

District court order puts city's vaccine mandate on hold

By JANE McCLURE

Saint Paul's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for city employees has been put on hold. Ramsey County District Court Judge Robert Awsumb issued a temporary restraining order on December 23 at the request of the Saint Paul Police Federation and the International Association of Firefighters Local 21. The city employee unions view the mandate as overly stringent with no option for regular testing of those who do not want to be vaccinated.

Mayor Melvin Carter has agreed to postpone enforcement of the vaccine mandate, which was scheduled to begin on January 1. The mayor contends that a strict policy is needed to protect public health. The matter will return to district court on January 20 for an update and scheduling conference.

Three city employee groups in all have filed suit over the vaccine mandate—the Police Federation, Firefighters Local 21 and the Tri-Council. The Tri-Council filed a separate lawsuit, and court action on that has not yet been scheduled.

In his ruling, Awsumb stated that the pertinent issue is not about the value of the vaccines. He cited their safety and effectiveness in preventing illness and death from COVID-19. Rather, he said, the issue is one of employee rights and whether or not the city violated the Minnesota Public Employment Labor Relations Act by implementing the vaccine policy

CITY VACCINE MANDATE ▶3



Warming up to his younger constituents.

Newly re-elected Mayor Melvin Carter joined students in making sculptures in the snow at the Edgcombe Recreation Center on December 30 as part of a week of outdoor events held during the holiday break as a lead-up to the mayor's second inauguration on January 3. At left, a decked-out youngster did a little decorating of the snow himself. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

St. Thomas eyes Highland Bridge site for upgraded sports facilities

By JANE McCLURE

A new University of Saint Thomas hockey arena and baseball and softball parks could be built on the site of the 122-acre Highland Bridge development in Highland Park. Representatives of Saint Thomas and Highland Bridge master developer Ryan Companies have confirmed that the university is considering developing a portion of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant to accommodate its newly upgraded Division I athletic programs. That property could include the former Canadian Pacific Railway yard that served the Ford plant.

Andy Ybarra, Saint Thomas' associate vice president for public relations and communications, emphasized that the university has not finalized any decisions regarding future athletic facilities. Its greatest need is a bigger and better hockey arena. The Tommies' men's and women's hockey teams currently play at Saint Thomas Academy's arena in Mendota Heights. Baseball is played on the diamond at Cretin and Selby avenues, and softball is played on the south campus at Cretin and Goodrich avenues.

"The university is in the early stages of evaluating a range of site locations, building programs and partnership opportunities," Ybarra

SAINT THOMAS SPORTS FACILITIES ▶2

Starting listeners' day is latest challenge for local news buff

Sawkar hosts morning radio program at WCCO

By DAVE WRIGHT

Most people in their mid-50s tend to be settled in their careers and may even be thinking ahead to retirement. Taking up a new pastime or tackling a new job is rarely on the radar.

Summit Hill resident Vineeta Sawkar is not one of those people.

A couple of years ago, Sawkar decided to emulate her son and play hockey. "I took

a Women's Hockey 101 class from Winny Brodt," she said. "I've always loved hockey, and life is short. So I decided to give it a shot."

One thing led to another and Sawkar soon found herself playing on a team with several other women on Sunday nights. "I can't skate backward, so I guess I have to be a forward," she said with a laugh. "I know where I'm supposed to be on the ice. I just have to figure out how to get there."

Playing hockey is Sawkar's weekend gig. Her weekday gig is considerably more diverse.

On January 3, Sawkar moved into her

new role as host of "The Morning News" on 830 WCCO. From 6-9 a.m., she sits in the director's chair that was held for three-plus decades by Dave Lee. It's now her job to inform listeners on everything from snow emergencies to the latest doings at the state Capitol. The nature of the freewheeling show means she might be talking politics with Governor Tim Walz (a first-day guest) or sports with Mike Max.

"I've been a radio listener for years in the morning," Sawkar said. "The beauty of this job is nothing's scripted. It's conversational radio. I hope to fill a niche that hasn't been filled."

Sawkar, a native of Kansas, has been on the Twin Cities media scene for more than two decades. She spent 18 years at KSTP-TV before she was informed one day that her services were no longer required.

"When you're let go from a job, you have to re-evaluate yourself," she said. After doing that, Sawkar went to work at the *Star Tribune* in various roles, including as an online newscaster.

That led to a regular weekly spot on FM107 with Kevyn Burger—also a KSTP alum. Later, Sawkar did a stint in corporate

SAWKAR ON WCCO RADIO ▶3

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High demand is driving up price of homeownership at Highland Bridge

By JANE McCLURE

Interest has been strong in the owner-occupied housing planned at the Highland Bridge development in Highland Park. The sale of the first 22 rowhouses being built by Pulte Homes is scheduled for January 18-20. But with bidding on the units starting at close to double the prices announced 18 months ago, many prospective homeowners have come to realize that they are already out of the running.

The rowhouses are being built west of Highland Bridge's central water feature—a man-made stream and adjoining park running north and south through the 122-acre site. Four different rowhouse models are up for bid in the January sale with prices starting between \$593,990 and \$760,990, according to the Highland Bridge and Pulte websites. Depending on how the bidding goes, the sale prices could be much higher.

The rowhouse units range from 1,935 to 2,322 square feet. Prospective buyers have been meeting with Highland Bridge sales representative to review all of the options available before submitting their bids.

"We've witnessed first-hand the intensity of intrigue in this project," said P.J. Cushing, director of marketing for Pulte Group's Minnesota division. "Over the last 18 months, we've had thousands of people sign up to receive updates, and the vast majority have been highly engaged."

Prospective buyers will not have to wait long to learn if their bids have been accept-



From the Pulte Homes website, an artist's rendering of some of the rowhouses planned for the Highland Bridge development in Highland Park.

ed. Winners will be notified by the end of the day on January 22, Cushing said. The first residents could move in as early as this summer.

Former Highland Park resident Michelle Williams was among those who were hoping to bid on a rowhouse. In mid-2020, Highland Bridge master developer Ryan Companies indicated that the rowhouses would sell in the \$300,000 range. Williams had postponed buying a new home in anticipation of buying a rowhouse at Highland Bridge. However, even the starting prices are beyond her reach, she said.

"Who is middle class who can afford that?" Williams asked. "I've been waiting

for housing options at Highland Bridge for a long time, and I feel a sense of betrayal. It feels as if the only housing options (there are for the very rich or the very poor."

The high prices of the rowhouses and the single-family homes planned for Highland Bridge are believed to reflect the current real estate market in the Twin Cities and the high demand for housing options that are not widely available in Saint Paul.

City Council member Chris Tolbert, whose Ward 3 includes Highland Bridge, said he has heard concerns about the rowhouse prices. However, he added, there has been strong interest in the rowhouses ever since the master plan was released a few

years ago.

The 34 single-family lots at Highland Bridge also attracted great interest when their availability was first announced in early 2021. Twenty of the lots are shown on the Highland Bridge website. Their prices range from \$475,000 to \$1.15 million. The zoning allows for one to six dwellings to be built on each of the lots. The homes are expected to cost between \$1.3 million and \$3 million.

Ten of the 34 single-family lots were reserved as of mid-March 2021. The sales have closed on two of the lots and construction is expected later this year. Two additional lot closings are in the works, according to Jim Seabold of Coldwell Banker Burnet, which is handling the sale of the single-family lots along Mississippi River Boulevard.

Ryan Companies has postponed the construction of some mixed-use commercial-residential and multi-family residential buildings following last November's passage of Saint Paul's new rent control ordinance. Other Highland Bridge projects are moving forward.

Construction of CommonBond's and Project for Pride in Living's new income-restricted apartment buildings is scheduled to begin in late spring. Weidner Apartment Homes' market-rate units above the new Lunds & Byerlys grocery store under construction at Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue are expected to be advertised for lease in the spring.

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said. "The Highland Bridge site is among multiple options being explored, but no plans are final. We expect to share information soon with neighbors and other community members."

"Ryan Companies is delighted to be working with the university as it considers various sites for their new Division I athletic facilities," said Maureen Michalski, who is serving as Ryan's lead on Highland Bridge. "These include the potential of Highland Bridge and the adjacent CP Rail parcel. Meanwhile, we continue to advance Highland Bridge as envisioned and seek opportunities to support the master plan. We look forward to sharing more as we continue to explore this opportunity."

Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert called the idea "intriguing," but said he will wait to see what materializes. He also said that if a Highland Bridge site is chosen by Saint Thomas, a lot of community review and other public processes would lie ahead.

CP Rail officials declined to comment. The railway began removing track from its 13-acre yard late last year. The former railyard is at the southeast corner of the former Ford plant. It is part of the Ford site master plan the Saint Paul City Council approved in 2017 and amended in 2019. However, new uses for the railyard were not indicated in the master plan because it was not part of the land that Ryan purchased from Ford.

During the Ford site planning process,

the railyard was zoned as a gateway to the Highland Bridge development. Gateway districts are intended to accommodate offices, institutions or retail and service businesses, although recreational uses are also allowed. The minimum building height in the gateway zone is 30 feet, and the maximum is 65 feet. Saint Paul does not have a specific zone for sports facilities, though most are located in residential areas.

No request has been filed with the city to change the Ford site master plan. "Any substantial amendment to the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan would require the same review and approval process as took place with the master plan initially," said Luis Pereira, the director of planning in the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED).

"This includes review by the city's Planning Commission and action by the City Council."

The old railyard and the tracks that extend east of it have been eyed for other uses in the past. PED led a study of the entire rail spur that in 2018 recommended reusing it as a recreational trail and transit route. The rail spur extends from the old Ford plant to the area around the former Schmidt Brewery in the West End.

Representatives of Ryan Companies and Saint Thomas will discuss the latest plans for Highland Bridge and the CP Rail spur at a meeting of the Highland District Council Development Committee at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 18. Join the Zoom meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83409142087>.



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Vineeta Sawkar at the microphone during her morning news show at 830 WCCO. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

1◀ SAWKAR AT WCCO RADIO

public relations before moving to the University of Saint Thomas as public relations director.

She was perfectly happy there when WCCO, which had been using a variety of on-air personnel in the morning slot since Lee's retirement last April, came calling.

"I had interned at WHDH in Boston," Sawkar said, "so I had an idea already of the inner workings of radio."

Sawkar immediately started doing her homework to prep for the assignment. She had lunch with Lee and picked the brains of other former colleagues who went from being in front of a camera to behind a studio microphone. In addition to Burger, that list included Angela Davis (now at MPR) as well as fellow WCCO colleagues Cory Hepola (whose show follows hers) and the afternoon tandem of Jordana Green and Paul Douglas. The advice from all of them was the same: Just be yourself.

"I'm a news junkie," Sawkar said. "That was always the challenge of doing the morning news show at KSTP. What I loved about TV is often you get thrown a curve."

Such is likely to be the case in her new role, and Sawkar said she happily antici-

"I'm a news junkie," Sawkar said. "That was always the challenge of doing the morning news show at KSTP. What I loved about TV is often you get thrown a curve."

pates such moments.

"The show is organic," she said. "Something is said or happens and my producer (Jimmy Erickson) will tell me we'll have a guest on that topic a half hour later."

Sawkar is still getting used to her new surroundings, but she quickly discovered one unanticipated facet to the job. Thanks to the internet, WCCO can be heard all over the world.

"I've been hearing from people everywhere and I'm overwhelmed by the support of my friends," she said. "High school classmates listened and texted me. I've heard from folks in Winnipeg and Washington. That was a surprise, but it's been a lot of fun as well."

1◀ CITY VACCINE MANDATE

without negotiating with the unions first.

In the absence of negotiations, the city submitted the matter to binding interest arbitration. In binding interest arbitration, parties in a dispute agree in advance to accept a decision made by a neutral third party.

In his written ruling, Awsumb urged the administration and unions to either continue negotiations or work with an arbitrator to resolve the dispute.

The Police Federation filed suit in November, stating that the vaccine requirement is a new condition of employment that was not negotiated with union members. The firefighters local and the Tri-Council filed similar actions in December. The three employee groups represent about a third of the city's approximately 4,000 workers.

The Tri-Council represents employees in the departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation as well as heavy equipment operators, snowplow operators, for-

estry workers, sewer and water workers in Teamsters Local 120, the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49, and City Employees Local 363/Laborers International Union of North America.

Saint Paul's vaccine mandate, which was imposed by Carter over the objections of some City Council members, is more stringent than the vaccine policies of other governmental units. The state of Minnesota, city of Minneapolis, Saint Paul school district, and Ramsey and Hennepin counties all allow their employees to opt out of vaccines if they agree to regular testing.

Saint Paul's policy called for employees to be fully vaccinated by December 31, with proof of vaccination required by January 14. Employees who did not get vaccinated by the deadline were to be put on paid leave and subject to discipline.

The city's policy does allow for religious exemptions and accommodations due to a medical condition or recent COVID-19 treatment. The city had received about 250 requests for exemptions prior to Awsumb's restraining order.

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Commodore gets to open west dining room

By JANE MCCLURE

The long fight to be able to use the Commodore Bar & Restaurant's west dining room has cleared another hurdle. The Saint Paul Planning Commission unanimously approved a nonconforming use permit on January 7 to allow the restaurant at 79 N. Western Ave. to expand into the space.

That is something owner John Rupp contends should have been allowed years ago. His dispute with the city cost him \$25,000 in penalties and hearing-related costs in February 2020 after an administrative law judge ordered him to discontinue the restaurant's use of the space.

Rupp said the west dining room was built as an expansion of the Commodore more than 40 years ago. He said the space has had a liquor license and certificate of occupancy continuously since then.

"The Commodore closed in on its 100th anniversary in 2020, just as the pandemic began," he said. Rupp has only used the bar and restaurant for private events since then, but he hopes to reopen to the public soon.

The western dining room is in a building that was constructed in 1976 as a squash club and dining space. Rupp acquired the Commodore in 1984 and the adjoining dining space in 2001.

A renovation project from 2012-2015 sparked a dispute between city



The Commodore's restored Art Deco mirror bar designed by Werner Wittkamp of Ziegfeld Follies fame.

inspectors and Rupp over the extent of the work that was done. An inspector attended a September 2016 event at the Commodore and saw the west dining room in use, which led to a fine and notice of violation in January 2017.

The dispute over the west dining room went on for several years, with the city saying it had not been cleared by city inspectors and Rupp saying he had used the space for more than a decade without any questions being asked.

In 2018, the City Council upheld a decision by the Board of Zoning Appeals that the west dining room could not legally operate. Rupp unsuccessfully appealed the decision, arguing

that it had been designated for dining on a 1976 floor plan. He said inspectors checked the space repeatedly and did not raise questions until 2015, just prior to his reopening of the renovated area.

The west dining room was closed off after Rupp was fined by the city in early 2020, but the rest of the Commodore remained open to the public until the pandemic struck.

Rupp said the west dining room is needed for the Commodore to successfully reopen. "Without being able to use it, (the Commodore) will never reopen to the public," he said.

The Planning Commission placed two conditions on the permit. One is that final plans approved by the zoning administrator must be in substantial compliance with the plan submitted and approved as part of the application. The second is that Rupp adhere to all applicable code requirements and obtain a certificate of occupancy for the west dining room.

City planner Tony Johnson recommended approval of Rupp's permit request. The Summit-University Planning Council took no position. Two neighbors sent letters in support and one presented a letter in opposition.

City hikes fees for rental, commercial buildings

By JANE MCCLURE

The vast majority of the fees charged for Saint Paul city services are increasing 1.5 percent in 2022. However, the owners of rental housing, commercial buildings, vacant buildings, and buildings with elevators can expect to see much steeper city fee increases this year.

Saint Paul's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) has paid for its operations largely through fees for many years. Those fees are typically raised every few years to cover the costs of inspections and the issuance of various licenses and permits.

In his 2022 budget address, DSI director Ricardo Cervantes outlined the growing demand on his department in recent years despite the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the number of building permits was up 10 percent in 2020 and 19 percent in 2021, according to him. Requests for construction plan reviews increased 13 percent in 2021.

The fee for building inspections related to a fire certificate of occupancy is increasing 10 percent. The city issues about 4,500 of the certificates annually. The fees have remained flat since 2014, and less than 50 percent of DSI's costs were being recovered, Cervantes said.

The fire certificate of occupancy fees for a multifamily dwelling vary by the number of units in the building. The fee for a single-family rental house will increase from \$206 to \$227. The fee for a fourplex will increase from \$264 to \$290. The fee for an apartment complex with 100 or more units will increase from \$913 to \$1,004.

The fire certificate of occupancy fees for a commercial building vary by total square footage. For an 118,000-square-foot building, the fee will increase from \$870 to \$957.

The fee for registering a vacant building with the city is increasing from \$2,127 to \$2,459. Those fees recover the cost of monitoring the approximately 600 registered vacant

buildings in Saint Paul. Monitoring is needed to deter illegal entry and squatters and to prevent vacant buildings from falling into disrepair.

State-mandated elevator inspections is another area where fees have greatly fallen behind the actual cost of providing the service, according to Cervantes. The expense of inspecting elevators in the city is estimated at about \$420,000 per year. Last year the fees recovered about \$185,000 or 44 percent of the city's expenses. The new fees are intended to recover 85 percent of the city's expenses.

The elevator inspection fees are set by the number of stories in a building. The fee for a building of up to five stories is increasing from \$93 to \$149. For a building of 21 or more stories, the fee is increasing from \$133 to \$213. The fees for escalators are increasing from \$78 to \$149.

With all of the increases, DSI expects to increase its revenue from fees from \$20.1 million in 2021 to \$20.7 million in 2022.

Mendota Plaza housing development is tabled

By CASEY EK

The Mendota Heights City Council has delayed until February 2 its consideration of a proposed 89-unit apartment complex on a vacant parcel in Mendota Plaza at the southeast corner of Dodd Road and Highway 62. The postponement is intended to give developer At Home Apartments time to work on a revised plan that addresses local concerns about the project.

At a December 13 work session, Mendota Heights residents asked for more open space around the new

building; a larger, 25-foot setback from the curb; and a three-story rather than a four-story height.

Council members John Mazzitello and Ultan Duggan have been in discussions with At Home Apartments. They have also asked Howard Paster of Paster Properties, which owns Mendota Plaza, to consider adding open space north of the parking area of the plaza's mall and reducing the amount of impervious surface throughout the plaza by narrowing streets. Those changes are aimed at promoting walkability and aesthetics of the plaza and would require Men-

dota Plaza businesses to be on board, Mazzitello said.

Last November, the council approved on a 3-2 vote At Home Apartments' plan to construct a four-story, 58-unit apartment building on a vacant parcel at the northeast corner of Mendota Plaza. The Mendota Heights Planning Commission had previously voted 5-2 to recommend against that project and 6-1 against an 89-unit complex, citing concerns about increased congestion on Dodd Road near its intersection with Highway 62. The City Council has until February 23 to approve the 89-unit project.

Up to the challenge

Donahue takes measured approach to fitness and his dedication earns accolades and better health overall

By JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

Peter Donahue has been referred to as “the great disappearing man.” The Highland Park resident admits that he is not the fellow he once was. The new version of his former self is leaner, healthier and, not incidentally, happier.

Donahue, 65, was a finalist in the 60-Day Challenge conducted last fall by LifeTime Fitness. He competed against thousands of people from across the nation who were all striving to make significant improvements in their health and physical fitness. Though Donahue did not win the competition, he lost more than 20 pounds, normalized his blood pressure, reduced his resting heart rate and dropped 10 percentage points on the body fat index.

“I really didn’t think it was possible, at least not at first,” Donahue said. “For the last 20 years, long dog walks were my claim to fitness fame.”

The death of his best friend a little over two years ago gave Donahue “a jolt of mortality,” he said. When his doctor suggested he was headed in the same direction, he re-

solved to do something about it.

As a younger man, Donahue had participated in competitive runs, games of squash and sailing. However, a busy career in molecular biology pushed those activities to the side. Two years ago, he joined LifeTime with two goals in mind—to lose weight and feel healthier.

At the LifeTime Fitness center in Highland Village, Donahue worked with personal trainer Destiny Zynda, who encouraged him to exercise and adopt a sensible diet. “Her idea of a sensible diet and mine were drastically different,” he said. And though regular exercise made him feel more fit, his plan came to a screeching halt when the pandemic hit and gyms were forced to close.

Last June Donahue returned to LifeTime with the same concerns he had 18 months earlier. Destiny was waiting for him. She suggested quite emphatically that he enroll in the 60-Day Challenge.

Donahue was not thrilled by the idea. But he was planning to take part in a 300-mile bike ride later this year, so he agreed. He started working out in two of Life-



With trainer Colin Milan behind him, Peter Donahue continues his training at Lifetime Fitness in Highland Village following his recognition as a national finalist in Lifetime’s 60-day Challenge.

Donahue said it is important to “have a finish line and track your progress” if you want to get fit. He learned that “exercise without hydration, smart eating and good sleep won’t get you to the finish line.”

He gives great credit to Zynda. “It’s not that I couldn’t have gotten fit without Destiny,” he said. “It’s that I wouldn’t have tried.”

“I’m beyond proud of Peter’s results,” Zynda said. “He applied everything given to him throughout the 60 days and impressed us with his perseverance and results. He has already inspired other LifeTime members to fully commit to getting to where they want to be.”

Donahue said it is important to “have a finish line and track your progress” if you want to get fit. He learned that “exercise without hydration, smart eating and good sleep won’t get you to the finish line.”

Since the 60-Day Challenge ended, Donahue has continued a routine of five indoor workouts a week. He combines spin cycling, dancing on the bike and off-bike strength training with outdoor biking and hiking. Since flexibility and balance become increasingly important with age, he also practices what he calls “a humorously uncoordinated attempt at yoga.”

His workouts are challenging but not crazy, he said, and he now walks rather than drives on his regular errands in the neighborhood. “Increasing daily movement just feels good,” he said.

However, Donahue did not deny himself the fun of social events and the pleasures of food and drink that were not part of his fitness plan. “My love of good wine hasn’t abated a bit,” he said. However, he no longer feels the need to overload on goodies.

“The hardest part was silencing that internal voice that says, ‘you don’t really need to work out today,’” he added.

With his doctor’s OK, Donahue has been able to quit taking his blood pressure medication and he now feels ready for the planned Yellowstone to Winter Park bicycle ride and a hiking trip in Italy this year.

“I want to serve as an example for my age group,” Donahue said. “That it can be done, and it’s not so hard.”



Peter Donahue maintains a regimen of five workouts a week—sessions of aerobic exercise and strength training that are challenging but not crazy, he said. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

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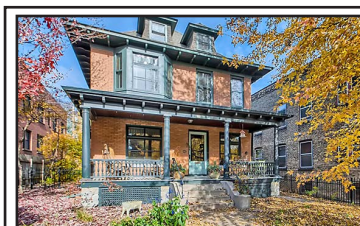
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News Briefs

With a \$250,000 state grant, Victoria Park to get new shelter

The Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation has received a \$250,000 grant from the state to construct a long-awaited recreation center shelter with restrooms at Victoria Park.

Victoria Park is a city park on what used to be a fuel tank farm at West Seventh Street and Otto Avenue. The shelter will be constructed near Victoria Way and Adrian Street. The park, which has been undergoing development for several years, already has trails, a Mississippi River overlook and natural areas. It will also have several athletic fields when it is fully built out.

City Council returns to in-person meetings after nearly two years

The Saint Paul City Council on January 5 conducted in-person meetings at City Hall for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. The in-person meetings are being held after extensive ventilation improvements were made in the building. Masks are required for everyone, and social distancing is adhered to.

The council has asked city staff to make reports in person unless they cannot do so otherwise. The public can testify before a hearing in writing or via voicemail, call in with testimony or attend a hearing in person.

Mayor Melvin Carter, whose reinstatement of an indoor mask mandate for city-licensed business was approved by the council on January 5, sent council members a letter questioning the return to in-person meetings. Council member Mitra Jalali took to social media to raise her objections to in-person meetings, but she

attended the meeting nonetheless.

The council has changed the seating configuration in the chambers to provide social distancing and eliminated the usual end of meeting "news from the wards" comments. Council members said if pandemic conditions worsen, they can go back to virtual meetings.

Council offices also reopened to the public during the week of January 3.

St. Paul considers extra penalty for stealing catalytic converters

The Saint Paul City Council plans to vote on January 19 to make possession of a catalytic converter without proof of ownership a misdemeanor. The council held a public hearing on the penalty on January 5, but laid the matter over to give it further time for review by the City Attorney's Office.

Catalytic converter thefts have skyrocketed in the past year. Saint Paul saw more than 1,850 such thefts in 2021. In past years, only a few hundred such thefts were reported. The cost of replacing the devices can top \$2,000.

The sale or purchase of the devices by unlicensed dealers has been a misdemeanor in Saint Paul since 2020. Under the proposed ordinance, no one can possess a detached catalytic converter without proof of ownership. The only exemption would be for licensed auto parts dealers.

Council president Amy Brendmoen cited the difficulty police have in charging catalytic converter thieves. At a December council meeting she said, "Our law enforcement officers have challenges when they pull over people who clearly have a removed catalytic converter, have a Sawzall in their car, but then say, 'Well, we got

these from our friend.' There has to be proof of ownership there."

Last spring, police held an event at Allianz Field where they marked catalytic converters on vehicles with spray paint, contending that scrap metal dealers would not buy marked converters. However, that has not deterred thefts.

Council upholds appeal, allows 3-car garage on Summit Avenue

Thomas Schroeder, 1446 Summit Ave., can add a larger detached garage to his historic property following a Saint Paul City Council vote on December 22 to overturn a Board of Zoning Appeals decision to deny the variance request.

The BZA voted 4-2 against the variance in November, saying it did not see any practical difficulties in building a conforming garage. City Council members disagreed. Chris Tolbert said the property's large lot size as well as other considerations warranted granting the variance.

The property is in the Summit Avenue West Historic District and has two existing detached garages totaling 908 square feet. A small older garage that dates from the 1920s and is used for storage is considered contributing to the historic district and will remain. A newer two-car garage is considered to be a non-contributing structure and will be removed.

Schroeder plans to replace the deteriorated two-car garage with a three-stall structure that has upstairs storage and living space. That will result in a total of 1,438 square feet of accessory structures. City code limits accessory structures to 1,000 square feet, so a variance was needed.

City staff recommended approval of

project, as did the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission did not object to Schroeder's plans.

St. Paul looks to squeeze more homes into single-family zones

A package of zoning changes meant to promote more one- to four-unit infill housing will go before the Saint Paul City Council for a public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 12, at City Hall.

The changes, which won Planning Commission approval in the fall, were reviewed on January 5 by city planning director Luis Pereira. He pointed out that the current set of changes are the first two that will be acted on this year, as the city seeks to encourage more housing construction. A key goal is to address so-called "missing middle" housing.

Changes are proposed for building setbacks, lot sizes and how many units can be built on a lot. The changes would make it easier to build on small lots that do not meet current minimum standards. Another goal is to make it easier to place more than one dwelling on lots zoned for lower density.

One big pending change is that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) would be allowed on properties that are not owner-occupied. Dropping the owner-occupancy requirement was a last-minute change made by the Planning Commission.

Proponents see the changes as adding more needed housing. Opponents contend the change could be exploited by some absentee landlords.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.



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Verdict still out on variances sought for five-story Lex-James apartments

By JANE MCCLURE

Plans for a five-story apartment building at the southeast corner of Lexington Parkway and James Avenue will return to a skeptical Saint Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee on January 13 after some members questioned whether the latest proposal meets all needed legal findings for variances.

Committee members voted 2-4 on December 30 to turn down requests for a revised conditional use permit for building height and new setback variances, and then laid the matter over. The delay is intended to give city staff and the developers more time to review the plans.

The project has now been on the drawing boards for more than two years. In late 2021, original developers Chet Funk, Erich Leidel and Nathan Jameson added Minneapolis-based developer Yellow Tree as a partner.

Six single-family homes along James are to be demolished to make way for the building. The project has been before the Planning Commission several times. The proposed height is now 69 feet 10 inches instead of 65 feet 8 inches, which requires a conditional use permit. The proposed building now includes 114 apartment units instead of 91, balconies facing Lexington and the alley to the south, and no surface parking.

The project also needs new setback variances due to the change in height and the desire to add balconies. Instead of the minimum setback of 18 feet 11 inches, 4 feet 5 is requested on the south side facing the alley for the balconies, 10 feet on the north side

facing James and zero feet on the east side facing an I-35E frontage road. There is no longer a need for front setback variances along Lexington.

Zoning Committee member Simon Taghioff and Luis Rangel Morales were among those questioning whether legal findings were met for all of the variances. "We've seen a plan for a smaller building and smaller variances," Taghioff said.

The developers said sloping site conditions are creating difficulties. "It's a challenging site," said Robb Lubenow, owner of Yellow Tree. He and project architect Eli Zmira defended the project's changes, which they said would allow more affordable housing units to be offered.

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Housing and Land Use Committee supported the changes, as did one other person. Ten people sent letters opposing the project, including two former Planning Commission members, Kris Fredson and Kyle Makarios.

"It's clear that the developer is trying to maximize the number of units in this proposal in order to maximize financial return on the project—and that isn't a sufficient reason to grant a conditional use permit for height, and it certainly isn't a good reason to grant setback variances," Makarios said. According to him, the redesigned building simply does not fit on the site.

The current building design includes 82 structured parking spaces on two levels, down from the 88 and at one time 95 previously planned, with 114 bike parking spaces. The building's front door would now be on Lexington, and the square footage would be 83,044 instead of 71,457.



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VIEWPOINT

MyVillager resolves to offer more of the news you need the most

Our continued expansion of news coverage in print and on web will ultimately depend on your support

BY DALE MISCHKE

Optimism may seem out of place in the midst of a pandemic, but hey, it's 2022 and the new year brings a resolve to make it better than the last.

The year 2021 was a good one for *MyVillager*. Though our bottom line was nothing to brag about, we made great strides in laying a foundation for the future, and that is largely thanks to the support of our readers.

It has been almost two years since we began soliciting donations to shore up our revenue in the face of the COVID-19 lockdown and a drop in display advertising. Those donations became subscriptions and the subscriptions became memberships as we shifted our business model from a newspaper almost solely supported by advertising to a newspaper and website that rely more and more on the financial support of readers.

That shift is one of the reasons we changed our name from *Villager* to *MyVillager* in 2021—to better reflect our more personal relationship with readers. At this writing, we have close to 2,700 members—a small legion of local residents and business people who appreciate a reliable source of local news.

Of course, that is just a fraction of the readers we have out there. We are hoping that in the new year, more and more of you will come to view a membership



The neighborhoods served by *MyVillager*.

in *MyVillager* as an investment in your neighborhood. Neighbors who are more informed have more control over current affairs and more involvement in the decisions that affect their lives.

These days the news can be pretty grim. The all too frequent carjackings, purse snatchings and other crimes can be unsettling, especially when they happen so close to home. *MyVillager* is resolved in the new year to bring you more of the news that affects you the most, in our every-other-week newspaper and on our website at

myvillager.com.

In case you have not noticed, we are now posting stories regularly to our website, not just on the newspaper's fortnightly publication date. We have begun updating our neighborhood crime reports three times each week. And we continue to augment our news and feature stories with videos, daily Facebook posts and an electronic newsletter delivered to members and others who have registered their e-mail addresses with us.

The greatest strength of *MyVillager* continues to reside in our team of freelance writers, photographers and illustrators, many of whom live in the area and have been with us for years. If you have a news tip or know of something or someone that would make a good story, please contact our editors John Wadell or Dale Mischke at 651-699-1462 or news@myvillager.com.

A lot has changed in the 46 years *MyVillager* has been under the management of former editor, executive editor, publisher and now 30-year owner Michael Mischke. Many of those changes involved the technology of publishing as typesetting machines, hot wax and layout boards gave way to desktop computers. What has not changed is the neighborhoods' need for local news and boots-on-the-ground reporters and a local publisher to deliver it.

As we embark on a new year, please consider signing up as a member of *MyVillager*. The continued expansion of our coverage, both in print and on the web, depends on your support. For more information on *MyVillager* memberships, see our advertisement on page 3 of this issue or visit myvillager.com.

Dale Mischke is co-editor of MyVillager.

INBOX

Taking exception to rent control

The numerous articles documenting what is wrong with the new rent control ordinance in Saint Paul confirms why I voted "no." The slogan "Keep Saint Paul Home" on postcards and signs sure sounded good, and I'm sure it was well-intentioned. But the policy made no exceptions for new construction, which would have included affordable units; no exception for new tenants, which would have given landlords a way to maintain income for maintenance costs; and no room for adjustments based on property tax increases.

The 3 percent cap on rent increases each year in an economy with 6 percent annual inflation only gives landlords incentive to sell buildings that may have once actually been affordable. It is supply and demand. The rent control ordinance cannot buck the reality that the outcome will be less housing as investors back out and developers stop building.

City leaders have a responsibility to amend the policy so that it works for everyone. As a renter in a non-luxury unit, I can only hope that my rent does not increase exponentially before May 1 or that the place I call home is sold because my landlord cannot break even in 2022.

*Patty Krech
Macalester-Groveland*

A threat to Medicare

Are you enrolled in traditional single-payer Medicare, otherwise known as Parts A and B? Be afraid, and call your U.S. senators and U.S. representative. Wall Street is coming for you.

Medicare open enrollment just closed. Anyone watching cable or broadcast TV may feel he or she can breathe easier now that the constant barrage of health insurance ads is ebbing. The most deceptive and obnoxious ads were for the so-called Medicare Advantage plans, a form of already-privatized Medicare, also called Part C. But under the radar, traditional Medicare single-payer Parts A and B are cued up for privatization as well.

Back in 2010, Congress wanted to rein in costs as part of the Affordable Care Act. To that end, the ACA authorized what are now called Accountable Care Organizations and Direct Contracting Entities—investor-owned, for-profit, intermediate adjudicators for Medicare Parts A or B insurance claims submitted by hospitals, clinics and other

health care providers. President Trump green-lit these under the aegis of a Medicare department deceptively named the Innovation Center, and its Democratic Senate staff author Elizabeth Fowler is now in charge of installing them inside the Medicare administration.

Physicians for a National Health Program and Health Care for All Minnesota are fighting to repeal privatization in defense of traditional, single-payer Medicare Parts A and B. We have a duty to protect what's left of single-payer Medicare Parts A and B from Wall Street vultures. Expanding to Medicare for All won't be much good if Wall Street gets its hands on traditional Medicare.

*Mathews Hollinshead
Highland Park*

Insult to long-term landlords

My son-in-law is not a predator. He knelt at his grandpa's knee to listen and learn that businesses come and go but land stays. Twenty-five years ago he invested in land within the neighborhood. The mayor giving new construction an exemption from the rent control ordinance is an insult. So new saplings have it over mature oaks with deep roots? It is a slap in the face to long-term landlords, and that includes my son-in-law, a respectable and responsible land owner.

*Elizabeth Ellis
Summit-University*

Inflation is squeezing elderly

Once again, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has used the CPI-W (Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers) formula to calculate and determine our annual Social Security benefits income cost of living adjustment (COLA) for 2022. The more correct CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) formula would have given seniors citizens and retirees more than the 5.9 percent COLA we are receiving in 2022 towards our annual Social Security benefits income.

Inflation is already above 8 percent and continues rising. Grocery costs have increased about 12 percent, and the cost to heat our homes this winter is forecast to be much higher than last winter.

Please contact U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (612-727-5220) and Tina Smith (651-221-1016) and your U.S. representative to request that they correct this injustice

and ensure that the CPI-E formula is used to calculate our Social Security benefits income COLA for 2023 and beyond. Thank you.

*Sue Shetka
Macalester-Groveland*

Maskless in Minnesota?!!

I found it very disrespectful of our Mayor Carter, Minneapolis Mayor Frey and even Governor Walz, who is always preaching about wearing masks, to meet with President Biden a couple of weeks ago and not be wearing masks. President Biden had one on. Their hypocrisy was apparent: Do as I say and not as I do.

*Patty Guerrero
West End*

Thank you, Saint Kate's

As the winter solstice has just passed and long dark nights are upon us, a note of thanks to the good people at Saint Catherine University for brightening the nights with the festive lights they put up annually. I know the purple lights are the school colors, but I also appreciate the color they add to our neighborhood. Thanks.

*Joe Bagnoli
Macalester-Groveland*

The cartoon returns

It was wonderful to see in the recent issue the return of the editorial cartoon, long missed (*Viewpoint, MyVillager*, December 22). A picture is indeed worth 1,000 words.

Happy new year to all! May love, peace, joy, health and sanity prevail.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

MyVillager welcomes letters to the editor and longer guest editorials. All commentary must be signed, indicate the neighborhood in which the writer lives and include a phone number for verification purposes. Please, send your commentary to *MyVillager*, 241 S. Cleveland Ave., Suite V, Saint Paul, MN 55105, email it to letters@myvillager.com or submit it via our website at myvillager.com/editorial. The views expressed are not the views of *MyVillager*.

City regs on religious land uses scaled back

By JANE McCLURE

In the face of overwhelming opposition by faith-based institutions, the Saint Paul Planning Commission has revised a proposed package of zoning regulations that would have restricted a broad spectrum of programs and services by religious institutions.

Many property uses that the city had considered accessory are actually primary to a congregation's mission, city staff decided after meeting with the Interfaith Action Coalition and other religious groups that were opposed to the original ordinance language. The proposed ordinance that will be reviewed by the City Council in a public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 12, no longer regulates most accessory uses nor the building expansions to accommodate them.

Well over 150 religious institutions and their individual members objected to the original proposal in oral and written testimony. They included Interfaith Action, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, Concordia University Saint Paul, the Saint Paul Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and parishioners from Lumen Christi, Holy Spirit and Nativity Catholic churches.

The religious institutions said the ordinance as originally drafted would have harmed their mission by overly restricting programs and services. They cited conflicts with the free exercise of religion under the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.

"While separation of church and



The Saint Paul Planning Commission is no longer recommending requiring city permits for many accessory uses at faith-based institutions such as the Virginia Street Church (above) on Selby Avenue.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

state is an important protection for all religions, it doesn't mean we as people of faith should not engage in our civic duties, our social responsibilities and the political process," said the Reverend Paul Feela, pastor of Lumen Christi. "These regulations as proposed would curtail much of what we can do as religious communities."

"It's especially difficult to hear about these proposals at a time in our history when division, isolation and hatred have taken hold," said Katie Mendenhall, music director at Holy Spirit Church. "We so desperately need the warmth and inclusion and outreach that only church communities can offer. This kind of govern-

ment control will only lead to more hurt, division and isolation."

The ordinance as revised would no longer require a conditional use permit for social services and other programs that occupy more than 1,000 square feet of space. Those permits would now be required for new services or programs involving more than 7,000 square feet or for any daytime or overnight shelters for homeless people. Emergency housing would still be allowed without a permit, but only within the limits of building and fire codes.

Child care centers and preschools, which are now only allowed in former religious institutions, would be allowed in existing institutions. Small accessory uses, such as travel agencies, accounting services or other small offices would be allowed with the approval of city staff.

The Planning Commission was unanimous in recommending the revised zoning regulations on December 17. The initial proposal was triggered by a 2019 U.S. District Court order that was part of a settlement between the city of Saint Paul and Listening House, a day shelter for homeless people that relocated from downtown to First Lutheran Church in Dayton's Bluff several years ago. Listening House's new location was approved by city staff without a hearing in the neighborhood. When neighbors protested, the city imposed a host of regulations on the homeless shelter's operations and Listening House sued.

Under the federal court order, the city has until February 1 to adopt new regulations of accessory uses at faith-based institutions.

Religious Notes

The annual Saint Thomas Aquinas Founders Day Mass to honor the University of Saint Thomas's patron saint will be celebrated at 9 a.m. Thursday, January 27, in the chapel at Saint Thomas. The public is invited.

The Reverend Bristol Reading began serving as the new pastor of Saint Luke Lutheran Church, 1807 Field Ave., on January 3. Reading was ordained on December 4 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. She studied the-

ology at Loyola University in Chicago and the Graduate Theological Union before entering parish ministry in 2012. She spent five years working near Boston before moving to Illinois for seminary training at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. Her internship brought her to Minneapolis in 2019, where she served as the vicar at Mount Olive. Most recently she served in a temporary capacity at Zion Lutheran Church in Buffalo.

MyVillager KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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EDUCATION

'A call to service'

New St. Thomas nursing school focuses on promoting diversity

By FRANK JOSSI

Amid a nationwide shortage of nurses, and in anticipation of a long-term demand for more health care workers, the University of Saint Thomas plans to open a new nursing program next fall on its Saint Paul campus.

The university's Morrison Family College of Health School of Nursing has begun accepting applications for 100 openings in

its undergraduate and graduate programs. The school will be housed in the Summit Classroom Building (located just west of McNeely Hall), which is now undergoing a renovation that includes the construction of a third-floor simulation laboratory. The university's social work program will share the building.

Maykao Hang, vice president and founding dean of the College of Health, said the university began planning the nursing program even before COVID-19 hit. "When we were looking at the needs for nursing in the community, it was already clear that we needed to have more nurses to address the shortage in Minnesota," she said.

UST had a "blank slate" to develop a different approach than existing nursing programs, Hang said. The new school has a goal of having at least 30 percent of its enrollment consist of students of color or from rural areas where health care access is a significant issue. Instead of having students take rotations at different clinics, UST's "immersion" model will assign students to a clinic for a longer period, Hang said.

"It puts you in one place for an extended time, so you're still getting the same content, but you're parceling it out differently," Hang said. "It allows the students to have a continuous clinical experience with an organization in a single geographical location."

Saint Thomas will partner with providers such as CentraCare Health in Saint Cloud and Allina Health in the Twin Cities to provide students with that experience. Allina Health and the university plan to develop a clinical home model approach in which students rotate within the provider's systems and still "get all their learning needs met," Hang said.



UST senior occupational therapy major Alissa Felmler and Morrison Family College of Health marketing director Timothy Pate utilize an Anatomic Table in one of the university's labs.



Paul Mellick, chair of the health and exercise science department at the University of Saint Thomas, shows how to record blood pressure with the help of senior Veronica Mahnke during a J-Term class. A school of nursing will soon join the university's Morrison Family College of Health. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Martha Scheckel, founding director of the nursing school, said the university hopes to attract 50 students each for its four-year bachelor of nursing (BSN) and 20-month master of nursing (MSN) programs. Scheckel said UST believes professionals looking for a new career with a greater purpose will find nursing an attractive option. So far, she said, recruiting has gone well.

"We have significant interest from incoming freshmen for the BSN and we have a fair number of applications coming in for the MSN," Scheckel said.

She said the program is developing scholarships to help students pay tuition and has completed market studies to ensure its costs align with other similar programs. She said some providers may also offer tuition reimbursement to students who do rotations in their health facilities.

Scheckel, who grew up on an Iowa dairy farm, worked as a nurse for years before becoming an academician. Before joining the Morrison Family College of Health, she

served as dean and professor of nursing at Viterbo University in LaCrosse for more than three years. She also chaired Winona State University's nursing department and worked there earlier in her career.

Now she is engaged in creating a program from the ground up to meet 21st century challenges. Minnesota already has several nursing programs, but Scheckel believes the market can absorb another. Nursing has been among the most frequently asked-for majors at Saint Thomas. Baby boomer nurses have begun retiring in droves, leading to shortages in Minnesota and across the country.

"The more we can fill the pipeline, the better," Scheckel said. "It's going to take all of us. Having a nursing program at Saint Thomas is certainly in line with our mission to serve the common good."

"We don't know what impact the pandemic is going to have, but we hope that it inspires those who are thinking about it to become a nurse," she continued. "We hope students see it as a call to service."



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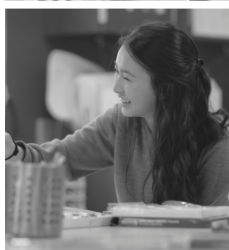
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Reconstruction will transform look of Prior Ave. north of Interstate 94

New boulevards, trees and streetlights will give it a more residential feel

By JANE MCCLURE

A quarter-mile of Prior Avenue just north of I-94 will be reconstructed in 2022. The section between Gilbert and University avenues will be largely closed to traffic from June to November as the Saint Paul Department of Public Works gives that mostly industrial and commercial street a new appearance.

The work will include new pavement, new sidewalks with pedestrian ramps, improved bike lanes, concrete curbs and gutters, concrete outwalks and driveway aprons, lantern-style streetlighting, public art, newly sodded boulevards with trees, new sewer and water mains, and new storm sewer catch basins. The owners of private property along Prior will also have the option of replacing old underground utility pipes at a reduced cost while the street is torn up.

Prior carries about 4,637 vehicles per day. Properties along the west side of Prior are zoned for industrial use. The east side was rezoned several years ago for traditional neighborhoods use in hopes of encouraging its redevelopment with a mix of commercial and residential uses.

The work is needed because of the street's poor condition, according to Public Works project engineer Jary Lee. Prior was last rebuilt in 1986 near the outset of the city's 10-year sewer-separation project. However, the stretch north of I-94 carries

a lot of traffic, including heavy trucks, Lee said.

The city ranks its streets on a pavement condition index, with zero being the worst and 100 the best. Prior between Saint Anthony and Oakley avenues has a score of 17. Other parts of the avenue rank higher, especially near University where work was done about a decade ago to prepare for the light-rail Green Line.

The new design of Prior will result in slightly wider bike lanes, some pedestrian improvements and the loss of about seven parking spaces on the east side of the street, according to Lee. Prior currently has one 11-foot traffic lane and a 5-foot bike lane in each direction. The traffic lanes will remain at 11 feet, but the bike lanes will be widened to 6 feet. The bike lanes on Prior connect to others on Saint Anthony, Marshall and Minnehaha avenues and Pierce Butler Route.

Each side of Prior has a 5-foot sidewalk and an 8-foot boulevard. Expanding the bike lanes will reduce by 2 feet the width of the boulevard on the east side.

Other changes are also planned. The intersection of Prior and Gilbert will be reconfigured to slow down trucks as they turn. Changes will also be made beneath the railroad bridge where sight lines are an issue. Corner bumpouts will be added on the east side of Prior at Feronia and Oakley avenues. About 380 feet of sidewalk will be added on the west side of the street where there is no sidewalk now.

For more information on the project and to register to receive updates, visit stpaul.gov/projects/public-works/pw2022prioravenue.

School Notes

Saint Thomas Academy has named senior Robert Cunningham as its 114th cadet colonel, the highest-ranking officer in the student corps. Cunningham has received awards for academics and leadership. He is a peer mentor, a member of the choir, and a varsity hockey and baseball player. Five additional seniors were promoted to cadet lieutenant colonel. They include Finn Chalmers, Ian Rutgers, Brennan Crow, Jack Strobel and Maximillian Feist.

Nova Classical Academy, a K-12 charter school at 1455 Victoria Way, recently announced that 2021 graduate Ben Parsonage was one of only 46 students in the world to receive a perfect score on the Advanced Placement 3-D Art and Design Exam.

The Saint Paul Public Schools recently received final approval from the state for spending \$207 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds to safely reopen schools and address long-term student outcomes that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The district plans to spend the one-time federal funds on the following:

- High-quality education (\$90.4 million)—includes direct funding for schools, one or two new teachers at every K-8 school to focus on math and reading, more summer and after-school programs, and college and career readiness programs.
- Safe schools (\$64.6 million)—building maintenance and cleaning, meal service, school health staff, transportation, COVID-related supplies and contingency funds.
- Targeted student services (\$11.5 million)—added support for students in special education, multilingual learners, American Indian students and others.
- Family services and community partnerships (\$10.9 million)—partnerships

with nonprofit organizations, city and county agencies and others to provide student services and funding for multilingual family services.

- Systemic equity (\$9.7 million)—creation of a district equity plan, recruitment and retention of teachers of color, culturally responsive instruction and equity training for all staff.
- Mental health and social emotional learning (\$8.1 million)—additional counselors and social workers at schools, and mental health support for students and staff.
- Operational expenses (\$11.7 million)—expenses to support the above initiatives, including staffing, equipment and progress monitoring.

For information, visit spps.org/ARP.
Saint Paul School Board members took their oath of office during a swearing-in ceremony on January 4. The board elected its officers for the coming year at the meeting that followed, including chair Jim Vue, vice chair Jessica Kopp, clerk Chauntyll Allen and treasurer Uriah Ward. Other members of the board include Janelle Foster, Zuki Ellis and Halla Henderson. For more information, visit spps.org/boe.

The School of Leadership for Public Service, a public charter school, is scheduled to open in Ramsey County during the 2022-23 school year beginning with children in grades 6-10. The Minnesota Guild is the school's authorizer, and its nine-member board includes Ahmed Hassan, Aaron Benner, David Stahlman, Chong Thao, William K. Finney, Shelly Vixayvong, Roy Magnuson, Bob Fletcher and Patrick Connolly. For information, contact startup coordinator Donna Swanson at 651-492-5487 or visit leadershipforpublicservice.org.



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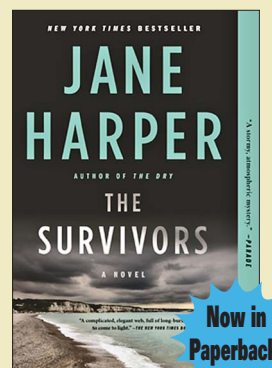
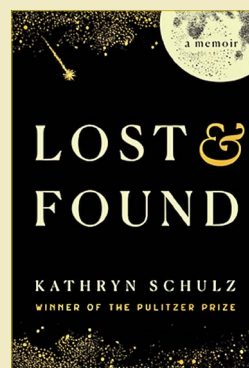
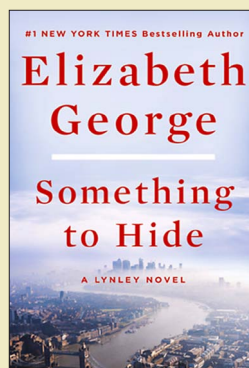
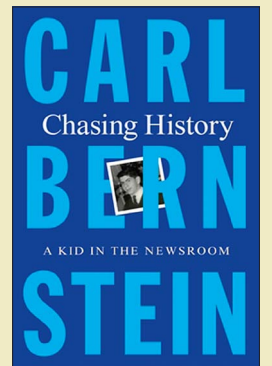
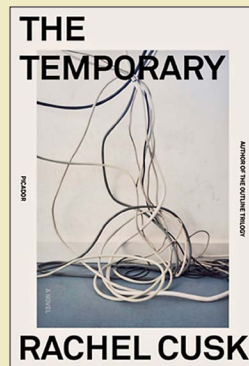
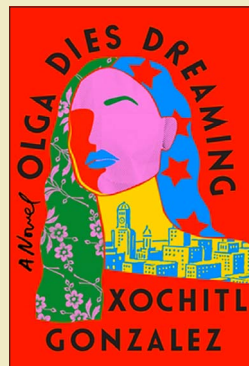
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Crime Report

The following criminal incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police reports. For more reports that didn't make the print edition, see MyVillager.com.

Highland Park

Burglary—The Minnocco station, 485 S. Snelling Ave., was broken into during the evening of December 30-31.

Theft—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on Inner Drive on December 28, the 1800 block of Beechwood Avenue between December 29-January 2, and the 1800 block of Yorkshire Avenue on December 30.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 700 block of South Cleveland Avenue on December 17, the 2100 block of Scheffer Avenue on December 19, and the 1900 block of Wordsworth Avenue on December 30.

Assault—Two males shot at each other at the Highway Motel, 2152 W. Seventh St., at 10:37 a.m. Friday, December 17. No injuries were reported.

Lexington-Hamline

Robbery—A man was injured during an attempted carjacking at knife-point on Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 12:57 a.m. Sunday, December 12.

Burglary—The management office of the Hamline Station Apartments, 1305 University Ave., was broken into at 8:54 a.m. Thursday, December 30.

Assault—A felony assault involving a weapon was reported on Lexington Parkway and Saint Anthony Avenue at 9:16 p.m. Thursday, December 30.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1200 block of Saint Clair Avenue at 10:10 a.m. Sunday, December 19.

—An aggravated robbery was reported at Speedway, 2051 Grand Ave., at 11:45 p.m. Tuesday, January 4.

Burglary—Home break-ins were reported on the 2100 block of Stanford Avenue on December 17-18, and the 1800 block of Lincoln Avenue on December 30.

—Nothing Bundt Cakes, 1580 Grand Ave., was broken into at 1:50 a.m. Tuesday, December 21.

—Around \$2,000 in merchandise was reported stolen at Patagonia, 1648 Grand Ave., at 5:50 a.m. Monday, January 3.

Theft—A purse taken was stolen from a

vehicle on Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard between 4:15-5:59 p.m. Sunday, January 2.

Miscellaneous—Numerous cellphones were found outside the Groveland Recreation Center, 2045 Saint Clair Ave., at 3:12 p.m. Thursday, December 30.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A home break-in was reported on the 700 block of Willow Lane at 9:36 a.m. Friday, December 24.

Theft—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from work trucks on the 2500 block of Northland Drive at 12:43 p.m. Monday, December 13.

Miscellaneous—A woman reported on Tuesday, December 28, that she was scammed out of \$2,000 by someone claiming to be from Xcel Energy who said she was behind on her energy bill.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A car was stolen from a garage on the 1900 block of Selby Avenue at 9:10 a.m. Saturday, December 18.

—Now Bikes & Fitness, 75 N. Snelling Ave., was broken into at 3:28 a.m. Friday, December 31.

—The Mall of Saint Paul, 1817 Selby Ave., was broken into and cash was stolen between 9:05 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, January 2.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1900 block of Portland Avenue and the 2100 block of Marshall Avenue on December 29, the 400 block of North Prior Avenue and the 1700 block of Portland on December 30, the Quality Inn at 1964 University Ave. on December 31, the 2100 block of Selby Avenue on January 1, and the 400 block of Pierce Street on January 3.

—A trailer was reported stolen on the 200 block of Exeter Place between 8:07 a.m.-12:25 p.m. Monday, December 20.

—A male tried to steal a running vehicle, but was scared off by neighbors, at 8:37 a.m. Wednesday, December 29, on the 1700 block of Marshall Avenue.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on the 500 block of Pelham Boulevard on January 3-4, the 2200 block of Selby Avenue on January 4, and on Aldine Street and Ashland Avenue on January 4.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Snelling and University avenues at 11:40 a.m. Friday, December

17. A man said a suspect had followed his vehicle from the Quality Inn, 1964 University. When both vehicles came to a stop in traffic, the suspect got out and pointed a gun at him. The victim said he was under such duress that he struck three other vehicles as he drove away from the suspect.

Weapons—Eight shell casings were recovered after gunfire was reported on the 300 block of Herschel Street at 5 a.m. Saturday, January 1.

Snelling-Hamline

Assault—A suspect with a knife assaulted an employee at the Midway Cub Foods at 4 p.m. Thursday, December 16.

—An assault was reported at Discount Tire, 1350 University Ave., at 4:18 p.m. Monday, December 20.

—A woman said she was punched in the head multiple times by a male suspect on Snelling and Ashland avenues at 9:35 p.m. Tuesday, December 21.

Theft—A woman said the keys were taken from her jacket and her vehicle was stolen at LA Fitness, 1370 University Ave., around 10:04 p.m. Monday, January 3.

Miscellaneous—Felony damage to property was reported at Five Star Storage, 1400 Selby Ave., at 9:50 p.m. Tuesday, December 28.

Summit Hill

Carjacking—A woman was able to remove her toddler from her BMW before it was stolen at gunpoint by three teenage males on the 700 block of Osceola Avenue the morning of December 28. Isaiah Jamal Foster, 19, of Richfield, was one of the three suspects who were later arrested in Minneapolis in connection with the carjacking.

Theft—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on Grand Avenue and Milton Street on December 10, and the 800 block of Grand on December 30.

—A heating and cooling coil was reported stolen from the Linwood Community Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave., at 9:09 a.m. Wednesday, December 15.

—Vehicles were reported stolen from Grand Avenue and Saint Albans Street on December 15, and the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue on January 4.

Assault—An assault was reported at Tavern on Grand, 656 Grand Ave., during the evening of December 31-January 1. The victim suffered minor injuries.

Summit-University

Goose sculpture recovered—A bronze goose that was reported stolen on December 19 from Cochran Park on Summit and Western avenues has been recovered. According to police, an employee at a metal recycling center called the next day to say someone came in with the statue. It is one of four geese that surround Paul Manship's 1926 sculpture "Indian Hunter and His Dog" in the park's fountain.

Robbery—A victim was assaulted with a metal object and robbed of his cash near Lexington Parkway and Marshall Avenue at 9:59 p.m. Thursday, December 30.

Burglary—Apartments were burglarized on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue on December 17, and the 800 block of Hague Avenue on December 21-January 2.

—Trott Law, 25 N. Dale St., was broken into at 5:38 a.m. Monday, December 20.

Theft—Tools and two guns were stolen from a vehicle on the 600 block of Dayton Avenue at midnight Friday, December 31.

Assault—A felony assault was reported at Saint Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave., at 12:23 a.m. Wednesday, December 15.

—An assault with a knife was reported in an apartment on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 3:20 a.m. Wednesday, December 29. The victim was taken to Regions Hospital in stable condition.

West End

Burglary—Two burglaries were reported in offices at Fort Road Medical Center, 360 Sherman St., on December 15-16.

Assault—Police discovered members of a large crowd screaming at each other at Sherman Forbes Apartments, 329 Sherman St., at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 15. A 29-year-old woman was arrested for assault after she was seen waving a knife while threatening another person.

—A man said he was knocked unconscious by a male suspect who sucker punched him after arguing over who was going to sit on the couch during a movie being played at Freedom House, 296 W. Seventh St., at 4:03 p.m. Saturday, December 18. The victim was treated at the hospital for minor injuries.

Miscellaneous—A pedestrian was injured in a hit-and-run accident at 2:45 a.m. Wednesday, December 29, on West Seventh and Homer streets.

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ON THE TOWN

A toast to music for the fun of it

Art Vandalay emerges from pandemic with its first album in a decade

BY CAROLYN WALKUP

Ten years after the release of its last album, “Heaven’s Operahouse,” the Twin Cities quartet Art Vandalay will celebrate the release of “Champagne & Chandeliers” in concert on Saturday, January 22, at the Aster Cafe, 125 Main St. SE in Minneapolis.

The eight songs on the new album include elements of pop, rock, folk and country music. The compositions are almost all written by Brandon Henry, guitarist, vocalist and leader of the band, which has been together for 13 years but has only

three albums to its name.

The band takes its name from the fictional character who was dreamed up from time to time by the fictional character George Costanza to avoid getting caught in one lie or another on the 1990s sitcom “Seinfeld.” Like Jerry Seinfeld and his pals, the members of Art Vandalay don’t take themselves too seriously. As Henry, a resident of Saint Paul’s Snelling-Hamline neighborhood put it, “it’s just a lot of fun to make music with these guys.”

These guys are Ben Cook-Feltz, keyboardist and singer who also works as manager of the ticket office at Park Square and SteppingStone theaters in



Art Vandalay members Ben Cook-Feltz, Calvin Keasling, Brandon Henry and Drew Stevenson. PHOTO BY AMBER STEVENSON

downtown Saint Paul; Calvin Keasling, drummer, an assistant principal at Rosemount High School; and Drew Stevenson, bassist, a software developer for the Minneapolis media company Soona.

Henry, who works as a project manager for the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, attributed the long span between albums to a lack of original content, not having enough money to record in a professional studio, and “life

events” such as starting families.

He described the new album as more rock-oriented than the band’s previous LP. “Champagne & Chandeliers” also features two guest guitarists, Colin Monette and Rich Rue. One composition, “Never See You Again,” was cowritten by Seattle folk artist Jaspur Lepak. Another is a cover of Eliza Gilkyson’s “Angel & Delilah” a folk song that Henry described as “a vivid picture of a dysfunctional relationship.”

Several cuts on the album have

received air time on local radio stations, especially the rocker “Never See You Again.” Henry performed some of the songs live in a solo show over the Christmas holidays in his hometown of Norman, Oklahoma.

Before the pandemic, Art Vandalay played once or twice a month in the Twin Cities and the surrounding area. They played in “dive bars, breweries, coffee shops, on front lawns and at

ART VANDALAY ▶14

Lowertown loses ‘cornerstone of the arts community’

After 23 years, Black Dog Cafe succumbs to fallout of COVID

BY ANNE MURPHY

The sudden closing of Black Dog Cafe in Lowertown this month has not only left a vacancy in the storefront at 308 E. Prince St., but a feeling of emptiness among the artists and art aficionados who frequented the space. Black Dog, they said, played an invaluable role in the growth of the music scene in Saint Paul as well as that of the visual arts.

“It was the cornerstone of the Lowertown arts community,” said Highland Park jazz guitarist Joel Shapira. It was the epicenter of live music in the neighborhood, he said, citing the Saturday Night Jazz series that ran weekly at Black Dog for over six years. “It’s a huge loss for musicians,



Black Dog Cafe owners and siblings Sara, Andy and Stacy Remke posed in their Lowertown establishment during a live performance of jazz back in 2014. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

artists and Saint Paul,” he said.

Owned by siblings Sara, Stacey and Andy Remke, Black Dog opened in 1998 as a coffee shop before growing into a cafe and wine bar as well as a popular venue for live

music and art exhibits. In 2019 Black Dog enjoyed its best year ever, according to Sara Remke, “then COVID hit.” While Black Dog survived the initial state-mandated shutdown in 2020 and rebounded with

a strong summer in 2021, COVID-related staffing shortages and resurgent fears of the Omicron variant finally did it in.

“We were never meant to be a takeout place,” Remke said. “We were a place to go to talk and listen.”

Remke praised her staff. “They were fantastic,” she said. However, COVID cut into their ranks, and staff shortages coupled with supply-chain issues had Sara and her siblings scrambling. They found themselves cooking and bartending at times, “and those are very demanding jobs,” she said. As 2021 came to a close, “the universe was telling us what to do,” she added.

The Remkes notified patrons about the closing with a January 2 Facebook post. Since then, “musicians from England, France and Germany have been sending messages, and countless musicians from the Twin Cities have been telling us what an incredible space this was,” Remke said.

“We tried to have a space where people could be themselves and express them-

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13◀ ART VANDALAY

soybean festivals up and down the I-35 corridor,” Henry said.

Henry was formerly employed in digital marketing at Red House Records, the Twin Cities label where he became acquainted with a host of songwriters, including Gilkyson. He developed his interest in songwriting, singing and guitar playing while majoring in sociology and Norwegian at Saint Olaf College in Northfield. There, he fronted Buffett Buffet, a Jimmy Buffett cover band.

After moving to Minneapolis, Henry earned a degree in music production at the former McNally Smith College of Music in Saint Paul. He also began playing bass with the acoustic pop trio Nothing of Consequence.

Art Vandalay got its start as a trio. Then in 2014, Stevenson approached the group and asked if they wanted to add a bass player. “Drew has been playing with us ever since,” Henry said. “He’s truly a positive force in the band with bass grooves that really round out our sound. Each one of these guys is so good at what he does that they help bring these songs to a whole new level.”



Brandon Henry, the Snelling-Hamline resident who leads Art Vandalay, toasts the release of the band’s new album as bassist Drew Stevenson looks on. PHOTO BY AMBER STEVENSON

“Champagne & Chandeliers” is available at artvandalaytunes.com. The band will share the stage on January 22 with j. bell and the Lazy Susan Band. The music begins at 9 p.m. For reservations, visit astercafe.com or call 612-379-3138.

13◀ BLACK DOG CAFE

selfes,” she said. “It was important to us to make a place where every kind of person could be at home. People came in to see world-class music. Neighbors came in to grab a coffee. We ran it out of love. We didn’t get rich, but it gave us a rich life.”

Jazz trumpeter Steve Kenny said his life was made immeasurably richer by Black Dog. “A few months after the Artists’ Quarter closed downtown in 2014, I hatched the idea for a Saturday night jazz series,” he said. “I approached eight venues with the proposition of having every Saturday night devoted to a curated show featuring the best available jazz musicians. I wanted to make the show a doubleheader with an opening set by a lesser-known or youth

group and then a set by the week’s featured artist or ensemble. I was going to emcee the show, promote the show, pay for all the musicians and not charge the venue at all or perhaps only a slight honorarium.”

Remke was the only one who even considered the idea, Kenny said. “I give Sara much credit for sharing the vision with me for what became Saturday Night Jazz at the Black Dog,” he said. “The series ran for 327 weeks and really helped solidify Black Dog’s reputation as a jazz venue.”

“It’s all very heartbreaking,” said Mcalester-Groveland artist Amy Clark about Black Dog’s closing. “Sara gave me my first solo show in 2004, which started my whole journey in Lowertown. Sara and I hosted many years of art shows for the Saint Paul Winter Carnival. I could always

“Black Dog was magic. It was a hub for artists, and everyone who went there came away with lifelong friends.... We should never forget what it did for Lowertown.”

depend on Sara, Andy and Stacey to be open to any crazy idea and lend a hand in any way they could.”

Black Dog was also a big supporter of *Saint Paul Almanac* and hosted many of that publication’s art shows, readings and spoken-word performances. “No mat-

ter what creative endeavor you were embarking on, Black Dog was there cheering everyone on. It’ll be hard to replace it,” Clark said.

“Black Dog was magic,” said Lowertown artist Lisa Mathieson. “It was a hub for artists, and everyone who went there came away with lifelong friends. Black Dog was a unique place for a specific time. We should never forget what it did for Lowertown.”

To celebrate its legacy, Black Dog will host one last evening of live jazz on Saturday, January 15. The ensemble Fuzzy Math and special guest Andrew Schwandt will open the show at 7 p.m., followed at 8:30 p.m. by Steve Kenny and Friends, including J.T. Bates, Chris Bates and special guests. Reservations are recommended. Visit saturdaynightjazzattheblackdog.info.



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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Books

Ramsey County Historical Society's History Revealed series for 2022 will open at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 13, with a virtual panel discussion of *We Are Meant to Rise: Voices for Justice from Minneapolis to the World*. The new book is a collection of essays and poems on the American experience in 2020 and 2021 from Minnesota indigenous writers and other writers of color. Editors Carolyn Holbrook and David Mura will be joined on the panel by contributors Suleiman Adan, Marcie Rendon and Kevin Yang. To register for the Zoom link, visit rchs.com.

Dance

Celebrate the Chinese New Year with CAAM Chinese Dance Theater. The local troupe will perform "Songs of Home" at 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, January 29 and 30, in the O'Shaughnessy at Saint Catherine University. Inspired by a millennium of Chinese melodies, mythical animals and heroic characters, the original choreography is augmented by vibrant costumes and exquisite lighting. Tickets are \$15-\$20. Visit oshag.stkate.edu/events/.

Exhibits

Minnesota Museum of American Art is showing two exhibits through January 29 in its window galleries on Fourth and Robert streets and at its Ecolab skyway entrance. In "Sutures," artists Cheryl Mukherji, Prune Phi, Sopheak Sam and Daniella Thach reappropriate images through screen printing, projection, neon and collage. "Transformation: Art from the Inside" features works by artists incarcerated at the Stillwater and Shakopee prisons. Visit mmaa.org.

"Complexity Made Simple," the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Rube Goldberg (1883-1970), is being shown through January 31 in the Fine Art Gallery of the Minnesota JCC's Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. The exhibit focuses on Goldberg's ability to distill a complex geopolitical landscape into a single image. Also featured are a Rube Goldberg-inspired machine created by Minnesota kinetic artist Robin Schwartzman and a documentary film about the cartoonist by Goldberg grandson, Geoffrey George of Highland Park. For gallery hours, call 651-698-0751 or visit minnesotajcc.org.

"Totally Radical, Designing the 1980s," an exhibit that captures the variety and ideosyncrasies of the styles prevalent during the 1980s, is being displayed through May 27 at the University of Minnesota's Goldstein Museum of Design,

located in Gallery 241 of McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave. Along with objects from the Goldstein's collection, the exhibit includes photos and print material from university archives and the Minnesota Historical Society. Admission is free. For gallery hours, visit design.umn.edu/goldstein-museum-design.

The Tiny Art Expo, a multimedia show and sale of one-of-a-kind pieces that measure no more than 10 by 10 inches, is on view through January 30 at AZ Gallery, 308 E. Prince St. For gallery hours, visit theazgallery.org or call 651-224-3757.

After a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19, Art Shanty Projects return to the frozen surface of Lake Harriet from January 15 through February 6. Viewing hours are 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Among the highlights are Winding Sheet Outfit's "Tick Tock Shanty"; Nick Knutson's "Rock Box" featuring live music and DJs; Emma Wood's "Rage Room" where visitors smash molded ice; and Adrienne Pabst and Nicole Simpkins' "Institute for Perpetual Unfolding." Artist Damien Wolf will install a field of over 600 ceramic flowers. Yoga will be conducted every Saturday afternoon by Bridges Through Yoga. Minneapolis Hoop Jams will have people grooving with hula hoops on Sunday mornings. Scheduled for the final weekend are open lacrosse games run by Twin Cities Native Lacrosse and "Fashion Disasters," a spectacle by artist Patti Paulson on the threat of climate change. Kick sleds will be available for accessible transport. ASL interpreters and audio describers will also be available from noon-3 p.m. daily. Admission is by donation with \$10-20 suggested.

Music

The JCC Symphony Orchestra returns on Wednesday, January 12, with an all-strings concert balancing English romanticism with folkloric colors from Hungary. The free program begins at 7 p.m. at the Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. It will feature Gustav Holst's Saint Paul's Suite, Edward Elgar's Elegy and Salut d'amour ("Love's greeting") and Béla Bartók's 10 Pieces for Children. Reservations are requested at tinyurl.com/c5zafvfv. Walk-ins are welcome, but space will be limited to ensure social distancing. Masks are required.

Violinist Chloe Fedor will join Lyra Baroque Orchestra in a musical tour of Leipzig, Paris, Rome and London at 3 and 5 p.m. Sunday, January 16, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The Grand Tour program includes Overture from Céphale et Procris by Jacquet de la Guerre, Sinfonia No. 3 in D Major by Scarlatti, Concerto in A Minor by Bach and Concerto in A Major by Avison. Tickets are \$30, \$25 for seniors, \$5 for students. Visit lyrabaroque.org or call 651-321-2214.

Internationally acclaimed pianist Eric Lu will perform in a Chopin Society recital at 3 p.m. Sunday, January 23, in Mairs Concert Hall at Macalester College. The 24-year-old Massachusetts native received top honors at the U.S. National Chopin Competition in 2015 and won the International Leeds Competition in 2018. His program will include Brahms' Variations in D minor, Schumann's Arabesque and Waldszenen, and Schubert's Sonata in A Major. Tickets are \$40. Visit chopinsocietymn.org or call 612-822-0123.

Italian classical guitarist Aniello Desiderio, professor at the Conservatorio Domenico Cimarosa of Avellino, will perform in a Minnesota Guitar Society recital at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 29, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. His hour-long program will include Suite Espanola by Gaspar Sanz, Chaconne from the Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor by Bach, Variations sur "Folia de España" et Fugue by Manuel Ponce, Escarraman by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and The Harp & Shadows by Leo Brouwer. Tickets are \$10-\$25. For reservations, visit mnguitar.org or call 612-677-1151.

Theater

South Minneapolis comedian Lorna Landvik has returned with her solo show, *Still a Party*, on Fridays and Saturdays, now through January 29, at the Bryant-Lake Bowl, 810 W. Lake St. The improvised program of stand-up, sit-down and sideways comedy runs from 7-9 p.m. Tickets are \$22, \$20 in advance. Call 612-825-8949 or visit bryantlakebowl.com.

Naked Stages, Pillsbury House Theatre's program for up and coming performance artists, will offer six new works by local playwrights virtually from January 15-30. The online program features *Mango Songs*, a drama about memory loss by Alia Jeraj; *As My Heart Grows*, a play about romantic love, self love and maternal desires by Atlese Robinson; *giving people what they want* by C. Michael Menge in collaboration with Jay Owen Eisenberg; *Never Underestimate a Short Asian Woman with an Accent* by Alys Ayumi Ogura; *Fantasmama: A Powderhorn Ghost Story* by Margaret Ogas; and *Joy on Me* by Ashembaga Jaafaru. Tickets are priced from \$5-\$25. Visit pillsburyhousetheatre.org or call 612-825-0459.

La Boheme, the beloved opera by Puccini reimagined by director Peter Rothstein, will be performed by Theater Latte Da from January 19 through February 27 at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE. in Minneapolis. The tale of love among young artists in Paris in the 1830s inspired the Broadway hit *Rent*. Rothstein has moved the story to the Nazi occupation of Paris during World War II. Tickets start at \$35. Call 612-339-3003 or visit latteda.org.

An Officer and a Gentleman, a new musical by Dick Scanlan based on the Oscar-winning film, will be performed from January 20-23 at the Ordway Music Theater. Wes Williams and Mia Massaro star. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$44-\$132. Visit ordway.org or call 651-224-4222.

'Til Death: A Marriage Musical returns to the Bucket Brigade Theatre for nine shows from January 28 through February 14 at Art House North, 793 Armstrong Ave. Husband and wife playwrights Jeremiah and Vanessa Gamble star as a middle-aged couple in marital crisis who get stuck in a remote cabin with newlywed couples who are "perfectly perfect" for each other. Joining them on stage will be real-life couples Nathan and Stephanie Cousins and Damian and Anna Leverett. Michael Pearce Donley returns as musical director and accompanist. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays. Tickets are \$30, \$25 for students and seniors, or whatever you can afford on February 7. For reservations and COVID precautions, visit bucketbrigadetheatre.com or call 612-547-9839.

Family

Bina's Six Apples, a new play by Korean-American playwright Lloyd Suh about the impact of war and displacement on children and families, will be staged from January 14-February 13 at the Children's Theatre Company, 2400 Third Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$15-\$63. Visit childrenstheatre.org or call 612-874-0400.

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

Experience China without leaving Saint Paul. Landmark Center's Urban Expedition program will immerse visitors in the culture of that Asian nation from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, January 16. Music and dance, educational exhibits and hands-on crafts will be featured in the free program. Call 651-292-3063 or visit landmarkcenter.org.

Et cetera

March of the Governors, free podcasts on the governors of Minnesota, are being offered by the Ramsey County Historical Society. Author Paul Nelson and a team of local historians will introduce listeners to each of our heads of state. Programs on the first 11 governors are now available. Visit rchs.com/news/rchs-podcasts.

MONDAY/JANUARY 17

A WALK UNDER THE FULL MOON will be led by the Friends of Coldwater beginning at 7 p.m. at the entrance of Coldwater Spring Park, located along the service road southeast of the intersection of Highway 55 and 54th St. in South Minneapolis. All are welcome. Visit friendsofcoldwater.org.

TUESDAY/JANUARY 18

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 district station, 389 N. Hamline Ave. Police officers will provide an update on crime in the area and answer questions from the audience. For more information, call 651-266-5512 or visit facebook.com/SPPD.West.

THE KIOSK

SEW, BEAD, SKETCH, QUILT, KNIT or crochet with the Keystone Krafters. The group meets from 12:30-2:30 p.m. every Tuesday at the Merriam Park Community Center, 2000 Saint Anthony Ave. Members share their projects and get advice for new ones. For more information, call Karlene at 651-645-7424.

FRIDAY/JANUARY 21

A NEW YEAR'S RETREAT with the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet and consociates will open with an informational session from 6:30-8 p.m. via Zoom. Learn about a community steeped in spirituality and social

justice. The retreat continues from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, January 22, with a discussion on Zoom of what it means to be contemplatives in action. Contact Joan Pauly Schneider at jpauly@schneider@csjstpaul.org or 651-690-7063.

SUNDAY/JANUARY 23

THE EXHUMATION OF MASS GRAVES for evidence in prosecuting genocide will be addressed in a live webinar from 1-3 p.m. Featured speakers are Nihaud Brankovic of the International Commission on Missing Persons and Erin Kimmerle of the University of South Florida, a forensic anthropologist who has worked on exhumations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Florida. The cost is \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. Visit worldwithoutgenocide.org/missing.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Former QB Walsh returns to CDH

Judy Garland, a native of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, said it eight decades ago in the role of Dorothy Gale: "There's no place like home."

Steve Walsh agrees.

It's been almost four decades since Walsh was a three-sport athlete at Cretin-Derham Hall. Although best known for his football achievements, including passing for more than 2,000 yards and leading the school to the state tournament as a senior, Walsh also was an outstanding basketball and baseball player for the Raiders before graduating in 1985.

He went on to have a stellar college career as a quarterback, leading the University of Miami to a national title in 1987, as well as an 11-year run in the NFL playing for six different teams.

Upon retiring as a player, Walsh stayed involved in football. In Florida, he coached a high school team for six seasons and worked in various football divisions of the prestigious IMG Academy. Later, he headed north for a five-year stint in the Canadian Football League, including serving as the quarterback coach for the Toronto Argonauts when they won the 2017 Grey Cup, the CFL's version of the Super Bowl.

While all that was taking place, Walsh had occasional conversations with fellow CDH grad Phil Archer, now the school's athletic director, about possibly heading back to town someday to take over the reins of the Raider football program.

That day has come. Walsh had already decided it was time for him, his wife Deanna and son Brayden to move back to town. That led to more conversations and, on December 29, Walsh was announced as the new head football coach at CDH. "Things just kind of worked out," Archer said. "The timing was right for both of us."

Walsh will also serve as an advancement officer for the school. "I'm excited for the opportunity to return to my alma mater—a place where I attended as a student and developed academically and athletically," he said in the press release announcing his appointment.

Football has had some rough patches in recent years at CDH. Although player participation numbers have remained solid, the Raiders found playing Class AAAAAA football to be tough sledding. The Raiders, who dropped down to Class AAAAAA to better align with their enrollment, were 3-7 in 2021.

Chuck Miesbauer, a 2003 CDH grad who served as the Raiders' head football coach for the past three seasons, will stay with the program as a helper and with the school working with the alumni as well as handling fundraising duties. Miesbauer has also been instrumental in the development of the 7-on-7 flag football league that is run in conjunction with the Capital City Football Association.

Prep shot clock a challenge on many fronts

As was noted in the last issue, a major change will soon take place in local high school basketball. Starting with the 2023-24 season, a 35-second shot clock will be used during boys' and girls' varsity games. Minnesota is the 13th state in the country to institute such a rule for prep hoops. Cretin-Derham Hall boys' coach Jerry Kline voiced a reaction that several other colleagues felt. "Hallelujah!" he said. "It'll give a better flow to the game. Just watch a college basketball game to see the difference."

Kline said his team has played at several sites where a shot clock was used. "The kids adjusted fast," he said. "Players know they have to make plays."

For a sport to succeed in the 21st century, it's necessary to adjust from time to time. There'll be teams with lesser talent that won't like the new rule, but good coaches will learn to adapt.

The adjustments for the girls' teams will be interesting

WRIGHT CALL ▶17

Battle-tested pucksters

Solid CDH boys looking to take next step

BY BILL WAGNER

The Cretin-Derham Hall boys' hockey team looked like a bonafide contender for top honors in the state last year, only to be eliminated in the section playoffs. This season, the Raiders have vowed to use that experience to take the next step after the regular season ends in early February.

"What we need to continue to do is to take care of the close games," said coach Matt Funk as his team had a 10-3 record through January 8. "We'll be battle-tested when the time comes. The schedule this year has really helped."

CDH was ranked first in the state in Class AA at the outset of the season and remains a top-10 team despite its tough schedule. Funk knows you have to beat the best to be the best, and the Raiders knew they'd be playing some Minnesota heavyweights before beginning their Suburban East Conference schedule early this month.

The Raiders' only blemishes to date include a pair of one-goal losses to Saint Thomas Academy and a 1-3 loss to highly ranked Andover in a holiday tournament.

CDH has posted impressive wins over Benilde-Saint Margaret's (5-3) and previously undefeated Hermantown (4-2). The Raiders also slugged it out to best tough adversaries in Mahtomedi (3-1) and Rosemount (3-1), and buried Champlin Park (7-2), Woodbury (8-1) and Roseville (11-0).

Funk was especially impressed by the team's win over top-ranked Hermantown, which was the Hawks' only loss so far this winter. CDH revved up its power play to score four of the game's last five goals.

The coach also didn't have to tell his players how important it was to overcome Benilde. "That was the team that knocked us out of the playoffs the last two years," Funk said.

CDH is a solid-skating team that can turn physical if the opposition wants to play that way. The Raiders have some gifted offensive weapons while still being able to call on some good blue-collar types. Good goaltending and smart positional defense are also hallmarks of this year's team.

Despite the many positives, Funk lamented that his squad is prone to



CDH senior wing Kevin Odlaug takes a point-blank shot on goal pursued by a defender as Hermantown goalie Dane Callaway eyes the puck in the first period of the Raiders' 4-2 win at home on December 23. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

giving up too many shots on goal. He also noted that there have been times when the team hasn't finished well. In both losses to STA, the Raiders were ahead going into the third period.

Still, Funk likes the way his team's power play has improved. And when it comes to depth, he has no qualms about running four forward lines and employing six defensemen on regular shifts. Add in senior goalie Marko Belak and CDH has the ingredients that all winning clubs must have.

Funk said Belak, who through January 8 had a .930 save percentage and 1.87 goals-against average, has more than pulled his share of the load. "He's been very consistent," he said. "He's made all the saves that you have to make."

Funk likes how his team plays defense. "It's maybe our best team strength," he said.

Senior Zach Sondreal partners with junior Colton Jamieson in one defensive tandem. Sondreal is a physical type who leads the team's defenders in scoring with 15 points. Jamieson is more of a high-flyer.

Junior defender Simon Hogue, who has 13 points, is paired with junior Joey Sylvester, a good puck rusher. Junior Lucas Cernohous and senior Rory Smith, both textbook stay-at-homeers, are the third pairing.

Along the forward wall, the Raiders are armed with an abundance of talent. The first three are senior left

wing Luke McCarthy, junior center Jake Fisher and senior right wing Drew Fisher. A solid sniper, Drew Fisher leads the club in scoring with 24 points. McCarthy, a tireless fore-checker, and Jake Fisher, who has good playmaking skills, both have 17.

On the second line, junior left wing Attila Lippai creates a lot of scoring chances and has 14 points. He's joined by junior right wing Devin Cardenas and senior center Gabe Rasmussen. Cardenas has played with Lippai for a long time and Rasmussen plays a very "responsible" game, Funk said. He also credits Cardenas and Rasmussen for their work on CDH's penalty killing, which was working at a rate of 94 percent.

The third line features senior left wing Kevin Odlaug, senior center Cooper Smith and senior left wing Kaden Spaniol rotating with sophomore Chuck Owens.

The fourth line has senior center John Kovarik between senior wings Sam Holm and sometimes Spaniol. In the victory over Champlin Park on December 30, Holm scored the first three goals of his high school career.

CDH has had to play without the services of senior forward Jake Sondreal, who sustained a shoulder separation against STA on December 21. The team has missed the solid two-way play of the Sondreal brothers, but Funk said Jake was expected back in the lineup this week.

Mack leads way for Minnehaha girls' hoops

BY BILL WAGNER

It's mind-boggling to muse on how good Minnehaha Academy's Addi Mack could be by the time she graduates. The freshman point guard is already ranked among the state's best in several categories this season and could well be one of the best girls' basketball players the Redhawks have ever had—and there have been plenty of good ones.

Through early January, Mack was ranked among the top 10 in the state

in points per game (25.2), field goals (78) and three-pointers (30). She had scored 202 points in her first eight games, including 40 points in a win over Minneapolis North.

However, instead of dwelling on individual stats, Mack said she's much more focused on helping the Redhawks win another state title. Minnehaha had an outstanding team last year, but suffered a one-point loss in the first round of state to get knocked out of the tournament.

"We have a golden opportunity to

get a state title this year," Mack said. "That was a heartbreaking game we lost last year, but now we have another chance."

As of January 8, the Redhawks were 9-1 overall and ranked first in the state in Class AA. They have been averaging around 86 points a game, their only loss coming in mid-December to undefeated Hopkins, the state's top-ranked team in Class AAAA.

Coach Matt Pryor knows just how

MINNEHAHA'S MACK ▶17

16◀ MINNEHAHA'S MACK

big an asset he has in Mack, who came to Minnehaha as an eighth-grader after starting at Blake. Pryor said Mack has been shooting an astounding 60 percent from three-point range, and that he never has to caution her against shooting the ball when she might have dished it off to a teammate instead.

"A point guard needs to keep her teammates in position to score, and Addi does that," Pryor said, "but that 60 percent figure just shows how efficient she is. It's a blessing to have a scorer like that on your team."

Offensively, Mack can give opponents fits. If they try to shut down her three-point game, she can penetrate to the hoop. And she has the kind of quick hands essential to effective guard play.

According to Pryor, there's no mystery about why Mack is so good: She works at it. "She eats, breathes and sleeps basketball," he said. "She's a student of the game. She loves to break down film."

Mack agreed that she has an insatiable desire to improve her game. "I go to the gym every day," she said. "I'm so lucky I can go in and use that shooting machine."

"She eats, breathes and sleeps basketball," Pryor said. "She's a student of the game. She loves to break down film."

To the surprise of absolutely no one, the high-achieving Mack is a 4.0 student. Needless to say, she's already attracted attention from colleges, despite being only a freshman. "My goal is to play for a Power Five school," she said, adding that the chances for such an achievement are good "if I continue the hard work."

Pryor also believes that Mack will end up playing somewhere prominent in college. "She's received a lot of Division I (scouting) already," he said.

The Redhawks have plenty of other talent to go around as well. Senior guard Charita Lewis was averaging 14.6 points and 6.4 steals per contest through January 6. Sophomore forward Angel Hill was averaging 9.9 points and 4.9 rebounds per game, sophomore guard Aliyah Al-Hameed was averaging 11.8 points, and sophomore guard Berit Parten was leading the team with six blocks.



Minnehaha Academy freshman point guard Addi Mack, who is among the top scorers in the state, pauses for a photo during practice in front of the school's new Dr. Dish shooting machine.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

16◀ WRIGHT CALL

to watch. High school rules are the same for everybody in Minnesota. That wasn't the case when college basketball instituted the shot clock. The NCAA started with a 45-second clock for men's games in 1985. Eight years later, it was reduced to 35 seconds. In 2015, it dropped to 30 seconds.

Women's basketball had a 30-second shot clock as early as 1971. However, the 10-second rule to get the ball past mid-court that had always been in the men's game didn't make it to the women's game until 2014. Before then, talented women's teams played at a quick pace. Many lesser teams, however, slowed the game down.

Saint Paul Academy girls' basketball coach Willie Taylor views the move as a positive. "I've coached with a shot clock in AAU games," he said. "It changes your strategy. It'll take a while to get used to it, but the game will be better for it."

The state announcement about the new rule offered this addendum: "Member schools may use the shot clock at sub-varsity levels by consensus of competing schools." Growing pains at those levels already require coaches to be patient. Nevertheless, count Highland Park athletic director Pat Auran among those who think using a shot

clock at the JV level is critical to having it be a success. "Players are going to have to get used to it," he said.

Taylor agrees. "I think it should be used at the JV and ninth-grade levels," he said.

The waiting period to add the shot clock is a necessity because it poses logistical and, in some cases, financial issues for schools. For schools with smaller gyms, wiring may be a challenge. As for overall costs, a quick glance at a Daktronics website revealed shot clocks cost \$2,647-\$3,722, not including shipping or installation.

You need a general to lead a team into battle

By the time you read this, major changes may already be afoot for the Minnesota Vikings. Outside of lining Zygi and Mark Wilf's pockets with a day of ticket and concession receipts, last Sunday's season finale against the Bears at U.S. Bank Stadium was a meaningless affair. The memory of the week before—the 37-10 national embarrassment at the hands of the Packers—is the image that many local fans will carry in their heads for months to come.

It was a classic lesson that the quarterback is the key to offensive success. Teams must believe the man under

center knows exactly what needs to be done to win a game. Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers strikes many people as a miserable lot of a human being. However, even his biggest detractors admit that the man knows how to get a team down a field and score points. He makes mistakes like the rest of us, but he rarely makes the same one twice. More important, he comes off as being with his mates every step of the way and will do whatever is needed to win a game.

Football is an interesting mix of a sport. Yes, individual efforts such as a great kickoff return, a long field goal or a sack on a third down play will stand out, but those are mere moments. More games than not are won or lost by the man who calls the signals and inspires the belief in his offensive mates that the play that's called will work. That trust gets built over time. As we saw in Green Bay with Sean Mannion leading the Vikings, a lack of trust—or inexperience in that position—makes it hard to succeed.

The Vikings now must decide if they have the right general at the helm to steer the under-.500 ship. It's possible to remedy a lack of athletic talent. Finding the right mental talent to be successful is a lot trickier.

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

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Volunteers needed—A food scraps collection site is now open 24 hours a day in the parking lot of the Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena, 800 S. Snelling Ave. Volunteers are needed to remove snow at the site after each storm. Call the HDC office or email info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org to sign up. Free food scraps starter kits and compostable bags are available at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. For details, visit RamseyRecycles.com/FoodScraps.

Property tax primer—Ramsey County Assessor Luis Rosario attended the HDC board meeting on January 6 to provide property tax information. To view recordings of past meetings, visit the HDC website and click on "Board."

Upcoming meetings—Saint Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee to discuss 1074-1096 James Ave., 3:30 p.m. Thursday, January 13; HDC Development Committee to host University of Saint Thomas and Ryan Co. officials for an update on the Canadian Pacific Railway spur and Highland Bridge, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 18; and HDC Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, January 24. Some HDC meetings will be in-person in 2022 at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., as well as online via Zoom. Links to access the meetings are posted on the HDC website prior to the meeting date.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Frost Fest—Join the Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation for Frost Fest from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, January 29, at

the Groveland Park ice rinks. The event will include skating, games, hot chocolate, a bonfire and chance to win prizes. For information, visit macgrove.org/frostfest.

Puck hunt—Check the community council's social media and website for clues to find the bronze, silver and gold hockey pucks hidden somewhere in Macalester-Groveland. Those who find the pucks should send a photo to mgcc@macgrove.org to win prizes from Tono Pizzeria, Groveland Tap and Roots Roasting.

What's happening—The community council will launch a new website this month and will hold its annual board meeting and elections in April. Meetings will continue to be virtual for now. The Block Ambassador program is continuing—email mgcc@macgrove.org about starting a block club. The council also is continuing its work toward equity and inclusion. Those who are interested in learning more about new initiatives being implemented this year are invited to attend a committee meeting to get involved. Visit macgrove.org/participate.

Board openings—In April, the community council will hold board elections to fill two seats each in Grids 1, 3, 5, as well as those for two at-large representatives. Board members are elected to three-year terms. Potential candidates can learn more by contacting the office.

Neighborhood pride—Locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts still can be purchased online and delivered within days. Visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors on Thursday, January 13; Inclusivity Task Force on Wednesday, January 19; Transportation Committee on Monday, January 24; and Housing and Land Use on Wednesday, January 26. To receive monthly meeting notices and Zoom information, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Volunteering with SHA—Volunteer opportunities with the Summit Hill Association include helping out with events, monthly committee projects and office tasks. Many opportunities are available remotely. For more information, visit SummitHillAssociation.org/become-a-volunteer

Neighborhood Plan—The SHA's Neighborhood Plan Committee opened a "visioning survey" in December to collect final data before drafting revisions to the plan. Visit SummitHillAssociation.org/survey to take the survey before it closes on January 15.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday January 13; and Racial Dialogue and Action Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, January 17. For information and participation links, visit SummitHillAssociation.org/calendar.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Wanted: West Seventh recipes—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation is currently collecting recipes from local residents to be included in a cookbook to be sold as a fundraiser for the organization. Recipes may be sent for consideration to fortroadfederation.org/cookbook.

Upcoming meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, January 20; Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 2; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, February 14. For meeting details, see fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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STATE OF MINNESOTA CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333. The filing of an assumed name does not provide a user with exclusive rights to that name. The filing is required for consumer protection in order to enable consumers to be able to identify the true owner of a business. 1. List the exact assumed name under which the business is or will be conducted: **Stephanie Blazina MS, MIM, FSM 2.** List the Principal Place of Business: **899 W 7th St St Paul MN 55102 USA 3.** List the name and complete street address of all persons conducting business under the above Assumed Name, OR if an entity, provide the legal corporate, LLC, or Limited Partnership name and registered office address: **Stephanie Francine Blazina; 1440 Randolph Ave Apt 323 St Paul MN 55105 USA 4.** List the name and complete street address of all persons conducting business under the above Assumed Name, OR if an entity, provide the legal corporate, LLC, or Limited Partnership name and registered office address: **Stephanie Blazina, 1440 Randolph Ave Apt 323 St Paul MN 55105 USA 5.** This certificate is an amendment of Certificate of Assumed Name File Number: **11155294800020** Originally filed on: **04/21/2020.** 6. I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is required, or as agent of the person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document on his/her behalf or in both capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required filings, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath. Date filed: **December 15, 2021** Signed by: **Stephanie Blazina** Mailing Address: **1440 Randolph Ave Apt 323 St Paul MN 55105 USA** Email for Official Notices: **stephazina@yahoo.com**

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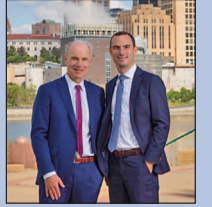
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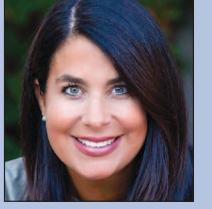
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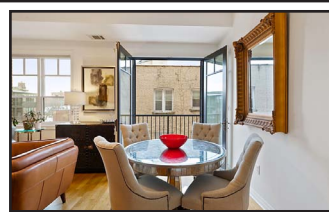
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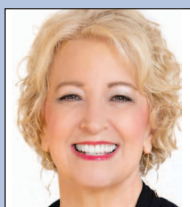


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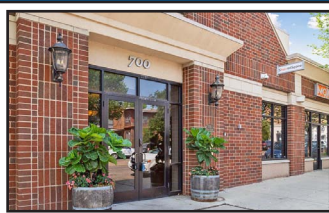
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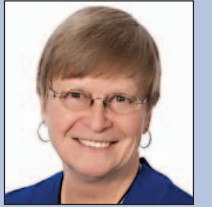
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