

VILLAGER

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Blood is thicker than watercolor for Michells

Mother-daughter relationship is tie that binds family's four generations

BY ANNE MURPHY

If there is one word to describe Jill Michell and her daughter Lucy Michell, it is *sympatico*, meaning not only agreeable but like-minded. Theirs is not so much a situation of like mother, like daughter, as it is of shared interests and an appreciation for what the other does.

On any given day, you might find Lucy at the Macalester-Groveland home of her mother and photographer father Richard Michell. Or you might find Jill at the Hamline-Midway home where Lucy and her husband Cooper Sheehan are raising their two young sons and daughter. Wherever Jill and Lucy are, they are talking and likely laughing about the trials, tribulations and joys of motherhood and their respective careers in the arts.

Jill is a painter and a retired arts educator, and Lucy is a musician and illustrator. As one longtime friend said, "Lucy is the poster girl for learning how to pivot in these uncertain times and what it feels like to be a working mom today."

Jill said she had it much easier as a working mom with her daughters born 10 years apart. While teaching art at Saint Paul's LEAP High School, she found time to pursue painting and to teach Lucy and her younger sister Alice



Daughter Lucy Michell visited mother Jill Michell in Jill's Macalester-Groveland studio.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

to find beauty in the world.

"As a child I went everywhere with my mom," Lucy said, "and she was always finding something to point out. I learned to see loveliness and creativity around me." Lucy said she grew up in the company of artists her parents knew and was exposed to the music her parents loved, including Nina Simone, Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.

Jill is busy now preparing an exhibi-

tion of her paintings at her in-home studio. Her plein air and still life paintings have previously been exhibited at the University of Minnesota's Katherine Nash Gallery and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Lucy is looking forward to a more active schedule in music as COVID-19 loosens its grip on the art world. She performs with her pop rock quartet the

JILL AND LUCY MICHELL ▶3

Mayoral veto revives plan for 288 units of housing on Lexington

Talks continue on providing more affordable units at site

BY JANE MCCLURE

Alatus LLC's controversial plan for a six-story mixed-use development at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy. was thrown a lifeline on April 14. Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter vetoed a City Council decision to reject Alatus' appeal and uphold the Planning Commission's denial of the Lexington Station site plan.

Carter told the City Council that denying the site plan was contrary to his and the council's vision for prosperity and affordable housing and could create "significant challenges" in reaching the city's goals for housing and economic development.

"The immensity of our vision for affordable and inclusive housing may make it difficult for any single development proposal to advance all of our goals," Carter said in a letter to the council. Nevertheless, he added, "we are responsible for advancing housing and economic development opportunities that are critical for our city's continued growth and vibrancy."

Following the veto, Alatus announced that it will continue to work with Wilder Foundation on the purchase of the two-acre site and move forward with the \$57 million, 288-unit development. Plans call for five floors of housing over first-floor commercial space and parking.

Wilder president and CEO Armando Camacho said his board of directors "intends to continue the dialogue with Alatus and the city to understand how the development can move forward with greater levels of affordability."

Wilder had tried for several years to find a buyer for the

LEXINGTON STATION ▶5

Freedom House's homeless clients troubling West 7th businesses

BY CASEY EK

Kathy Gosiger was preparing for a busy evening as general manager of Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub when a young man walked in with a backpack and a skateboard. Backpacks are not allowed in the pub. Gosiger told the man he would have to leave the pack elsewhere. The man became aggressive and began shouting at Gosiger. He walked out the door, but before leaving the premises, he paced back and forth on the sidewalk cursing and threw a lit cigarette at the window and his skateboard at the building.

Scenes like this have become a frequent occurrence at Tom Reid's and other nearby businesses since Freedom House opened last winter in a former fire station at 296 W. Seventh St. A drop-in day shelter for homeless people, Freedom House is operated by the nonprofit Listening House. Residents and business people in the area regularly happen upon used syringes, garbage and human feces littering the area, according to Patricia Salkowicz, president of the nearby Art Farm advertising agency. Panhandling, public urination and vagrancy are other regular complaints.

Saint Paul City Council member Rebecca

Noecker, whose Ward 2 includes the neighborhood around Freedom House, said the day shelter is likely there to stay despite the complaints. According to her, the city worked with Listening House on dozens of possible locations for Freedom House before settling on the former fire station. "I think it's the right kind of service in the right place at the right time," Noecker said.

When asked about plans to address the complaints, Noecker said the city is investing "hundreds of thousands of dollars" in new community street teams who will direct visitors through the area, flag dangerous or

disturbing behavior and pick up trash. She expects the teams to be deployed sometime in May following training.

That may not be soon enough for Gosiger, who has already hired private security in the wake of increased crime in the vicinity of Tom Reid's. The pub's security cameras have captured footage of violent assaults and public defecation on the sidewalk.

Representatives of businesses along West Seventh were scheduled to meet with city officials last week to discuss the problems related

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Judge suspends city's new tenant protections

Constitutionality of SAFE Housing law called into question

By JANE McCLURE

Saint Paul's new tenant protection ordinance has been put on hold. U.S. District Court Judge Paul Magnuson ordered city officials on April 19 to stop enforcing the SAFE Housing ordinance until a lawsuit filed by a group of landlords has been settled. Magnuson agreed with the landlords that part of the ordinance may be unconstitutional. He thought it likely that their lawsuit will prevail.

The ordinance, which was adopted last July in a unanimous vote of the City Council, limits to one month's rent the amount that can be charged for a security deposit and includes a "just cause" provision that limits the conditions under which a landlord may terminate a lease.

The ordinance limits the use of credit histories and criminal records in screening prospective tenants, and changes how past evictions are considered when a rental application is reviewed. Tenants cannot be denied a lease if they had a misdemeanor more than three years before or a felony more than seven years before. Tenants could still be turned down if they had been convicted of murder, distributing or manufacturing controlled substances, arson, kidnapping, assault, robbery, manslaughter or criminal sexual conduct, or if they are on the lifetime sexual offender registry.

The ordinance took effect on March 1 and the landlord group filed suit in mid-February. In addition to their constitu-

tional challenges, the landlords said the ordinance would greatly add to their costs for unpaid rent, property damage and court fees, and through its limits on tenant screening could put their other tenants at risk.

Magnuson agreed with the landlords' Fifth Amendment concerns. That amendment prevents the government from taking private property for public use without fair compensation. "Undoubtedly this ordinance comes at a heavy cost for owners," he said. "The screening criteria mandates, for example, that landlords rent to tenants with less stable financial situations, prohibits them from collecting additional upfront funds to mitigate the risk of rent non-payment, and permits tenants who are repeatedly late with rent payments to renew their lease indefinitely."

Magnuson also agreed with the landlords' claim that the ordinance operates as an unfair taking of property "because it singles out landlords to address a perceived, though vaguely identified, societal problem related to housing needs."

Another constitutional argument the judge supported centered on the 14th Amendment, which allows people to exclude others from their properties without due process. Magnuson wrote that the right to exclude others from one's property is "fundamental," and that there is "no compelling governmental interest" to deny them that right. Magnuson criticized the ordinance for lacking clarity in how it will help the city accomplish its housing goals. He said the city also failed to show how criminal records or poor credit scores are preventing Saint Paul residents from being able to find housing.

The City Council brought the ordinance forward in early 2020 after a se-

ries of public meetings. Housing advocates and elected officials contended the city needed to limit how landlords use a prospective tenant's criminal record, rental history and credit scores when vetting rental applications. Housing advocates contended that some landlords used the rental application process to keep low-income people and people of color out of their buildings.

"While we're disappointed that this means the status quo will persist as this process plays out, the city will continue our efforts to respond to the many impacts of this enduring housing crisis in our community," said Saint Paul City Attorney Lyndsey Olson in a statement.

The plaintiffs include Lamplighter Village Apartments, 1023 Grand Avenue LLC, 1708 and 1712 Grand Avenue LLC, 1947 Grand Avenue LLC, 231 Dayton Avenue LLC, 707 and 711 Grand Avenue LLC, Alton-SHN LLC, Alton-NFLP LLC, Alton-HRG LLC, Highland Ridge LLLP, Lucas Goring, Madison LLC, Minnehaha Avenue Apartments LLC, Oaks Union Depot LLC, Oxford Apartments LLC, Plaza LLLP, Rockwood Place LP, Wellington-NFLP, Wellington-PFP LLC, Wellington-SHN LLC, Woodstone Limited Partnership, and Chue Kue and Yea Thao.

The Minnesota Multi Housing Association, which is not a party to the lawsuit, is following the case closely. It issued this statement: "The shared view of the Minnesota Multi Housing Association and other advocates is that we need more housing. These types of regulations do not solve that problem, but discourage investment in additional housing in our communities. We call on leaders in Saint Paul to work with our members, particularly the plaintiffs, to find effective solutions."

Southbound Mississippi River Boulevard is closed to cars

The southbound lane of Mississippi River Boulevard will be closed to motor vehicle traffic from now through mid-July between Ford Parkway and Pelham Boulevard.

Mayor Melvin Carter announced the lane closure in early April to encourage the greater use of the boulevard by

bicyclists and pedestrians. The extra space is intended to accommodate social distancing in light of ongoing concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

Mayor Carter also closed to motor vehicle traffic three other city parkways during the same period: East Como Lake Drive between East Como Boule-

vard and Lexington Parkway in Como Park, East Shore Drive between Johnson Parkway and Arlington Avenue in Phalen Park, and Cherokee Heights Boulevard between Baker and Annapolis streets in Cherokee Park.



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An artist's rendering of Alatus' six-story Lexington Station development—a plan for 288 new apartments and first-floor commercial space on a vacant parcel at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy.

1◀ LEXINGTON STATION

vacant parcel before Alatus stepped forward. Its project, which has been on the drawing boards for the past few years, became a flash point in the debate over affordable housing and gentrification in the neighborhood and what effect building any new housing would have in a city where the demand for housing outstrips the supply.

The project has the support of the Union Park District Council, but is opposed by the Summit-University Planning Council and the Frogtown Neighborhood Association. Some opponents, including Midway RiseUp and the Housing Justice Center, said they are now contemplating their options.

“Our anger about this runs deep!” Midway RiseUp posted on social media. “Now we will have to continue our fight against gentrifiers, and you (Mayor Carter) are included on that list. We will not forget! We will not stop!”

Jack Cann, an attorney for the Housing Justice Center, contended that under state law and Saint Paul’s zoning code, Carter does not have the authority to veto City Council decisions on zoning appeals. “His purported veto has no force or effect, and the council’s rejection of the Alatus appeal stands as the final city action on the matter,” he stated.

The Planning Commission in January denied Alatus’ site plan on an 8-7 vote. Alatus appealed that decision to the City Council, which voted 4-3 to memorialize the commission’s decision. Council members Dai Thao, Mitra Jalali, Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang voted for denial. Council president Amy Brendmoen and members Rebecca Noecker and Chris Tolbert voted against denial.

All three of the dissenting council members have said the city does not have legal grounds

to deny the site plan. The council would need a fifth vote to override Carter’s veto.

Chris Osmundson, the development director for Alatus, released a statement after the veto saying the project will proceed. However, changes may be in the works in terms of affordability.

Under Alatus’ site plan, 144 of the housing units would be affordable to households earning no more than 60 percent of the Twin Cities area’s annual median income (AMI). That is about \$43,400 for a single person and \$62,000 for a family of four. Twenty of those units would be affordable to households making no more than 50 percent of AMI.

Carter is pushing for Alatus to consider making some of the units affordable to households with even lower incomes, possibly with the inclusion of federal Section 8 housing. “While we know (Section 8) funds are highly competitive,” Carter said, “if Alatus chooses to apply, I will support that application and will work to help it succeed.”

Affordable housing advocates have pushed for rents at Lexington Station that are affordable at 30 percent of AMI, which would be about \$30,000 for a family of four. According to them, the AMI for the Twin Cities is quite a bit higher than the AMI for Saint Paul, let alone the Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods.

Alatus had sought no public subsidies, zoning changes or variances for the Lexington Station project. The site is zoned Traditional Neighborhoods 4, the mixed-use zoning designation that allows for the highest density.

Typically, site plan reviews are handled by city staff, but because of the contention over Lexington Station, city staff referred the site plan review to the Planning Commission.

1◀ JILL AND LUCY MICHELL

Little Fevers and is preparing to release a new recording, “American Mom.” She is also planning to complete a master’s degree in art education at the U of M and teach as her mother did.

With so much on hold during the pandemic, Lucy said, motherhood was made easier and more joyous. “If there’s anything good to come out of the lockdowns, it’s that our kids have brought so much light and hilarity than we otherwise might have had,” she said.

Jill had to isolate at home for a time. Not seeing Lucy and her family for so long, she appreciates their proximity now more than ever. “We weren’t mingling in between our houses,” Jill said, “and that was hard. We feel very fortunate to live so close.

“I love to learn from Lucy,” Jill added. “I learn a lot from her. As a mother, what’s really neat is to embrace and learn from your daughter’s life. To have a genuine interest and appreciation and curiosity makes for a great relationship.”

Lucy appreciates Jill’s advice as a mother and as an artist. When Lucy was working on illustrations for a book written by Twin Cities musician and composer Chan Poling, she shared them with her mother. “As a plein air painter, my mother studies the play of light.

And she’d say, ‘Oh, I think you should change that shadow a bit.’ She helped me finish them,” Lucy said.

“Lucy is good about being assertive if she doesn’t need advice,” Jill said. “I think it’s neat that she has the respect and confidence to accept criticism and know when it isn’t needed.”

Having a good sense of humor and an appreciation for the other’s strengths also make for a good mother-daughter relationship, Jill and Lucy agreed. “As hard and as busy as things can get, it’s important to remember to stay positive and know that you can accomplish anything no matter what,” Lucy said. “Women have that power.”

The Michells will celebrate all this and more on Mother’s Day, May 9.

“This year we’ll be celebrating Mother’s Day with four generations,” Jill said. “I’ll be joining my mother, Jean Dooley, Lucy and the grandchildren. Lucy’s husband Cooper makes delicious Eggs Benedicts, and we hope he’ll do it again.”

“Every Mother’s Day since our oldest was born, my husband has had our children make me a hand-painted little canvas,” Lucy said. “I’m also so very grateful for my mother-in-law, Alex Crosby, who also happens to be a Highland resident. The kids are so lucky to have both their grandmothers in their lives.”

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With COVID restrictions easing, restaurants wanting to expand are hamstrung by staff shortage

By Carolyn Walkup

As restaurants across the Twin Cities see a resurgence in business with the relaxation of state-mandated limits on dining capacity and hours of service, many are running up against staff shortages. Several reasons have been cited for the shortages, including the insecurity of restaurant work following state shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, career changes and state and federal unemployment benefits that in many cases pay laid-off workers more than they would be making if they had a job.

“We’re super understaffed,” said Brian Ingram, the owner of Hope Breakfast Bar at 1 S. Leech St., the Gnome at 498 Selby Ave. and the soon-to-reopen Woodfired Cantina in Keg and Case Market on West Seventh Street.

Ingram is dismayed by the few applications he has received for positions at Woodfired Cantina, which he expects to open in early May. “I don’t know why,” he said. Some restaurant workers have been laid off, rehired and laid off again. “People are tired of that,” Ingram surmised. “If they stay on unemployment, they know they have a check coming in. But we’ve raised wages, especially at the back-of-the-house. We’re paying dishwashers \$15 to \$18 an hour.”

Minnesota restaurants have had to weather several state shutdowns over the past year. Limited to 25 percent and 50 percent capacity at times, they are now allowed to operate at 75 percent capacity with a maximum of 250 pa-

trons. Those limits apply to indoor as well as outdoor dining. All customers must be seated, and parties are limited to six at tables and to four at counters or bars with a minimum of six feet between parties.

Justin Sutherland, a chef and partner at five local restaurants, including the Handsome Hog at Selby and Western avenues, speculated that many restaurant workers are tired of living paycheck to paycheck and fearful that they may be laid off again. “Rehiring has been difficult,” he said, though he was able to retain 60 percent of his staff at the Handsome Hog.

Alex Roberts, owner of Brasa at 777 Grand Ave. and two other locations, said having two rounds of layoffs did not bode well for retaining employees. “I’m finding staff, but the numbers aren’t that great,” he said. Both he and Sutherland have former employees who decided to get out of the hospitality industry and get trained for more secure jobs as computer programmers, electricians or plumbers.

During the state shutdowns of indoor dining, the Green Mill at 557 S. Hamline Ave. and 18 other locations laid off everybody but the few employees needed to handle take-out and delivery, according to Paul Dzubnar, co-owner of the Green Mill’s parent company, High Top Hospitality. Since his restaurants returned to on-site dining and began rehiring workers, Dzubnar has received a dearth of applications. “A lot of people out there may have moved on to another career,” he said.

Minnesota’s unemployment rate has dropped from 9 percent a year ago to 4.2 per-



Sous chef Aaron Cave, cook Jake McLahorn and server Cassie Wyzykowski kept pace with the lunch orders last weekend in the kitchen of the Gnome Craft Pub, 498 Selby Ave. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

cent today. That is lower than the national unemployment rate of 6 percent. Restaurants that have a fast-food or fast-casual format require fewer employees, and they have been less affected by staff shortages. While at least a dozen full-service restaurants have closed over the past year in the Villager area, a half-dozen fast-casual restaurants have opened.

“We’re now giving bounties if new hires stay a certain length of time and signing bonuses for referrals,” said Phil Roberts, co-founder of Parasole Restaurants, which operates Salut Bar Americain at 917 Grand Ave. Like some of his peers, he is finding kitchen positions to be the hardest to fill.

“The industry is on its knees around the country,” said Donna Fahs, Parasole’s chief operating officer. “So many restaurants have closed and are not coming back.” According to her, Parasole closed three restaurants last

year—Chino Latino in Minneapolis’ Uptown and Burger Jones in Minneapolis and Burns-ville. “I’m anticipating that finding and training talent will be the number-one issue in our industry (for the foreseeable future),” she said.

Since lifestyle is especially important to younger workers, Parasole is making accommodations for new employees who want considerations like some weekends off. The company has found some success with cross training that enables staffers to fill in for co-workers in different positions when they are on vacation.

Fahs remains hopeful that the staffing situation will improve. “We’re survivors,” she said. “There will always be a place for food service. I don’t think the shortage of workers will last because there is a pipeline of young people turning 17 and 18.”

New housing project proposed, another OK’d on popular Marshall Ave.

By Jane McClure

Three vacant houses at 1515, 1519 and 1525 Marshall Ave. would make way for a pair of three-story apartment buildings if plans presented by developer Charlie Burdick and architect Wynne Yelland on April 19 to the Union Park District Council (UPDC) Land Use Committee come to fruition.

The three lots are located just west of a commercial property that will be soon replaced by a 4½-story, 60-unit apartment building. The lots are zoned for Traditional Neighborhoods 3, so they meet the height limit. At this point the only potential variance is to meet the definition of front-facing entries. Yelland’s design

has the buildings facing a courtyard rather than Marshall.

If all goes as planned, groundbreaking would be in June and the new buildings would be complete in early 2022. Each of the two buildings would have 12 one-bedroom apartments ranging from 500-600 square feet. Burdick said his target market for tenants is young professionals. Rents would be at 80 percent of the Twin Cities area’s median income, or around \$1,550 per month.

The buildings would have 10 rear parking spaces along the Marshall-Iglehart alley. Bike parking would be inside the buildings.

Most of the UPDC committee’s questions centered on motor vehicle and bicycle access

as well as the buildings’ design. Yelland said the buildings would have a contemporary design. Exterior materials could include fiber-board or Hardie board, metal and wood.

If the project goes ahead it will be the ninth new multifamily building planned along Marshall since zoning changes were adopted in 2018 between Pascal Street and Mississippi River Boulevard. Two buildings are completed, another is under construction and the rest have gotten city approvals.

The latest project to win approval is Marshall Lofts at the northeast corner of Marshall Avenue and Finn Street. The Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on April 19 approved two of three variances for the project. Devel-

oper Jon Schwartzman plans to replace four homes at 2097-2115 Marshall with nine loft-style townhouses facing Marshall and a 50-unit apartment building along the alley.

There were 73 parking spaces required and 61 were unanimously approved by the BZA. There was more debate over two variances for balconies on the apartment building. The board was initially deadlocked, but reconsidered and approved a rear-yard setback of 20 feet instead of the required 25 feet for balconies on the north side of the apartments.

However, the BZA rejected a third variance for balconies on the east side of the building. A 9-foot side-yard setback was required there and four feet were proposed.

Affordable housing advances with TIF districts at Highland Bridge

By Jane McClure

The use of tax increment financing (TIF) for the construction of the Highland Bridge development continues, this time to provide affordable housing. On April 14, the Saint Paul City Council gave its initial approval for the creation of two TIF districts that will help subsidize 195 units of affordable housing in three buildings, as well as two market-rate senior buildings.

The council, sitting as the city’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) board, is expected to vote on the two TIF districts in June. If approved, the districts will allow the city to divert up to \$46.9 million in property taxes for the Highland Bridge projects.

“It’s exciting that we’re taking another step to meet our affordable housing goals for Highland Bridge,” said Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert. “I’m especially pleased that we’ll be able to offer some housing at 30 percent of area median income (AMI), which is the deepest level of affordability.”

TIF allows developers to subsidize certain costs by diverting a portion of the property taxes to cover those expenses. It often pays for infrastructure, such as streets and utilities. The original TIF district for the 122-acre site of Ford Motor Company’s former assembly plant was created in 2016, before Ryan Companies was selected as the master developer.

The two new affordable housing TIF districts will start capturing tax increments in 2024 and will continue for 25 years.

The first new TIF district will subsidize affordable housing buildings planned by Project for Pride in Living (PPL) and Emma Norton Services. The PPL building will have about 75 “workforce” apartments. Called Nellie Francis Court, about one-fifth of the units will be affordable to families earning 50 percent of the AMI (about \$52,000 for a family of four) and the rest for those earning 60 percent of AMI (about \$62,000 for a family of four).

PPL also is working with Emma Norton Services on a building with approximately 60 units of supportive housing for women. The

units will be available to those earning 30 percent of AMI, or about \$30,000 per year. The building will be home to the new offices for Emma Norton’s operations. On April 21, the City Council accepted \$1.9 million in Metropolitan Council Liable Communities funds for the Emma Norton 2.0 project.

In addition, the TIF funding will support 182 market-rate senior independent living and memory care units in a building to be developed by Presbyterian Homes.

The second TIF district will consist of a 60-unit apartment building for low-income seniors planned by CommonBond Communities. The housing will be available to those with incomes at 30 percent of AMI.

The district includes a second Presbyterian Homes building. It will have 118 market-rate independent living units and about 4,000 square feet of retail space.

The two TIF districts are anticipated to generate around \$28 million and \$17 million, respectively, during their lifetime. The tax dollars generated by the two Presbyterian Homes

buildings are included in those amounts and will be used for affordable housing in the city.

The original Ford TIF district is anticipated to contribute up to \$275 million in public financing for the site’s redevelopment. In 2019, the City Council and HRA approved \$53 million in TIF to pay for streets, utilities and parks. Last year, additional public improvements were funded with TIF, including \$200,000 for a tunnel below Mississippi River Boulevard leading to Hidden Falls Regional Park.

City officials also expanded the original TIF district so that revenue can be used to pay for future traffic improvements in much of the Highland Park neighborhood.

Ryan will present a virtual project update on the Highland Bridge development on May 19. A meeting focused on housing is set for June 23.

An open house about future parks was planned for April 20 but was postponed and will be held at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 12. For more information and access to the virtual meetings, visit highlandbridge.com/news.

Partnership could aid St. Paul's ash tree removal, replacement

By JANE MCCLURE

Green-ringed trees along Saint Paul streets have been coming down all spring, just the latest casualties in the city's losing war with the emerald ash borer (EAB).

About 3,000 boulevard ash trees are expected to be felled in 2021 through the city's structured removal program. However, there are an estimated 11,000 dying or dead ash trees along Saint Paul streets and, without additional financial help, it could be 2034 before all of the diseased trees are removed, their stumps ground out and new varieties planted.

The City Council passed a resolution earlier this month to seek federal funding to address ash tree removal and replacement. It is also looking at a joint city-Port Authority proposal

that was unveiled on April 21 and could fund a sweeping tree removal and replacement program.

The partnership could be put in place later this year and fully implemented in 2022. It calls for the Port Authority to issue bonds of \$17.7 million to \$19.9 million for tree removal and replacement. Youth jobs could be created through the city's Right Track program and the nonprofit Tree Trust. Adult workers could find a career path in forestry. Over time, the bond would be paid back through the Port Authority levy.

Different funding scenarios could mean completion of the EAB removal and replacement work by 2027. A backlog of other stump removals and tree replacements could move up a few years and be completed by 2030. It also would allow the city to re-establish its

regular tree trimming cycle.

The city has been dealing with the destructive emerald ash borers for more than a decade. Their larvae burrow under tree bark and feed on a tree's circulatory system, eventually killing it. Insecticides can slow the insects' spread, but city forestry staff estimate that the pests will keep doing damage.

Ash trees have been marked for removal this year in the West End, Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline, Macalester-Groveland, Highland Park, Summit-Hill and Summit-University neighborhoods.

The Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation has found one-time funding sources to supplement city spending, according to director Mike Hahm, but that money is not nearly enough. Efforts to get ongoing state grants have failed at the Capitol.

Parks and Recreation staff estimate that by the end of 2021, there will be a backlog of 2,575 EAB stumps and 4,570 other stumps that need to be ground out, and approximately 18,150 sites needing replacement trees.

Council members are impatient to see progress on ash tree removal and had hoped to see a stepped-up tree removal and replacement plan in late 2020. They are hearing from constituents who are unhappy that trees are removed, but the stumps remain and new trees are not planted quickly.

"The devastation on our streets is just unacceptable," said council member Rebecca Noecker.

"It looks like a tornado went through," said council president Amy Brendmoen. "We expected this plan in December. We need answers now."

Hearing set on new zoning code for homeless shelters in St. Paul

By JANE MCCLURE

Freedom House, a drop-in facility for the homeless, opened last winter in a former fire station at 296 W. Seventh St. as part of an emergency ordinance adopted by the Saint Paul City Council in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The day shelter was meant to replace the libraries and recreation centers where homeless people sought refuge before the pandemic shut those buildings down.

How Freedom House and facilities like it will operate once the COVID emergency is over will be addressed in a public hearing before the city's Planning Commission at 8:30 a.m. Friday, April 30.

The Planning Commission on March 19 released a zoning study on the location and operation of programs that offer daytime ser-

vices for homeless people. Currently, the city's zoning code only allows those services as an accessory to other uses.

Freedom House is affiliated with Listening House, a daytime drop-in facility for homeless people in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. Listening House operated for years downtown in a building owned by Catholic Charities. It moved into First Lutheran Church at 463 Maria Ave. when Catholic Charities renovated and expanded its downtown facilities.

Unlike other day shelters and emergency housing facilities in Saint Paul, Freedom House has its own building. City officials would like it to continue operating after the pandemic ends, according to principal city planner Bill Dermody, and it is possible that similar facilities will open in the future.

Saint Paul's 2040 Comprehensive Plan

calls for more support services for homeless people. City planning staff have proposed amending the zoning code to establish new standards and conditions for homeless facilities and the zoning districts where they are allowed. Under those standards, homeless facilities would be classified as civic and institutional uses. They would be allowed in the same zoning districts as clubs, lodges and fraternal organizations. That includes many areas zoned for commercial, industrial and traditional neighborhoods uses.

The day shelters would need to be located within a half mile of an overnight shelter or emergency housing facility for the homeless. Like an overnight shelter, the day shelters would need a conditional use permit before opening. They would be allowed to have a small number of beds for emergency use over-

night.

More than 100 people typically use Listening House and Freedom House each day. Because of that, city staff is recommending that homeless service facilities not be allowed in commercial or mixed-use zoning districts that are typically found in residential areas. An exception would be an institution such as a church or other large building that has enough space to handle the anticipated number of users.

According to Dermody, the proposed zoning amendments do not address how a homeless service facility would be permitted as an accessory to a religious institution. A separate zoning study on accessory uses for religious institutions is planned in the future, he said.



A client of Freedom House, Richard Howell takes a break in front of the former West Seventh Street fire station that has been turned into a day shelter for people experiencing homelessness. PHOTO BY CASEY EK

1◀ FREEDOM HOUSE TROUBLES

to Freedom House's clients. Gosiger is worried that the situation might devolve. "It's starting to really make me nervous," she said.

Representatives of Freedom House would not respond to requests for comment. However, Richard Howell, who frequents the day shelter, said it provides a critical lifeline for people like him. Howell will often grab a meal and take a shower at Freedom House before spending his day on the streets. "Freedom House saved my neck," he said. "It's in the right spot because it's where the people are."

Listening House has been providing shelter and other resources for people experiencing homelessness or other crises for 37 years. After losing its downtown location to redevelopment, it moved into First Lutheran Church in Saint Paul's Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. Neighbors there complained about disturbances, and when the city imposed operating restrictions in response to those complaints, Listening House filed suit.

Freedom House was meant to replace the public libraries and recreation centers where many of Saint Paul's homeless people sought

shelter before those facilities were shuttered by the pandemic. It is open from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily, providing food, water and clothing for those experiencing homelessness.

Noecker said it may not be possible to resolve the problems around Freedom House to everybody's satisfaction. While complaints outnumber the accolades for Freedom House, she has heard from residents and business people who are happy to have the shelter in their area. "That would be my ideal," Noecker said, "that (Freedom House) is accepted as a part of the community network."

Rhonda Otteson, executive director of the Minnesota Coalition for Homeless, of which Listening House is a member, said she is lobbying state legislators to allocate \$50 million in capital funding to expand shelters and other resources for homeless people. The measure, Otteson said, would be a crucial step in solving homelessness statewide.

"The more resources a shelter has, the more effective it can be at moving folks into permanent shelter," Otteson said. "This is a statewide problem, and it takes everybody coming together to solve the problem."

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News Briefs

City Council approves Highland Bridge park names as proposed

It is official: Highland Bridge's four new city parks now have names. The Saint Paul City Council on April 21 approved the names that were recommended earlier in the month by the city's Parks and Recreation Commission.

Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert praised the new names. More than 300 were suggested by citizens, with ideas ranging from famous Saint Paul residents to popular models of Ford Motor Company vehicles.

Highland Bridge, a development of 3,800 new homes, offices, retail and institutional uses, is being constructed on the former site of Ford's Twin Cities Assembly Plant. The plant closed in 2011 after 85 years of operation.

The four parks will be named as follows:

- Gateway Park, for the open space near Ford Parkway and Mississippi River Boulevard.

- Assembly Union Park, for the open space in the west-central portion of Highland Bridge.

- Uñči Mak'a (pronounced oon-CHEE mah-KAH) Park in the southwestern portion of the site. The name translates as "mother earth" in the Dakota language, reflecting the area's early history as Dakota tribal land.

- Míča (pronounced MEE-cha) Park in the southeastern portion of the site. Míča is an abbreviation for "coyote" in the Dakota language, and coyote sightings have been common in the area.

The city and Highland Bridge master developer Ryan Companies will hold a virtual open house on the new parks at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 12. The parks are expected to open in 2022. Visit highlandbridge.com/news.



Another cleanup is in the bag. Milo Pearson, 4, beams as Lexington-Hamline Community Council member Lucas Riley sees what he and his mom, Melissa, had collected during Saint Paul's 35th annual citywide spring cleanup on April 24 near the Midway Peace Park on Griggs Street and University Avenue. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

BZA grants parking variance for expansion of Iron Ranger patio

With the support of neighbors and the Summit Hill Association, the Iron Ranger restaurant at 1085 Grand Ave. has been granted a parking variance to expand its rear patio. The Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved owner Thomas Forti's application for

the variance on April 19, and BZA approval is final unless it is appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

The patio expansion will reduce Iron Ranger's off-street parking from seven to three spaces. Forti said he has obtained the approval of neighboring U.S. Bank to use several of its parking spaces after hours, though there is no formal shared parking agreement.

Reservoir demolition proceeds, but Pig's Eye land swap delayed

Demolition of the unused water reservoir just south of the historic Highland Water Tower will get underway this month. The large underground water tank will be removed and the site seeded over except where Ramsey County will be making parking lot and access improvements for the Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena. The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department is planning to create new ballfields there at a later date.

The City Council has delayed action on a related land swap involving the reservoir site and land adjacent to Pig's Eye Lake. For the past 17 years, the Saint Paul Water Utility has used Pig's Eye Lake park land to dump soil left over from its water line work. The soil has been dumped during the winter and hauled away each spring.

The proposed land swap would allow the water utility to use eight acres of city land near Pig's Eye Lake as a staging area for soil for 29 years. In exchange, the water utility would lease the former reservoir site to the city's Parks and Recreation Department for the new ballfields.

The land swap is intended to meet the requirements of the city's charter and parkland ordinance, which calls for no net loss of park land. As part of the deal, the water utility would improve the three acres it currently uses at Pig's Eye and add signs and possibly parking. Nevertheless, the plan is opposed by parks advocates on Saint Paul's East Side, who view the water utility's eight-acre soil staging area as an industrial use.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

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Council approves most of the features of Phase 2 of Griggs-Scheffer repaving

By JANE MCCLURE

A controversial right-of-way improvement project is moving forward with the Saint Paul City Council's approval of the second phase of the Griggs-Scheffer street repaving and sidewalk project.

The project has generated controversy on two fronts. The first is the laying of new sidewalks along Edgcumbe Road between Hamline and Randolph avenues. Some Edgcumbe Road neighbors have fought that project under the banner of the Edgcumbe Preservation Group. They contend it will result in the loss of many mature trees and have asked the city to look at alternative designs. One idea raised would have put the sidewalk down the center of the street median.

The other controversy pertains to Edgcumbe Place, a cul-de-sac where seven homeowners have pushed the city to rebuild the street in the same path as the existing street. City officials have staked out the borders of the new street according to its legal description, but that repaving would require the loss of mature trees along with walls and fences.

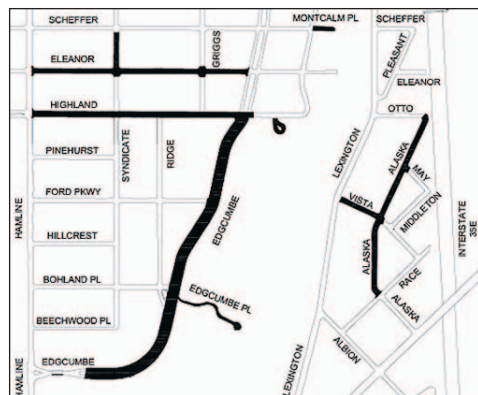
Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert, who represents the area, acknowledged his constituents' concerns. While some features of the project are still being discussed, Tolbert was adamant about the new sidewalks along Edgcumbe Road, calling them "an essential component in a city."

Neighbors have debated the sidewalks with city officials since 2019. Some have suggested the sidewalks are not needed. Others have hired a landscape architect to present alternative plans to the city. Still others requested that the sidewalks be installed immediately adjacent to the street.

Edgcumbe Road residents David and Annette Swanson have testified that the sidewalks as designed by Public Works "will degrade the scenic beauty of one of Saint Paul's most beautiful parkways. They would add substantially more paved surfaces than are appropriate for a low-traffic street with the associated loss of green space and mature trees."

Edgcumbe Road is a popular route for people heading to local parks, according to Tolbert. "I don't want to see strollers in the street," he said. Besides, he added, filling gaps in the city's network of sidewalks as part of street repaving projects has been city policy for years.

Tolbert said the city's Department of Public Works will do what it can to work with neighbors on sidewalk plans. Trees that have to be removed will be replaced, according to him. More than 50 young trees are already sched-



The streets included in Phase 2 of the Griggs-Scheffer repaving project are shown in bold.

uled to be planted where trees were removed in recent years.

As for Edgcumbe Place, Tolbert said it is a unique situation. Attorney Jack Hoeschler, who represents the seven homeowners on the cul-de-sac, said it was designed and constructed about 35 years ago as part of a planned unit development. Hoeschler has told city officials that the homeowners are willing to deed to the city any right-of-way that is needed for the project to follow the existing right-of-way.

Nick Peterson of Public Works said city officials are willing to work with the Edgcumbe Place residents on the plans. However, Tolbert cautioned that the complexity of the project may mean the neighbors do not get everything they want.

The Griggs-Scheffer project is expected to begin by the end of May and continue into the fall. Part of the work will include redesigning the Bohland Triangle to add more green space and improve traffic safety. The streets will get new pavement, curbs, gutters, catch basins, lighting, trees and sidewalks. Below-street utilities will be replaced along with driveway aprons and outwalks. All ash trees will be removed due to the threat of the emerald ash borer. Replacement trees will be planted in the spring of 2022.

The second phase of Griggs-Scheffer has an estimated cost of \$12.6 million. The actual cost will not be known until the bids come in. Abutting property owners will be assessed for a quarter of the cost based on the frontage of their homes. The assessments can be paid in a lump sum or in annual installments with property taxes over 20 years. Senior citizens and people with disabilities may choose to delay payments, but any remaining balance must be paid when their property is sold.

Property owners may also choose to pay extra to replace the water and sewer service lines to their homes while the street is dug up.

Design changes eyed for Pelham bikeway

By JANE MCCLURE

The two-way, separated Pelham Boulevard bikeway—the first of its kind in Saint Paul when it was approved four years ago—is in line for some tweaks. The city's Department of Public Works reviewed ideas to make the bikeway safer for bicyclists and pedestrians alike during the Union Park District Council (UPDC) Transportation Committee meeting on April 12.

The \$250,000 side-by-side bikeway is located on the east side of Pelham between Myrtle Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard. It was the first of its kind in the city to use white poles, called delineators, to separate bicyclists from motor vehicles. The street has one 11-foot traffic lane in each direction, one-foot reaction lanes and a two-foot buffer between vehicles, and the 11-foot bikeway.

The current setup is considered to be an interim measure until off-street bike lanes can be built. Until then, some changes are scheduled to be made to the route.

Last year, the heavy volume of cut-through traffic on Pelham during rush hour and motorists mistaking the bikeway for a traffic lane were among concerns discussed by the UPDC committee. The loss of delineators during snowplowing season, traffic speed, truck traffic and the deteriorated condition of Pelham itself are other issues.

Design changes on Mississippi River Boulevard, Otis Avenue and Beverly Road will be made this year to reduce confusion.

At Pelham and Mississippi River Boulevard, a bumpout will be built at the northeast corner and the street will be narrowed to slow vehicles making right-hand turns. Bicyclists will travel off-street for a short distance and then re-enter the bikeway north of the intersection. A similar bumpout design is planned at Otis and Pelham.

For the northeast corner of the Beverly Road intersection, cyclists will have a raised median between themselves and motor vehicles. The angle of the corner will change to keep right-turning vehicles from entering the bikeway.

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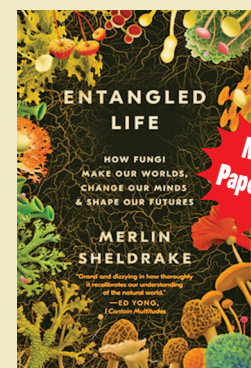
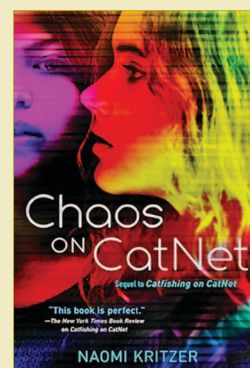
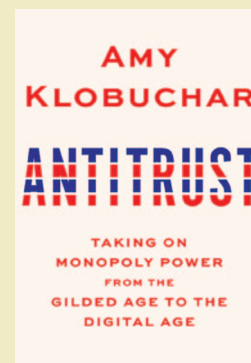
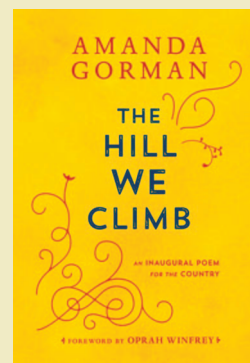
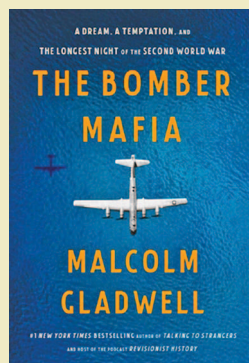
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VIEWPOINT

INBOX

A buffet for developers

When I subscribed to the *Villager*, it was in appreciation of the fact that I could read neighborhood news for the areas I frequent the most. But honestly, the newspaper needs a name change. I suggest the *Saint Paul Construction News*. All those variance requests—it gets repetitive.

Saint Paul seems like a buffet restaurant for dozens of ambitious construction firms. And the requests get more and more bizarre. That proposal for Saint Clair and Cleveland avenues must have wrinkled some brows when it came in. I drive by that intersection five or 10 times a week. Of all the places I never picked for a soaring apartment building, that was the classic. Is it a feeding frenzy? Am I the only reader shaking his head in disbelief?

Well, I guess with the world frozen by battles against the coronavirus, maybe zoning variances are what is actually active. Some Saint Paul historian should write a chapter called “The Variance Spasm.”

James Mork
Cooper, Minneapolis

For innovation in health care

Like millions of Americans, I have been vaccinated. As a caregiver working in an assisted-living facility, I have seen first-hand the effect COVID-19 has had on our state’s senior population. It was incredibly important that assisted-living facility residents and staff were prioritized in vaccine allocation, and I commend the work of our lawmakers in making it happen.

Now, as vaccines continue to roll out and health care remains at the forefront of our minds, I encourage Congress to work toward better health care options and outcomes for every patient. They should be supporting the research and development of new medical treatments and cures.

Innovative policies led to the development of three COVID-19 vaccines in a year’s time. That is frankly incredible, and it is saving so many lives. We also need to support the efforts to develop other crucial treatments.

I hope Congress will reject any policy that inhibits biopharmaceutical companies from producing life-saving medications for cancer, Alzheimer’s disease and the many other incurable and untreatable conditions our seniors face. We need as much help as possible.

Morgan Cardosi
Como, Minneapolis

It’s the orchard, not the apples

The good-and-bad-apples analogy prevalent in our law enforcement discourse is woefully inadequate to describe the immense work required to root out systemic racism. Public safety is more of an orchard, one required by society to produce healthy trees that grow nutritious apples which benefit us all. Throughout the orchard there are healthy trees producing mainly good apples and unhealthy trees producing more bad apples than good.

Good and bad apples, healthy and unhealthy trees, they are spread throughout the orchard. But bad apples or trees, and the pain and death they cause, are not the problem. They are the consequence. The problem is a chronic blight, metastasized throughout the orchard, affecting every tree and apple, the healthy and the rotten. This blight is systemic, and the fruit of the entire orchard is tainted as a result.

We must redefine what it is we need from public safety and law enforcement and renew our trust in it by calling out and curing the blight of systemic racism, not the badness of individuals or departments.

This is hard. And messy. And painful. But it is the only path to justice.

Chris Howie
Highland Park

Representing Islam in art

The article in the March 31 *Villager* about the Interfaith Prayer Wall that is being exhibited in April in a gallery at the University of Saint Thomas was of great interest. It certainly demonstrates connection over division.

In the article the creator of the prayer wall, Aimee Orkin, identifies the “architectural forms” chosen by her to represent each of the three major monotheistic religions: the Western Wall in Jerusalem to represent Judaism; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, also in Jerusalem, to represent Christianity; and an Iranian prayer niche to represent Islam.

695 Grand project would overwhelm historic area

By TED LENTZ, MARILYN BACH AND GARY R. TODD

Residents of Saint Paul’s Historic Hill District recognize Summit Avenue as the anchor supporting the preservation and renewal of the neighborhoods on either side of it. Saint Albans Street extends Summit’s character south to Grand Avenue. However, Summit Avenue and Saint Albans Street are both threatened by the proposed redevelopment of the Dixie’s site at 695 Grand Ave. with building features that are too big, too small and architecturally insignificant.

The building as proposed is 57 feet high at its edges and 60 feet high at the parapet. It would have 79 apartments with a total of 128 bedrooms or dens and 73 off-street parking spaces. The total commercial space would be larger than the three restaurants it replaces, but would have less parking for customers and staff. Adding 79 apartments in an area that already has among the highest residential density in Summit Hill is inappropriate and destructive.

On its east and west sides, the proposed building would rise straight up a few feet from the lot line. Occasional balconies would seem to project over the property line. The Grand Avenue side would pull back just enough to meet city requirements for minimal setback, but on the north side there would be a nearly 60-foot wall close enough to the alley to create significant sunlight and microclimate hazards.

Placing the wall of this tall building a few feet from the alley would substantially shade backyards on Summit and Saint Albans year-round. Is it OK during winter for those residences to become darker and colder for a longer period so that a developer can add two floors and meet his arbitrary profit target? How much pain, property-value loss and diminished livability should adjacent homeowners have to endure to permit a developer to live out his dream?

The proposed building would be almost double the size of the Oxford Hill condo development, which in 2005 triggered so much neighborhood opposition that the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District was created to protect Grand and the Summit Hill neighborhood. The zoning district limits building heights to three stories or 36 feet and building footprints to a maximum of 25,000 square feet. The 695 Grand Ave. project’s rejection of this zoning agreement in both height and density would create significant problems with traffic and parking on the street and alley.

Parking is a major issue on the blocks around 695 Grand Ave. even when the Dixie’s, Saji-Ya and Emmett’s

All three of these forms are architectural, but the form that she chose to represent Islam is puzzling. Wouldn’t the obvious Islamic analogue to the Jewish and Christian representations be either the Islamic Dome of the Rock or the Islamic Al-Aqsa Mosque, both situated on the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem?

Liza Burr
Macalester-Groveland

Aimee Orkin responds: Thank you for your interest in the Interfaith Prayer Wall created by the Interfaith Artists Circle. As I researched Islamic prayer walls of significance, I was told the mihrab, or prayer niche, is the focal point in the interior of a mosque, located in the qibla wall that faces Mecca. The image I used from Iran was the most beautiful, compelling prayer niche I found. The prayer niche spoke to me and fit best in the design. I hope I did not offend you in any way. My hope was to be inclusive and welcoming.

Grand project is out of scale

I understand the need for redevelopment and housing on Grand Avenue. However, the out-of-scale five-story proposal for the Dixie’s site at 695 Grand Ave. is not the answer, even with the revisions unveiled at the April 8 presentation (*Villager*, April 14). While parking and delivery access points have been moved to better accommodate neighbors, this does not address the real issue: The structure is too massive for the space, and the streets around it will not easily accommodate the traffic it will generate.

The vehicle needs for the residents of 79 apartment units, the patrons of three restaurants, and the delivery, garbage and recycling trucks for the restaurants and residents will create a level of traffic that is unimaginable to those who live in the area. Given the space and location, this project is trying to do



An architect’s rendering of the five-story development proposed for the Dixie’s site at 695 Grand Ave.

restaurants are closed. At noon on Monday, April 19, there were only three open parking spaces of the 24 available along Saint Albans. Meanwhile, the one block of Summit Avenue between Saint Albans and Grotto Street had more parked cars than any block along the entire 4½ miles of Summit.

Possibly 20 or 30 years from now, the tenants of 79 apartments renting for \$1,500-\$2,400 per month will own fewer than one car per dwelling. However, today the off-street parking proposed for this building would diminish the success of the residential rental and commercial interests in the area while seriously eroding the quality of life for 40-plus homeowners on Saint Albans and Summit Avenue.

Saint Albans here is a narrow one-way street heavily trafficked and essentially impassable in winter. It is lined with historic buildings that are often featured in promotions for Saint Paul. Built in the 1890s and the first two decades of the 20th century, the classic buildings are prized for their historic charm and sense of place. The building proposed for 695 Grand would use repetitive features that have been successful in suburban developments but would forever alter the character of this part of Summit Hill.

The building as proposed builds slab walls along Saint Albans five stories high. That is almost 20 feet taller than adjacent buildings. The building would be too tall, too massive and completely out of scale and character with the historic and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood around it. By taking light and air, and increasing traffic and noise, the development team’s proposal for 695 Grand would plant an architectural intrusion in the heart of a historic area.

A resident of Summit Avenue for 45 years, Ted Lentz is an architect. Marilyn Bach and Gary R. Todd have resided in Summit Hill since the 1980s and 2004, respectively.

way too much. How can it possibly fit with the city Planning Commission’s vision of a future with fewer cars?

The multifamily buildings in the area represent a scale of development that has withstood the test of time and is appropriate to the neighborhood. Grand Avenue is not zoned for this type of project. The current East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District must be respected and maintained. We need thoughtful development that is at scale and appropriate to the neighborhood—development that will improve livability, not do the opposite.

Brenda Besser
Summit Hill

Retain Grand’s historic charm

The redevelopment of 695 Grand Ave. needs to be a win for the new and the old. I take great pride in living at Grand Avenue and Saint Albans Street. While I look forward to sharing my joys with new neighbors at 695 Grand, I have serious concerns about the immensity, density and design of this project.

Our immediate neighborhood, and the greater Summit Hill area, have much to offer to ensure the success of the proposed development, but we want assurance that our neighborhood will also be enhanced. The new residential tenants deserve to know they have made the right decision to rent at 695 Grand and that the legendary charm, walkability, vibrant livability and historical ambiance of the neighborhood will still be here for them to enjoy. The proposed high-density development simply does not encourage this kind of neighborhood.

Currently, Saint Albans between Summit and Grand avenues is all condominiums, nearly all owner-occupied. I was astounded, in doing a little math, to discover that

84 INBOX

my building of six condos has over 150 years of combined continuous residency, from five to 47 years, respectively. That says a lot about the neighborhood; it has kept its energy and vivacity. Few feel the need to move on, up or over.

I am all in favor of Grand continuing to grow while preserving its historical charm and leaving a legacy for the next generations to enjoy. Those who established the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District were prescient. These guidelines need to be followed “to provide design standards and building height, size and footprint limits, and to reduce the shortage of parking in the east Grand Avenue area.”

*M.L. Kucera
Summit Hill*

A turn for the worse on Grand

Grand Avenue is on the cusp of changes that will define it and the neighborhoods that surround it. The Reuter Walton-Kenefick project on the Dixie’s site at 695 Grand is the first of probably many, and will set a precedent for future development along the avenue. The project has raised issues that need careful consideration. It challenges maximum building height and square-footage limits as defined in the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District. It would tower over Grand Avenue and dominate it in an unfriendly, unneighborly way.

The project would nearly double the density in an area that is already one of the most dense along Grand Avenue. It’s possible that this large project could trigger a change to the zoning on Grand, to one that supports future buildings of this type, which means that traffic issues on an already too busy Grand Avenue, and the narrow residential streets that support it, will increase. That doesn’t make for a walkable avenue.

The historical significance of the Summit Hill neighborhood is a value not just for its inhabitants, but for all of Saint Paul. The building design for 695 Grand is a plan pulled out of a drawer, a cookie-cutter design increasingly seen in every area of the Twin Cities and meant to realize the highest economic return.

Grand Avenue offers exciting opportunities for new businesses and housing projects. Does this project provide the legacy we want to promote for our neighborhood?

*Linda Makinen
Summit Hill*

We can do better at 695 Grand

The so-called refinements to the essentially unchanged design for the proposed redevelopment or the Dixie’s site at 695 Grand Ave. were nothing more than window dressing. Minor changes such as adding a balcony or moving the entrance to the parking garage do not begin to address the many and legitimate concerns expressed by neighbors.

The design of the building is formulaic architecture, a generic plan meant to maximize everything in all directions: height, mass and lot coverage. Frank Lloyd Wright once wrote, “A building should appear to grow easily from its site and be shaped to harmonize with its surroundings.” This building seeks to dominate, dwarf and diminish its

neighbors. It is designed to maximize unit numbers. It flouts the setbacks, breaches the height limits and does not address the unique context that is present on the site and on this area of east Grand Avenue.

The scale of the building is maxed out. It dumps cars right onto the sidewalks. With no buffer, there will no doubt be a loud speaker announcing the exiting of every car. The design pushes the highest mass to the north, casting the maximum shadow on its neighbors. Unfortunately, the architects did little to mitigate the height. The design could have recognized the eight feet of grade change on the site and stepped the building down with the grade, saving four to six feet in height. They could have used a lower floor-to-floor height to keep the overall height down.

The developers have ignored the context of the site. They are not listening to the people being affected. It sets a horrible precedent for future development on Grand. We can do so much better.

*Jonathan Mason
Summit Hill*

City Council just isn’t listening

The juxtaposition of the first two pieces in the Viewpoint section of the April 14 *Villager* were priceless. The first, by Tom Meier, describes the frustration of Edgcombe Place homeowners with the city of Saint Paul in regard to Phase 2 of the Griggs-Scheffer repaving project. He describes the homeowners’ efforts to work with the city and how the city, instead of being inclusive and transparent as it claims, has been dismissive and opaque.

Many Edgcombe Road residents have sought to work with city planners to encourage the thoughtful and cooperative redevelopment of our streets. They, too, have seen their input dismissed by city staff. I live on Edgcombe Road and have been a part of meetings about the proposed project. All of our comments have fallen on deaf ears.

The second Viewpoint piece is a letter from Ann Dolan, a member of several Macalester-Groveland Community Council committees. She states that “every person on the council’s board and committees is clearly dedicated to the betterment of the community.... If all of my neighbors told me they wanted things a certain way, I could not in good conscience vote in opposition to them. Our job is to be the mouthpiece of the people.” Wow. How enlightening is that?

Phase 2 of the Griggs-Scheffer repaving project was on the City Council agenda on April 14. It was introduced by council member Chris Tolbert. He obviously did not hear a thing the neighbors, his constituents, had to say. He did not acknowledge that 21 neighbors had responded to the City Council, and all of them were opposed to the project as proposed. He did not report that no one from the neighborhood who responded favored the project. He asked the council for a vote, and they approved the project, 7-0.

The City Council voted unanimously to approve a project that is significantly more expensive than it needs to be and has elements that no one in the neighborhood wants and for which there is no defined need. Where is the fiduciary responsibility in that? And whatever happened to encouraging public input and listening to it?

*C.T. Killian
Highland Park*



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GARDENING

Japanese transplant Witkus creates a garden of calm in the heart of South Minneapolis

BY JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

When Mary Witkus designed her split-level house in South Minneapolis, she imagined looking out the ground-level windows into the back yard and, in a moment of epiphany, exclaimed, “It will have to be a Japanese garden!”

A retired high school math teacher, Witkus had never visited Japan before but knew something of Japanese gardens. Dating back to the Sixth century, the gardens employ the simple beauty of nature to express concepts in philosophy and spirituality.

She began her project by poring through stacks of books on Japanese gardening, and over the past 18 years she has created a cultural jewel. The Asian-themed home in the Ericsson neighborhood that she shares with her husband, Werner Koehler, appears to have sprung organically from its exquisitely crafted surroundings.

Witkus did nearly all of the work herself, choosing the stones and plants and placing them meticulously to create ponds and rivers and flowing fountains. Using the principle of wabi-sabi—an appreciation for things that are old and worn yet well cared-for—she designed the outdoor furniture where one can contemplate her handiwork. The four connected gardens instill calm and tranquility along with feelings of space and balance.

The courtyard garden in front draws on the scenery of Minnehaha Creek across the street. From their front deck, Witkus and Koehler can see the creek and watch herons and egrets feeding. “Our small city lot seems to extend with no limit,” she said.

Rocks that Witkus gathered from her childhood home in northern Minnesota create a memorial square at the entrance to the courtyard garden. The large stones represent continuity, permanence and wisdom, she said. The front sidewalk zigzags to the house because, according to Japanese mythology, evil spirits can only move in straight lines.

Symbolism is found throughout the gardens. A dry lake made of pebbles has two isles of immortality. Crane Island and Turtle Island offer good luck and health to passersby. The turtle is a small berm covered with wooly thyme, and the crane’s neck is suggested by an emperor Japanese maple tree. A rock and copper fountain attracts birds to bathe and drink.

Visitors make their way to the private garden in back by passing through a traditional gate called torii that is made of a Brazilian hardwood known as ipe using ancient joinery techniques. From the gate they proceed along a path made of bluestone, chosen to look natural in this particular setting. The distance from the center of each bluestone to the center of the next is 22 inches, and each is slightly lower than the one before it.

On another path, the stones are 19 inches apart to encourage a slower pace. Witkus said she placed each stone precisely using a level and tape measure. Six stone lanterns are situated in the garden wherever light may be needed. Witkus said the lanterns are especially lovely after a snowfall with domes of the white stuff atop each.

The back garden has benches and chairs made of reclaimed teak. Those who enter can enjoy the gurgling of a fountain set amid carefully placed foliage. Two whimsical figures are part of the garden. Jizo, a cherub-faced standing Buddha, is said to care for travelers and the souls of children who perish too soon. It is there as a memorial to a family friend who died.

Many species of frogs are native to Japan. The creatures are sometimes carried by travelers as a charm for a safe journey. In Witkus’ garden, a whimsical stone frog sits among two evergreens, yew and juniper, and gazes into the ground-level guest room as a blessing to the family’s visitors.

For her gardens, Witkus has chosen cultivars that are hardy enough for Minnesota’s climate, including blooming shrubs, many



Mary Witkus has surrounded her home in South Minneapolis with an authentic Japanese garden. A Jizo likeness in stone keeps watch over her backyard landscape. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



evergreens, several small deciduous trees and perennials. All have passed the test of not being “fussy,” she said. Some are plants one would find in Japan, but others are substitutes that have a similar effect.

Witkus keeps a meticulous list of what is planted where. Flowering plants are arranged to brighten areas of the yard spring, summer and fall. They include azaleas, hydrangeas, itoh peonies, astilbe, Minnesota hardy mums and Japanese forest grass. “Japanese-style gardens are designed to be interesting in each season,” Witkus said. “Spring is a splash of color and hope, summer is a cooling green, autumn brings the last hurrah, and winter shows off form and structure.”

The garden can be enjoyed both inside and out, and not all visitors are human. From his ground-level office, Koehler has spied various critters who live along the creek investigating the unusual plants. Pesky raccoons can leave a mess, and there are plenty of squirrels and rabbits, but he has also seen wild turkeys, an opossum and even an otter. Witkus managed to photograph a curious red fox checking things out.

One of the great benefits of her garden is the many Japanese friendships she has developed as a result, Witkus said. She has now visited

Japan several times, and when Japanese students visit Minneapolis’ South High School where she taught, she conducts a class in Japanese bookmaking there.

Witkus enjoys tending her garden. She will move plants, even stones, to maintain esthetic balance. She attends to insects, pruning and irrigation. “Last summer was great,” she said. “There was nothing else to do.”

Showing off her garden to visitors, explaining the symbolism and the nurturing required to maintain it, is another delight. Before guests arrive, “I like to wet down the garden,” she said, “to have it appear as it would after a rain.”

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Nearly two dozen local projects wishing on STAR grants & loans

By JANE McCLURE

A longtime social club, a Ramsey Hill park, a local food shelf and dozens of businesses and nonprofit organizations are among those that are competing for 2021 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grants and loans from the city of Saint Paul. A total of 74 projects are vying for funding. Another six were rejected.

The 21-member Neighborhood STAR board is now reviewing the loan and grant applications and will make its recommendations to the mayor and City Council in late spring. The Planning Commission will also review the applications. The City Council is expected to approve final funding for the projects later this summer.

This year's requests total \$3.9 million in grants and \$2.1 million in loans. The amount of money available for 2021 has not been released yet. The council allocated a total of \$1.6 million last year, when 60 projects were submitted and 21 received funds. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the review of submissions for 2021 will again be conducted virtually.

The Neighborhood STAR program is funded by the city's half percent sales tax. Any loan request of more than \$50,000 must be matched with non-city resources.

One project seeking funding this year is the Sterling Club, 300 Saint Albans St. The African-American service club is requesting a \$35,000 grant and \$32,800 loan. The club formed in 1926 at a time when people of color were prohibited from joining other social organizations in the city.

Another local request is from Keystone Community Services, which hopes to open a new food shelf at 1790-1800 University Ave. The nonprofit organization is seeking a \$100,000 grant to renovate two 1920s-era commercial buildings.

The Ramsey Hill Association is requesting a \$20,483 grant to make improvements to Cochran Park at Summit and Western avenues. The park is home to Paul Manship's 1926 bronze sculpture "Indian Hunter and His Dog."

Other local projects and their loan and grant requests include the following:

- TRUCE Center and African-American Museum, 175 N. Lexington Pkwy., a \$50,000 grant for building improvements.
- Ackerberg and Northland LLC, a \$150,000 grant for a mural on a new mixed-use building under construction at 337 W. Seventh St.
- Best Steak House, 860 University Ave., a \$6,209 grant and \$12,418 loan to replace its

roof and improve four second-floor apartments. The restaurant had a fire this spring and it is unclear what impact that will have on the request.

- Cafe Astoria, 325 W. Seventh St., a \$25,000 grant to rehabilitate its building, including a new kitchen.

- Community Action Program of Ramsey and Washington Counties, 450 Syndicate St., a \$40,000 grant and \$60,000 loan to install a white roof and solar array on its building, which houses 15 nonprofits.

- Jandrich Floral, 976 W. Seventh St., a \$22,500 grant to repair its facade.

- Little Szechuan, 422 University Ave., a \$32,666 grant and \$32,666 loan for building renovation and HVAC work.

- Minnesota Children's Museum, 10 W. Seventh St., a \$30,000 grant to make HVAC improvements.

- Public Art Saint Paul, a \$15,000 grant for new signs at Western Sculpture Park and for 12 sculptures in other city parks.

- Quan Kim LLC, a \$50,000 grant and \$50,000 loan to renovate a commercial building at 680 University Ave.

- Remke Partners, a \$75,000 grant and \$75,000 loan to renovate the former Stran-sky's Drive-In Liquors at 1545 W. Seventh St. The partnership owns and operates Black Dog Cafe in Lowertown.

- The Salvation Army, a \$7,000 grant to install a garden, patio, play area and public space at its property at 237 Forbes Ave.

- Sannah Foundation, 1276 University Ave., a \$100,000 grant to make interior and exterior building improvements.

- Seasoned Specialty Food Market, 1136 Grand Ave., a \$38,000 grant for interior and exterior improvements.

- Treats, 770 Grand Ave., a \$20,000 grant to make building and parking lot improvements.

- Victoria Theater Arts Center, 825 University Ave., a \$100,000 grant to turn the former movie theater into an arts center.

- Waldmann Brewery, 445 Smith Ave., a \$22,019 grant and \$45,000 loan for landscaping, fencing, bike racks and a retaining wall.

- WHB Inc., 678 W. Seventh St., a \$10,000 grant and \$16,000 loan for mechanical system renovation and replacement at its building.

- White Squirrel, 974 W. Seventh St., a \$20,000 grant and \$20,000 loan to make exterior improvements at the planned bar and music hall.

- YWCA of Saint Paul, a \$77,932 grant to rehabilitate supportive housing it owns in the Highland Park and Summit-University neighborhoods.

School and Club Notes

The Highland Friendship Club, which provides programming for teens and adults with disabilities to help enhance their quality of life, is piloting a scholarship program to improve access for those with limited finances. The initiative is being supported by a grant from the Mary Alfonse Bradley Foundation. Applications are due by May 9 for the summer semester that starts in June. Visit tinyurl.com/bwzk64nw. For information, contact katie@highlandfriendshipclub.org or 651-698-4096.

Visitation School in Mendota Heights will hold an in-person open house at 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 28, for students entering grades 6-8. See visitation.net/openhouse.

School District 197 is launching a Warrior Online Academy option for students in grades K-12 for the next school year. The academy was developed in response to family requests for an online option similar to what distance learners experienced during this year. In order

to offer the academy, the district must meet a minimum threshold of registered students. Enrollment closes at 3 p.m. Friday, April 30. For information and to register, visit tinyurl.com/p8kfn3nx.

Saint Paul Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Joe Gothard has been named a Regional Administrator of Excellence by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. Gothard is just the second Saint Paul superintendent to receive the honor in the 36-year history of the award.

Jack Hlavka, a student at Saint Paul Academy, was named one of six finalists for the Regeneron International Science & Engineering Fair Award, which recognizes Minnesota's top high school science projects. Hlavka's project was on "Treatment of Simulated Acid Mine Drainage with *Desulfovibrio Desulfuricans*" (sulfate-reducing bacteria). For the complete award results, visit mnmas.org.




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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 2500 block of West Seventh Street at 8:39 p.m. Sunday, March 28.

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1400 block of Mississippi River Boulevard on March 29 and 30, and the 1700 block of Pinehurst Avenue on April 3.

—Commercial burglaries were reported on the 2200 block of Ford Parkway on April 9, and on the 1900 and 2100 blocks of Ford on April 11 and 12.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 700 block of South Cleveland Avenue on March 25, the 2500 block of Crosby Farm Road on March 29, and on Davern Street and Morgan Avenue on April 11.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 700 block of Woodlawn Avenue on March 26, the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive on March 31, and the 1200 block of East Maynard on April 10.

Sex crime—Rapes were reported on Villard Court at 3:32 p.m. Wednesday, March 31, and on the 2300 block of West Seventh Street at 3:24 p.m. Wednesday, April 7.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on Cleveland Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard at 11:27 p.m. Wednesday, April 14.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—A commercial burglary was reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 12:48 p.m. Wednesday, April 7.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on North Lexington Parkway and Saint Anthony Avenue on March 25, the 300 block of North Lexington on March 30, and two vehicles on the 1100 block of University Avenue on April 7.

—Shoplifting losses of more than \$1,000 were reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue on March 27 and 31, and on April 10.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Portland Avenue on April 1.

Miscellaneous—Felony criminal damage to property was reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 2:08 p.m. Saturday, March 27.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 1600 block of Grand Avenue at 9:14 p.m. Saturday, April 3.

Burglary—Burglaries were reported on the 1500 block of Sargent Avenue on March 28, the 2000 block of James Avenue on April 8, and the 1100 block of Edgcombe

Road on April 9.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Randolph and Snelling avenues on March 25, the 2100 block of Sargent Avenue on April 9, and the 2000 block of Wellesley Avenue on April 10.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1400 block of Lincoln Avenue on March 27, and the 2000 block of James Avenue on April 8.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 1400 block of Grand Avenue at 1:27 a.m. Monday, April 12.

Mendota Heights

Theft—A laptop computer was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Highway 13 at 7:32 p.m. Friday, April 2.

—Two lawn mowers were reported stolen on the 2100 block of Lexington Avenue during the weekend of April 3-4.

—A man was arrested for a theft in progress on James Avenue and Douglas Road at 11:18 p.m. Sunday, April 4.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on the 700 block of South Plaza Drive on April 5, and the 800 block of Marie Avenue on April 14.

—An all-terrain vehicle and a utility trailer were reported stolen on the 2100 block of Aztec Lane at 2:23 p.m. Tuesday, April 6. The trailer was later recovered in Roseville. It had been involved in a collision.

Miscellaneous—A driver was cited for failing to yield after hitting a runner at Delaware and Marie avenues at 4:34 p.m. Monday, April 5.

—Someone walked on the roof and shattered two windows of a residence on the 1000 block of Mayfield Heights Lane, it was reported at 12:17 p.m. Monday, April 12.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 1900 block of Marshall Avenue at 8:58 a.m. Monday, March 29.

—A burglary was reported on the 1700 block of Carroll Avenue at 12:43 p.m. Sunday, April 11.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1700 block of Carroll Avenue on March 25, the 400 block of North Wilder Street on April 3, on Carroll Avenue and Fry Street on April 3, and on the 400 block of Pierce Street on April 5.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 2000 block of Laurel Avenue on March 28, the 500 block of North Prior Avenue on April 3, the 2000 block of Ashland Avenue on April 4, the 300 block of Dewey Street on April 5, and the 200 block of Montrose Place on April 9.

Arson—A fire was reported in a multifamily dwelling on the 1600 block of Marshall Av-

enue at 10:54 p.m. Thursday, April 8.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 2000 block of Merriam Lane at 11:08 p.m. Saturday, April 3.

Snelling-Hamline

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1500 block of Selby Avenue at 5:19 p.m. Wednesday, March 31.

Burglary—Commercial break-ins were reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 2:12 and 5:47 a.m. Monday, April 12.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on the 1400 block of University Avenue at 4 a.m. Tuesday, April 13.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on Snelling and Selby avenues at 4:21 a.m. Sunday, April 11, and on the 1400 block of University Avenue at 1:23 a.m. Monday, April 12.

Miscellaneous—Felony criminal damage to property was reported on the 1500 block of University Avenue at 7:59 p.m. Thursday, March 25.

Summit Hill

Burglary—Burglaries were reported on the 700 block of Lincoln Avenue on March 25, on Crocus Hill on March 28, the 1000 block of Fairmount Avenue on April 2, and the 600 block of Fairmount on April 10.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Dale Street near Summit Avenue on March 31, the 100 block of South Chatsworth Street on April 10, and on Grand Avenue and Victoria Street on April 13.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 900 block of Goodrich Avenue at 10 p.m. Friday, April 2.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 200 block of South Dunlap Street on March 26, and the 900 block of Saint Clair Avenue on March 29.

Summit-University

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 200 block of Dayton Avenue on March 26, and the 800 block of Laurel Avenue on April 8.

—Commercial break-ins were reported on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 5:40 p.m. Friday, March 26, and at 4 p.m. Monday, April 12.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 800 block of Laurel Avenue on April 1, the 200 block of Marshall Avenue on April 3, the 800 block of Hague Avenue on April 6, on Summit Avenue and Dale Street on April 7, and the 300 block of Summit on April 10.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 200 block of Kent Street on Thursday, April 8.

Assault—Aggravated assaults with deadly weapons were reported on the 600 block of

Selby Avenue on April 3, and the 200 block of Dayton Avenue on April 4.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 800 block of Selby Avenue on March 27, the 700 block of Iglehart Avenue on March 29, on Summit Avenue and Avon Street on March 29, on Concordia Avenue and Milton Street on April 3, the 200 block of Marshall Avenue on April 5, the 300 block of Selby Avenue on April 7, the 700 block of Iglehart Avenue and 800 block of Hague Avenue on April 7, and the 900 block of Dayton Avenue on April 13.

Miscellaneous—Felony criminal damage to property was reported on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue at 9:30 p.m. Sunday, April 4.

West End

Robbery—Strong-arm robberies were reported on Exchange and Sherman streets at 12:35 a.m. Saturday, March 27, and on West Seventh and Walnut streets at 9:48 p.m. Monday, March 29.

Burglary—Commercial burglaries were reported on the 200 block of North Smith Avenue on March 25, and the 900 block of West Seventh Street on April 5.

—Burglaries also were reported on the 200 block of Goodhue Street at 10:37 p.m. Friday, March 26, and the 700 block of South Victoria Street at 5:42 p.m. Sunday, April 4.

Theft—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 500 block of South Chatsworth Street on Saturday, March 27.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 900 block of West Seventh Street on March 27, two vehicles on the 200 block of Wilkin Street on March 28, on Elm and Exchange streets on April 1, and the 1400 block of Victoria Way on April 2.

Sex crime—Rapes were reported on the 200 block of Grand Avenue at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 25, and the 600 block of Randolph Avenue at 5:16 p.m. Monday, April 5.

Arson—A fire was reported in a building on the 100 block of West Kellogg Boulevard at 7:57 p.m. Wednesday, March 31.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a deadly weapon was reported on the 300 block of Spring Street at 9:53 p.m. Saturday, April 3.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on Saint Clair Avenue and Cliff Street on March 29, the 600 block of Canton Street on March 30, on Leech Street near Forbes Avenue on March 30, on Saint Clair and Colborne Street on April 7, the 1000 block of Montreal Avenue on April 11, the 700 block of Otto Avenue on April 14, and on Smith Avenue and Shepard Road on April 14.

Miscellaneous—Felony criminal damage to property was reported on the 900 block of West Seventh Street on April 3 and April 8, and on the 500 block of Harrison Avenue on April 14.

Names in the News

Merriam Park resident Patrick Redmond of Patrick Redmond Design has been selected as an honoree for *The Irish Echo's* 2021 Arts & Culture Awards. The virtual awards celebration was broadcast from Ireland on April 23. According to the *The Irish Echo* newspaper, the awards honor arts and cultural figures of Irish American ancestry who have kept spirits up since the pandemic began with their arts and cultural endeavors. Redmond is a designer, artist, author and retired educator.



The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library has elected Na Eng, Bryce Miller, Deepa Nirmal and Mani Vang-Polacek as new trustees to its board of directors. Eng is communications director for the McKnight Foundation and a resident of Ward 3. Miller is a partner in the downtown Saint Paul law firm of Collins, Buckley, Sauntry & Haugh PLLP and a resident of Ward 1. Nirmal is an associate vice president for RBC Wealth

Management U.S. and is a resident of Ward 4. Vang-Polacek is a human resources director at the University of Minnesota and lives in Golden Valley. Outgoing board members include Jim Bradshaw, Scott Burns, Pat Harris, Vineeta Sawkar and Mike Zipko. Members are elected to three-year terms that are renewable up to three times. For more, visit thefriends.org.

The Minnesota Asian Pacific legislative caucus has elected state representatives Tou Xiong (DFL-District 53A) and Kaohly Her (DFL-District 64A) to serve as its new chair and vice chair, respectively. Their terms will run through the 2021-22 session. Xiong will be the second chair for the caucus, which was formed in 2019. Her, who is also currently the DFL House majority whip, returns as vice chair.

Partners in Policymaking is welcoming applications for its eight-session leadership training program that will start this fall at the Crowne Plaza Aire in Bloomington, near the Mall of America. Adults with disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities will be trained at no cost. The monthly two-day sessions will be held on Fridays and Sat-

urdays from September-May (no session in December), with the March class held on Sunday and Monday so participants can visit legislators at the Capitol. Childcare and respite allowances are given, and mileage and meals are covered. Applications are due by July 9. Visit tinyurl.com/z8x59ep6 or contact Brenton Rice at brenton@togevents.com or 651-242-6589.

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States was recently honored for its 125th anniversary with a proclamation from the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. The JWV was established in March 1896 by Civil War Veterans in New York City, and now has more than 15,000 members. The board also commended Department Commander Lou Michaels of Minnesota Post 162, 331 and 354, the Ladies Auxiliary, National Commander Jeff Sacks and all of the JWV's achievements.

Ananya Chatterjea, the artistic director of the Ananya Dance Theatre (ADT) at 1197 University Ave., has received the 2021 A.P. Anderson Award for her significant contributions to the cultural life of Minnesota. A professor of dance at the University of Minnesota, Chatterjea founded ADT in 2004.

ON THE TOWN

Persistence pays off

Music scene heats up with the Hook & Ladder's new series of outdoor concerts

BY CAROLYN WALKUP

Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge will reopen on May 1 with five months of live entertainment outdoors under a large tent. The South Minneapolis venue has been closed for the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the \$280,000 in damages it suffered last May in the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd.

Located in a former fire station at 3010 Minnehaha Ave. S.—just around the corner from the Third Precinct police station that was burned down by rioters on May 28—Hook and Ladder is one of the few music venues in the Twin Cities that is nonprofit. It opened in 1999 as Patrick's Cabaret and was incorporated as Hook and Ladder in 2016. "By 2019 we'd really started to rock," said Kristine Smith, co-founder of Hook and Ladder and chair of its board of directors. "Then the pandemic hit. Just as things were getting going, we were handing out water to protesters (in the days following Floyd's death)."

Smith, Hook and Ladder co-founder and executive director Chris Mozena, members of their staff and friends guarded the theater and lounge as masked looters roamed the neighborhood in late May, attempting to blend in with peaceful protesters. "We were there

every day, but not at night because it was too dangerous," said Smith, who lives in the nearby Seward neighborhood.

Vandals eventually gained entry and inflicted \$250,000 in damages to the Hook and Ladder building and \$30,000 in damages to such moveable equipment as tables and chairs. While insurance covered the building, it did not cover the moveables.

Smith credited the Lake Street Council and the Longfellow Business Association for the donations that made up for some of the losses. Concerts by local musicians live-streamed from Hook and Ladder also helped.

"We deeply appreciated the support from our business neighbors. Many of them will not be back," Smith said. "People must think we're completely nuts to launch our new outdoor season as the trial (of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin) is coming to an end. But we're persistent."

The summer season, dubbed Under the Canopy, kicks off on May 1 with a concert by Twin Cities blues pianist and singer Samuel "Cornbread" Harris and his band on the occasion of Harris' 94th birthday. Harris was one of the first musicians to perform at Hook and Ladder after its incorporation. He will be followed on May 7 by a sold-out album release concert by the Belfast Cow-



Executive director Chris Mozena and board chair Kristine Smith stand outside the Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge, which will open a new series of live music on May 1 on the patio at 3010 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

boys, a Van Morrison tribute band.

Davina and the Vagabonds will perform their vast repertoire of jazz, rock and rhythm and blues Under the Canopy on May 15. Davina Lozier, a resident of Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood, is looking forward to the show. She has played close to a dozen times at Hook and Ladder and Patrick's Cabaret. "It's a miracle they didn't get destroyed (in the riots)," Lozier said. "In my 42 years, I've never seen anything like that. It was just insane."

Hook and Ladder "has gone above and beyond to help the community and the music industry through hard work and perseverance," Lozier added. "It's wonderful to find a venue that isn't just out for financial gain."

"The Hook is special because it's run by artists," said singer Terry

Walsh, leader of the Belfast Cowboys. "They're not just in it for the money by any means."

Walsh's nine-piece band, which includes Merriam Park bassist Joe Baumgart, has played Hook and Ladder and Patrick's Cabaret many times over the past two decades. The Belfast Cowboys also played some live-streamed concerts on Hook's stage during the pandemic.

"It's pretty admirable the way they pieced it together over the last year," Walsh said. His upcoming album release show sold out quickly partly because social distancing allows just 200 tickets.

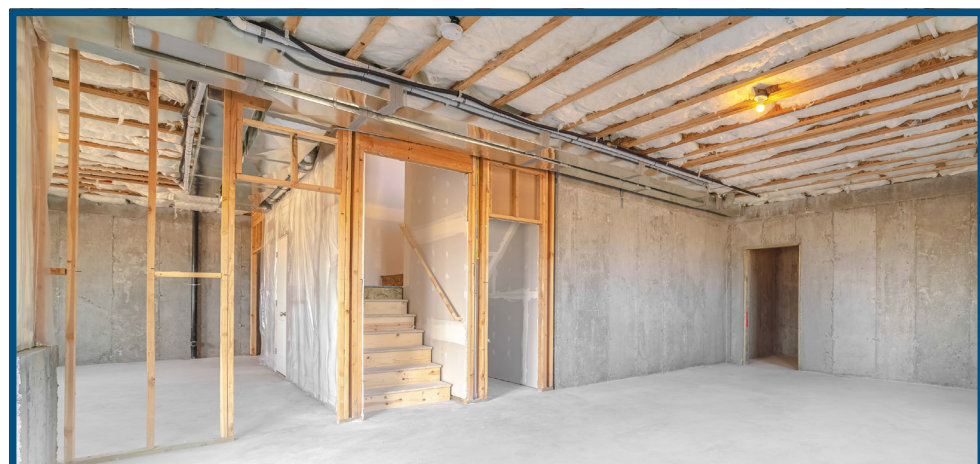
Guitarist Phil Schmid, who backed the late blues singer and harmonica player Big George Jackson at many Hook gigs, said the intimate concert hall "was perfect" for a performer like Jackson. "The audi-

ence is right there," Schmid said. "It's fun to play like that. And the sound system is good."

Smith and Mozena are hoping to reopen their two indoor theaters this fall. "We've structured it as COVID-safe as it could possibly be," Smith said. "If we can't open (in the fall), we'll go back to live-streaming with limited attendance."

Live-streaming with a technical crew of about 20 people "helped us keep local music alive over the past year," she added. "Live performance is necessary for the soul. It was already under a lot of threat before COVID with Spotify and other such services."

Tickets for the Under the Canopy concerts range from \$10-\$50 depending on the artist. For more information and reservations, visit thehookmpls.com.



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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Theater

The Root Beer Lady, a dramatic reading of a new play about the indomitable Dorothy Molter, will be streamed from May 3-9. Written and performed by Kim Schultz, the solo show tells of the last legal nonindigenous resident of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, aka Knife Lake Dorothy (1907-1986), whose solitary yet satisfying life pushes back against the premise that she was the “Loneliest Woman in America,” as the *Saturday Evening Post* claimed in 1952. For tickets, call 651-292-4320 or visit historytheatre.com.

WonderLand, a spin-off of *Alice in Wonderland* presented as steampunk dance theater, will be performed by Collide Theatrical from May 15-30 outside of the James J Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The drama is set at a first-rate mental institution run by a doctor who is tasked with the treatment of a man who suffers from severe anxiety disorder, a young woman with body dysmorphia and an older woman with narcissistic rage. Intended for adults, this story about friendship and acceptance was created by Regina Peluso. It stars Rush Benson, Renee Guittar, Brian Bose, Miranda Shaughnessy, Heather Brockman and Jarod Boltjes. Show times are 4 and 7 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 5 p.m. Sundays and 7 p.m. Friday, May 21. Tickets are \$36-\$22. Visit collidetheatrical.org or call 651-395-7903.

Exhibits

Northern Clay Center, 2424 E. Franklin Ave. in Minneapolis, will mark its 30th anniversary with “Pearl,” featuring the work of artists who have been at the core of the center’s exhibition program over the years. “Pearl” will be displayed in the Main Gallery from April 30 through June 20. A virtual exhibition will be held online on May 6. Visit northernclaycenter.org or call 612-339-8007.

Multimedia works by 40 members of the Minnesota Artists Association will be displayed from May 6 through June 27 in the

North Gallery at Landmark Center. The free exhibit features the best works of association members. They will be judged for awards. Art lovers are invited to choose their favorite for the Visitors’ Choice Award. The gallery is open from noon-4 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, pending COVID-19 guidelines. Face masks are required. Visit landmarkcenter.org.

“Racism: In the Face of Hate We Resist,” a juried exhibit featuring 63 quilts by the Women of Color Quilters Network, is on view through June 12 at the Textile Center, 3000 University Ave. SE. in Minneapolis. The quilts tell stories of resistance and fortitude that have been integral to the survival of Black people in America. Admission is free, but reservations are required. Visit textilecentermn.org.

Music

The Minnesota Music Coalition will present its 11th annual MN Music Summit from April 30-May 2. The virtual program includes artist workshops, community conversations and performances at venues across the state. The schedule includes a 7 p.m. concert by Orange Goodness and the Red Hot Django Peppers on Friday; a keynote address by Gary Hines of Sounds of Blackness, networking, workshops, a discussion of the future of the music industry, and a 7 p.m. concert by singer-songwriter Anat Spiegel, Dred I Dread and Miloe on Saturday; and stories and performances by eight Minnesota artists, industry workshops and a concert by Cory Coffman, Superior Siren and AfroGeode. All of the programs are free. Registration is required. For information on in-person tickets or to register for the links, visit mnmusicsummit.org.

The Minnesota Orchestra will continue its series of free Friday night concerts at 8 p.m. April 30 with “Dreams and Discovery,” a live-streaming of Alberg’s Shining Gate of Morpheus, Stravinsky’s Suite from Pulcinetta and Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 under the



Church of Lost Souls. Singer-songwriter Peter Mayer (above) will join guitarist Billy McLaughlin and SimpleGifts in concert at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, May 2, at 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. Patrons must be masked. Ninety-two seats are available (25 percent capacity). Tickets are \$29 in advance, \$39 at the door. The concert will also be live-streamed with tickets at whatever you can afford. Visit theparkwaytheater.com.

baton of Fabien Gabel. “Elements of Possibility” will be streamed at 8 p.m. May 14. Osmo Vänskä will conduct this performance of Yaz Lancaster’s dis(armed), Stravinsky’s Symphonies of Wind Instruments, Pendercki’s Chaconne in Memoriam del Giovanni Paolo II and Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

Music written by and dedicated to 18th-century Afro-European violinist and composer Joseph Bologne will be performed by Lyra Baroque Orchestra in a live-streamed concert at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 1. The program, which was rescheduled from April, will feature violinists Lucinda Marvin, Marc Levine and Elizabeth York, violist Ginna Watson, cellist Tulio Rondón and harpsichordist Tami Morse. Tickets are \$15,

\$5 for students. Visit lyrabaroque.org.

Sunday Soiree, a live performance by guitarists Joe Haus and Michael Ziegahn, will be presented at 5 p.m. May 2 under the north side of the Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road. The free program will be hosted by Urban Landreman of Lex-Ham Arts. Bring a lawn chair if you like and enjoy.

A class in hand drums for beginners will be offered from 5-6 p.m. Tuesday, May 11, at the Women’s Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. Students will use djembes to explore pulse and rhythm and learn the foundation of African songs. The cost is \$10. Drums are provided. To register, email info@womensdrumcenter.net.

Books

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host free online readings and discussions with authors Rivers Solomon and Solomon’s Gothic fiction *Sorrowland* at 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 4; Shelley Nolden and her novel *The Vines* at 7 p.m. Monday, May 10; and Jonny Sun and his book, *Goodbye, Again: Essays, Reflections and Illustrations*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 11. To register for the link, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will host free online readings and discussions with poets Margaret Hasse and Athena Kildegaard, editors of *Rocked by the Waters*, a poetry anthology on motherhood, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 5; and Jeannine Ouellette and her memoir, *The Part That Burns*, and Keisha Burns and her novel, *No Heaven for Good Boys*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 12. To register for the link, visit subtextbooks.com.

South Minneapolis author Eric Dregni will discuss his new book, *For the Love of Cod: A Father and Son’s Search for Norwegian Happiness*, in a virtual program at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 6. Sasha Aslanian of Minnesota Public Radio will take part in the conversation. To register for the link, visit z.umn.edu/dregni506.

THE KIOSK

THURSDAY/APRIL 29

THE VIOLENT CONFLICT in the Tigray region of Ethiopia where war crimes have been reported will be discussed in a Zoom program from noon-1 p.m. The cost is \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. To register, visit worldwithoutgenocide.org/ethiopia or call 952-693-5206.

THE RED CROSS will be accepting blood donations from 1-7 p.m. at Clutch Brewing in Keg and Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St. To sign up to become a donor, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

FRIDAY/APRIL 30

THE RED CROSS will be accepting blood donations from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Midway YMCA, 1761 University Ave. To sign up to

become a donor, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

FRIDAY/MAY 7

“FREEDOM OF SPEECH and Racial Justice: Friends or Enemies?” will be addressed this evening by John Gordon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota. The free online program will run from 7:30-9 p.m. It is being hosted by the Jewish congregation Or Emet. It will begin with a short humanistic sabbath service. To register for the link, email Scott Chazdon at president@oremnet.org.

TUESDAY/MAY 11

NATIVE PLANT IDENTIFICATION, a Minnesota State Horticultural Society webinar, will be offered at 7:30 p.m. Learn how to

identify native flowers and grasses using basic characteristics of plant families and their growing conditions. The cost is \$10. To register, visit tinyurl.com/3r6ephjv.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE of 1915-23 and the recent conflict in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh and Artsakh regions of Armenia and Azerbaijan will be addressed by Armen Sahakyan of the Armenian National Committee during a webinar from 7-9 p.m. The cost is \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. To register, call 952-693-5206 or visit worldwithoutgenocide.org/armenia by May 10.

SUNDAY/MAY 16

THE SAINT PAUL HIKING CLUB will gather this afternoon for a five-mile hike

along Minnehaha Creek and around Lake Hiawatha and Hiawatha Golf Course. The hike will begin at 2:30 p.m. at the corner of Minnehaha Parkway and 35th Avenue South in Minneapolis. New members are welcome. Call Sharon at 651-207-5926.

A POLLINATOR PLANT SALE will be held from noon-3 p.m. today at the Temple of Aaron Synagogue, 616 S. Mississippi River Blvd. A variety of annual and perennial plants that are organically grown and pollinator-friendly will be available, along with heirloom tomatoes, vegetables and herbs. Order forms, which are due by May 12, are available at the temple office or by emailing 7381jbs@comcast.net. Curbside pickup is available for pre-orders. Masks are required. Call Margie at 651-698-4358.



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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Holmgren's pick caps amazing run

It was no surprise to most people when Minnehaha Academy senior Chet Holmgren, the most highly recruited high school basketball player in the country this winter, announced on April 19 that he would follow in the footsteps of ex-teammate Jalen Suggs and lend his talents to Gonzaga University next season. However, the Redhawks' alumni reunion was a short one. A couple of hours after Holmgren's announcement, Suggs announced that he is declaring for the NBA draft.

At his press conference, with Suggs present, Holmgren said of the Zags: "It's a perfect fit. They play in space and play with pace. I want to get out and run. It's more of an NBA style of play, which I want to learn and excel at."

Holmgren and the Redhawks capped off an impressive season with an 80-29 dismantling of Alexandria in the Class 3A championship game on April 10 to make it four straight state titles. Minnehaha has not shied away from tough competition, taking on much larger Class 4A schools like Duluth East, Wayzata, Edina and Hopkins. Holmgren, who has won just about every prep award there is, both locally and nationally, showed versatility rarely seen in a 7-footer. He often took the ball up court and connected on both of his three-point shot attempts in the title game. He previously had taken just two shots from beyond the arc all season.

Minnehaha's cupboard is not bare for next winter. Prince Aligbe, a talented 6-foot-7 forward who was injured late in the season, is expected to be at full strength along with several other talented returning players. Minnehaha is dropping back to Class 2A next year and likely will still be one of the teams to watch in a state that seems to be producing more topflight prep basketballers every year.

CDH boys' hoops season was impressive

Cretin-Derham Hall's trip to the state tourney in boys' basketball didn't end as well as Minnehaha's did with a loss to Wayzata in the Class 4A championship game. However, in a way the Raiders' run might have been more remarkable.

The Raiders play in the Suburban East, one of the most difficult conferences in the state. There they have to face several larger schools, some of which have very good basketball pedigrees. CDH head coach Jerry Kline had a rebuilt roster that got tossed right into conference play when the season finally began in mid-January. The early results were not surprising when CDH started out 4-4.

Then the marvelously talented Tre Holloman and his teammates found their groove. They avenged two earlier losses against East Ridge and Mounds View, and had a 9-1 run heading into sections. CDH won a heart-stopper in the section final against a Woodbury team that had beaten it twice during the regular season. The Raiders opened the state tournament with a one-point win over Rosemount. Things went smoother in their semifinal victory over Maple Grove, but Wayzata was simply too deep in the final.

Holloman, a junior, stood out and will likely be the apple of recruiters' eyes next year with his 20.3-point average and stunning .824 free throw percentage. However, what also made the Raiders fun to watch this season was their ability to clamp down defensively. They held seven opponents to under 50 points and 16 to under 60.

Two remarkable hockey stories

The Highland Park boys' hockey team finished this season with a 4-10 record. While that looks unmemorable, the fact that the Scots pulled it off at all was amazing.

Last summer, Highland found itself without a league to call home. The Two Rivers Conference went down to two teams and new Scots head coach Brandon Ferraro suddenly had to work the phone to find games to play as an independent. It was easier said than done, since most schedules are put together months in advance.

WRIGHT CALL ►16

Prep sports previews

Teams playing catchup as baseball returns

BY BILL WAGNER

It's a mixed bag of issues for high school baseball coaches this spring. Because of COVID-19, many are finding that they're having to do a lot more coaching of the game's fundamentals. That's because the virus effectively took a full year from the development of their players. Still, they say it's a lot better than not playing at all, like last year.

"I told the boys that every day we play is a gift," said Saint Thomas Academy coach Jon Engeswick. "We have 15 seniors and 12 of them have never played in a varsity game."

According to Nova Classical Academy coach Scott Lindholm, "Last year's team was probably the one we've had here that we were the most excited about." This spring, he said, "We need to avoid injuries, but I expect us to compete in every game."

Henry Sibley coach Greg Fehrman summed up the return to prep baseball for all high school teams. "Most of us are still trying to figure it out," he said.

Despite playing catchup, there's still plenty of enthusiasm for the 2021 season. Here's a look at the local clubs:

CENTRAL

League: Saint Paul City

Coach: Adam Hunkins

Key players: senior center fielder/pitcher Miles Liebrén, junior outfielder Duncan Reyburn, senior first baseman/pitcher Henry Kampa, sophomore catcher Payton Bang.

Outlook: The Minutemen, who started the season with four straight wins, have just one player with varsity experience. Still, Hunkins has 50 players out for three teams this spring. "I'd hope that we'd be near the top (of the league) by the end of the season," he said. Hunkins said Highland Park and Johnson should provide Central's stiffest competition.



Central senior Miles Liebrén watches his RBI triple find the outfield in the first inning of a 13-2 win over Washington on April 21. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East

Coach: Mike Kvashicka

Key players: junior pitcher/center fielder Cooper Smith, senior catcher/first baseman Will Skjold, junior pitcher/third baseman Ben Weber, senior pitcher/infielder Cole Hannum.

Outlook: CDH, which started the season 1-3, might find the tough Suburban East an unfriendly place to play this year, at least early on, with opponents like Stillwater, East Ridge and Forest Lake. "The most depth we have is in our younger group of players," Kvashicka said. "We want to make sure that we're progressing as the year goes on."

HENRY SIBLEY

League: Metro East

Coach: Greg Fehrman

Key players: senior pitcher/first baseman Joey Hazzard, junior third baseman Blake Eckmann, junior center fielder Abe Mogelson, senior catcher Peter Altier.

Outlook: Fehrman figures Saint Thomas Academy, Mahtomedi and Hill-Murray will all be tough conference foes, with Sibley a mystery at this point. "I don't know what we're really good at right now," he said. "It could take a while." Sibley had a 2-1 record through April 21.

HIGHLAND PARK

League: Saint Paul City

Coach: Chris Steenberg

Key players: senior outfielders, infielders and pitchers Aidan DuMond and Joey Kottke, senior catcher Teagen Burch, senior center fielder and pitcher Shea Landa.

Outlook: Steenberg likes his club's savvy. "We have 11 seniors," he said. "There's some talent there." He believes Central, Johnson and Como Park will provide the toughest conference competition for his team, which had a 2-1 record in the early going.

BASEBALL PREVIEW ►16

Softballers retake the field on the fly

BY BILL WAGNER

The biggest problem facing high school softball coaches this spring is learning what type of team they have.

The 2020 season was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and prep coaches lost a year of player development. It left some coaches wondering what might have been.

"It was a total reset," said Visitation coach Dan Jameson, whose Blazers made it to the Class AAA state tournament in 2019. "We were loaded last year, but we didn't get to play."

Here's how the 2021 season is shaping up as local softball teams finally get a chance to take the field together after almost two years:

CENTRAL

League: Saint Paul City

Coach: Fiona Lodge

Key players: junior pitcher Madelyn Griggs LeRoux, senior outfielder Zoe Okerstrom, junior catcher Bella Lauer, senior first baseman Georgie-Rae Plathe.

Outlook: Central, which opened the season with a 2-1 win over DeLaSalle on April 15, should be in contention with Highland Park and Como Park for the City Conference title. "I think that (title) is a realistic goal," said Lodge, who returns four varsity players from 2019. "We have some experience and a large junior class."

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East

Coach: Patrick Bowlin

Key players: junior catcher/shortstop Sammy Muetzel, senior outfielders Shannon Cummings and Ella Klein.

Outlook: The Raiders got off to a rocky start this spring with four straight losses. They have a big challenge playing in the rugged Suburban East, all of whose teams compete in Class 4A except CDH, which is in Class 3A. "We'll rely on our players who've played as sophomores and freshmen," Bowlin said. "We're lacking a lot of experience." Stillwater, East Ridge and Forest Lake all look tough in the conference.

HENRY SIBLEY

League: Metro East

Coach: Jenny Carpenter

Key players: senior pitchers Greta Ogden and Sofia Braun, junior pitcher Kallie Frett, junior infielders Bella Ramos and Molly Shetka.

Outlook: The Warriors, who were 1-3 through April 21, are a work in progress like so many other teams. "We have a very softball-experienced crew," said Carpenter, who was supposed to be a first-year coach last spring. "It's not a varsity-experienced one, but they do know the game well."

HIGHLAND PARK

League: Saint Paul City

Coach: Louie Neurer

Key players: senior pitcher Carly Landa, senior infielder Grace Bluhm, senior first baseman Jamie Lucken.

Outlook: Highland, which started the season with wins over Wasburn and Richfield, should be near the top of the

SOFTBALL PREVIEW ►16

15◀ BASEBALL PREVIEW**MINNEHAHA ACADEMY**

League: Independent Metro Athletic
Coach: Scott Glenn

Key players: senior pitcher/infielder Caidan Moore, senior catcher Toby Jacobson, junior third baseman/pitcher Owen Santiago, senior pitcher Leo Kloos.

Outlook: Glenn said his team, despite heavy losses of last year's seniors, should be OK. "I think (getting to the state tournament) will always be our goal," said Glenn, whose Redhawks made it to the Class AA state final in 2019. He predicts a dogfight for the league title, with Breck, Blake, Providence Academy and Saint Paul Academy all teams to watch. The Redhawks jumped off to a 2-4 start this spring

NOVA CLASSICAL ACADEMY

League: Skyline
Coach: Scott Lindholm

Key players: senior pitcher/first baseman

David Scheil, senior catcher/pitcher/second baseman Sam Hingsberger, senior center fielder Daniel Krizan, junior pitcher/first baseman Liam Borell.

Outlook: The Knights have only four seniors on this spring's roster, but were 4-1 in the early going. Lindholm hopes that a mix of veteran and younger players will come together. "I knew we'd be young this year," he said, "but I think we can compete (for the league title)."

SAINT PAUL ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic
Coach: Rob Thompson

Key players: junior center fielder Judah Thomas, junior pitcher Boden Strafelda, senior third basemen/pitchers Levi Mellin and Bobby Verhey.

Outlook: Thompson picks Breck and Providence Academy as the top conference threats, but he likes his club's chances. "We have a good solid senior class and some juniors," he said. The Spartans started the season with a 2-2 record, including a 6-0 win over Breck.



Central's Oscar Holm tumbles home safely on a passed ball for the third run of a 13-2 win over Washington on April 21.

PHOTO BY
BRAD STAUFFER

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

League: Metro East
Coach: Jon Engeswick

Key players: senior third baseman Joe Middleton, senior catcher/outfielder Tristin Thilmany, senior shortstop Jordan Young, senior pitcher Zach Klemz.

Outlook: The Cadets won the 2019 state Class AAA title, but never got the chance to defend it last year. This season, Engeswick has the task of integrating new players into his lineup. "We have some talent," he said. "We just have some issues that we need to settle." Hill-Murray and Mahtomedi should be tough this year. STA was 1-2 after three games at home.

15◀ SOFTBALL PREVIEW

conference. "The way the league has been recently, we've always got a shot," Neuer said. "We had a nice team two years ago, but now we have to start from scratch."

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: IMAC
Coach: Megan Thurow

Key players: junior center fielder Caroline McHugh, senior shortstop Camryn Thurow

(the coach's sister), junior pitcher Payton Glenn.

Outlook: "We have a lot of athletes," said coach Thurow. "If we play the way we do in practice, we definitely have a chance to win (the conference title)." The Redhawks won their first three games this season, outscoring their opponents 38-11.

SAINT PAUL ACADEMY

League: IMAC
Coach: Lauren Janssen

Key players: senior pitcher Jane Christakos, junior first baseman Sarah Oppenheim, senior outfielder Isle Groupman.

Outlook: The Spartans' most experienced players are infielders, said new coach Janssen, who has 15 players out. SPA opened the season with four postponed games and a loss to Breck.

VISITATION

League: Tri-Metro
Coach: Dan Jameson

Key players: senior pitcher Izzy Griffin, senior second baseman Julia Finn, junior catcher Hannah Allen, senior shortstop Alexandra Gold.

Outlook: Visitation coach Jameson likes what he's seen so far. "Our younger players are stepping up," he said. "We've lost a lot of training (because of COVID). With our games this year, we've had to do a lot of catchup on the fly." The Blazers opened the season with losses at Richfield and Benilde-Saint Margaret's.

15◀ WRIGHT CALL

The Scots worked out deals with such nontraditional opponents as Waseca, Rochester Lourdes and Bloomington Kennedy. They didn't win many games, but it was better than not playing at all. Here's hoping that the Scots can find a conference next year and get back to a sense of normalcy.

Saint Thomas Academy, meanwhile, was expected to have a good season and its final 13-5-3 record that included a return to the state hockey tournament confirmed the prediction.

A lack of consolation play at this year's state tournament meant the Cadets' 6-2 quarterfinal loss to Eden Prairie made for a disappointing end to the season. However, those who

watched STA marveled at the speed and shooting acumen of senior Jackson Hallum, a third-round NHL draft choice who will eventually skate at Michigan. Hallum, who led the Cadets with 41 points, wasn't the only name to take note of, however. Senior Jared Wright was right behind Hallum with 38 points. Wright is headed to Colgate, a top-notch academic school and a member of the Eastern College Athletic Conference. Judging by Colgate's average of around two goals a game this season, Wright's eye for the net may be something they'll be thankful for in Hamilton, New York, next winter.

Still some playoff hope for the Wild

There's still a possibility that the Minnesota Wild will be

playing hockey later than usual this year. The NHL season has a couple of weeks to go. With the exception of a lost weekend in Saint Louis, the Wild have been an enjoyable group to watch for the past two months, with good goaltending and bursts of offensive excellence.

It's been a while since there's been reason to be hopeful for a Stanley Cup run that lasts past the first round. The NHL format this year has the top four teams in each division making the field. Minnesota will face either Colorado or Las Vegas in the first round. The Wild have had some failures in the past, but they don't look like they're in over their head against either foe this year.

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

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Taste of Ward 3: Encore—The Highland and Macalester-Groveland district councils and the Highland Business Association are again conducting a month-long promotion of restaurants in Saint Paul's Ward 3. Order from restaurants in Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland between now and May 22 and submit your receipts. Every submission of two receipts by June 1 will be eligible for one entry into a drawing for restaurant gift cards. Learn more at tasteofward3.com.

Highland Bridge update—Ryan Companies will present a virtual update on the Highland Bridge project from 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 19. Learn more and register at highland-bridge.com/news.

Garage Fest 2021—Due to COVID-19, Highland Park's annual neighborhood garage sale has been pushed back until September 10-11. Registration information and garage sale signs will be available in the coming months.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, May 6; and Transportation Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 11. All HDC meetings are currently being conducted online via Zoom. Links to access the meetings are posted on the HDC's website. Visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar for notices of future meetings.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Taste of Ward 3: Encore—Order from any restaurant in Ward 3 (Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland) between now and May 22 and save your receipts. Every submission of two receipts by June 1 will be eligible for one entry into a drawing for restaurant gift cards. Visit tasteofward3.com.

Block Ambassadors—A virtual meeting will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, May 4, for those interested in starting or joining a block club in the Macalester-Groveland and Union Park neighborhoods. Visit macgrove.org/block-ambassadors.

Alley Garden Awards—The community council is looking for judges to walk the alleys of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood on July 15-22 as part of its annual Alley Garden Awards. Email mgcc@macgrove.org.

Volunteer with Mac-Grove—There currently are openings for a Grid 5 board seat and an at-large faith representative on the board of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. The council also has three standing committees that meet once a month. Visit macgrove.org/committees.

Upcoming online meetings—Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, April 28; Inclusivity Task Force on Thursday, May 6; board of directors on Thursday, May 13; and Transportation Committee on Monday, May 24. All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Visit macgrove.org/participate.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Solidarity fund—The Union Park and Lexington-Hamline community councils have established a solidarity fund that may be used to help people cover rent, mortgage payments and utilities. Those who are able to donate to the fund are asked to visit givemn.org/story/Li2sdg. Those in need of assistance should call Keystone Community Services at 651-917-3883.

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. Applications are due by the end of May. Email info@unionparkdc.org or visit unionparkdc.org/micro-grant.

Earn a UPDC scholarship—The district council's Neighborhood Involvement Committee is sponsoring a one-time

\$500 scholarship for someone who works, lives or attends school in one of Union Park's neighborhoods and will be pursuing a post-secondary education this fall. Applications will close on April 30 and the finalist will be notified by mid-May. For information, email jonah@unionparkdc.org.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 5; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 10; Committee on Land Use and Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 17; and Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 19. To access the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or info@unionparkdc.org, or click on the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Annual meeting—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's annual meeting via Zoom has been postponed for a week. It will now be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 27. Register by visiting the website.

Book discussion circle—West End residents are invited to read *Me and White Supremacy* and participate in a virtual book group discussion from 6:30-8 p.m. on Wednesdays in June via Zoom. The discussion aims to help people recognize racial bias and address systemic racism in their personal and professional lives. Register by May 26 by visiting the website.

Upcoming Zoom meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee with a Ramsey County update on the River-view Corridor, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 5; board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, May 10; and Community Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 20. For details and log-in information, go to fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

Stay in touch—People are invited to "like" the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation on Facebook and subscribe to its e-newsletter on its website.

CLASSIFIEDS

SPECIAL EVENTS

OUTDOOR WALKING group. Meet on Monday mornings at 10:00 AM outside the Highland Park Library. 1974 Ford Parkway. Contact Liz, 651-698-7019.

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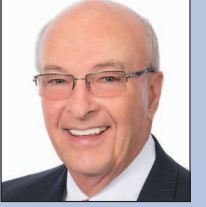


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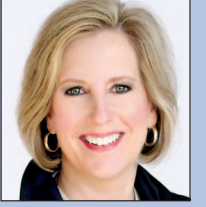
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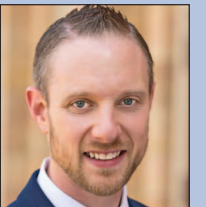
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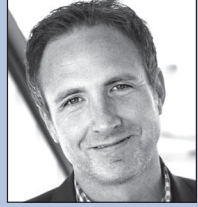
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