think it was our best game of the season."

Junior goalie Hannah Fritz is one of the best in the state, according to Scheid. She finished the regular season with a 1.72 goals-against average and a .941 save percentage. "Her technique is so strong," he said. "She plays the angles well and she's very athletic."

Fritz is backed up by junior netminder Erin Hannon. She stepped in nicely when Fritz was injured in the middle of a key game against Roseville.

The Raider defense features four players who all can skate and shoot the puck well, and are adept at breaking out of their zone. Senior Lily Barrett was leading the team in assists with 15, followed by junior Maggie Dolan with 12. Junior Ari Evans moves the puck well and has a heavy shot, and junior Ryan Sherry is strong and fast.

Up front, perhaps the best of the group is first-line senior wing Lexi Bonfe. The Division I Saint Michael's College commit was second on the team with 14 goals. She's a highly competitive performer who is nimble on her skates.

Centering that line is senior Erin Anfang, a solid playmaker who has drawn kudos for her ability on both ends of the ice. The other wing is split between sophomore Lily Anderson and senior Ella Klein, who had eight and six goals, respectively.

The second line has senior Frances Staples centering for junior wingers Lily Geist and Sammy Muetzel. Staples also plays a nice two-way game. Geist was leading the team with 16 goals, a testimony to her skating ability and hard shot. Muetzel had 10 goals, can fore-check and knows how to find the net.

The line of sophomore center Meredith Anfang, junior Shannon Murphy and either Klein or Anderson is more offensive-minded than most third units.

Heading into sections, Scheid liked the way his team was playing.

"We play fast and we play a skill game," he said. "We hold onto the puck and we move it well."

15 WRIGHT CALL

Miesbauer, a 2003 Raider grad, agreed. "The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive," he said. "It's all about giving the kids the best possible experience."

Many prep football programs have seen their participation numbers drop in recent years. The Raiders had a smaller than normal senior class on its football team in 2020 with just 18, but that number is expected to climb to 25-30 in 2021. "Overall, we have about 100 kids (playing football) in grades 9-12," Miesbauer said.

One possible positive of such a move for CDH is it could mean a return to the storied rivalry with 5A power Saint Thomas Academy, which was 6-0 last year.

Moving to 5A may help the Raiders play games a little closer to home as well. In 2019, they had road games at Osseo, Roseville, Woodbury and Stillwater. Their first-round state tournament game was at Prior Lake.

MIAC to spring ahead with athletics

After tightly controlling athletic competition during the fall and winter months, the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference is loosening up a bit for the spring. Baseball, softball and tennis teams were allowed to begin competing on March 5. Golf and track and field will get outside when the weather allows it.

Fall sports, including cross-country, volleyball, soccer and football, will also be allowed to compete this spring. Cross-country and football can have up to four competitions, while soccer gets eight and volleyball nine.

Macalester College, which has been inactive all year, is also getting back into the game with its teams, including water polo, which will play Carthage four times in April.

Saint Catherine University wasted no time getting in gear, traveling to Rochester on March 7 to sweep a softball doubleheader from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Softball has been the Wildcats' best sport in recent years, with five consecutive winning seasons.

The University of Saint Thomas is set to play baseball and softball. However, since it's moving up to Division I this fall, finding one last round of Division III volleyball, soccer and

football foes may be a bit of a challenge for UST this spring. Many people are hoping to catch one last Tommie-Johnnie football game this spring, but nothing had been set.

Sibley dance team competes in state jazz

Six years ago, Ali Pendergrass had an idea. At the time, she was about to start her fourth year as the coach of the Cretin-Derham Hall dance team. It was one thing to get freshmen acclimated to the jazz and kick routines needed for success in competitions, but what if they came in with prior experience? So Pendergrass reached out to some sixth-graders and got them going on routines. Now the Raiders have a system that other dance teams might well envy.

Pendergrass' original group of sixth-graders matured and, when they got to high school, helped the Raiders gradually move up the ranks. A year ago, they narrowly missed making the state jazz tournament, finishing one point shy of third place in section competition.

This year, despite some challenges, the Raiders edged out perennial power Austin for third place in the section meet to advance to the state jazz tournament for the first time ever on March 12 at Edina High School.

"We had a week together to practice before we got stopped for four weeks by COVID," Pendergrass said. "We had to go to virtual practices, but the girls already knew the choreography that was needed." The Raiders then had several competitions before heading to Winona for the Section 1AA meet.

CDH also had an excellent kick season, pushing past long-time powers Forest Lake and Mounds View to win the conference championship, but did not make state.

Four senior standouts earned all-state honors. Co-captains Abby Blake and Carly Sullivan were named for jazz, with Nat Scott and Maddie Zoost making it for kick.

The individual honors are great, but the Raiders' big reward was making the state jazz meet where they joined Faribault and Simley as Section 1AA reps. At sections, Pendergrass had a simple message for the troops before they hit the floor. "The mentality here is to have fun," she said. CDH did just that at state, placing eighth in the 12-team field.

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

Sports Shorts



Molly Moening

Highland Park High School junior Molly Moening repeated as individual champion during the state girls' Nordic skiing meet on March 11 in Biwabik. Moening finished the 4K classic and freestyle events with a combined time of 23:53.4, more than 25 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher. Saint Paul Academy eighth-grader Inga Wing took third in 24:34.4 and Visitation senior Margaret Dalseth placed ninth in 25:49.1. On the team side, the defending state champion Scots finished second with 556 points to Forest Lake's 588. SPA was ninth with 401 points. The Highland boys placed 10th and Central finished 14th in their state Nordic skiing meet on March 12. Scots' sophomore Davis Isom was 20th and senior teammate Oto Schmidt was 31st. Central junior Charlie Ostergren placed 34th. Minnehaha Academy seniors Will Carlen and Soren Davison were 40th and 50th, respectively.

Minnehaha Academy junior Grace Torgeson took fifth place at the state high school girls' Alpine skiing meet on March 10 at Giants Ridge near Biwabik. She had a combined two-run time of 1:18.24. The individual title was won by junior Ava Pihlstrom of Blake School at 1:15.54.

Riley Eddins, a senior at Central High School, has been named the 2021 Region 4AA Triple A winner for academics, arts and athletics by the Minnesota State High School League.

Registration for summer youth softball, baseball, T-ball, machine pitch leagues and lacrosse clinics is being accepted through March 31 by the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation. Registration can be done online or by calling any recreation center. Visit stpaul.gov/youthsports.

The Animal Humane Society is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Walk for Animals with a virtual event on Saturday, May 1. The first 500 people to register and raise \$50 by April 1 will receive a prize. Visit animalhumanesociety.org.

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Lexington reroute—Lexington Parkway will be extended from West Seventh Street to Shepard Road beginning in 2022. Project staff are seeking public comments to help evaluate the road's design, which include options for the new Lexington/Elway Street and Montreal Avenue intersection. A virtual open house will be held from 5-6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 25, to hear from project staff and provide feedback. Register at ramseycounty.us/LexingtonExtension. For information, visit the site or contact Nick Fischer at 651-266-7119 or Nicklaus.Fischer@ramseycounty.us.

Personal safety workshop—The Saint Paul Police Department will offer a virtual personal safety workshop at 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 24. The workshop will focus on situational awareness at home, shopping, work and the neighborhood. Register at bit.ly/March24SPPDclass.

Block club leaders—New quarterly meetings with police for block club leaders will kick off at 6 p.m. Monday, March 29. The meetings will include guest presenters and information about crime prevention. Register at bit.ly/SPPDblockclub.

Conversation with Choi—Join Ramsey County Attorney John Choi for a conversation on the Juvenile and Family Justice Center, convictions and crime at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 31. Visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

Annual meeting—The Highland District Council will hold its annual meeting and board elections at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 22. Up for election will be representatives for all odd-numbered grids, two at-large seats and one at-large alternative position. A virtual meeting for prospective board members will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 23. Learn more by visiting highlanddistrictcouncil.org/hdc-event/2021-election.

Upcoming meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, March 22; and prospective board member information, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 23. Links to the Zoom meetings are posted on the HDC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Annual meeting and elections—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council will host a virtual annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 8. Board elections will take place online and via mail from April 8-15. Learn about open seats

and running for the board at macgrove.org/annualmeeting or email mgccc@macgrove.org.

Mac-Grove webinars—The community council is offering the following free webinars: vegetable gardening with the owners of Our Urban Farms at 4 p.m. Saturday, March 20; and a community meeting with City Council member Chris Tolbert at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 6. Register at macgrove.org/webinars.

Block ambassadors sought—The public is invited to meet with Macalester-Groveland and Union Park staff, as well as neighborhood relations staff from Saint Thomas and Macalester, to learn how to start a block club in their neighborhood. The Zoom meeting will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, March 25. Visit the website for more information.

Century building plaques—The community council is still offering owners a chance to purchase plaques identifying their building's age. Any property that will be 100 years old by 2025 is eligible. Order at macgrove.org/100years by March 31.

Mac-Grove survey—The community council is asking people to submit comments about its current programs, activities, communication and outreach at macgrove.org/2021survey by April 16. Include an email for a chance to win a \$25 gift card.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation Committee on Monday, March 22; Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, March 24; and Inclusivity Task Force on Thursday, April 1. All meetings will be held via Zoom beginning at 6:30 p.m. Visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

SHA plant sale—The Summit Hill Association will hold its annual plant sale online this year in partnership with Gerten's Garden Center. Visit gertensfundraising.com and type in "191" to visit the site to find a wide variety of plants, flowers, floral arrangements, vegetables and gift cards. The fundraiser will close at 10 p.m. Thursday, April 22, and no late orders will be accepted. Buyers will be able to pick up their orders starting at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 15, in the parking lot at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave. Visit the SHA website for more information.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Solidarity fund—The Union Park and Lexington-Hamline community councils have established a solidarity fund for

those in need of housing relief. Those who are willing to donate to the fund are being asked to visit givemn.org/story/Li2sdg. Those who are in need of assistance should call 651-917-3883.

Gardening workshops—The UPDC is offering free online vegetable gardening workshops this spring. The sessions will take place from 7-8 p.m. The schedule includes Cooperative Vegetable Gardening (collaborating with neighbors) on March 22, Introductory Vegetable Gardening Part 1 (planning and planting) on April 5 and Introductory Vegetable Gardening Part 2 (growing and harvesting) on April 12. Register at least two days in advance by visiting tinyurl.com/as9prxsr.

Union Park micro-grants—The UPDC is seeking applications from residents and small groups of neighbors for grants of \$400-\$600 to complete small projects in its neighborhoods. Applications are due by the end of May. Email info@unionparkdc.org or visit unionparkdc.org/micro-grant.

Upcoming meetings—Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 17; Neighborhood Involvement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 22; board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 7; and Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 12. To access the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or click on the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Lexington Parkway extension—A virtual open house will be held by Ramsey County at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 25, to discuss draft layouts and provide comments on plans to extend Lexington Parkway from West Seventh Street to Shepard Road beginning in 2022. One focus of the event will be the intersection of Montreal Avenue and Lexington/Elway Street. Register in advance at ramseycounty.us/lexingtonextension.

Board update—On March 8, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's board of directors supported a rezoning request for a patio at Mucci's Italian restaurant, 786 Randolph Ave. The patio will include a privacy fence and landscaping. The board also approved a letter of support for a Neighborhood STAR funding application to build a bandshell at the Keg & Case Market Plaza on West Seventh Street.

Upcoming Zoom meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 18; Lexington extension open house, 5 p.m. Thursday, March 25; and Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 7. Go to fortroadfederation.org/calendar for log-in information.

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Next Issue: March 31 Deadline: March 24

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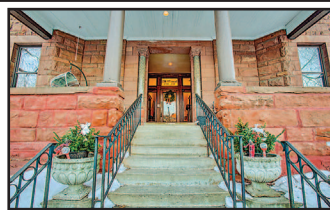


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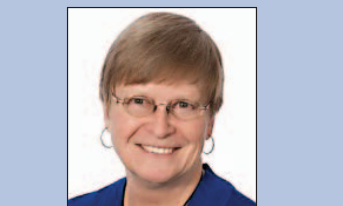
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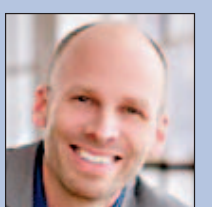
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