

Opposition grows to district's plan to close smaller schools to improve education overall

BY FRANK JOSSI

Opposition is growing to a Saint Paul Public Schools plan to close five schools and merge as many others in response to declining enrollments and the desire to offer a more well-rounded education at all district schools. The School Board is scheduled to vote on the Envision SPPS plan on November 16. However, in listening sessions leading up to the vote, most speakers have asked the board to reject the restructuring plan.

The Saint Paul Federation of Educators has suggested the same. In a recent Facebook post, it wrote that "affected communities—predominantly areas that serve families of color and immigrants—have said they had no prior warning before the plan was put together. And they don't want to be ignored."

A group of parents and educators led by Highland Park resident

ENVISION SPPS ►4



Monumental moment. Rachel Berger and her daughter Greta, 2, paused on a pleasant November 4 morning to read the tribute to members of the Armed Services that was installed by the Daughters of the American Revolution on the Veterans Monument at Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

St. Paul voters approve 3% cap on rental hikes

But city is still trying to figure out just when new law takes effect, how it will be enforced

BY JANE MCCLURE

Saint Paul voters approved by a 53 to 47 percent margin on November 2 what may be the most stringent rent control ordinance in the country. City officials are now scrambling to figure out what comes next. Meanwhile, landlords and their residential tenants are waiting to learn just when the ordinance will begin affecting them.

With a turnout of 34 percent of registered voters, the rent control measure passed with 30,965 "yes" votes and 27,581 "no" votes. City officials had planned for the ordinance to take effect on May 1, 2022. That date was in the enabling language for the ordinance. However, Saint Paul's city charter holds that an ordinance adopted by voters in a referendum takes effect immediately. That discrepancy, plus a botched attempt by city staff to provide more details on the ordinance on November 3,

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City aims to snuff out smoking with new tobacco rules

Tobacco will be more costly, harder to find in Saint Paul

BY JANE MCCLURE

More stringent regulations on the sale and marketing of tobacco products will take effect in December in Saint Paul with the unanimous vote on November 3 by the City Council. The ordinance has been hailed by anti-tobacco activists as a way to protect public health and discourage the use of tobacco products. Opponents of the ordinance believe the council is overreaching and contradicting state law.

Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker called the new restrictions "a step forward for our young people." Other council members

praised the coalition that drafted and supported the ordinance.

The measure reduces the number of tobacco sales licenses available in the city to 150, down from about 190 licenses today. Businesses that already have such licenses can retain them, but getting a new license will not be possible until approximately 40 of the businesses close or otherwise give up their license.

The number of tobacco shop licenses has been capped at 25. There are 39 tobacco shops currently, and that number will be trimmed through attrition. Another change that will be phased in is a minimum half-mile distance required between tobacco shop license holders.

Saint Paul regulates e-cigarettes and vaping products in the same way it regulates tobacco, so those items fall under the ordinance as well.

The ordinance prohibits the sale of menthol

and other flavored tobacco products in liquor stores. It prohibits the use of coupons and other price promotions for tobacco products, and it sets at \$10 the minimum price of cigarette packs and standard-size cans of smokeless tobacco.

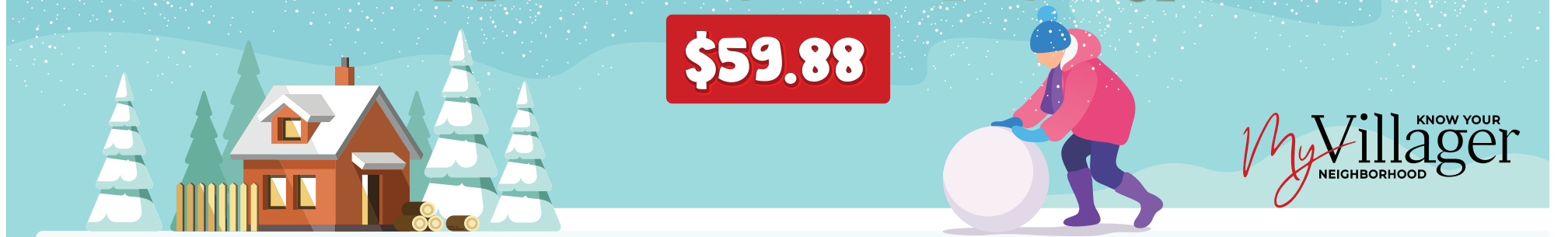
The \$10 minimum sale price has come under fire from retailers and business associations. Minnesota law already sets minimum prices for tobacco products through a formula.

"How does the City Council intend to reconcile the proposed ordinance provision with the state law?" asked the Coalition of Neighborhood Retailers in a letter to the council. "A city should not engage in what is essentially price fixing. To our knowledge, the city of Saint Paul does not fix the prices of any other consumer products, and neither should it start to do so with cigarettes."

TOBACCO SALES ►4

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St. Paul votes for status quo

Carter is reelected, Ward and Henderson join Vue and Foster on School Brd.

BY DALE MISCHKE

Melvin Carter III topped a field of eight candidates to win his second term as mayor of Saint Paul on November 2. The former City Council member from Ward 1 and former director of the state Office of Early Learning garnered 62 percent of the vote, easily outdistancing the 13 percent received by his nearest challenger, former City Council member and former Ramsey County commissioner Dino Guerin.

It was a strong turnout for Carter, who had campaigned on the strength of his accomplishments over the past four years, including the passage of a \$15 minimum wage, eliminating late fines for library materials, tripling free recreation center programs, establishing a dedicated fund for bikeways, eliminating minimum off-street

parking requirements for new developments, and establishing a \$50 college savings account for every child born in the city.

Carter had been criticized for the slow rollout of his Community First Public Safety initiative and an increase in homicides and gun violence in recent years. When a dispute between two men at a West Seventh Street bar on October 10 erupted in gunfire and resulted in the killing of one bystander and the injuring of 15 others, several of Carter's opponents touted their own public safety proposals, but to no avail.

Thirty-five percent of the 169,950 registered voters in Saint Paul turned out for the general election. The majority of them also supported the incumbents in the two School Board races.

School Board chair Jeannie Foster bested challenger Clayton Howatt 57 to 42 percent

to win the race for an unexpired two-year term on the School Board. Vice chair Jim Vue was re-elected by topping a field of six candidates in the race for three four-year terms on the School Board. Challengers Halla Henderson and Uriah Ward finished second and third in that race to also win four-year terms beginning January 1.

The referendum on a proposed city ordinance limiting rent increases on all residential rental properties to a maximum of 3 percent annually was approved by voters 53 to 47 percent (see story on page 1).

SAINT PAUL MAYORAL RACE		
Melvin Carter	36,426	61.64%
Dino Guerin	7,454	12.61%
Paul Langenfeld	5,298	8.97%
Bill Hosko	3,423	5.79%
Dora Jones-Robinson	2,357	3.99%
Miki Frost	2,069	3.50%

Abu Nayeem	1,516	2.57%
Scott Evans Wergin	355	0.60%
Write-Ins	192	0.32%

SCHOOL BOARD RACE, TWO-YEAR TERM		
Jeannie Foster	24,388	56.94%
Clayton Howatt	17,948	41.90%
Write-Ins	498	1.16%

SCHOOL BOARD RACE, FOUR-YEAR TERMS		
Jim Vue	26,767	23.94%
Halla Henderson	24,090	21.55%
Uriah Ward	22,466	20.09%
James Farnsworth	21,188	18.95%
Jennifer McPherson	11,520	10.30%
Ryan Williams	4,699	4.20%
Write-Ins	1,074	0.96%

REFERENDUM ON RENT CONTROL		
YES	30,965	52.89%
NO	27,581	47.11%



Uriah Ward Halla Henderson Jim Vue Jeannie Foster

District 197 voters elect three to board, renew operating levy

BY JOHN WADELL

Voters chose two newcomers and one incumbent to fill three open seats on the West Saint Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area School Board on November 2. They also decided to renew District 197's operating levy for another 10 years by a more than two-to-one margin.

Sarah Larsen led all 10 candidates running for the four-year seats, followed by incumbent Marcus Hill in second and Jon Vaupel a close third.

Larsen, 45, of Mendota Heights is a supervisor at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and has a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's in public health. She has been a member of the district's Parent Ambassador Network and the Strategic Planning Core team, and has a freshman at Two Rivers High School and a sixth-grader at Friendly Hills Middle School.

Marcus Hill, 56, of West Saint Paul is a



Sarah Larsen Marcus Hill Jon Vaupel

data manager and has a bachelor's degree in business administration. Along with being on the board, he has served on school fundraiser committees. He has a freshman in college, a sixth-grader at Heritage Middle School and a fourth-grader at Somerset Elementary.

Jon Vaupel, 45, of Mendota Heights works for the Minnesota Department of Education and has a bachelor's degree in public policy and economics, and master's degrees in public policy and education. He

has a third- and fourth-grader at Mendota Elementary and has served on the Mendota PTA board, the Mendota Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Committee, and the district's Parent Ambassador Network.

The district's current operating levy was first approved in 2011 and was scheduled to expire this year. It provides the district with \$224.48 per pupil or around \$1.3 million each year.

District officials said renewal of the levy will not increase a homeowner's property

taxes in 2022. However, it will increase each year by the rate of inflation. Rejection of the levy would have resulted in around a \$51 tax decrease on an average-priced home of \$301,500.

SCHOOL BOARD RACE		
Sarah Larsen	3,309	16.77%
Marcus Hill*	2,363	13.04%
Jon Vaupel	2,319	12.80%
Mark Grondahl	2,133	11.77%
Stephanie Auran	2,054	11.34%
Robert Reese	2,228	12.30%
John Chandler*	1,715	9.47%
Timothy Aune	972	5.36%
Morgan Steele	921	5.08%
Elena Villarreal	303	1.67%
Write-in	72	0.40%
* Denotes incumbent		

RENEWAL OF OPERATING LEVY		
YES	4,388	67.75%
NO	2,089	32.25%



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1◀ RENT CONTROL APPROVED

has frustrated City Council members.

The ordinance forbids landlords from raising rent on their residential tenants by more than 3 percent per year. Unlike other cities’ rent control measures, Saint Paul’s applies to landlords of any size and to existing as well as newly built housing.

The rigidity of Saint Paul’s ordinance has been criticized. For example, it does not account for inflation, which is now running at about 5 percent annually. While the measure is meant to have a process for landlords to apply for an exemption from the 3 percent cap in the case of expensive improvements or large increases in property taxes, that process has not been formulated. Landlords are also concerned that applying for an exemption will require them to reveal their rental fees, information they consider to be confidential.

The rent control ordinance was promoted by such groups as the Housing Equity Now Saint Paul coalition, TakeAction Minnesota, the ISAIAH coalition and several district planning councils.

“This campaign grew out of decades of organizing in the communities most impacted by housing injustice,” said Tram Hoang, manager of the Keep Saint Paul Home campaign. “Countless renters have told us that something must be done to stop predatory practices and egregious rent spikes that are targeting and disproportionately harming households of color. We knew we would be outspent 20 to 1 by national interests intent on protecting unlimited profits for landlords and real estate speculators, but we were not intimidated. We knew our community needed action now.”

“Our policy to limit rent increases to 3 percent annually was crafted to eliminate the loopholes that have preferred landlord profit over renter stability in other cities that have passed rent stabilization,” said Margaret Kaplan, president of the Housing Justice Center. “The opposition tried to weaponize the strength and predictability of our policy because they know this is a significant step in rebalancing the outsized power of property owners over tenants.”

Opponents of the rent control ordinance included the Sensible Housing Ballot Committee, a coalition of landlords of all sizes, the Minnesota Multi Housing Association, chambers of commerce and labor unions. The committee spent about \$4 million to influence voters in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, which also had a rent control referendum on the ballot on November 2.

The Sensible Housing Ballot Committee stated that it was “deeply disappointed in the results of the referendum in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Our historic coalition of jobs and housing providers will engage with a new Minneapolis City Council on the policy discussion around rent control. And as Mayor Melvin Carter has said, we need to fix the Saint Paul rent control ordinance that will limit the development of new affordable housing in a region that badly needs it. Rent control will be a major discouragement to new housing investment in our core cities.”

Local developers are concerned that rent control could affect their efforts to build

new housing. They said they are finding that lending institutions are wary of the new restrictions.

Ryan Companies, the master developer of Highland Bridge, held a news conference in the week prior to the election to highlight how the ordinance could hamper its plans to build 3,800 new homes on the site of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Highland Park. Almost all of those homes will be rental units, and 20 percent of them will be affordable to households making 30 to 60 percent of the Twin Cities area’s median income.

City Council members said they have heard from developers who are worried about projects they have in the pipeline and the possibility that those projects need to be revised to remain feasible.

The rent control referendum that was passed by voters in Minneapolis authorized their City Council to draft a detailed ordinance and bring it back to citizens for review. That ordinance could then be approved by the mayor and City Council or by Minneapolis voters in another referendum.

The provisions of Saint Paul’s rent control ordinance were largely laid out in the referendum. City Council members said they have been frustrated with Mayor Melvin Carter’s administration for the lack of timely information on rent control, how it will be implemented and enforced, and how it will affect the 2022 city budget. After waiting several weeks for their questions to be answered, council members were dismayed on November 3 to see additional details about rent control pop up on the city’s website only to be almost immediately taken down.

Council president Amy Brendmoen said detailed rent control information should have been available to voters before the election. The council asked the Carter administration repeatedly for that information, but “we were given nothing but vague answers,” she said.

Brendmoen was also unhappy about the lack of estimates about the cost of implementing the rent control ordinance. “We’re passing the 2022 budget without that information, and I think that’s a shame,” she said.

Four of the seven members of the City Council opposed rent control in the form that was approved by voters. Carter supported it, with the caveat that the ordinance needs to be amended. However, the City Council will not be able to repeal or amend the ordinance for at least a year after it takes effect, according to the City Attorney’s Office. Assistant City Attorney Rachel Tierney said that case law on amending an ordinance passed by referendum is not clear. However, she cautioned the council about the risk of litigation if amendments are pursued.

Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development director Nicolle Goodman tried to answer the City Council’s questions on November 3, but conceded that the Carter administration was still looking into the ordinance. Should rent control already be in effect as provided by the city charter, the city has no staff in place to implement it. Nor is it clear which department will enforce it.

1,400 square feet of retail space and 110 structured parking stalls. The project was granted a zoning change, conditional use permit and variances last year by the city.

The developer is proposing to install a projecting sign on the southeastern face of the building. The zoning code allows a maximum size of 16 square feet, while 48 square feet are proposed. The illuminated sign will be designed so the light does not spill over to adjacent properties.

Two neighbors sent letters opposing the sign variance. The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation took no position on the request.

BZA grants sign variance for new Alvera building on West Seventh

A seven-story, mixed-use building under construction at 337 W. Seventh St. can have a larger sign than ordinarily allowed as the result of a variance granted on November 1 by the Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals.

Ackerberg Group sought the variance for the \$40 million Alvera, which is one of the first buildings in the city to be built with modular units stacked together. The building is expected to have 192 apartments,



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14 ENVISION SPPS

Joe Nathan has proposed that the school district delay the vote until 2022 and investigate alternatives. These could include renting surplus space to outside agencies, modeling unsuccessful school programs after those with waiting lists and reconsidering the advantages of smaller schools and classrooms.

Envision SPPS spares no area of the city from changes.

In neighborhoods served by *MyVillager*, the plan would turn Cherokee Heights into a neighborhood school and move its Montessori students to J.J. Hill Montessori in the fall of 2022. Obama Elementary would close, and that building would be renovated as the new home for the merged Cherokee Heights and J.J. Hill Montessori as well as a new Montessori middle school beginning in 2024 or 2025. Students graduating from grades 1-8 Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet School would no longer be tracked to Highland Park but could attend any of the city's high schools.

Jackson Elementary would merge with nearby Maxfield Elementary. Galtier Elementary would merge with Hamline Elementary. John A. Johnson and Bruce

Vento elementary schools would merge. L'Etoile du Nord lower school would move into L'Etoile du Nord upper school. LEAP High School, Parkway Montessori Middle School and Wellstone and Highwood Hills elementary schools would close.

Jackie Turner, the school district's chief of operations, said the plan is to create larger schools that are capable of having more support staff and offering a greater variety of subjects, including art, music and other disciplines. "What we hope to achieve is a situation where all our elementary school students have access to a well-rounded education," she said. "Many of our elementary schools have an unsustainably low enrollment."

The schools facing closure have enrollments of under 250 students. Though the schools would close, the district does not intend to sell the buildings. However, their operational costs would be saved. Nor does the plan intend to cut staff. When students move to other schools, "we still need to hire teachers to go along with the students," Turner said.

The number of babies born in Saint Paul has declined by almost 900 per year since the 2012-13 school year. Based on current projections, the number of kindergartners

in the school district will decline by 775 between now and 2025.

The parents of J.J. Hill students have been asking for a grades K-8 Montessori program for years, and Envision SPPS would create one, Turner said. Many Obama School families live in the neighborhood of Maxwell Elementary, and that school will be "intentional" in recruiting them, she said. Capitol Hill students no longer need to matriculate at Highland Park because the district's other high schools all have the same program offerings, she added.

J.J. Hill's Parent Teacher Organization is concerned about the plan. According to its co-chair, Deepa McGriff, parents and other family members were not involved in the planning process. "Is there a space to pause and meaningfully listen with the intention of actually receiving whatever people have to offer and potentially change (the plan)?" she asked.

Parents were "surprised" by the plan and the speed with which the district wants to pass it, McGriff said. Closing Obama and replacing it with J.J. Hill raises questions, she said. What will happen to Obama students and will they be given information about joining the Montessori program at J.J. Hill? she asked.

Research has shown that smaller schools are safer than larger schools, according to Nathan, the longtime director of the Saint Paul-based Center for School Change. The school district could keep its small schools, lease their surplus space to outside organizations and use that revenue to offer art, music and other subjects, he added.

Envision SPPS, according to Nathan, does not address multicultural education, which "people have been pleading for." Nor does it offer the more personalized education that many families want, he said. Two examples of that approach to learning are Avalon School and Open World Learning Community, two public charter schools that have waiting lists, according to Nathan.

Rather than close schools, Nathan suggested locating two or more schools in a single building.

School district administrators appear to have neglected the timing of such a momentous change, Nathan said. "Families have been through enormous trauma over the last couple years," he said. "This is putting 10 percent of the district—or more than 3,000 kids—through more trauma. Is this really the right time to be doing this?"

14 TOBACCO SALES

The ordinance increases the presumptive penalties for tobacco license violations. Selling tobacco to a person under age 21 comes with a \$500 fine for the first offense (up from \$200), \$1,000 for the second offense, \$2,000 and a seven-day license suspension for the third offense and license revocation for a fourth offense.

Penalties have been added for the display, possession or sale of single cigarettes, menthol tobacco products and flavored tobacco products in violation of the ordinance. The first incident brings a 10-day suspension and the second incident license revocation.

The City Council received more than 100 comments from supporters and opponents of the ordinance.

The Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association wanted the ban on menthol and flavored tobacco sales at liquor stores dropped. At a press conference in Octo-



The days of buying cigarettes for under \$10 a pack in Saint Paul will end in December with the City Council's adoption of new restrictions on the sale and marketing of tobacco. This photo from the summer of 2005 indicates how relatively inexpensive cigarettes were just 16 years ago. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

ber organized by the Coalition of Neighborhood Retailers, business owners said that smokers tend to be people of color and have low incomes. They said the new restrictions could be viewed as discriminatory. The retailers also objected to accusations that they

knowingly sell tobacco illegally to young people.

Another concern echoed by individual store owners is that customers will now take their purchase of tobacco products outside of Saint Paul and buy their gas and groceries elsewhere as well.

The Coalition of Neighborhood Retailers includes the Minnesota Grocers Association, Minnesota Retailers Association, Minnesota Service Stations and Convenience Store Association, and Minnesota Petroleum Marketers Association. It asked the City Council to study the impact of the many tobacco restrictions it has passed over the years and present data on what those restrictions have accomplished. The coalition asked the council to at least set aside the pricing restrictions and the ban on coupons and promotions.

Testifying in favor of the new restrictions were the Association of Nonsmokers Minnesota, health care providers and youth advocates. The Ramsey County Board not only voiced support for the Saint Paul ordinance, it passed its own restrictions on tobacco product pricing and use of coupons and promotions in October.

"The tobacco industry has a

long history of targeting youths and minority populations through coupons and promotions, especially in low-income neighborhoods," said Elizabeth Heimer, a public policy advocate for the American Lung Association. "The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has found that when prices are higher, tobacco use decreases, especially among youths and low-income people."

"Approximately 95 percent of smokers start before they are 21 years old," HealthPartners stated in a letter to the City Council. "Tobacco use is the number-one preventable cause of death in our country and state. It costs the state more than \$3 billion annually in excess health care costs, and each year more than 6,000 Minnesotans die from tobacco-related diseases. Big Tobacco uses price discounts and coupons to keep people using its harmful product. Cheap tobacco helps no one."

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Mendota Heights council approves plan for 58 new apartments at Mendota Plaza

Plan for 89-unit building on second vacant parcel to be considered Nov. 16

BY CASEY EK

Despite the vocal opposition of residents in attendance and a majority of the city's Planning Commission, the Mendota Heights City Council voted 3-2 on November 3 to approve At Home Apartments' plan for a new 58-unit building on a vacant parcel in Mendota Plaza at the southeast corner of Dodd Road and Highway 62.

Voting in favor of the four-story apartment building were council members Joel Paper and John Mazzitello and Mayor Stephanie Levine. Council members Jay Miller and Ultan Duggan voted against. With discussion running past midnight, the City Council postponed until November 16 its vote on At Home's plan for a four-story, 89-unit apartment building on a second vacant parcel at Mendota Plaza.

Traffic was far and away the biggest concern at the City Council hearing on November 3 and at an October 26 hearing before the Planning Commission. Well over a dozen residents argued that the apartment buildings will add to the already severe congestion on Dodd Road. During rush hour, traffic on Dodd can be backed up for a half mile behind the light at Highway 62 and making a left-turn can mean as much as an 11-minute wait, residents said.

Bernard Friel, a former member of the Planning Commission, said construction of the two apartment buildings is an attempt to shoehorn development into an already cramped space, an effort he considered dangerous given the traffic concerns. "There's nothing desirable about

these spots," he said. "(The buildings) are just crammed into those spaces.

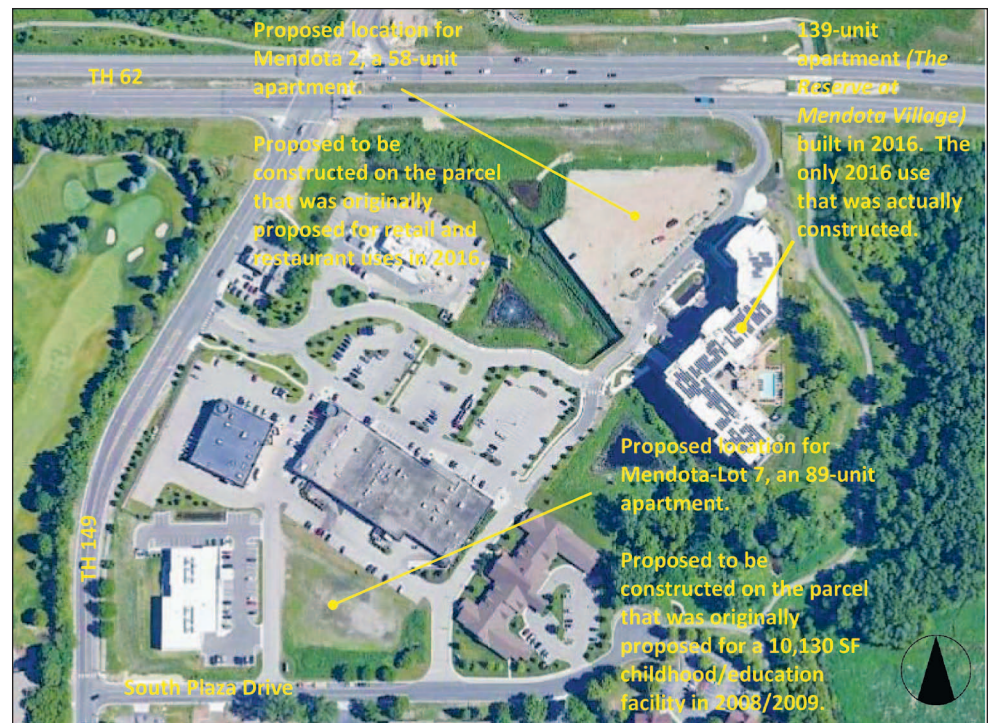
Compounding matters is the inability of the developer and the city to make any improvements to the intersection, which is under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Although the intersection of Dodd and Highway 62 has been given a grade of "F" by the state, MnDOT has said it has more pressing concerns to attend to.

The apartment buildings have been proposed for two 2-acre parcels within the roughly 21-acre planned unit development (PUD) that was created in 2009 at Mendota Plaza. The original intent was to build a strip mall, a four-story apartment building, a smaller retail strip, offices, multiple restaurants, a child care center and a pharmacy there. However, the plans have changed over the years.

The two new apartment buildings are expected to generate an average of 798 cars per day in traffic, which is down from the average of 1,024 cars per day projected for the restaurants and day care center that had been planned for those parcels.

"Solving the traffic (at Highway 62 and Dodd), that's not our issue to solve," said Richard Paster of Paster Properties, which owns Mendota Plaza. Paster argued that the two apartment buildings would bring much-needed business to the retailers at Mendota Plaza and would attract younger residents, which will help bolster the city's future.

To address the traffic issues, council member Mazzitello proposed establishing a new committee made up of local residents and representatives of the City Council, Mendota Heights' Fire and Police Departments and Dakota County government, among others. Potential tasks for the committee will be securing grants for road



Mendota Heights' City Council has OK'd the plan for a 58-unit apartment building (right) on a vacant parcel at the northeast corner of Mendota Plaza (above). It has yet to consider the 89-unit building proposed for the vacant parcel on the south end of the plaza.



improvements.

"No more kick the can. No more just talking about it," said council member Paper in reference to the traffic problems and the new committee.

The Mendota Plaza PUD was established to facilitate a cluster of varied but compatible new land uses at the site. Among the several amendments it has undergone over the years was one allowing for the construction of the Reserve Apartments by At Home at the northeast corner of the site. Another one led to the construction of the Gemini Medical office building.

The City Council's vote on November 3 followed votes of 5-2 and 6-1 by the Planning Commission to reject the plans for

the 58-unit and 89-unit buildings, respectively.

Council member Miller, whose motion to reject the 58-unit building drew applause from the audience on November 3, believes the two buildings will hurt the city's character. "We have the luxury of deciding what goes in and what it looks like," Miller said. "This PUD doesn't strip us of that responsibility."

Mazzitello defended the At Home projects. According to him, the recent mixed-use Linden development off Dodd Road just north of Highway 62 drew less scrutiny from the city. "We need to work on treating our applicants fairly and equitably," he said.

County puts an end to COVID-era hotel stay for homeless seniors

BY ANNE MURPHY

Nearly 100 homeless seniors staying at the Best Western Capitol Ridge Hotel near downtown Saint Paul were notified on October 29 that they will need to move soon. Ramsey County is terminating its contract with the hotel as of November 30.

Catholic Charities' Homeless Elders Program had partnered with the county to secure the hotel rooms for clients who are particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Until the last week of October, the clients had felt secure knowing the county had extended its contract with the hotel through May 2022.

"Residents were very concerned to learn of this news," said Melea Blanchard, supervisor of the Homeless Elders Program.

"Many expressed fear of returning to an overnight shelter while COVID is still a threat and cold weather is returning."

Ramsey County's contract with the hotel provided that it could terminate the lease at anytime with 30 days' notice, according to county spokesperson John Siqueland. "Though community transmission remains high in Ramsey County and the danger of COVID and its variants remains very present, vaccination is the best way to combat the virus," he said.

Ramsey County's Housing Stability and Public Health departments have worked for many months to vaccinate homeless people, according to Siqueland. "We've provided clinics at our shelter locations and have facilitated vaccinations through other avenues as well," he said.

Keith Lattimore, director of Housing Sta-

bility for the county, said the contract cancellation is part of an effort to make certain there is funding to support housing for homeless people should there be a surge in homelessness or COVID infections in the months ahead. The county paid for the hotel rooms with money from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Security Act and American Rescue Plan. Those funds have not run out, but there is concern that they could, Lattimore said.

No elders leaving Capitol Ridge will find themselves without shelter, according to Siqueland. County staff will "work directly with each resident on his or her next step," he said. "For some, that will be another shelter. For others, it will be more permanent housing."

"Typically, government moves slowly," said Ramsey County commissioner Trista

Louise Matascastillo. "But we have to be flexible and nimble in a way we never have before." That includes making sure funds are used in the most beneficial way and working quickly to help the homeless of all ages, she added.

"The tight timeline for securing permanent housing for our clients is posing challenges," Blanchard said. "People may end up in housing that isn't the right match for their needs and without the support necessary for success. If a place isn't a great match and challenges ensue, clients could face eviction, and eviction creates additional challenges.

"This is a sensitive population with specific needs," Blanchard said. "We want to do all we can to make sure they stay safe and healthy and continue to receive the care they need to live in dignity."

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Riverview streetcar advisory criticizes plan for Hwy. 5 tunnel

Project staff propose two options for skirting Historic Fort Snelling

By JANE MCCLURE

Getting the proposed Riverview Corridor streetcar line through the historic and culturally significant area around Fort Snelling could put a squeeze on the tunnel that runs beneath the historic fort. Both options presented on October 21 to the Riverview Corridor Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) call for reducing the traffic lanes in the Highway 5 tunnel to provide space for streetcar tracks.

The Riverview streetcar line would connect Saint Paul's Union Depot to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America along a route that connects with the light-rail Blue Line northeast of the airport and light-rail Green Line in downtown Saint Paul.

Many factors have to be considered when it comes to any changes near Fort Snelling, Riverview project staff explained. The area around the fort is known as Bdote, a Dakota word that means "where waters come together." The fort was built in the 1820s at the confluence of the Minnesota

and Mississippi rivers.

In addition to the operations of Historic Fort Snelling and any disturbances to its historic buildings, project planners must consider the preservation of a designated area of remembrance, the original rock that is considered to be a sacred part of the Bdote landscape, and the visual impact on the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. These considerations are what led to the proposal to use the existing tunnel for the streetcar line, according to Jessica Laabs of the consulting firm Kimley-Horn.

One option would have the streetcars running in mixed traffic on that stretch of Highway 5. That would require installing some sort of gate or traffic control device on the highway to stop motor vehicle traffic whenever a streetcar enters or exits the tunnel. The speed limit on the highway leading up to the tunnel would also need to be reduced from 50 to 35 mph.

The tunnel is 67 feet 9 inches wide and currently has two lanes of traffic in each direction. The traffic lanes vary in width from 15 feet 5 inches to 13 feet 10 inches. Under the first option, four 12-foot traffic lanes would be created, two in each direction, and two of the lanes would be shared by streetcars.



The first of two options for running the Riverview line through the tunnel under Fort Snelling includes a gate or other device for stopping traffic on Highway 5 whenever a streetcar exits or enters the tunnel.

Under the second option, the streetcars would take turns traveling through the tunnel on a single set of tracks. The tunnel would be reconfigured to have one 11-foot lane for streetcars and four 12-foot 4-inch lanes for motor vehicle traffic, two in each direction.

PAC members were not thrilled by either option. Both would require a significant slowing of motor vehicle and streetcar traffic. However, the first option with a gate or traffic control device on busy Highway 5 prompted the most objections.

"I'm very concerned with bringing traffic on a highway to a halt," said Saint Paul City Council member Rebecca Noecker.

Metropolitan Council member Kris

Fredson said he had mixed feelings about both options. He asked why planners had not considered a flyover, which is a high-level overpass or bridge. Project staff said there is not adequate space for a flyover.

Riverview project staff have been working with the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit and the Minnesota Department of Transportation on the streetcar route, along with such stakeholders as the local American Indian tribes, the Minnesota Historical Society, the National Park Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Among the other unresolved issues for the proposed transit line is how to get the streetcars across the Mississippi River.

Metro Transit changes driven by shortage of riders, operators

By JANE MCCLURE

Metro Transit plans to suspend service on 16 bus routes and make changes to dozens of others beginning December 4 as it faces a driver shortage and a decline in transit ridership.

Longtime local bus Routes 16, 84 and 134 are among those scheduled to be suspended, while part of Route 70 will also be dropped. Many other routes throughout the Twin Cities will have reduced bus frequency and schedule changes.

Route 16, which was once one of the busiest bus routes, used to connect the Minneapolis and Saint Paul downtowns via University Avenue. The opening of the light-rail Green Line in 2014 brought cutbacks to Route 16, which now ends at Fairview Avenue.

Route 84, which connects Highland Park and South Minneapolis to Roseville, follows much of the same route in local neighborhoods that the bus rapid transit (BRT) A Line has traveled since 2016.

Route 134, which connects downtown Minneapolis to Highland Park via Cleveland Avenue, will also be suspended. Routes 87 and 63 are listed as alternatives.

Route 70 will still serve destinations east of downtown Saint Paul, but will no longer travel west of downtown on Saint Clair

"Over the past couple months in particular we've had difficulty hiring bus operators, which is a challenge when you need to have 1,100-1,200 operators," said Metro Transit service development director Adam Harrington. "Right now we're about 80 operators short of where we need to be."

and Cretin avenues.

Weekday service on the A Line will change to every 12 minutes, with service times adjusted to maintain connections with the Green Line.

One gain is on bus Route 94, which travels on I-94. Stops will be added at both directions on Snelling for better connections to the Midway area, A Line and Green Line.

Several local bus routes will have schedule changes. That includes Route 21, which

travels along Lake Street in Minneapolis and Marshall and Selby avenues in Saint Paul, and Route 46, which serves South Minneapolis and Highland. Route 21 will have trip frequencies adjusted on weekdays and Saturdays, while Route 46 will no longer have Saturday and Sunday service. Alternate service in Highland will be offered weekends on the Route 87B.

Route 74, which travels on West Seventh Street and Randolph Avenue as part of its route between downtown Saint Paul and the Blue Line's 46th Street station, will have weekend schedules adjusted.

"Over the past couple months in particular we've had difficulty hiring bus operators, which is a challenge when you need to have 1,100-1,200 operators," said Metro Transit service development director Adam Harrington. "Right now we're about 80 operators short of where we need to be."

About 5 percent of existing service hours will be reduced, Harrington said.

The December 4 changes are just the latest for Metro Transit, which greatly cut service during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most bus and light rail routes now stop around midnight.

Transit ridership nationally has fallen since the pandemic began and more people worked at home. How that affects

projects on the drawing boards, including the planned Riverview Corridor modern streetcar line that is anticipated to start in 2040, remains to be seen.

That project's planners have been doing daily ridership estimates for Riverview for several years. The current 2040 daily ridership projection is at 12,800, a drop of 36 percent from the 20,000 riders projected during the initial Riverview studies in 2017.

Dedicated BRT is projected to drop from 14,000 to 10,000 or 29 percent, and arterial bus ridership to drop from 11,000 to 7,300 or 34 percent.

The drop in numbers prompted some questions in October from the Riverview Corridor Policy Advisory Committee. While project staff still believe Riverview will meet Federal Transit Administration criteria for federal funding, they are watching the ridership projections carefully.

Project manager Mike Rogers said the decrease reflects a number of factors, including the change in modeling and projections used, and how different forms of transit are weighed. Other changes are due to population and employment projections that are lower than previous estimates.

For a detailed review of the Metro Transit changes planned to begin December 4, see tinyurl.com/55chpez6.

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Religious institutions object to city's effort to restrict their use of property

They contend zoning rules would infringe on free exercise of religion

By JANE MCCLURE

A proposed package of zoning regulations regarding the accessory uses of churches, synagogues and other religious institutions ran into vociferous opposition at a public hearing before the Saint Paul Planning Commission on October 29. More than 50 people turned out for the hearing. Many of them were representatives of the city's faith-based organizations. They largely agreed that the regulations were too broad and would infringe on their community services and free exercise of religion.

Among those testifying were representatives of Lumen Christi Catholic Church in Highland Park and Fairmount Avenue United Methodist Church and CityLife Church in Macalester-Groveland. Brian Alton, a representative of Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul and a former chair of the Planning Commission, said he was willing to meet with city staff and work out a new proposal.

One of the regulations would have greatly restricted an institution's ability to expand its facilities for accessory uses. Several faith leaders said that would hinder the accommodation of everything from wedding and funeral receptions to sports activities. The provision could also run afoul of the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which prohibits regulations that place a substantial burden on religious exercise.

"This could easily be seen as just another way for the government to marginalize and suppress minorities," said the Reverend Joseph Gifford, pastor of Saint Peter Claver Catholic Church. The Summit-University congregation has been working for years on plans to add a senior care facility, new offices, a convent and a school gym.

Imam Asad Zaman, executive director of the Muslim American Society of Minnesota, said Muslim institutions in Saint Paul are relatively new and have not had time to build all of the facilities they need to meet

their needs. "Our community needs soup kitchens and battered women's shelters and workforce training centers," he said.

Following the hearing, city officials dropped the restrictions on expansions at the recommendation of the City Attorney's Office.

Some speakers said it was difficult to figure out just what was and was not allowed under the regulations. "Honestly, I have a law degree from Stanford and I'm confused," said Ethan Roberts, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council for Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Objections were made to a prohibition on new "social and community services" of more than 1,000 square feet without a conditional use permit. Capping overnight shelters to no more than 10 adults and the minor children in their care was also opposed. Project Home, an overnight shelter for homeless families, which has been housed in churches and synagogues for many years, typically has more than 10 adults, according to Alton. He suggested a maximum of 25 people.

David Mennicke of Concordia University-Saint Paul said the proposal does not make clear whether or not faith-based colleges and universities fall under the regulations.

"This is just ripe for litigation from beginning to end," said Joseph Kueppers, chancellor of civil affairs for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, which has 27 parishes in Saint Paul.

The proposed zoning regulations were triggered by a court battle over the operation of a drop-in day shelter for homeless people at First Lutheran Church in Dayton's Bluff. Listening House moved into the church several years ago with the approval of city staff. When neighbors objected, the city imposed a host of operating conditions, and Listening House sued. The case was settled in 2019 with Listening House remaining at the church and the city facing a court order to draft new zoning regulations for accessory uses at faith-based institutions.

Faith leaders offered to help city staff draft the new regulations, but the city is up against a deadline of February 1, 2022, to have the regulations in place and that does not leave much time, according to principal city planner Bill Dermody.

Council approves funding for two riverfront projects, Midway trail

The Saint Paul City Council approved a \$457,000 allocation on November 3 from the Great River Passage Conservancy to design a new Mississippi River education center at Watergate Marina and Crosby Farm Regional Park.

The project has been on the drawing boards for several years. The approximately 25,000-square-foot building would include space for classrooms, National Park Service offices, and such amenities as canoe, kayak, fishing and cross-country ski rentals. The city's top priorities for the 2022 state bonding bill include \$20 million to help build the center.

A \$200,000 allocation from the conservancy also was approved by the council in October for designing a River Balcony that would extend along the Kellogg Boulevard river bluff. The project also received \$55,000 in state funding.

The council also supported funding last month for the Wabash Avenue Trail Spur in the Midway neighborhood. The project received a \$150,000 Local Trail Connection grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and \$80,000 from the city's Public Works Department.

Vacant Merriam Park dental building gets 90-day reprieve

The owners of a building at 1630 University Ave. received a 90-day reprieve from added city fees from the Saint Paul City Council on October 27. Still, city officials are urging Ridgcrest Saint Paul LLC to find a new occupant or owner for the former dental office by December 11.

The building has been declared vacant since 2016. The current owners had paid the annual vacant building fee in the past but missed the last deadline, which triggered revocation of the building's certificate of occupancy.

At a legislative hearing this fall, Trent Mayberry of Ridgcrest said the building was purchased in 2019 for redevelopment along with the former Pawn America to the west. The former pawn shop was replaced with a Bank of America. The owners are trying to lease out or sell 1630 University.

Mayberry said a number of prospective occupants have toured the building over the past 12 months, but are hesitant to commit in part due to the civil unrest of 2020. The property also has some environmental contamination that needs remediation.

News Briefs compiled by Jane McClure.

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VIEWPOINT

City must expand tax base to make housing more affordable

By JOHN MANNILLO

Saint Paul has allowed its property tax base to gradually erode over the years. The tax base is and always has been what pays for public safety, schools, libraries, parks and recreation, streets and now affordable housing in the city. It also pays off our public debt. For decades, the city has been increasing spending—mostly for needed services, but also, and unfortunately, while depressing the tax base.

About 25 percent of the city’s real estate assets are tax-exempt. This includes hospitals, churches, colleges, schools and other nonprofit organizations. It also includes the real estate of five levels of government. This is no small amount, and it leaves Minnesota’s capital city in a fairly deep hole when it comes to tax base.

Too few of these tax-exempt organizations pay a reasonable share for the city services they use. The city should make a concerted effort to encourage all of these institutions to participate in a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program. The state of Minnesota could also pay its fair share for the city services it uses.

Saint Paul has often been accused of not being business-friendly. Ryan Companies, the master developer of the 122-acre Highland Bridge redevelopment project, is required to make 20 percent of the new housing units there affordable

to households making no more than 60 percent of the Twin Cities’ area median income (AMI). Ten percent of the units will need to be affordable to households making no more than 30 percent of the Twin Cities AMI.

To help Ryan achieve these numbers, the Saint Paul City Council approved a public subsidy of up to \$275 million in tax increment financing (TIF) at Highland Bridge. The city has made another \$209 million in TIF available for redevelopment around the new Allianz Field soccer stadium at Snelling and University avenues.

With TIF, the city finds itself paying mostly out-of-town developers to help with building projects in Saint Paul. This effectively removes a significant portion of the potential tax revenue from these properties for a quarter century or more, leaving us with little to show for the project. To make matters worse, we are creating competition for other property owners who do pay taxes into our general fund. In the process, we risk overbuilding commercial properties and in that way

reducing the valuations of commercial properties throughout the city.

On November 2, Saint Paul voters approved a new ordinance that caps at 3 percent annual increases in the rent charged for residential properties. This applies to all new, existing and even luxury rental housing. By limiting rent increases, the ordinance is likely to discourage investment in new rental

housing and in maintaining or improving existing rental housing. It could hurt all landlords, both the good and the bad, and is yet another way we risk depressing our tax base.

Saint Paul needs to effectively address the shortage of affordable housing

in town. That has become a top priority. What is the best way to relieve the shortage? I would suggest it is to expand the tax base and increase the annual revenue the city has at its disposal to spend. Promoting affordable housing does not have to be a zero-sum game; we do not need to take away from those who provide market-rate rental housing to help those who cannot afford market-rate rents.

We should be encouraging the development of all new housing. This can and should be done by adhering to zoning guidelines and being sensitive to the character of surrounding neighborhoods. If deeply affordable housing is the most important immediate need in Saint Paul, the goal should be to build the most housing we can as fast as we can. This could be achieved by encouraging the building of new market-rate rental housing by developers who are willing to build without public subsidy and will pay market-rate property taxes.

The future tax revenue derived from these projects could be bonded by the city up front, similar to TIF. The difference is, the city would be creating a restricted fund to capture that future revenue and use it to subsidize the private development of new affordable housing. In this way, the city can control the location, quality and desired amenities of affordable housing. One hundred percent, not just 20 percent, of this new housing would be affordable.

By protecting what is good in Saint Paul, and improving upon it, we can build a source of funding for whatever our needs may be, work toward a healthier tax base and make more people of all incomes want to live and do business in the city.

A resident of Highland Park, John Mannillo is a commercial developer and a former residential and commerical landlord.

INBOX

Rethinking school busing

I have noticed in the last few years that whenever I see a school bus, it either has no children or only a handful of children in it. It seems the days of packed school buses in the city are over. Why not start using smaller, hybrid buses instead of the big polluting diesel ones? The big buses also obstruct traffic, and their weight is hard on the roads.

I hear they are having trouble finding bus drivers. Who would want a job where you are liable for other people’s children if you get in an accident? What parent would trust a stranger to drive his or her children around? I think an interesting idea would be to get rid of the bus ride to and from school and give parents a little extra time and money to drive their children to school. Or they could arrange to have someone else do it.

*Greg Mulally
Highland Park*

Upside of bus driver shortage

In 2019, the city passed the Saint Paul Climate Action Resilience Plan, setting goals for addressing the issue of climate change locally while outlining the challenges and opportunities we face. The plan stated: “Transportation today has surpassed the electricity generation sector as the largest source of carbon emissions.... Eliminating transportation emissions is critical to achieving the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.”

In other words, we could get all our electricity from renewables and still fall short of our climate goals. While there is not one quick fix to this issue, one clear strategy is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled. Simply put, reduce the number of cars and buses on the road.

For good news on this issue, we need only look to the Saint Paul Public Schools. As many are aware, we are in the middle of a bus driver shortage. To address it, the school district decided to have a large percentage of its senior high students use Metro Transit to and from school. That took about 100 bus trips per day off the road. With those fewer trips, we will see fewer transportation emissions and less local air pollution.

Several years ago, Johnson High School chose to move away from traditional busing and have students use Metro Transit. With that change, Johnson saw significant

increases in the number of students engaging in school clubs, school sports and the overall school community. This decision also helped create future transit riders, connect students with the larger community and prepare them for their future.

Having our students use Metro Transit will not solve all of our climate-related transportation issues. However, it is a good first step. Kudos to the Saint Paul Public Schools for taking this opportunity. Here is hoping they will not look back.

*Tom Lucy
Como Park*

Doggone it, SPA

Saint Paul Academy has decided to put up a fence and lock out neighbors from using the athletic fields after hours on its Upper School campus. A group of neighbors had been meeting there with their dogs for over a year during COVID to chat and connect with each other. It has been a resource of great connection and neighborly friendship. Yes, we have dogs. Yes, we sometimes don’t see our dog poop, but we try really hard to never leave poop in the fields. After many attempts to discuss these issues, SPA has decided to stop all neighborhood activity in the fields.

*Anna Solowiej
Macalester-Groveland*

Saint Paul Academy and Summit School responds: The new fencing at our Randolph Avenue campus will secure access to our athletic fields, provide additional safety and security for our campus community and preserve the integrity of our playing fields. Installing this fencing was strongly recommended by our insurance carrier because of the risks and liability involved. Adults and children in the neighborhood will continue to have access to our athletic fields and track when school activities are not taking place. Once the project is complete, access to the space will be through an entry gate by the tennis courts at the southwest corner of the Drake Arena parking lot.

Dogs will no longer be permitted on the athletic fields. The school has tried for many years to accommodate the desire for an off-leash dog park. Unfortunately, the dog traffic on our athletic fields has become untenable. The dog urine and excrement, in addition to the foot traffic, is damaging

our fields and making it exceedingly difficult for our staff to maintain them for their primary purpose, which is for our students. For more information on the fencing project, visit spa.edu/about/our-campuses/fencing-project. Neighbors will find a form there for submitting their questions or concerns.

An ordinance for kids’ success

As a childless homeowner in Saint Paul, I campaigned to pass the rent stabilization ordinance because I believe it will improve living conditions for everyone in our city. When I got a postcard in the mail saying that the ballot initiative was about rent control, I called a homeowner on the East Side and asked her to go literature-dropping with me to promote rent stabilization. She had received the same postcard and planned to vote “no.” When I told her that low-income families were being forced to move by unaffordable rent hikes, setting up their children to do poorly in school, that convinced her to vote “yes.”

We are seniors without kids who care about kids having the proper foundation to learn well in school. Having a stable address provides one of the major foundations influencing their success. Thanks go to my fellow voters for passing the rent stabilization initiative to advance housing justice.

*Diane J. Peterson
Como*

Washington is failing us

The White House and the Democrats in Congress have one job – to protect and defend the United States of America. They’re failing at it. Instead of pushing a multi-trillion-dollar welfare expansion that Americans don’t support, why aren’t they doing whatever it takes to secure our border? They’re trying to pass a bill that will add trillions to the deficit and increase inflation while there are millions of dollars of paid-for border wall materials wasting away in Texas.

Where are the moderates in Washington? My family and friends feel less safe with this current administration in charge. Crime is way up in our area while the Democrats denigrate our police force and push to defund our police departments, returning many repeat offenders back into our neighborhoods.

City workers agree to retroactive pay hike, avoid strike

By JANE MCCLURE

Unions representing about 300 city of Saint Paul snowplow drivers, park workers, heavy equipment operators, forestry staff, and sewer and water workers voted on November 1 to accept a two-year contract for 2021-2022, averting a threatened strike. The contract includes a 1 percent wage increase retroactive to January 1 of this year, a 2 percent increase starting in January and a 0.5 percent increase in July.

The old contract expired at the end of last year. Employees and city

administrators had been in talks for more than 10 months. The city had initially offered no wage increase for 2021, and a 1.5 percent increase for 2022. A lump-sum payment was also offered. Workers voted to authorize a strike in October, but entered a mandatory cooling-off period and continued negotiations.

The settlement was with the Tri-Council, which represents workers in Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Saint Paul Regional Water Services. The workers were represented by Teamsters 120, the International Union of Operating Engineers Local

49, and Laborers Local 363.

Troy Gustafson, business agent for Local 120, said they will be back at the bargaining table in less than a year and will be looking for more than the minimal increases that were agreed to in the present contract.

Still unresolved with workers is Mayor Melvin Carter's new policy mandating that all city employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 by December 31. The policy has faced objections from a wide range of city employees. It does not include a testing option for those who do not want to be vaccinated.

84 INBOX

The southern border is wide open—a sieve allowing who knows who to freely enter this country to do who knows what. The border is a disaster and shows gross incompetence by the Biden administration and the Democrat Party.

The Democrats are too focused on spending trillions on free college, free day care and trying to control the climate, which cannot be done. When will they get their priorities straight? Where is common sense in Washington? It's frustrating as an American and Minnesotan to watch the incompetence on display on a daily basis in the White House and in Congress.

Tom Ordahl
Highland Park

Humboldt earns trip to state

Reading the article on the Humboldt vs. SPA boys soccer game (*MyVillager*, October 27), I was left wondering if goals win games or something else determines the winner. What I saw that night was two highly skilled teams playing an exciting, hard-fought match. I also saw the most dominate player on the field being Humboldt goalie Mu Tu Hsa Lah. With consecutive victories in the playoffs over Minnehaha Academy, Trinity and SPA, congratulations are in order for the boys' Section 3A champs, the Humboldt Hawks. Having outscored their opponents 9 goals to 1 during their run to state, they earned it.

Patrick Campion
Macalester-Groveland

Nursing amidst a pandemic

The letter, "Thank God for the unvaccinated" (*MyVillager* Inbox, September 29), was texted to me by a friend while I was busy running between sick patients in the emergency room at HCMC, where I have worked as a nurse for the past nine years. I have never felt so

defeated, watching half of our nursing staff quit over the last year due to stress and burnout. Yet those who remain continue to perform at our best, treating each patient with dignity and respect. If the writer of this letter came into our emergency department, we would greet him with compassion and kindness.

I sincerely wish you had avoided publishing his letter. It adds to the heavy and isolating burden that we are already carrying. We are committed to serving our community, not for the money, but because we have the skills, passion, experience and competence to help others during these unprecedented times. We are exhausted, and we ask for your support.

Anna Dykhuis
Standish, Minneapolis

Masks help reduce the spread

A letter writer asks, "When will this mask madness end?" (*MyVillager* Inbox, September 29). I ask myself the same question. When will the madness of people denying the efficacy of masks in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19 end? No one claims that masks alone will halt the spread of the virus. They will, however, help a great deal in reducing the spread. A large randomized trial conducted by Stanford Medicine and Yale University found that a surgical mask worn over the mouth and nose is effective in reducing "the occurrence of COVID-19 in community settings." The study also indicated that "cloth masks reduce the overall likelihood of experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness."

Stephen Lehman
Macalester-Groveland

MyVillager welcomes letters to the editor and longer guest editorials. All commentary must be signed, include the neighborhood in which the writer lives and a phone number for verification purposes. Send your commentary to *MyVillager*, 241 S. Cleveland Ave., Suite V, Saint Paul, MN 55105, email it to letters@myvillager.com or submit it at myvillager.com/editorial.

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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Selby Ave. rezoning sought for new five-story building

Apartments would replace two homes, one-story business

By Jane McClure

A longtime Selby Avenue commercial building and two adjacent houses would be torn down to make way for a five-story apartment building if a requested zoning change is approved by the Saint Paul City Council.

The Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee recommended approval of the rezoning at 1708 Selby Ave. from community business to medium-density multifamily use (RM2) despite the objections of several neighbors. That recommendation will be reviewed by the full Planning Commission on November 12.

Five neighbors spoke against the proposal on November 4, and 35 more signed a petition opposing the project. They contend that the five-story building will tower over the homes on Hague Avenue to the south. The block has no alley, which puts the planned Selby development even closer to the homes.

"This building will block the view of the sky from my front porch," said Hague Avenue resi-

dent Steve LeBeau.

Hague Avenue resident Paul Toman said the maximum building height in the area is two stories. He and other neighbors questioned the lack of a site plan and building drawings. Neighbors also criticized what they see as a lack of notice and time to discuss the project with the developer.

Hopkins-based developer Jon Schwartzman requested the rezoning. He has been involved in other housing projects in Macalester-Groveland and Merriam Park, including the five-story building on Marshall Avenue and Moore Street.

Schwartzman said he wants to get the rezoning approved before working on more detailed plans.

The Union Park District Council's land use committee had voted in support of the rezoning in October. However, the UPDC's executive committee had a split vote and did not make a recommendation.

As a condition of its support, the UPDC land use committee asked that the developer return with detailed building plans as well as plans to have some affordable units in what will otherwise be market-rate rental housing. About 40 studio, one- and two-bedroom units are tentatively planned.

The single-family homes at 1712



Developer Jon Schwartzman would like to build a five-story apartment building on the site of a commercial building (left) and two single-family homes at 1708-1716 Selby Ave. The houses are already zoned for medium-density multifamily housing, but the commercial building would need to be rezoned.

and 1716 Selby that Schwartzman would tear down are already zoned RM2. The one-story commercial building at 1708 Selby sold this fall for \$225,000. It currently has a woodworking shop, but has housed other businesses over the years, including a repair shop and a lawn care and landscaping business.

Schwartzman's plan is to combine the three lots. If the rezoning of 1708 Selby is not approved, he said he will demolish the two houses, construct a smaller apartment building and level 1708 to make way for surface parking.

Union Park committee members and local residents at their meeting had mixed feelings about the proposed five-story building. Ben Quam said redevelopment and greater density should be en-

couraged on Selby between Snelling and Fairview avenues. Charlotte Berres disagreed, saying she does not see a need for such tall buildings beyond Snelling's intersections with Marshall and Selby avenues.

Last year the Planning Commission and City Council approved sweeping changes to multifamily zoning to allow taller buildings on lots zoned for that use as one means of addressing the city's housing shortage. The commission and council also pushed for requirements for developers to provide more affordable units in exchange for the chance to redevelop sites. According to UPDC committee member Roger Meyer, there are other single-family houses on Selby that are being eyed by developers for

new multifamily housing.

Schwartzman said he plans to make about 10 percent of the units in the Selby building affordable to households making 60 percent of the Twin Cities area median income, or about \$62,940 for a family of four. UPDC committee members asked Schwartzman to strive for deeper affordability if the rezoning is approved.

Schwartzman does not plan to seek any variances for his building. The structure would have approximately 17 parking spaces on the ground floor but no underground parking, he said. Though off-street parking is no longer required by the city for a project of this type, Schwartzman believes it is important to offer some parking to make the apartments more attractive to tenants.



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Triplex conversions meet mixed fate

By JANE MCCLURE

The Saint Paul Planning Commission voted 10-3 on October 29 to reject a request to change the underlying zoning in order to use a Macalester-Groveland duplex at 1329-1331 Lincoln Ave. as a triplex, which means a longtime basement apartment cannot be used for housing.

A majority of commissioners said the change would be illegal spot zoning. It also would have opened the possibility of allowing the structure to be torn down and replaced with a larger multifamily building.

Earlier in October, the commission voted 9-1 to grant a legal nonconforming use request for a Summit Hill duplex at 1124-1126 Lincoln to be used as a triplex, which will allow a basement apartment there.

Such requests could become a thing of the past as the city studies ways to more easily add housing in neighborhoods zoned for one- to four-unit dwellings. One recommendation would eliminate Saint Paul's longstanding conversion guidelines for duplexes and triplexes. The guidelines are typically used in cases where an extra unit has existed for a long time and is later identified during a city inspection.

One argument for eliminating the guidelines and simplifying the conversion process is that if additional units meet city building codes, they should be allowed.

The request for 1329-1331 Lincoln had support from the Macalester-Groveland Community Council on the condition the zoning was changed from two-family residential to townhouse residential. The property owners, Ramsey Hill residents Gary and Catherine Ballman, asked for conversion to residential multifamily zoning. The district council wanted to see the Ballmans be able to rent out the finished

basement unit if it meets building codes. No neighbors had objected.

The building was constructed in 1927 and the Ballmans have owned it for three years. It is not known when the basement unit was added. Recent inspections indicate it has been considered a duplex.

The legal nonconforming use request for 1124-1126 Lincoln was approved by the Planning Commission on October 1 despite a recommendation of denial from planning staff. The change was sought by Larry and Tamara Kuenster, who have owned the property since 1998. The dwelling was built in 1923. It is unclear when it was converted to a triplex.

The Kuensters said they purchased the property with the understanding that it was a triplex. All three units were leased at that time and have been leased with no gaps in occupancy since then.

Records on the property vary. A Truth in Sale of Housing report in 1995 indicated that the property was considered a duplex. Past certificates of occupancy from 2008 and 2014 also indicated it was a duplex. A code inspection in May 2021 found that the basement unit was not legally recognized by the city. However, county records indicate that the property was considered to be a triplex and was taxed as such.

The Kuensters submitted testimony outlining the property conditions and their arguments for approval of legal nonconforming use status. The basement apartment has legal egress windows and meets building codes.

The granting of a legal nonconforming use requires meeting five conditions of the city's duplex and triplex conversion guidelines, and seven conditions for nonconforming use status. The conversion met all but one condition.

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Crime Report

The following criminal incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police reports. For more, see MyVillager.com.

Highland Park

Burglary—Two guns were reported stolen during an apartment break-in on the 1600 block of Ford Parkway on October 20-22.

Theft—A juvenile male was arrested for trying to steal a vehicle in the Hertz Rent a Car lot, 1420 Davern St., at 5:47 p.m. Sunday, October 24.

Miscellaneous—A man suffered minor injuries after driving into the Circus Juventas big top at 1270 Montreal Ave. at 4:21 p.m. Saturday, October 23.

—A woman reported that, after she broke up with him, her now ex-boyfriend slashed a tire on her vehicle on the 2300 block of Stewart Avenue at 7:44 a.m. Thursday, October 28.

—A 29-year-old woman was arrested for DUI, leaving the scene and obstructing the legal process following a hit-and-run accident on West Seventh and Albion streets at 7:02 p.m. Sunday, October 31. She was found slumped over at the wheel a short distance away and resisted arrest when being taken into custody.

Lexington-Hamline

Theft—A 25-year-old man was arrested for felony shoplifting at the Midway Target at 9:28 p.m. Friday, October 22.

Assault—Felony terroristic threats were reportedly made on October 23 on social media by a student who vowed to shoot up Central High School the following Monday morning.

Weapons—A suspect reportedly pointed a gun at a victim during a road rage incident at noon Wednesday, October 27, on Lexington Parkway and University Avenue.

Miscellaneous—A traffic accident involving a pedestrian was reported on Lexington Parkway and Saint Anthony Avenue at 4:13 p.m. Tuesday, November 2.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 300 block of South Lexington Parkway on October 29-30, and the 1800 block of Grand Avenue on November 2.

Assault—A man reportedly went with his cousin to an address on the 1400 block of Saint Clair Avenue to retrieve some belong-

Teen charged in assault, carjacking on Grand Ave.

Derrick Leon Jiles Jr., 17, was charged in Ramsey County juvenile court with first-degree aggravated robbery, second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon and fleeing police after allegedly assaulting a woman and stealing her vehicle at gunpoint in a parking lot behind a commercial building at 975 Grand Ave. just before 3 p.m. Wednesday, October 27.

According to the juvenile petition, a 53-year-old woman parked her 2018 Mercedes SUV behind a store at that address to go shopping and walked by a boy who said "hello." When she left the store, the boy grabbed her bag, put a gun to her temple and demanded her car keys. When she refused to give up her bag, the suspect tripped her, kicked her in the face, stepped on her neck and put the gun to her head again, threatening to kill her.

A 19-year-old store employee came out when he heard the woman yell for help. She eventually gave her keys to the

suspect, who drove off in the stolen vehicle. On October 30, the Mercedes was observed parked on Bush Street on Saint Paul's East Side. A Ramsey County sheriff's deputy placed a tire deflation device in front of the car. Around 10 p.m. the vehicle pulled away.

Though the Mercedes had blown right tires, it was driven at a high speed and ran red lights and stop signs. It stopped on Mackubin Street, at which point two boys got out and were apprehended. The driver was identified as Jiles, who was carrying a loaded gun and keys to the stolen vehicle. He and his 15-year-old male passenger declined to give a statement.

Jiles' mother later told investigators that something had to be done with her son because she feared he would end up dead. She said "they let him off easy" on a previous gun charge and he was right back on the streets once his probation was over and his ankle monitor was removed.

ings and was shot by another person there around 1:55 a.m. Wednesday, November 3. The victim was expected to survive.

Weapons—Multiple callers reported gunfire at 3:25 a.m. Thursday, October 28, on Snelling and Randolph avenues. Ten shell casings were found.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A business on the 2000 block of Dodd Road was burglarized at 12:02 a.m. Friday, October 22.

Theft—Several items were reported stolen from a vehicle at the off-leash dog park on Pilot Knob Road and Acacia Boulevard around 5:30 p.m. Friday, October 15.

Miscellaneous—Police received a report of an intruder on the 1900 block of Knob Road at 3:45 p.m. Sunday, October 24, and discovered a highly intoxicated neighbor in the basement bathroom. The man, who had apparently entered the wrong home, was taken to the hospital for evaluation.

Merriam Park

Burglary—Surveillance video showed a masked suspect enter a room and steal a purse with three Guatemalan passports at

the Quality Hotel, 1964 University Ave., at 8:13 a.m. Saturday, October 23.

Weapons—Live rounds of ammunition were recovered on the 1900 block of University Avenue on Tuesday, November 2.

Miscellaneous—Two occupants were found slumped over in a vehicle at the pumps at the Holiday Station, 281 N. Snelling Ave., at 8:29 p.m. Tuesday, October 19. They were treated by medics for a drug overdose and taken to the hospital.

—A bicyclist was injured during a traffic accident on the 1900 block of Marshall Avenue at 9:35 p.m. Sunday, October 31.

—A man was arrested for damaging vehicles with a pole on Marshall and Otis avenues at 1:12 p.m. Monday, November 1. He was taken to the hospital for evaluation.

Snelling-Hamline

Theft—A shoplifter was caught trying to sneak out a fire door with \$850 in merchandise from TJ Maxx, 1410 University Ave., at 3:51 p.m. Tuesday, November 2.

Weapons—A 26-year-old man was arrested for possession of a firearm by an ineligible person, fleeing police and DWI on University and Snelling avenues at 3:47

a.m. Friday, October 22. He was passed out behind the wheel with a gun on his lap and tried to drive away when he awoke.

Summit Hill

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 700 block of Grand Avenue on October 29-30, and the 1100 block of Grand on October 30.

Theft—A woman reported that her wallet was stolen after she dropped it at Walgreens, 734 Grand Ave., at 8:30 a.m. Friday, October 29. Video showed the suspect was a tall male wearing a gray hooded jacket, blue tennis shoes and black facemask.

Miscellaneous—A 24-year-old woman was arrested for DUI and drug possession after she crashed into property on Crocus Place and Fairmount Avenue at 11:41 p.m. Wednesday, October 20.

—A motorist drove into Cafe Latte, 850 Grand Ave., at 7:15 p.m. Friday, October 29. The building was checked by Saint Paul Fire personnel and deemed safe.

Summit-University

Burglary—Break-ins were reported at the Aberdeen Condos, 370 Marshall Ave., on October 23-24, and the French Hen Cafe, 518 Selby Ave., on October 31.

Theft—A gun was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 8:50 a.m. Monday, October 25.

Assault—A victim was hit in the head with a hammer during an assault on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 1:09 a.m. Sunday, October 31.

Miscellaneous—A boy was in critical condition after being struck by a vehicle on Marshall Avenue and Oxford Street around 6:26 p.m. Thursday, November 4.

West End

Burglary—A second-floor business at 265 W. Seventh St. was broken into during the evening of October 27-28.

Theft—A 51-year-old man was arrested for stealing copper wire from a city light pole on Shepard Road and Washington Street at 10:03 a.m. Saturday, October 23.

Assault—A 35-year-old man was arrested for making felony terroristic threats after he yelled at kids and waived a large kitchen knife at their mother at 6:03 p.m. Saturday, October 30, on Forbes Street and Douglas Avenue.

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ON THE TOWN

GTCYS turns 50

Youth Symphonies marks a half century of turning out classically trained musicians

By JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

Fifty years ago, one of the nation's premier youth orchestra programs was born. The Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS) was created by the merger of nine local junior orchestras engineered by such musical luminaries as Henry Charles Smith, the assistant conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra at the time.

GTCYS at 50 "reflects the hard work of a few and the support of many," said Dr. William LaRue Jones, the organization's first artistic director who was hired following a nationwide search and remained in that position for 25 years. "To thrive and maintain its relevance through the generations, GTCYS has obviously been able to sustain high standards in providing gifted and talented youth an exemplary music experience," Jones said.

GTCYS is one of the largest youth orchestra programs in the country. It enrolls nearly 800 students in 10 orchestras that rehearse weekly throughout the school year and present concerts in venues ranging from Orchestra Hall and the Ordway Music Theater to schools, homeless shelters and senior care centers.

Young musicians audition for placement, and many begin

playing while they are still in elementary school. As they become more proficient, they progress to more challenging orchestras. The most advanced musicians play in the elite Symphony.

Conducted since 2012 by GTCYS artistic director Mark Russell Smith, the Symphony tours internationally every three years or so. It has appeared on stage at the Sydney Opera House in Australia, Royal Albert Hall in London and notable venues in Poland, the Soviet Union, Spain, Argentina, China, Japan and Malaysia. It is planning a concert tour of Italy this coming June.

Throughout its five decades, GTCYS has expanded programming to meet the needs and interests of its performers. Each year it awards thousands of dollars in tuition assistance and support for private music lessons. It conducts a summer camp and sponsors the Harmony Strings, an instructional program for underprivileged children at Riverview West Side School of Excellence in Saint Paul.

Most GTCYS alumni go on to other vocations, but many have pursued musical careers. Michael Sutton is a violinist in the Minnesota Orchestra. Kari Doctor is a cellist with the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Nick Cords plays viola with the Brooklyn Rider String



Conductor Mary Sorlie led a rehearsal of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies' Philharmonia East ensemble last week at Saint Matthew's Catholic Church on the West Side of Saint Paul. There, Daniel Wixon, 8, and Ryan Kototovich, 9, concentrated on their sheet music as they played their violins. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



Quartet and Silkroad Ensemble. Other GTCYS alums teach music or perform with community orchestras, chamber ensembles and jazz and rock groups. Rolf Haas, who was concertmaster of the GTCYS Symphony for several years, is a professional violinist in the Twin Cities as well as a hip-hop emcee and producer.

GTCYS was one of the few youth musical programs that continued to meet in person when COVID-19 struck in 2020, according to executive director Megan Balda. Smaller cohorts of all 10 orchestras rehearsed in shifts with face masks, instrument covers and socially distant seating in such venues as

hotel ballrooms and Saint Paul's RiverCentre. The live-streaming of rehearsals enabled students to participate from home if they wished, and the spring concert last May in Orchestra Hall was video-recorded and presented on YouTube.

GTCYS will kick off its 50th anniversary with three Fall Festival Concerts on November 13 and 14 in Orchestra Hall. The organization has commissioned three pieces for its youth orchestras, and in April it will hold an Orchestrating Opportunities Benefit at Orchestra Hall emceed by violinist Gretchen Carlson, a GTCYS alumna and Miss America

1989.

While some GTCYS alumni have gone on to play with major orchestras and ensembles, others have ventured into teaching and conducting. Mary Sorlie, a resident of Merriam Park, joined GTCYS in 1972 as a 10-year-old violinist and played with the organization through high school. She took part in GTCYS's first international tour to London and remembers playing with John Denver in Florida.

"Hard work, friendships and playing such amazing repertoire—these are the things I remember most," Sorlie said.

GTCYS TURNS 50 ►14



Lorenzo "Ledfoot Larry" Michelutti outside his West End home.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Country...where country isn't cool

Ledfoot Larry hits the road to promote new CD

By CAROLYN WALKUP

Singer-songwriter Lorenzo "Ledfoot Larry" Michelutti and his band are hitting the road this fall in support of their latest full-length album with hopes of attracting new fans to their style of country music. Titled "Tequila Mockingbird," the 10-song recording encompasses rockabilly and Tex-Mex as well as earlier forms of country music.

Michelutti, who is a resident of Saint Paul's West End, wrote all of the songs on "Tequila Mockingbird" with the help of some of his bandmates. Most of the songs are upbeat tunes about romance, with a couple of mournful ballads thrown in for good measure.

Michelutti has been writing music since his teenage years when

"I don't know if Minnesota is the perfect venue (for us). There's not a lot of love for this kind of music in the Twin Cities. I've been told I might do better in places like Austin (Texas)."

he also learned to play the guitar. His earliest influences were Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson, Roy Orbison, Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Presley and Marty Robbins. His tastes later evolved to

include Dwight Yoakum, the Texas Tornados and the Mavericks.

Michelutti decided early in his career that his given name would not work in the country music world, so he adopted Ledfoot Larry as a stage name from his youthful tendency to drive fast cars. He switched to country after tiring of playing in rock 'n' roll cover bands, and put his own band together in 2017.

"I wanted to play what I liked to listen to," he said. "I like about 10 percent of every genre," including the classical music he now listens to when he is driving his car.

Ledfoot Larry's music can be broadly classified as country, accented by the Stetson hats and other western garb the band usually

LEDFOOT LARRY ►14

134 GTCYS MARKS 50

“The conductors I had as a student had extremely high expectations. And playing great music with your friends is a powerful experience. The friends I made in GTCYS I still have today.”

Sorlie joined GTCYS’s faculty in 2000, conducting the ensembles that give beginning players their first orchestra experience. She also directs the Harmony Strings program. “Working with these young musicians is the best job in the world,” she said.

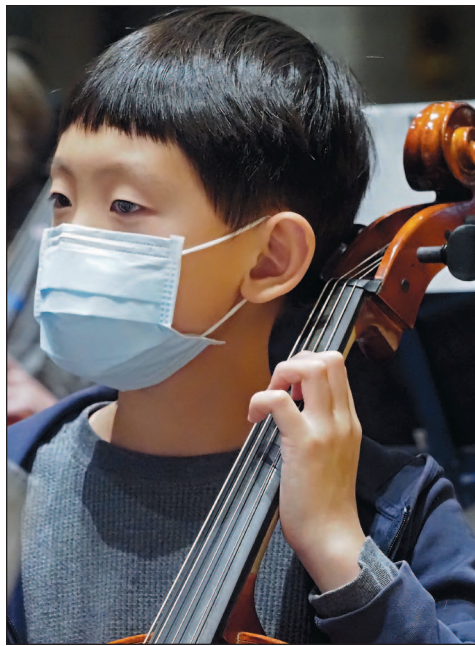
Hamline-Midway resident and GTCYS board member Julia Jenson was a violinist with the organization as a youth in the 1990s. The director of communications at Western National Insurance now, she remembers the thrill of stepping onto the Ordway stage as an 11-year-old dressed in the concert uniform of white blouse and black skirt. GTCYS was “an opportunity to learn and stretch yourself,” Jenson said.

Henry Hilton, a 10th-grader from Highland Park, has been playing the clarinet with GTCYS for five years and is now in the Concert Orchestra. The son of a GTCYS alum, he also plays saxophone in the jazz band at Saint Paul Academy.

“My school didn’t offer any way for me to play with string players,” Hilton said. “I really enjoy playing with the many different types of instruments and sounds that I find at GTCYS.”

Mateo Chevrier of Highland Park has been playing violin for four years and has been a member of GTCYS for three years. A 6th-grader at Holy Spirit School, he said he enjoys playing with other people, and “the pieces are pretty good.”

Keira Gupta, a senior at Saint Paul Central High School, began playing violin at age 6 and joined GTCYS’s Philharmonia in a middle school. She has since progressed to the Symphony and



Cellist Ernest Tsai, 10, focuses on his part during a recent rehearsal by the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies’ Philharmonia East ensemble.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

next summer hopes to travel with that ensemble to Italy. Looking back at her GTCYS experience, Gupta appreciates how the program fostered her growth. She said she has also enjoyed the Symphony rehearsals at Orchestra Hall and working with professional musicians.

GTCYS’s 50th anniversary program on November 13 and 14 will feature three 90-minute concerts. The Sinfonia East, Concertino West, Philharmonic and Symphony will perform at 10:30 a.m. Saturday. The Philharmonia East, Concertino East, Camerata and Symphony will perform at 3 p.m. Saturday. Then at 2 p.m. Sunday the Philharmonia West, Sinfonia West, Concert Orchestra and Symphony will perform. Tickets are available at minnesotaorchestra.org/tickets/calendar/2122/gtcys-fall-festival/.

134 LEDFOOT LARRY

wears on stage. In addition to Michuletti on rhythm guitar and vocals, the band features Paul Pederson on keyboards, accordion and vocals; Patrick Dempsey on bass and vocals; Bob Locke on lead guitar; and Mark Haider on drums.

They typically play about 90 gigs a year at venues throughout Minnesota, western Wisconsin and portions of Iowa. Michelutti does all of the booking to avoid having to pay a 15 percent cut to an agent, and he will not book a weekend show that does not allow the band to be home by Monday since all of them have day jobs.

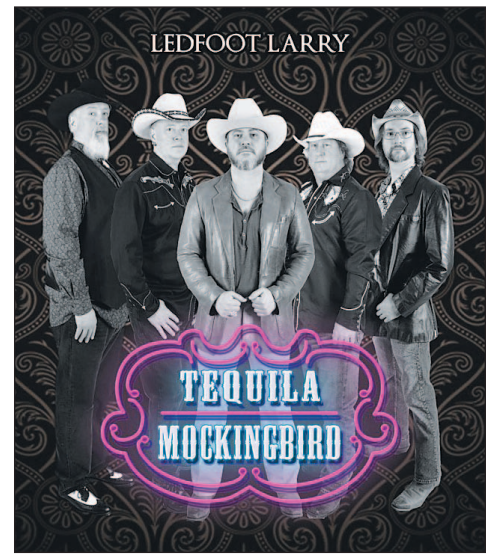
Michelutti is employed as a quality assurance analyst for a computer engineering firm. Few musicians are able to support themselves solely on their music, he said, and those who have families should not let their performing interfere too much with family time.

When he interviews potential bandmates, Michelutti makes it clear that their significant others have to be OK with the amount of time involved. His wife, Beth Vitek, comes to his gigs when she can, he said, but she is often occupied with taking care of their four children.

Negotiating pay with club operators is Michelutti’s least favorite part of being a bandleader. Many venue operators would still like to pay bands what they paid them in the 1990s, he said, or around \$100 per musician. “That amount isn’t feasible for a lot of people,” he said.

Most fans of live music do not realize the time that is involved in setting up and tearing down a band’s equipment, according to Michelutti. A typical four-hour gig can easily stretch into seven hours, not counting travel time, he said.

Ledfoot Larry rarely places a tip jar on stage. Although many bands do it, “it feels tacky,” Michelutti said. However, a few



venues insist on the practice.

The band also discourages folks from asking if they can sing a song or two with them on stage. “There are a lot of ‘American Idol’ wannabees out there,” Michelutti said. A primary reason for the ban is the band’s use of in-ear monitors. Sharing a monitor with a guest singer would not be sanitary, Michelutti said.

Most of Ledfoot Larry’s gigs are in smaller towns because that is where the bulk of country fans live, according to Michelutti. “I don’t know if Minnesota is the perfect venue (for us),” he said. “There’s not a lot of love for this kind of music in the Twin Cities. I’ve been told I might do better in places like Austin (Texas).”

Ledfoot Larry was scheduled to perform at 7 p.m. Wednesday, November 24, at Mancini’s Char House on West Seventh Street, although Mancini’s has since postponed live entertainment until further notice. Ledfoot Larry’s new CD as well as its debut album, “Smooches Gracias,” is available on the band’s website at ledfootlarry.com.

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Books

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host “The Fruit of a Wicked Garden,” a virtual panel discussion about contemporary Gothic horror, at 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 17; a reading with poets Ryan Vine and Michael Bazzett and their collections, *Ward* and *The Echo Chamber*, respectively, at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, November 20; a hybrid reading with authors Carolyn Holbrook and David Mura and *We Are Meant to Rise: Voices for Justice from Minneapolis to the World*, at 6 p.m. Monday, November 29; and the launch of Eric Dregni’s new book, *The Impossible Road Trip: An Unforgettable Journey to Past and Present Roadside Attractions in All 50 States*, at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 30. To register for virtual programs or to purchase the required tickets for in-person programs, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

Exhibits

“**Complexity Made Simple**,” the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Rube Goldberg (1883-1970), is on view through December 20 in the Fine Art Gallery of the Minnesota JCC’s Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. The exhibit focuses on his ability to distill a complex geopolitical landscape into a single image. Also featured will be a Rube Goldberg-inspired machine by Minnesota kinetic artist Robin Schwartzman and a documentary film by Geoffrey George that highlights how Goldberg was a man of his times whose work remains relevant today. For gallery hours, call 651-698-0751 or visit minnesotajcc.org.

Minnesota Museum of American Art is showing two new exhibits in its window galleries on Fourth and Robert streets and at its Ecolab skyway entrance through January 29. In “Sutures,” artists Cheryl Mukherji, Prune Phi, Sopheak Sam and Daniella Thach reappropriate images with the use of screen printing, projection, neon and collage. “Transformation: Art from the Inside” features works by prisoners at the Stillwater and Shakopee correctional facilities. Additional works by these incarcerated artists are being displayed through November 30 at Creators Space, 218 E. Seventh St. Visit mmaa.org.

“**What opens—like a blaze of fire**,” a collaboration by artist Charles Matson Lume and poets Joyce Sutphen and Galilee Peaches, is on view through December 11 in the Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at Saint Catherine University. Visual art and poetry come together with the help of Lume’s site-specific light installations. The artists will talk about their work at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, December 2. For exhibit hours and COVID protocol, visit gallery.stkate.edu.

Family

The warm glow of miniature streetlights and holiday decorations will turn the Twin City Model Railroad Museum into a winter wonderland from 3-7 p.m. on Saturdays, now through February 26. Admission to the museum at 668 Transfer Road for this special program is \$15, free for children age 4 and under. For reservations, visit tcmrm.org or call 651-647-9628.

“**Ultimate Dinosaurs**,” a showcase of cutting-edge paleontology and the spectacular dinosaur fossil discoveries to which it has led in earth’s southern hemisphere, is on view through April 10, at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 65 W. Kellogg Blvd. Playing in the museum’s Omnitheater through June 30 is the new movie *Dinosaurs of Antarctica*, about the quest of scientists to understand the continent’s transformation and compare climate change today to that in prehistoric times. Related paleontologist talks will be offered at 2 p.m. Saturdays, November 13 through December 31. Dino Nights, featuring flashlight scavenger hunts, a costume contest, shadow puppet shows and the like, will be presented from 5-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays beginning November 26. For information, call 651-221-9444 or visit simm.org.

Theater

Top Girls, Caryl Churchill’s modern classic about gender, class, race and family obligations, is being staged through November 21 by Theatre Pro Rata. Directed by Carin Bratlie Wethern, an all-female cast will demonstrate just what it takes for a woman to succeed. Show times are 7:30 p.m. November 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20 and 3 p.m. November 21 at the Crane Theater, 2303 Kennedy St. NE. in Minneapolis. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale from \$16-\$61. Reservations are required. Visit theatreprorata.org or call 612-234-7135.

The power and limits of empathy in a deeply fractured world is investigated in *The Empathy Project*, a play by Stephanie Lein Walseth that will be presented from November 12-21 by Full Circle Theater. Based on interviews with rural and urban Minnesotans, the production stars Song Kim, Dominique Jones, Shanan Custer, Oogie Push, Siddeeqah Shabazz, Kim Vasquez, Peter Colburn, Marci Lucht and Joshua C. Larson. Claribel Gross directs. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday on the thrust stage at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place. Tickets are \$16-\$30. For reservations or information on COVID protocol, visit parksquaretheatre.org or call 651-291-7005.

Comedian Jacqueline Novak’s *Get on Your Knees*, a blend of stand-up comedy and theater that is part feminist outcry and

part tale of triumph, will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, November 19 and 20, at Parkway Theater, 4814 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$40 at the door. Visit spittakeseries.com.

Christmas of Swing, a reimagining of History Theatre’s holiday classic about the singing Andrews Sisters and their entertainment of the troops during World War II, will be performed from November 20 through December 19 on the stage at 30 E. 10th St. Jen Burleigh-Bentz, Elena Glass and Quinn Shadko star as LaVerne, Patty and Maxene Andrews, whose letters from the men and women serving overseas dance their way into their USO show and the hearts of audience members. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$15-\$65. Visit historytheatre.com or call 651-292-4323.

Music

“**Waves**,” works by three turn-of-the-20th-century composers, will be performed by the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, November 13, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Under the baton of artistic director Brian Dowdy, the orchestra will revel in the lushness of Elgar’s String Serenade, the playfulness of Coleridge-Taylor’s Petite Suite de Concert and the romance of Dvořák’s Symphony from the New World. Tickets are priced at what you can pay. For reservations, visit mnphil.org.

Storyhill, the folk duo of Chris Cunningham and John Hermanson, will mark 30 years of brotherly harmonies, infectious melodies and smart story songs in concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, November 13, at the Fitzgerald Theater, 10 E. Exchange St. Tickets are \$25-\$45. Visit storyhill.com.

“**Music of Thanksgiving and Promise**” will be performed by the Saint Paul Civic Symphony in a free concert at 1 p.m. Sunday, November 14, at Landmark Center. Music director Jeffrey Stirling will lead a program that includes Hailstork’s Fanfare on “Amazing Grace,” Beethoven’s Holy Song of Thanksgiving, Sibelius’ “Nocturne” from King Christian II Suite and Lemminkäinen’s Return, and Liszt’s Les Préludes (Tone Poem #3). Visit spscmusic.org.

“**Love Transcendent**,” a performance by the Saint Catherine Choral Society, will be presented at 3 p.m. Sunday, November 14, at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 515 S. Albert St. The program includes Jake Runestad’s “The Hope of Loving,” John Rutter’s Gloria and a setting of Mozart’s Te Deum. The Saint Catherine Women’s Choir will perform J.A. Hasse’s “Miserere Mei.” Also featured will be soloists Kristie Tigges and Michael P. Schmidt, the Birchwood String Quartet and other

professional musicians. Admission is \$15, \$10 for seniors and students.

Zorongo Flamenco, 3715 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis, will welcome back to its stage flamenco guitarist Diego Rowan-Martin at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, November 14. Tickets are \$15. For reservations or information on COVID protocol, call 612-234-1653 or visit zorongo.org.

The **Minnesota Sinfonia** will present free holiday concerts on November 19 and 20. The music begins at 7 p.m. Friday at First Covenant Church, 1280 Arcade St., and at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Church of the Holy Cross, 1621 University Ave. NE. in Minneapolis. Children are welcome. For more details, visit mnsinfonia.org.

Texas troubadour Danny Schmidt will appear at 8 p.m. Friday, November 19, in Weyerhaeuser Auditorium at Landmark Center. Performing most often solo, armed with just his voice and acoustic guitar, the Austin songwriter’s compositions are a mix of poetry, mythology, folk wisdom and surprise. His concert will be preceded by a cocktail hour with a cash bar. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Call 651-292-3276 or visit landmarkcenter.org.

Walker-West Music Academy, 760 Selby Ave., will present a virtual concert with gospel singers Duncan & Robinson at 7 p.m. November 20 and hip-hop artist Tish Jones on December 3. The programs are free, although donations are welcome. To register for the link, visit walkerwest.org.

Daniel Ho and Dani Joy Herreid will showcase their original ukulele and slack key guitar instrumentals in a Minnesota Guitar Society concert at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, November 20, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Tickets start at \$10. Masks and proof of vaccination are required. For reservations and more information on COVID protocol, visit mnguitar.org.

The **Bakken Trio**, featuring violinist Stephanie Arado, cellist Pitnarry Shin and guest violinist Natsuki Kumagai and violist Dana Kelley, will open its season at 4 p.m. Sunday, November 21, at the MacPhail Center for Music, 501 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. The program will include the world premiere of Fly Away Moon for Violin and Cello by T.J. Cole; Beethoven’s String Trio in G Major; and Wynton Marsalis’ string quartet, At the Octoroon Balls. Tickets are \$25, free for children and students if available. For reservations, visit bakkentrio.org or call 612-584-1967.

The **Mount Olive Cantorei** and organist David Cherwien will lead a service of lessons and carols for Advent at 4 p.m. Sunday, November 28, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Admission is free and open to all. Call 612-827-5919 or visit mountolivechurch.org.

THURSDAY/NOVEMBER 11

A VIRTUAL VETERANS DAY PROGRAM will be presented on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ website at MinnesotaVeteran.org/VeteransDay2021 beginning at 8 a.m. The 30-minute recording will include remarks by Governor Tim Walz, Veterans Affairs commissioner Larry Herke, Major General Shawn Manke of the Minnesota National Guard and the Minnesota congressional delegation. Country artist Rockie Lynne and the 34th Infantry Division Red Bull Band will provide the music.

TUESDAY/NOVEMBER 16

THE SAINT PAUL POLICE Department’s Western District will hold its monthly community meetings at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. today at the station at 389 N. Hamline Ave. The police will update neighbors on crime in the area and answer questions. For more information, call 651-

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266-5512 or visit facebook.com/SPPD.West.

SATURDAY/NOVEMBER 20

A BAKE SALE featuring Greek pastries, holiday breads and other food products, gifts and apparel imported from Greece will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. today and from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Sunday, November 21, at Saint George Greek Orthodox Church, 1111 Summit Ave.

A HOLIDAY CRAFT SHOW and sale featuring the works of more than 30 artisans will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Edgcumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St. Admission is free. Concessions will be available. For

more information, call 651-695-3711.

SUNDAY/NOVEMBER 21

MEMORIAL BLOOD CENTERS will be accepting blood donations from noon-5 p.m. at Bad Weather Brewing, 414 W. Seventh St. To make an appointment to donate, visit mbc.org.

FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING between Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims and Jews will be addressed by Fred Schlomka of the Green Olive Collective from 10 a.m.-noon at the Talmud Torah of Saint Paul, 768 S. Hamline Ave. The Green Olive Collective is an organization of Israelis and Palestinians working for a just peace. The free program is sponsored by the Or Emet congregation. It is available in person or via Zoom. For information on COVID protocol or to register for the online link, visit oremnet.org.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Saint Kate's wins 1st MIAC regular-season soccer title

Saint Catherine University won its first Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) regular-season women's soccer championship on October 30 with a 3-0 win at home over Saint Olaf. However, the seeds for it were planted with three nonconference matches in late August.

Head coach Jesse Campos thought he had a pretty good team this fall, but he wanted to make sure. Accordingly, he scheduled three preseason games prior to the official opener on September 1 at perennial Division III power California Lutheran. Two of those scrimmages were against Division II schools—Bemidji State and Minnesota State University-Mankato.

"I felt the senior group was very talented," Campos said, "but I wanted to see how good we could be. I was impressed with how we played in those D-II scrimmages and felt good going into the season."

As a sign of things to come, hard-driving junior midfielder Amanda Elton scored the initial tally of the season in a 1-1 tie after two overtimes against Cal Tech, a team that finished second in a strong conference this year.

The Wildcats came home, shook off a late September loss to Saint Mary's, and roared through the MIAC schedule with a 9-1-1 mark to claim the conference title. Elton led the offensive attack with a conference-high 12 goals and 27 points. "She's a phenomenal player. She plays with such joy," Campos said. "She has speed, can create plays and has great agility."

Elton's agility helped draw four penalty kicks during the season. Interestingly, she doesn't take those...and for good reason. Senior Taylor Johnson is six for six in her career on penalty shots.

But a soccer team can't live on one player's offensive skills alone. Campos said he knew his team would face every opposing team's best effort. To counter that, he developed two forms of offensive attacks. "You have to have players who can get people the ball," he said. "Players have to be problem solvers. For us, our game is to adapt as we go. We want teams to be forced to adapt to us."

The Wildcats allowed just eight goals to conference foes during the regular season. Sophomore goalie Kate Praetz recorded seven shutouts behind that steady defense.

"I recruit to specific positions and needs," Campos said. "There was some experimenting early in the season but we're set now." The system works well for Campos, who has had winning seasons every year since coming to Saint Catherine in 2017.

The Wildcats, who won the conference's postseason title in 2017 despite being a No. 5 seed, had to put the regular season in the rearview mirror quickly. They got a first-round bye as the top seed and defeated No. 4 Gustavus Adolphus 5-0 in the MIAC semifinals on November 3, with Elton scoring three goals.

In the MIAC championship game against No. 2 Saint Benedict on November 6, Saint Kate's Lauren Witte scored 44 minutes into the game for a 1-0 win and the return trip to the NCAAAs. Praetz had four saves to earn her fourth consecutive shutout. The Wildcats were scheduled to find out their first-round NCAA foe on November 8.

Redhawks pair battle in state tennis finale

It was one for the books—the record books that is—in the Class A state girls' singles championship on October 29 at the Reed-Sweat Tennis Center in Minneapolis. Minnehaha Academy sophomores Isabelle Einess and Ancele Dolensek finished the regular season with perfect 16-0 records and were ranked No. 1 and 2, respectively, in

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Volleyball playoffs

Highland heads to first state tourney since 1977

By BILL WAGNER

The Highland Park High School volleyball team may not be the tallest on the court, but that didn't stop the Scots from stepping up bigtime at home on November 4 to defeat DeLaSalle 3-1 in the Section 3AAA final and earn their first trip to state since winning the AA title in 1977.

The Scots (18-6-2) will face top-seeded Marshall (30-2-0) in the opening round of state at 5 p.m. Wednesday, November 10, at Xcel Energy Center. Highland coach Sonje Odegard couldn't have been happier for her squad, which is making the school's fourth-ever state tournament appearance.

"We knew from the beginning of the season that we had a real shot (at getting to state)," she said. "We're not a big team, but we play a smart game. We work very hard on defense. When we play bigger teams, we just have to keep getting digs."

For sure, it's hard to string together a cohesive offense against this Scots team. In the section final, Highland took the first two sets by scores of 25-20, bowed to the Islanders 21-25 in the third, but sealed the match with a 28-26 victory in the fourth. Odegard said her team turned up the heat in that final set.

"We were in control in the first two sets," she said. "They came back and put pressure on us, but then we were able to figure out when it was 'go' time. That last set was a battle, but we



Highland's Ayana Bougie-Martinez and Bella Kottke go for the block in the Section 3AAA title game on November 4. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

served really well and were aggressive."

Key in that DeLaSalle victory was sophomore right-side hitter Kate Reubish, who had five serving aces in the final set.

Highland ended up sharing the Saint Paul City Conference title with Central after splitting their two games with the Minutemen during the regular season. Odegard said lessons were learned from an October 20 loss to Central that would have given the

Scots the title outright.

"It was disappointing," she said, "but we felt that we'd show we were a better team after that."

Highland followed that defeat with consecutive 3-0 victories against South Saint Paul and Simley in the first two rounds of the section playoffs.

Leading the way for the Scots this season has been senior outside hitter Kiyomi Callahan, who uses her 5-foot-8 frame to its utmost. Callahan was

leading the team in passing and hitting percentages, and had 14 kills against DeLaSalle.

According to Odegard, Callahan leads the team in "just about every stat," and deserves consideration for all-state honors this fall. "She's proven herself," she said.

Senior middle hitter Azeria Stagg is also 5-foot-8, but also plays a heady game at her position. Junior middle-hitter Bella Kottke is the Scots' tallest player at 6 feet. She has good quickness and gets her share of blocks. Junior setter Ayana Bougie-Martinez is just 5-foot-5, but is still very good at the net. She leads the team in assists and had the game-winning block in the second set versus DeLaSalle.

Sophomore libero Alyssa Ramos is very consistent and gets the ball where it needs to be. The coach likes the way Ramos passes the ball and takes control of the back row. "She's made some amazing saves," Odegard said.

Senior outside hitter Delaney Sis comes off the bench frequently and the coach likes her ability to come back from adversity if it strikes. "I'd say the best way to describe (Sis) is that she's determined," Odegard said.

She added that the team has been a pleasure to watch as the season has unfolded.

"Absolutely, we're improving," Odegard said heading into the state tournament. "I think that we're peaking at the right time."

Wolfpack season ends in section football final

By BILL WAGNER

The second-seeded SMB Wolfpack, composed of players from Saint Paul Academy, Minnehaha Academy and Blake, felt good about its chances against top-ranked Holy Angels heading into the Section 5AAAA football final on November 5.

Wolfpack assistant coach Joe Protzmann knew the Stars had a big weapon in running back Emmett Johnson, but said his team also had some weapons in senior running back Sanjay Redd and senior wide receiver Elijah Wade. According to him, the Wolfpack also had looked "better throwing the ball in practice."

The problem was that Holy Angels (8-2) made it tough for the Wolfpack (6-4) to sustain any kind of drive, blasting SMB 42-6 to end its season.

The Stars' Johnson was everything as advertised, running for 315 yards and five touchdowns, giving him 40 for the season. It was a contest for the first quarter as SMB countered Johnson's first two touchdown runs with one of its own on a 15-yard run by Wade. The extra point failed and little else went right for the Wolfpack the rest of the night.

The Stars went on to score on their first three possessions of the second half and that was that. Johnson had two touchdown runs of 2 yards each, and scampers of 27, 40 and 57 yards. The Wolfpack, who hadn't been behind much of the season, were simply not used to passing the ball that frequently.

Protzmann said Johnson was simply too tough to stop. "That's a good night that he had," he said, "but it

wasn't that much above his norm. We didn't have our 'A' game, but we didn't play terribly."

The wind on game night raised some havoc with any attempts to throw the football and the Wolfpack also were hurt by a dropped pass with no Holy Angels defenders near the receiver. That was costly, since a touchdown there would have created a one-score scenario in the second quarter.

"That missed deep ball might have been really big," Protzmann said.

The Wolfpack made it to the section final following a 10-3 win in a dog-fight against Benilde-St. Margaret's.

However, there was little resemblance between SMB in that game compared to its performance against the Stars. "Our defense played very well (against Benilde)," Protzmann said.

Redhawk girls top Breck to win state Class A soccer title

By Bill Wagner

The Minnehaha Academy girls’ soccer team just seemed to get better and better as the season wore on. And by the time it was all over, the Redhawks were occupying a place they hadn’t been for 23 years.

The second-seeded Redhawks (16-2-2) became state champions for the first time since 1998 on November 6 by defeated fifth-seeded Breck 4-2 to win the state Class A title at U.S. Bank Stadium. It was Minnehaha’s fifth overall trip to state and first since 2004.

The victory didn’t come easy against the Mustangs, who beat top-ranked Holy Family 4-1 in the semifinals. In the final, the Redhawks got two goals each from sophomores Berit Parten and Greta Carlson to take care of business.

Minnehaha coach Bryan Hollaway said his club was beside itself after the win.

“It’s incredible,” he said. “It’s just surreal. You dream about it, but there are so

“It’s just surreal,” said coach Bryan Hollaway. “You dream about it, but there are so many good teams out there you’re never sure if it’s going to be you.”

many good teams out there you’re never sure if it’s going to be you.”

The win over the Mustangs was the second for the Redhawks this year in three meetings. The two teams tied once during the regular season, with Minnehaha winning the other contest 3-2.

Hollaway said Breck was a team blessed with good speed and that the Redhawks needed to play a more deliberate game if they hoped to come away with a victory.

“Breck was looking to play the ball long,” he said. “We needed to slow it down, possess the ball and play connected.”

One thing that worked well for the

Redhawks, Hollaway said, was sophomore central defender Charlotte Wold playing back deep into her own zone to keep the Mustangs from coordinating attacks on the net.

“She played like a safety (in football),” Hollaway said. “We didn’t want the attack to get organized.”

The Redhawks showed that their game was in good shape when they beat Winona Cotter 4-0 in the semifinals two days earlier. Again it was spark plug forward Parten who stepped up with a goal in the first half and one in the second to give the Redhawks all they needed. But that wasn’t all she did to help her club.

Early in the second half, Minnehaha goalie Ayden Guild drew a yellow card and was required to leave the field. Without even asking, Parten grabbed the goalie gloves and stepped up to face Cotter’s Olivia Gardner on a penalty shot. Parten made the save.

Hollaway was not the slightest bit upset that Parten had not sought permission to

stand in as goalie. “That’s the kind of competitor she is,” he said. “That shows what she’s willing to do to help her team.”

Hollaway said Guild deserved credit for offering encouragement to Parten, who led the team with 47 goals and 23 assists this season, before she went into the nets for the penalty kick. “Ayden talked to her about what to expect,” Hollaway said.

The Redhawks’ season included several challenges that all good teams go through on their journey to the state title. They were beaten in both regular-season contests by Saint Paul Academy, but bounced back to beat them in the section playoffs when the chips were down the most.

“We took away a lot of SPA’s possession in that third game,” Hollaway said.

Minnehaha’s only losses of the season were those two to SPA. And the experiences of those defeats were not lost on the Redhawks coach.

“I’d say that we played our best soccer of the season after we lost those two games,” Hollaway said.

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the Class A coaches’ poll.

Both Redhawks breezed through their first three state matches to advance to the final, where all coach Jose Williamson could do was watch and marvel at their skills. It was their second head-to-head matchup of the year. In the Section 4A final, Einess got the jump early on Dolensek and won in straight sets 6-2, 6-0.

The outcome was different the next time as Dolensek got off to a fast start with a 6-0 win in the first set, and Einess roared back for a 6-3 victory in the second. The dramatic third set was a back-and-forth affair and no one was surprised when the score went to 6-6, forcing a tiebreaker. Dolensek grabbed a 5-1 lead, but Einess pulled within 6-5 before Dolensek took match point in a contest that lasted nearly three hours.

Afterward, Williamson said, “It’s going to go down as one of the classics in state history for girls or boys. It was phenomenal.”

Highland, Nova win state cross-country titles

Highland Park’s deep reserve was on full display at the state girls’ Class AA cross-country championships on November 6 in Northfield. The Scots took their first team title—and first for a Saint Paul public school—with 61 points, well ahead of second-place Willmar’s 78.

Highland senior Molly Moening led the way again with a fifth-place finish, running the 5K course in 18:52.67, four seconds better than her winning time in the section meet the week before. However, her supporting cast changed considerably, from that section meet. Freshman Ellie Moore was 15th, junior Chloe Koch was 30th, and freshmen Sam Palm and Zova Westrich were 40th and 41st to round out the scoring.

Head coach Brad Moening had just two seniors, two juniors, four freshmen and seventh-grader Zoe Moore, who ran third in the Section 3AA final, competing in Northfield. Depth is a beautiful thing, isn’t it?

The Highland boys finished third in their Class AA meet with 108 points. Three juniors led the way with a pack-like finish. Davis Isom was 24th, followed by Ben Martin in 26th and Gavin Roberts in 27th. Saint Thomas Academy junior Emmett Wolf finished fourth, just 10 seconds off the lead, in 16:03.02.

Two top 10 finishes helped Nova Classical Academy to its first state boys’ Class A cross-country title. The Knights’ total of 122 points was six better than runner-up Perham. Junior Henry Korelitz finished second with a time of 16:25.02. Senior teammate Finn McCormick was eighth in 16:44.69.

Central senior Iris Guider capped her cross-country career in style by finishing fifth in the girls’ AAA race in a time of 18:25.76, two seconds better than her winning time in the section meet.

Knights fall in section volleyball final

Nova Classical Academy’s volleyball team gave it a good run, but fell 3-2 to Mounds Park in the Section 4AA championship game on November 6 at Bloomington Kennedy.

The second-seeded Knights, who defeated nemesis Saint Croix Lutheran 3-1 in the semifinals, grabbed a quick 2-0 lead in the title match against the fourth-seeded Panthers, but Mounds Park came back with three in a row, including a 15-9 win in the deciding set.

The Knights finished the season with a record of 23-5, and with no seniors on the roster, they figure to be a presence again next year.

Undefeated Cadet gridders win section

Saint Thomas Academy continued its undefeated football run with a solid 28-0 victory at home over Hastings in the Section 3AAAAA title game on November 5. It was the Cadets’ fourth shutout of the season and third in the last four games.

STA, which finished as runners-up in the last two Prep Bowls, will open state tournament play on Saturday, November 13, against Mankato West (also 10-0) at Prior Lake High School.

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

District Councils

Highland Park highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Lexington Parkway open house—The third virtual open house regarding Ramsey County’s extension of Lexington Parkway between West Seventh Street and Shepard Road will be held from 5-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 10. The preferred road layout for the next phase of the project includes a mini-roundabout at the intersection of Elway Street and Montreal Avenue. People can register for the open house at tinyurl.com/LexingtonParkway. Additional information is available at ramseycounty.us/LexingtonExtension.

Upcoming meetings—Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 16. All HDC meetings are currently being held online via Zoom. Links are posted on the HDC website. For recordings of previous meetings, see highlanddistrictcouncil.org/hdc.

Macalester-Groveland
macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

The snow team—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council is seeking volunteers to help keep its organics recycling drop-off site on Grand Avenue clear of snow and ice this winter. Volunteers can expect to shovel two to three times during the season. Learn more or sign up by emailing mgcc@macgrove.org.

Century building plaques—The community council is

still offering the owners of homes and commercial buildings in the neighborhood that were built in 1925 or before to purchase a plaque to identify the structure’s age. Those who order by November 30 will be able to receive one before the holidays by visiting macgrove.org/100years.

Donations doubled—Give to the Max Day is Thursday, November 18. All donations up to \$3,700 to the Macalester-Groveland Community Council will be matched by its board. Early giving has begun at givemn.org/macgrove. For more giving options, visit macgrove.org/donate.

Let’s chat—Those who are interested in adding their interests, skills or voices to the community council’s programs or events are being asked to email mgcc@macgrove.org to meet for coffee or virtually.

Show your pride—Locally designed Mac-Grove T-shirts can still be purchased online and delivered within just days of purchase. Visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors on Thursday, November 11; Transportation Committee on Monday, November 22; and Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, December 1. The meetings will be held virtually beginning at 6:30 p.m. To receive monthly meeting notices and Zoom details, sign up at macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill
summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Fall safety walk—Summit Hill Association board members and volunteers examined 74 blocks in the western

half of the neighborhood during safety walks on October 21 and 26 to spot street and sidewalk maintenance issues. In general, it was found that the neighborhood is very well maintained, but the teams submitted to the city 60 issues related to sidewalk pavement, eight instances of trees or shrubs obstructing sidewalks, five incidents of graffiti on public property and three inoperative streetlights. Those who want to bring other issues to the city’s attention may report them at stpaul.gov/report-incident.

Neighborhood Plan—The SHA’s Neighborhood Plan Committee will be publishing an online survey in November to collect final data for updating its 10-year district plan. The short survey will assist the committee in narrowing the priorities for the plan that were discovered over the past 18 months of research.

Summit Avenue trail—The survey and period of public comment is rapidly closing for the development of a master plan for a Summit Avenue regional trail from the Mississippi River to downtown Saint Paul. People can complete the survey by November 14 and find other ways to participate in the process at tinyurl.com/4ffn9n36.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, November 11; Racial Dialogue and Action Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, November 15; Neighborhood Plan Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday November 16; Streetscapes and Environment Committee, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 17; and Zoning and Land Use Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 23. For updated information about those meetings and Zoom participation links, visit [SummitHill Association.org/calendar](https://SummitHillAssociation.org/calendar).

CLASSIFIEDS

HOLIDAY MARKET

HAMLIN CHURCH HOLIDAY MARKET. 9:30am-3:30pm, Saturday, November 20 at the church, 1514 Englewood, St. Paul. Handmade items and favorite products for sale. Baked goods. Tables still available. 651-646-3473.

HOLIDAY GIFTS

IT'S QUITE HARD TO FIND A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE THESE DAYS! Advertise your gift ideas from Nativity sets to new bikes, gift certificates for spa services, favorite restaurants, coffee shops, retail stores and much more under the HOLIDAY GIFTS special category of MyVillager! Call 651-699-1462 ext 10 or send an email to WantAds@MyVillager.com

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CRAFT SHOWS/SALES

CRAFT SHOW. Saturday, November 20, 10am-4pm. Free admission. Concessions available. Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 South Griggs Street, 651-695-3711. Crafters wanted!

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Next Issue: November 24 Deadline: November 17

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MARY KNUDSEN
651-335-6619



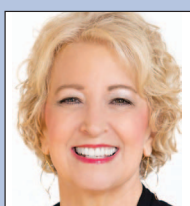
TOM EDELSTEIN, CRS
HENRY EDELSTEIN, CRS
651-695-4300



LOLLY MCNEELY
SALMEN
612-810-4138



JIM SEABOLD
651-276-8555



DEB SOUCHERAY
651-263-0552

Highland Park 1991 Ford Pkwy.
651-698-2481

coldwellbankerhomes.com

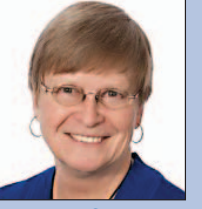


COLDWELL BANKER
REALTY

Crocus Hill 821 Grand Ave.
651-227-9144



MYA HONEYWELL
THE HIVE
651-329-3619



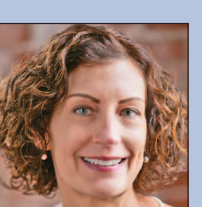
ANITA C. HILL
651-707-6408



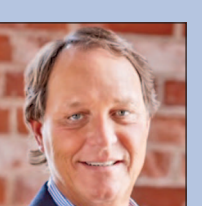
ROBBIE GROSSMAN
651-434-7887



ABE GLEESON
651-329-1990



MICHELE DuMOND
651-283-7996



PETER DONOVAN
651-336-8050



TOM & MIKE DISTAD
612-275-1343



MORAGHAN DeROSIA
952-486-3697



JIM BURTON
651-690-8556



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Well-loved classic and spacious 1900 built home in a private setting and yet walkable to so much! Stained glass windows, original built-ins, high ceilings, charming wrap around porch! Gorgeous easy care gardens. 520 Jefferson Ave. GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com

SUE JOHNSON CRS, GRI
651-329-1264 • \$399,900



CONSIDERING SELLING NEXT YEAR?

2022 is The Year to Sell! If you are thinking of selling, give me a call and we will put our market knowledge and experience to work for you! Private virtual or phone meetings easily arranged! Let's begin to create a plan now! GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com

SUE JOHNSON CRS, GRI
651-329-1264



STEPS TO THE VILLAGE!

Truly delightful 4-bedroom, 4-bath boasts classic character and updated amenities! New roof, gutters and lower level carpet. Lovely hardwood, sunroom, den, living room with fireplace. Fenced back yard, attached 2-car. 669 Howell Street S. Call for details.



HENRY EDELSTEIN CRS
651-276-1770

\$500,000

www.teamedelstein.com



Coming Soon!

FABULOUS GRAND LOCATION! 745 GRAND AVE #506

Enjoy this 2BR's, 2BA's corner unit located on quiet north side overlooking historic Summit Ave. Features include A/C, wood-burning FP, in-unit laundry, private balcony, elevator, security building, storage unit, underground heated parking, pet friendly & just steps away from neighborhood shops & restaurants.

NANCY K MAAS
651-235-8581 • \$320,000



Sale Pending!

LOCATION, LOCATION!

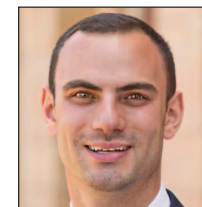
Demand Kings Maple Wood neighborhood of Macalester Groveland is home to 4BR, 3BA Colonial lovingly maintained by long term owners. Four BR's on second floor along with 2BA's main floor powder room, den, sun-room. Fabulous family space. Call Lolly Salmen for more details.

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138



CHARM, TIMELESS APPEAL, GREAT LOCATION!

Captivating 3-bedroom, 2-bath jewel offers gorgeous hardwood floors, formal dining with built-ins, kitchen with breakfast nook. Sparkling sunroom, paver patio, bonus climate-controlled loft above the 2-car garage! 1676 Eleanor Avenue. Call for details.



HENRY EDELSTEIN CRS
651-270-1667

\$624,500

www.teamedelstein.com



UNIQUE SUMMIT HILL GEM!

This Chatinwood Condo has been freshly painted and completely updated. Open & airy, sunny & bright you will love the superb location, close to the charming shops of Mac-Groveland, fabulous stores of Grand Ave, chic restaurants of Cathedral Hill & the dynamic night-life of DT St Paul! Call for Details.

SARAH KINNEY AND FRIENDS
651-497-4387



BRILLIANT NEOCLASSIC DESIGN!

This classic St Paul Home has been meticulously updated and transformed, to please those with the most discerning tastes. You will love the lush green spaces, stone patio, and fully fenced backyard, all conveniently located to the new Allianz Field, The YMCA, light rail and more! Call for Details.

SARAH KINNEY AND FRIENDS
651-497-4387



RIVER FRONT END-UNIT TOWNHOME!

With amazing views of the Mississippi & High Bridge, this one is a WOW! Completely updated to perfection featuring 2 gas fireplaces, 4 decks, 3 overlooking the river, endless built-ins, electronic blinds, surround-sound, spa-like master & sensational new chef's kitchen w/stunning granite throughout. All near the best in St. Paul's nightlife, river walking trails & much more! Call for details.



SARAH KINNEY
AND FRIENDS
651-270-6409

www.sarahkinney.com



New Price!

TREETOP CONDO IN CATHEDRAL HILL!

Enjoy indoor/outdoor living from the spacious balcony at this 2 BR/1 BA condo in Cathedral Hill. Tall windows, central air, hardwood floors, garage spot. Walk to everything! www.wahlbergttoohy.com

MICHAELA TOOHEY
PHILIP WAHLBERG
651-336-2410
\$274,000

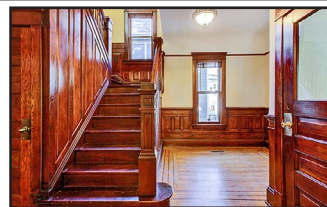


Sale Pending!

1173 VIRGINIA ST.

Classic bungalow on quiet street. Two main floor BR's. Large BR on the UL. Updated BAs on main floor & LL. Hrdwd flrs. 3 season porch. Corner lot w/fenced yard. Storage shed & single car gar. Newer roof & furnace. Excellent buyer opportunity to build equity as a homestead, or investment potential.

TJ PIERRET
651-755-6669 • \$235,000



STUNNING VICTORIAN!

Grand staircase, original woodwork, built-ins, and coved ceilings grace this magnificent home. 4BRs, 3BAs, large kitchen island, finished 3rd floor, and finished basement. Peaceful, shaded backyard with deck. 1619 Girard Ave N. Minneapolis.

DEB SOUCHERAY
651-263-0552 • \$349,900



Sale Pending!

1009 GRAND AVENUE

Fantastic opportunity to live in the midst of Summit Hill and enjoy all that this vibrant neighborhood has to offer. Stunning 3BR/3BA home with gorgeous features. AnotherHomeSoldByMary.com

MARY KNUDSEN CRS
651-335-6619 • \$525,000



Now Pending!

STUNNING SUMMIT HILL TOWNHOME!

You'll love the open, spacious floor plan that moves seamlessly to the outdoor spaces. The kitchen features high end appliances. Remodeled owners' suite. This meticulously maintained property includes a large fenced yard with patio and deck. www.SaintPaulTownhome.com

KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106 • \$875,000



EXECUTIVE BUILT 2 STORY IN LAKE ELMO!

Two story great room, along with main floor study shows off the incredible detailed cherry woodwork. Custom gourmet kitchen with informal dining room, and the screened porch with deck out to the in-ground swimming pool is perfect for entertaining. Lower level walkout includes a wine room, a home gym with sauna, and a hot tub outside on the patio.



KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106
\$1,650,000

www.HomeWithThePool.com



NORTH OAKS CHARMER ON GILFILLAN LAKE!

From the spacious kitchen to the hearth room area off the DR to the private master suite, you'll find spaces that are inviting & convenient for day to day living. Easy 'up front' location within North Oaks gives easy access to both St. Paul & Minneapolis. www.StoryBookCharmer.com

KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106 • \$895,000



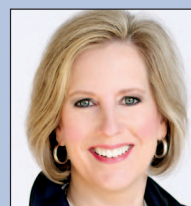
JOE UEBEL
651-341-3599



BRIAN WAGNER, M.ED.
651-497-4387



PHILIP M. WAHLBERG
651-336-2410



KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106