

UST tests waters for new arena, ballfields on Highland Park site

By JANE McCLURE

Representatives of the University of Saint Thomas and Highland Bridge master developer Ryan Companies met on January 18 with the Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee to discuss the possible construction of a new hockey arena and baseball and softball fields for the university at Highland Bridge in Highland Park.

Saint Thomas is contemplating new facilities for several of its sports programs with its recent move to NCAA Division I. "We're currently carefully assessing our options on and off campus, and (Highland Bridge) might be one of them," said Amy McDonough, chief of staff for Saint Thomas president Julie Sullivan.

Ryan officials are excited about the possibility of having Saint Thomas at Highland Bridge, according to Maureen Michalski, Ryan's vice president for real estate development. She called it a "once-in-a-generation opportunity."

Ryan and Saint Thomas have been looking at the former Canadian Pacific Railway yard at the southeast corner of Highland Bridge as well as adjacent property owned by Ryan. Ryan has the 13-acre CP Railway property under contract.

Ryan is performing due diligence on the rail property, including environmental issues. The developer is also reviewing traffic, parking and infrastructure issues with Saint Thomas.

The university is weighing several factors in

ST. THOMAS SPORTS FACILITIES ▶2



Having fun under the winter sun.

Sisters Willa, 6, and Scout Brown, 9, built a snowman on Crosby Lake with pooch Gryffindor as the temperature climbed above 40 on January 18. At left, their fearless Frosty could be seen standing vigil on the snowy lake as ducks flew by and the sun shined bright in the sky.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Commission OKs plans for 5-story development at Lexington-James

By JANE McCLURE

Construction of a five-story apartment building at the southeast corner of Lexington Parkway and James Avenue can proceed. On January 21, the Saint Paul Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit, variances and site plan for the building. The commission's decision is final unless it is appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

The commission split 9-5 on the requests from the development team of Chet Funk, Erich Leidel, Nathan Jameson and Minneapolis-based Yellow Tree Development. The proposed 114-unit building would replace six single-family homes on James. It would front 470 S. Lexington and would have below-grade parking for motor vehicles and bicycles.

Commissioners debated the project for an hour before casting their votes. A state-mandated deadline governing action on zoning cases meant they had to make a decision by January 21. Otherwise, the project would have been automatically approved.

Members were split on whether the revised project met all legal findings required for the variances. City planning staff and the developers said the site's sloping terrain constituted a practical difficulty. The site has a roughly 25-foot change in grade

LEXINGTON-JAMES ▶4

Restaurants embrace vaccine mandate, some with reservations

By ANNE MURPHY

Saint Paul bars and restaurants, theaters and other entertainment venues that have been struggling for close to two years with state-imposed shutdowns and a drop in business driven by fears of COVID-19 now find themselves bracing for the impact of Mayor Melvin Carter's new vaccine mandate. The mandate, which took effect on January 19, requires all patrons of those venues to show proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or a negative PCR test within the previous 72 hours.

"This policy is intended to slow the spread of COVID and keep our local economy moving forward," Carter said. It will remain in effect for 40 days or until the end of the declared local COVID emergency, whichever occurs first, he said.

Some restaurant owners contacted for this story lauded the vaccine mandate as critical to controlling the spread of COVID-19. However, many others declined to comment or did not return calls or emails seeking comment.

For bars and restaurants, the mandate applies only to indoor service and only to

those that have a city license to serve alcoholic beverages. Nevertheless, the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA) was not pleased.

Calls to the MLBA were not returned, but in a post issued after Carter's January 12 announcement of the mandate, the MLBA stated: "We understand the seriousness of COVID for the health of the community, patrons and employees. But it's hard to understand a vaccination mandate that's unjustified and unscientific. It targets one specific industry with zero science or data driving the decision, and zero caring about

our dedicated frontline workers who will now add 'enforcement agent' to their job titles. The only scientific thing we know is that it has devastated the hospitality industry in other cities with these mandates.

"They say we're in this together," the MLBA continued, "but this mandate shows that the hospitality industry is clearly targeted alone. We know both vaccinated and unvaccinated people spread the virus. And it happens at schools, workout facilities, other retailers, sporting events and more."

RESTAURANT VACCINE MANDATE ▶3

EDUCATION



Century of learning in Groveland Park ▶10

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A COSTLY PROBLEM

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Lucie Bond shines on ice for United ▶16

While other projects proceed, new rental housing stalls at Ford site

Ryan Companies awaits resolution of St. Paul's rent control ordinance

BY JANE MCCLURE

Work continues at Highland Bridge on new rowhouses, a new medical office building, new senior housing and supportive housing and the nearly completed Weidner Apartments/Lunds & Byerlys mixed-use development. However, the construction of all other new apartment buildings has been put on hold in the wake of voters' approval of the new rent control ordinance in Saint Paul. The ordinance does not take

effect until May, but it has halted work on four Highland Bridge buildings with a total estimated market value of \$250 million.

The ordinance limits rent increases on all residential properties in the city to 3 percent per year. With inflation now running at about twice that rate, investors have become increasingly hesitant to put their money in rental housing in Saint Paul. Developers have urged Mayor Melvin Carter and the City Council to amend the ordinance with an exemption for new construction. Carter has indicated his support for such an exemption, but the City Council appears to be divided over the issue.

Rent control has made it more challenging to finance new rental housing in all of Saint Paul, according to Maureen Michalski, Ryan Companies' vice president for real estate development.

Ryan has stopped work on three housing projects near Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue and another building at the northeast corner of Highland Bridge's central water feature. The four buildings together include about 400 apartments and 47,000 square feet of commercial space. "We won't be spending resources on those projects until there is more clarity on the rent control ordinance," Michalski said.

Ryan officials told the Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee on January 18 that they will not be seeking the rezoning of any property at Highland Bridge earmarked for multi-family housing. The rent control restrictions also have nothing to do with Ryan's interest in possibly developing several new sports facilities for the University of Saint Thomas (see story on page 1).

The property on the former Ford site that is being considered for a collegiate hockey arena and baseball and softball fields is in the so-called gateway zones, which allow for sports facilities. However, the great majority of Highland Bridge is zoned for multi-family housing.

When Highland Bridge was being planned, new market-rate housing was intended to help pay for new infrastructure at Highland Bridge and new affordable housing at Highland Bridge and elsewhere in Saint Paul. That was to happen through tax increment financing (TIF). "The new rent control policy has threatened those funding sources," Michalski said.

Rent control has threatened the future of rental housing throughout the city,

HIGHLAND BRIDGE ▶ 3

1◀ ST. THOMAS SPORTS FACILITIES

its search for new athletic facilities, according to McDonough. Saint Thomas would like the facilities to be in Saint Paul, at a site that is convenient to mass transit and near businesses that could contribute to a good fan experience.

"If I had my druthers, we'd play all of our contests on campus," said Phil Esten, UST vice president and director of athletics. "But we don't have that luxury." The campus does not have the space for the new facilities, and its expansion is restricted by the university's 2004 conditional use permit with the city.

A new hockey arena is the university's top sports priority currently. For the past two decades, it has shared Saint Thomas Academy's hockey arena in Mendota Heights, but that arrangement is not likely

to continue. The university needs a college-level ice arena with 3,500 to 5,000 seats, Esten said. A market analysis is now underway to determine everything that is needed in a new arena.

Saint Thomas has no timeline for building new facilities, according to Mark Vangsgaard, UST vice president for finance and chief financial officer. University officials did not mention any other possible sites for those facilities on January 18. Vangsgaard noted that "there is not a lot of undeveloped land" near campus.

One of the goals for the new facilities is that they be a "broad community asset," McDonough said. Public use of the new facilities attracted the interest of many people at the HDC meeting. Esten outlined possible shared-use opportunities when the facilities were not being used by the university. As the parent of a young High-

land ballplayer, Esten said he would be especially interested in shared field use since one of the three Highland Ball baseball diamonds was lost with the redevelopment of the Ford site.

Saint Thomas' new facilities would be financed largely through philanthropic donations and revenue from athletics. The university's willingness to share the facilities could be an incentive for the city to get involved with helping with related infrastructure costs and possible tax increment financing.

The railroad property is already tax-exempt. However, McDonough said UST would not be opposed to paying for its share of city services.

One issue HDC committee members raised is traffic. Saint Thomas' men's and women's hockey teams each play about 18 home games a year. UST officials discussed

various transit options, including shuttle buses to transport athletes and spectators to and from games.

Another issue was how the new sports facilities would affect plans to redevelop the five-mile CP Railway spur as a new recreational trail and transit route. That plan was adopted by the City Council in 2018, though it hinges on a public entity purchasing the rail spur.

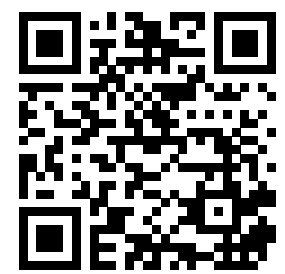
According to Ryan and UST officials, the use of the rail spur as a recreational trail would still be possible even with the new sports facilities there. The HDC is expected to vote next month on a resolution urging local units of government to push for the purchase of the rail corridor, which extends from Highland Bridge to the area around the former Schmidt Brewery in the West End.



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W.A. Frost manager Mike Noyes confirms the vaccination status of patrons (from left) Jaclyn Wainwright, Julie Vandelac, Laura Cook and Andy Thieman before seating them last week. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

1◀ RESTAURANT VACCINE MANDATE

Vaccine booster shots are not required by the mandate, and children under the age of 5 are exempt. Carter's initial order also required all employees of restaurants and entertainment venues under the mandate to be vaccinated or regularly show negative test results. However, when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down President Joe Biden's vaccine mandate for all businesses with over 100 employees, Carter amended the mandate to not include employees.

The mandate applies to bowling alleys and theaters that are licensed by the city and serve food or beverages. Ticketed events at Xcel Energy Center and Allianz Field are also included, although for them the mandate does not take effect until January 26.

"I'm very supportive of the action taken by the mayor," said former Saint Paul mayor and Highland Park resident Jim Scheibel. "I very much welcome the mandate for restaurants. Our condition is still very serious."

Maria Gans, who owns Luci Ancora at 2060 Randolph Ave. with her siblings Daniela and Stephen Smith, also welcomed the mandate. "From the time all of this started, we've asked, 'How do we make our restaurant safe?'" Gans said. With all of their staff fully vaccinated and masked, she added, "this is not going to last forever. Many other cities in the country and the world have been made safer this way. We can follow their lead without it having to be difficult."

Maria Liberman, who with her husband Norm Liberman owns Moscow on the Hill at 371 Selby Ave., said they, too, are happy to follow the mandate. The couple are both physicians, and they understand the importance of containing contagion, she said. "I'm personally in support of vaccinations," Liberman said, though she understands those who have differing perspectives.

"I'm absolutely 100 percent behind the mandate," said Highland Park resident Joanne Collins, who worked throughout her career as a cardiac nurse and nurse manager for Hennepin County. "With our hospitals so strained, we need to do whatever we can to help take care of staff and to keep people from becoming ill."

"We have done our best to keep both our employees and guests safe throughout this process," said Stephanie Shimp. "The new vaccine mandate puts additional stress on our team members by asking folks who are trained in hospitality to be enforcement agents, but we can do it."

Collins does not believe the mandate will hurt the restaurant business. She spent much of the last year vaccinating people. During that time, she and her husband continued to frequent the Highland Grill, 771 S. Cleveland Ave., because of the safety measures the Highland Village restaurant had put in place.

"We have done our best to keep both our employees and guests safe throughout this process," said Stephanie Shimp, co-owner of Blue Plate Restaurant Company, which owns the Highland Grill and Groveland Tap in Saint Paul. "This has included masking when state and city guidelines have indicated, an on-site vaccine clinic for our employees, and a COVID booster shot and flu shot clinic in November. We created a wellness committee and provided access and information on mental health services to support our teams. The new vaccine mandate puts additional stress on our team members by asking folks who are trained in hospitality to be enforcement agents, but we can do it."

Peter Drinan, general manager and executive chef at W.A. Frost, 347 Selby Ave., believes the vaccine mandate will not only make indoor dining safer, but benefit restaurants as well. W.A. Frost has required patrons to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID test since last September. Customers are also asked to wear masks when they are not seated at their tables or the bar.

"Since COVID hit, we've followed CDC guidelines to a 'T,'" Drinan said. "Our approach has been to trust the experts rather than anything political, (and our) business has come back to pre-pandemic levels. Some people might believe the new safeguards will harm business, but we're confident of the opposite."

2◀ HIGHLAND BRIDGE

Michalski added. She used the mixed-use Harper development at Selby and Snelling avenues as an example. Ryan Companies has about 2 percent equity in that new five-story building, with investors providing the rest. The main investor in the Harper is a pension fund, which needs a certain rate of return to pay employee pensions and now may be looking at projects outside of Saint Paul to get that return, she said.

When HDC committee members asked why the developers at Highland Bridge are not considering building more owner-occupied condominiums or single-family homes in place of rental housing, Michalski said the intent is to stick with the city's master plan for the site. Condominiums are more expensive and complicated to build than apartments, she said, and single-family homes would affect the development's overall market value and what can be gained through TIF.

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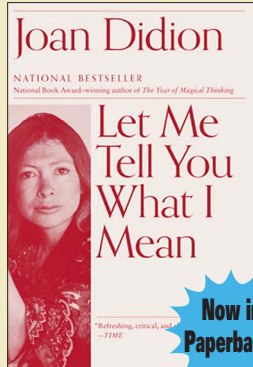
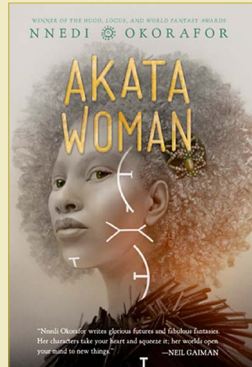
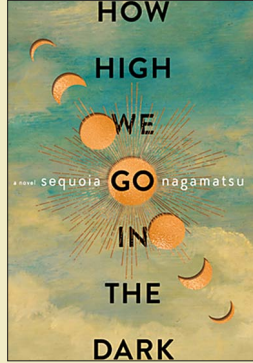
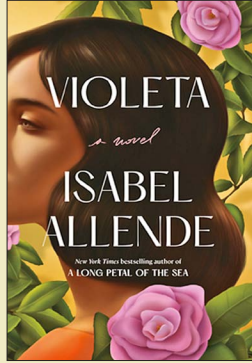
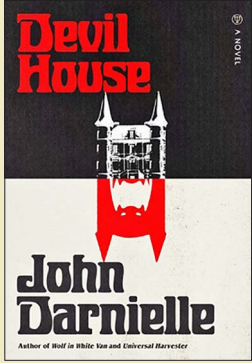
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A rendering of the five-story, 114-unit apartment building proposed for the southeast corner of Lexington Parkway and James Avenue. Six houses will have to be removed to make way for the new building.

LEXINGTON-JAMES

from northwest to southeast.

Opponents said that while they support the need for greater housing density and more affordable units, previous plans for a 91-unit building had already won the commission's approval in 2021. They speculated that the increase in the number of units was based on economic reasons, which cannot be considered a valid legal argument for claiming practical difficulty.

"This is a tough one," said commissioner Nate Hood, noting that he supported the smaller project. He called the slope argument "flimsy."

The revised project should be considered as a new request, said commissioner Kristine Grill in supporting the variances. She said the current plan is not that different from the one that was approved in 2021.

The project had a recommendation of support from the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. However, several neighbors opposed the plan, saying the building would be out of scale for the area.

The project has been on the drawing board for more than two years and was delayed at one point to allow for citywide changes to multifamily zoning. The changes allow more density if developers add affordable units and agree to keep them so for at least 15 years.

The Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit and variances for the project last March, even though city staff recommended denial at the time. Since then the project was redesigned to add 4 feet 2 inches of height and more balconies, and to eliminate surface parking. That triggered a new application, which was recommended for approval by city staff.

The project required a conditional use permit to allow a building height of 69 feet 10 inches instead of 65 feet 8 inches. It also needed new setback variances. Instead of a minimum setback of 18 feet 11 inches, 4 feet 5 inches was requested on the south side, 10 feet on the north side and zero feet on the east side. A front setback variance along Lexington was no longer needed.

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Survey says: Improve West 7th parking

BY JANE MCCLURE

Improving signage and enforcement of on-street parking, developing consistent rules for permit parking districts and using striping to make on-street spaces more efficient are some of the ideas being sought to improve parking congestion in Saint Paul's West End neighborhood.

The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation reviewed a parking study and survey results for permit parking Area 7 on January 10, and forwarded several recommendations to the City Council for consideration.

Area 7 covers several blocks on both sides of the West Seventh Street and Smith Avenue intersection, including sections of Forbes, Harrison and Goodrich avenues, and Garfield, Douglas, Leech, Wilkin and McBoal streets. Most of the district was created in 1991 to address concerns about commuter and event parking. Hospital and medical office parking was also a factor.

Small sections of Douglas and Goodrich were added to the district in 2018 to address spillover business parking. That triggered a city-sponsored parking study that was published in 2019.

The recommendations of the Fort Road Federation on January 10 are among the more modest ones for short-term changes outlined in the study. The district council is also recommending that any long-term changes should be considered holistically.

"Parking issues are really dealt with on a piecemeal basis," said Casey Carmody, chair of the district council's Transportation and Land Use Committee. According to him, there is also a need to encourage walking, biking and the use of public transit to reduce parking demand.

Other district council members want

to see more bike racks. Federation board president Dana deMaster would like to see Metro Transit extend downtown's 50-cent bus fare zone along West Seventh to promote transit ridership.

One complaint is that streets in Area 7 do not have consistent permit parking rules. Some blocks allow no parking except by permit, while others allow two-hour parking from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. except by permit.

The current parking recommendations were informed by a new survey that was sent to 600 people. Of the 109 who responded, 79 percent had Area 7 permits and 93 percent had a motor vehicle.

Residents had mixed feelings about parking solutions, but strongly opposed taking away daytime permit parking. Residents and businesses surveyed oppose adding parking meters. Both groups find permit parking rules to be confusing.

Fourteen businesses responded. Most said removing free parking would negatively affect customers and employees. They supported the ability to park for up to two hours in posted permit areas.

Longer-term ideas outlined in the study could be considered in the future. The most ambitious and potentially costly idea would be closing some streets that cross West Seventh to create more parking. That idea has been considered up and down much of the street over the years. Eight intersections have been suggested as possibilities, including Smith-McBoal, Goodrich-Dousman, Western-Superior, Ann-Superior and Western-Saint Clair.

Another idea is to expand the use of privately owned lots for public parking. That could come into play when planning for the Riverview Corridor modern streetcar line gets further along.

Water utility seeks to step up replacement of lead service lines

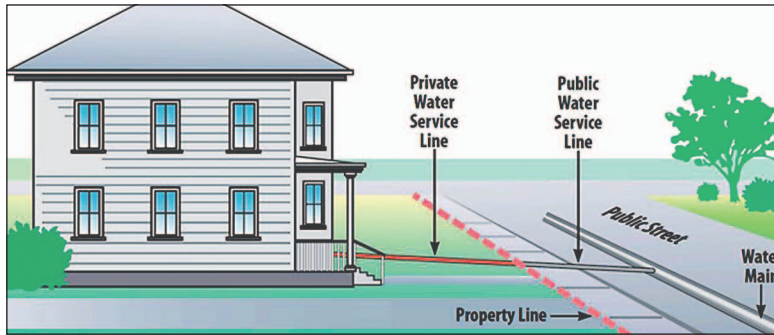
By JANE McCLURE

Replacing the roughly 26,600 lead water service lines in the area served by Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) could cost as much as \$275 million. Yet replacement is needed not just for health reasons, but to meet changing federal regulations designed to better protect the public from exposure to lead.

The SPRWS Board of Water Commissioners on January 11 heard a presentation on the extent of lead water service replacement needed and will consider an accelerated 10-year plan for replacing all such pipes when it meets again on February 8.

Young children are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure. "We know it's the right thing to do," said Mara Humphrey, chair of the water board. However, she conceded that replacing lead service lines has a big price tag.

"It's not a cheap problem," said David Wagner, engineering division manager for SPRWS. In today's dollars, replacement of all lead service lines in the utility's system would cost \$223 million. However, factor in inflation and



An illustration of a typical water service line and ownership responsibilities.

street repairs, and the cost could reach \$275 million.

The average age of lead service lines in the SPRWS system is 100 years. They were installed up through the mid- to late 1920s, though Wagner said there are instances where they were installed into the '40s.

SPRWS is tracking where lead water service lines still exist. The 26,660 number comes from 8,900 lines of full lead service in the street right-of-way and on private property, and another 11,200 where there is copper pipe in the right-of-way and lead pipe on private property. Another 6,500 private properties have pipes of unknown materials.

Most of SPRWS's lead water service connectors are in Saint

Paul, with about 500 in West Saint Paul and smaller numbers in other cities that are part of the utility's system.

SPRWS has been replacing about 400 lead service lines a year in street rights-of-way when roads are rebuilt or water mains replaced. The replacement program has gone on for more than 25 years.

Typically, only about 5-10 percent of property owners opt to replace the section of lead pipe extending onto their private property in conjunction with the road work. That is even with the option of having the costs paid back with property taxes over a 20-year period. The cost to replace a lead water service line on private property is about \$6,000.

SPRWS had state funding in 2021 that provided \$1,500 for general applicants and \$2,500 for low-income applicants and registered child-care providers to replace their lead water service on private property. That resulted in 24 percent of property owners opting to replace their lead service lines in road project areas. Still, Wagner said, only a few low-income people and childcare providers took advantage of the funds.

Moving forward, one possibility Wagner raised is that the voluntary replacement of lead service lines on private property may have to become mandatory. That is a policy decision the water board would have to make.

A variety of new funding sources are also being eyed to replace lead water service lines. One is from the federal American Rescue Plan, and another is \$40 million in state funds. Other grants, loans and bonding have also been suggested, as has a water rate increase.

A major factor driving lead pipe replacement are revisions to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's lead and copper pipes rule, which take effect in October

2024. The rule puts more stringent testing and water quality regulations in place. SPRWS will have to work with the Minnesota Department of Health on a stepped-up lead water service replacement program.

SPRWS staff also asked Saint Paul's Truth in Sale of Housing Board last year to require information about lead water service when a home is being purchased. The board denied the request, so City Council members Chris Tolbert and Dai Thao may ask for the change via council action.

Tolbert called for "bold action" to replace all lead pipes in the SPRWS system. "We all agree that there's no level of lead that's safe in a child's bloodstream," he said. "We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to use state and federal resources for this. We need to get every lead pipe out of Saint Paul."

Property owners can see if they have lead water service lines via an interactive map at tinyurl.com/3652bn25. SPRWS also provides free kits for testing lead at its headquarters at 1900 Rice St. For information, contact 651-266-6270 or water-lead-replacements@stpaul.gov.

City Council adopts new zoning rules for faith-based institutions

By JANE McCLURE

New zoning regulations for faith-based institutions were approved on January 19 by the Saint Paul City Council, just days before a federal court deadline of February 1. The regulations provide clarity on how religious institutions can accommodate everything from day care centers to senior programs. They also provide consistency with the city's new regulations on homeless shelters.

More than 150 individuals and institutions submitted comments on the regulations at hearings or in writing. Widespread opposition to an early draft last fall prompted the city's Planning Commission to rewrite the ordinance with many restrictions removed.

The latest draft elicited only a single comment at the public hearing. Randi Roth, executive director of Interfaith Action, objected to the 30-day limit for anyone staying in emergency housing at a faith-based institution. "Eighty-three days is our average stay," Roth said, referring to the homeless families served at Interfaith Action's Project Home shelter at the Sisters

of Saint Joseph of Carondelet's Provincial House, 1880 Randolph Ave. The City Council extended the maximum stay to 90 days, giving Project Home more time to move its clients into permanent housing.

Roth said that as the COVID-19 pandemic dissipates, Project Home hopes to resume its collaboration with other faith-based groups to provide shelter for homeless families. "Even with our 100 beds (at Provincial House), there's still a substantial wait list for family shelters in Ramsey County," she said. It is possible that some of the faith-based sites will agree to house families for more than 30 days, she added.

The new ordinance brings the city into compliance with a 2019 U.S. District Court order that was part of its settlement with Listening House, a drop-in day shelter for homeless people operated at First Lutheran Church in Dayton's Bluff.

In its final draft, the ordinance does not regulate so-called accessory uses at faith-based institutions nor the space needed to accommodate them. That opens the door to multipurpose spaces used for events central to a faith-based organization's mission and those open to the greater public.

City eases rules for adding new dwellings in single-family zones

By JANE McCLURE

Zoning changes that are intended to reduce the housing shortage in Saint Paul and make it easier to construct accessory dwellings and small houses on narrow lots were approved on January 19 by the City Council. The unanimous vote opens the second phase of a zoning study that is focused on promoting the building of one- to four-unit dwellings across the city. Public meetings on the changes proposed in the second phase will be held virtually in February and March.

With the changes approved on January 19, property owners will find it easier to add accessory dwelling units (ADUs) above a garage, elsewhere on a lot or attached to an existing home. Property owners no longer have to live in one of the units on the lot, and restrictions on the size of the ADUs have also been eased.

Registered student dwellings near the University of Saint Thomas campus in Merriam Park and Macalester-Groveland may now house up to six residents rather than just four. The approved changes also open the door to smaller houses and to a

cluster of smaller houses on a single-family lot. New houses may now be narrower than the previous minimum of 22 feet. The minimum setbacks from property lines and the minimum distance between adjacent buildings have also been reduced.

The second phase of the zoning study is more ambitious than the first phase. It could further ease restrictions on the size and types of new housing, make it easier to convert large homes for multi-family uses and allow duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in areas where they are now forbidden.

The virtual meetings on the second phase are open to anyone, although they will be focused on different parts of the city. The Macalester-Groveland and Highland district councils will host the first meeting from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, February 1. Other meetings are scheduled from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, February 10, for the Hamline-Midway, Como and North End neighborhoods, and from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, for the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. To register for the meeting links, visit engagstpaul.org/1to4housingstudy.

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Trial begins of officers accused of violating Floyd's rights

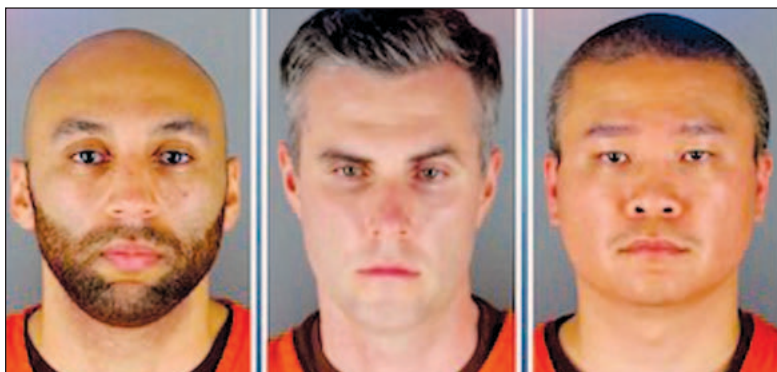
St. Paul closes roads, increases security at start of federal case

BY JANE MCCLURE

The federal civil rights trial of three former Minneapolis police officers indicted in connection with George Floyd's death in 2020 began on January 20 with jury selection at the federal courthouse in downtown Saint Paul. The trial has resulted in road closures and parking restrictions that began on January 18, and could end up costing the city an estimated \$2 million in police overtime salaries and other expenses.

Former officers Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao face federal charges of abusing their roles as police officers to deprive Floyd of his constitutional rights with the use of unreasonable force. Former officer Derek Chauvin, who pinned Floyd down for more than nine minutes, was found guilty of murder last year. Chauvin in late 2021 pled guilty to the civil rights charges.

U.S. District Judge Paul Magnuson is presiding over the trial of the three officers, which is being held at the Warren E. Burger Federal Building, 316 N. Robert St. Opening statements were set to begin on January 24. Saint Paul City Council members have ex-



Former Minneapolis police officers J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao face federal civil rights charges in George Floyd's death.

pressed frustration that the trial is being held there instead of in Minneapolis. Saint Paul's federal courthouse is smaller and is located near schools and day care centers, as well as many businesses, offices and homes.

"I don't know why this trial is being held in Saint Paul," said Ward 2 council member Rebecca Noecker. She cited the disruption that the trial could cause due to protesters and expressed hope that the city could get reimbursed by the federal government or the city of Minneapolis.

Saint Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell is seeking reimbursement for security costs from the federal government. All city departments have been asked to track all costs related to the trial. It is unknown what the final costs will be, but media reports indicated that Hennepin County spent about \$3.7 million and the Minneapolis Police Department around

\$2.9 million on overtime pay during Chauvin's trial last spring.

The trial of the three officers comes at a time when a short-staffed Saint Paul Police Department is coping with the latest surge of COVID. As of mid-January, the department had 92 employees on sick leave, said Assistant Chief Robert Thomasser. The department's current staffing level is 547 officers, but only 520 can be deployed.

"The biggest challenge is trying to work through our staffing challenges. Of course the COVID surge isn't helping us," Thomasser said.

The police department has cancelled staff vacations in February and has shifted personnel around to cover the trial. It also is activating its agreements with other law enforcement agencies in the East Metro Response Group. The group formed in 2021 in preparation for Chauvin's trial and

includes law enforcement agencies from Ramsey, Washington and Dakota counties.

Thomasser has assured council members that the response group would work at Saint Paul's direction and follow the police department's practices. "We don't arrest people who are trying to express their first amendment rights," he said.

Several city departments are involved in planning and response to the trial. Twelve subcommittees are working on issues ranging from command and control to public engagement.

During the trial, there will be increased police staffing in downtown. Thomasser said officers would act more as "ambassadors" at that time, helping people get around and responding to issues as needed.

Once a verdict is announced, the Police Department is expected to be ready for any demonstrations. While that is a time when there is the most risk, Thomasser said, the department does not anticipate problems.

Saint Paul officers will have the strongest presence close to the courthouse and a designated public gathering space. Thomasser said the plan is not to have a heavy police presence. "You won't see people with helmets, you won't see people with batons," he said.

Preparations have been underway for about two months,

Thomasser said. Fencing went up around the federal courthouse early this month.

Beginning January 18, Robert and Jackson streets between Kellogg Boulevard and Fourth Street will be closed for the duration of the trial. Parking on the north side of Kellogg, from Cedar Avenue to Robert, will also be restricted, and the Capital City Bikeway on Jackson Street will be closed.

The City Council on January 12 approved the closure of the skyway between the Pioneer Endicott Building and the federal courthouse to the general public. The city's Skyway Governance Committee recommended approval of the closure.

Ramsey County's Downtown Service Center at 160 E. Kellogg Blvd. will be temporarily relocated to Suite 2500 on the skyway level of Metro Square, 121 E. Seventh Place, as of January 18. The center's overnight emergency shelter will remain operating on a referral-only basis.

Metro Transit bus and light-rail Green Line schedules could also be affected by events related to the trial. Metro Transit riders can check metrotransit.org and sign up for rider alerts.

Information and updates about road closures, parking restrictions and other activities outside the courthouse will be posted on the Saint Paul Police Department's website at stpaul.gov/departments/police.



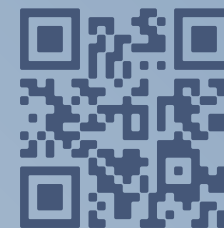
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VIEWPOINT

INBOX

The mania of some motorists

Where oh where is Q?
I want a James Bond car tricked out with 20-inch drill bits that at the touch of a button emerge from the rear of my car, boring holes straight through the engine compartment of the tailgater behind me.
On rare occasion, one can understand the need to go faster because of a true emergency. But for most of you, it has become ingrained behavior—speeding, running red lights, hopscotching lanes, gliding through stop signs, blaring the horn the millisecond the light changes to green.
Your commute is not some testosterone-fueled competition. You are responsible for respectfully controlling a heavy, gasoline-powered machine that helps you get somewhere faster than walking or riding a horse. Your inflated opinion of your needs astounds. The lesson not learned at your parent's knee is that in the scheme of the universe, you are just not that important. So do the right thing.

Mary Therese Nelson
Highland Park

Think globally, ignore locally

A record number of murders in 2021. Carjacking and general lawlessness at all-time highs. University Avenue still hasn't been built back after the Floyd riots. Restaurants haven't recovered from COVID shutdowns. Rental property construction is at a standstill. And the Saint Paul City Council votes to declare a climate change emergency.
So glad the City Council has time to take on the important issues.

Gary Fischbach
Mendota Heights

Support Minnesota Health Plan

We have a severely broken health care system. In the early 1980s, I fought Group Health regarding surgery for my child. I was told they would not refer him out of their system because their surgeons would do it. None of them had ever done this kind of surgery. I found a specialist at the University of Minnesota who had done thousands. Two and half years of court battles and appeals (which I made without an attorney due to money), they eventually agreed to reverse their decision and allow the surgery to happen with the surgeon who had much experience.
More recently, after having a bilateral mastectomy, I discover my insurance does not cover compression garments. Who wears these if they are not medically necessary? Now I need to see a doctor regarding tinnitus.



That is not covered either. All of the above while insurance companies are making record profits.
This should never happen in our country. We need to support state Senator John Marty's bill, the Minnesota Health Plan. Please let your state senator and representative know that you appreciate them supporting this important legislation.

Linda Hartmann
Merriam Park

A mob is a mob

Rabid Trump supporters watching a summer of civil disobedience, including burned-down police stations, commercial streets looted and set aflame, interstate highways blocked, and no viable legal response, thought: "Hey, if they weren't arrested or called to account, then we should be able to get away with a bit of Tea Party-type government shaking."
The irony is that the Trumpeteers on January 6, 2021, probably spent somewhere between \$1,500 and \$5,000 in fuel, lodging and wafflehouse breakfasts and half of their vacation time getting to Washington, D.C. These were not the sans-culottes nor the Hay Market hungry. The only thing they stole was our national dignity. It's

like they arrested themselves and did as much damage to the Republican Party as rioting urbanites do to their own neighborhoods and reputations.
A mob is a mob and equally ugly, whether at the gates of the Bastille or the base of the hanging tree.

Tom Dunne
Downtown Saint Paul

Don't bet on a tax cut

Would it be cool if we who paid more Minnesota taxes than needed got some of the dough back? Of course, that's a childish thought. The excess money won't be excess for long. Politicians are parasites, after all. The best we can hope for—and don't bet a cent on it—is a rate cut.

T.J. Sexton
Highland Park

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Infill housing study—A virtual session to learn about and comment on the second phase of Saint Paul’s 1-4 Unit Housing Study will be hosted by the Highland and Macalester-Groveland district councils from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, February 1. The study is evaluating the potential to create smaller-scale housing across Saint Paul. For the Zoom meeting link, visit engagestpaul.org/1to4housingstudy on February 1. For information, email 1to4HousingStudy@ci.stpaul.mn.us or call 651-266-6657.

Coordinated trash collection—In anticipation of a new or renewed contract in 2023, the Saint Paul Garbage Advisory Committee was recently formed to provide recommendations on the city’s coordinated trash collection. The committee is composed of city representatives, property owners and renters. The public can comment by visiting bit.ly/garbagecommittee.

Tree Advisory Panel—The Saint Paul Tree Advisory Panel is seeking new members to help guide the city on the preservation, promotion and enhancement of its urban canopy. Learn more at bit.ly/treeadvisorypanel.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors with an update from the Western District police commander, 7 p.m. Thursday, February 3 (virtual meeting); and Transportation Committee to discuss 2022 road construction projects in the area, 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 8 (in-person and virtual). Most HDC meetings are being held online via Zoom at this time. Select meetings will be in-person at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Agendas and meeting links are posted on the HDC website.

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, treats and a chance to win prizes. For information, visit macgrove.org/frostfest.

Housing study—A virtual session on the second phase of the city of Saint Paul’s 1-4 Unit Housing Study will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, February 1. The session is especially for those in the southwest part of the city to share ideas on expanding Saint Paul’s number of one- to four-unit dwellings. For information on the study, visit tinyurl.com/3nkv28et. The Zoom link for the session will be available on the Mac-Grove website on February 1.

Board openings—The community council will hold its annual meeting and elections in April. Board openings include two seats each in Grids 1, 3 and 5, as well as two at-large seats. For information, visit macgrove.org/board-elections. Candidates can schedule a Zoom meeting with the executive director to ask questions or receive more information. There will also be a public meeting from 6:30-

7 p.m. Wednesday, February 2, via Zoom. Email mgcc@macgrove.org if you are interested in attending.

New website—Check out the community council’s new website at macgrove.org.

Mac-Grove T-shirts—A new order of locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts has been received and includes new colors. Visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

Upcoming meetings—Housing and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 26; and board of directors, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, February 10. To receive monthly meeting notices and Zoom information, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Union Park resource map—Union Park District Council staff are beginning preliminary work on a map of resources within the neighborhood. Those who know of an establishment that they consider vital to the quality of the neighborhood may email jonah@unionparkdc.org.

Upcoming online meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 2; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, February 14; and Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 16. Click on the Zoom meeting links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

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

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Wanted: West Seventh recipes—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation is 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.

Board notes—At its January 10 meeting, the Fort Road Federation’s board of directors reviewed the parking study and survey results for permit parking Area 7 centered at West Seventh Street and Smith Avenue. It then voted to submit five recommendations to the city.

Candidates sought—A new board president, treasurer and one coordinator for each of the planning district’s three geographical areas will be elected at the board’s annual meeting in April. Those who are interested in these volunteer positions should fill out the nomination form on the website. Candidates must be 18 or older and live, own property or own a business in the area served by the Fort Road Federation. For information, email the office at fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 2; board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, February 14; and Community Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, February 17. For meeting details, see fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

MyVillager

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Volume 69, Number 24

Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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EDUCATION

Century school

Groveland celebrates 100 years as cornerstone of neighborhood

By FRANK JOSSI

On the heels of a global pandemic and a world war, Groveland Park Elementary School opened in 1921 in what was then a neighborhood of mostly vacant lots just waiting for new homes and new businesses to fill them. This year the public school at 2045 Saint Clair Ave. is celebrating its 100th anniversary, and Groveland's staff and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) have developed several programs to commemorate the centennial. That includes a website at groveland100.com where alumni can share memories, donate to the school and learn about upcoming events.

A free Panda-monium Carnival, named for the school's longtime mascot, will take place on May 13. An online auction and a ticketed fundraiser is tentatively scheduled for May 21.

The carnival may feature some of the events that were part of the Housewarming and Community Picnic held in August 1921 to mark the opening of Groveland Park Elementary, including three-legged, wheelbarrow and burlap-sack races. The school is planning to gather its entire student body in the form of a giant "100" somewhere on the grounds for a drone photograph.

Groveland principal Sarah Lightner's staff has yet to locate the time capsule that was buried by the school in 1921. "We think it's somewhere in the front yard," she said. "Our hope is that this article in MyVillager might pull in someone who remembers where it is. We're also working on creating our own time capsule from 2021-22. When I subbed in a classroom the other day, we made a list of all the things we wanted to include in the time capsule, such as iPads, face masks and other things that are unique to this time."

Groveland's teachers are planning to enlist students in the creation of oral histories

through interviews of Groveland alumni. Students will conduct a tree-planting project. However, the most ambitious goal for the centennial year may be the creation of an outdoor classroom behind the school designed with the help of a landscape architect.

"The outdoor classroom was inspired by the last few years," said PTO member and 100th anniversary organizer Ropal Phadke, the parent of two Groveland Park graduates and a current student at the school. "We heard from teachers that they're looking for more outdoor spaces for students so they can get out of the building and breathe fresh air. We need spaces that are contemplative and meditative for the kinds of activities you wouldn't do on a playground."

The PTO and Lightner hope to name the outdoor classroom Nellie's Place in honor of Black civil rights activist Nellie Griswald Francis, who moved into a house across the street from the school in 1924 with her husband, prominent Saint Paul attorney William T. Francis. Local residents protested the Francis' move to the then all-white



A class of 1st- and 2nd-graders posed on the front steps of Groveland Park Elementary School in 1931.



Groveland Park 2nd-graders Ilyas Ali, Oliver Boesel and Oliver Gonzalez conferred with their instructor, Tracy van Natta, during a lesson last week at the elementary school. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

neighborhood and threatened the couple. This episode was revisited in a recent History Theatre play, *Not in My Neighborhood*, co-written by the father of one of Groveland's teachers.

So far, the school has been unable to find a relative of the Francis to assist in the planning of the outdoor classroom. "I think everyone's really moved by the idea of naming this garden as a way of looking forward to a new era where we make amends for the last century," Phadke said.

Groveland Park has another connection to the history of African Americans in Saint Paul. The school was designed by the first Black registered architect in Minnesota, Clarence "Cap" Wigington. Wigington had a hand in the design of 53 buildings in Saint Paul, including 13 other schools.

The building of Groveland Park Elementary was initially advocated in 1914 by the local Groveland Park Improvement Association. The city purchased two city blocks in 1917 for \$5,000, but the building project languished. "Ow-

The most ambitious goal for the centennial year may be the creation of an outdoor classroom behind the school designed with the help of a landscape architect.

ing to the chaotic condition of the country, many vexatious delays occurred because of the inability to secure deliveries of materials," according to the program for the 1921 Housewarming and Community Picnic.

The original Groveland School had 24 classrooms and cost \$160,000 to construct. The school has seen five additions over the years, all in keeping with the original design. The large windows allow for lots of natural light, Lightner said, and the natural woodwork creates a warm environment for learning. Parents of prospective students who tour the school today say "it reminds them of the elementary school they went to," Lightner said. "It certainly reminds me of the one I went to in Iowa. It feels like home."

GROVELAND PARK TURNS 100 ▶ 11




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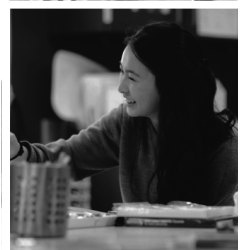
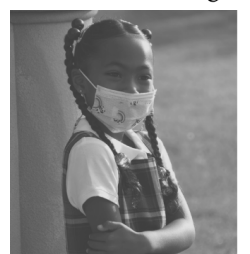


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HPC finds Kellogg Blvd. bikeway won't affect historic properties

By JANE MCCLURE

A grade-separated bikeway along Kellogg Boulevard between Saint Peter and Jackson streets is now being planned as the next leg of downtown Saint Paul's Capital City Bikeway, with construction being eyed in 2023.

The half-mile project got a boost on January 10 with a determination from the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) that it would have "no adverse effect" on adjacent historic properties. The HPC is asking that all future work along Kellogg be done in a way that preserves the street's median as much as possible.

"Overall it's a very good project," said commissioner Joseph Peroutka. He and other commissioners called for signage along the bikeway to direct users to other historic districts in downtown, including Lowertown and Rice Park.

The first segment of the Kellogg bikeway would be followed by one between Saint Peter and West Seventh Street. Design work for the second phase would start in 2024. All of Kellogg is designated as a bike route in the city's bike plan that was adopted in 2015. The plan, which was amended in 2017 to include the Capital City Bikeway, is now in the process of being updated with a focus on creating more bike paths separated from motor vehicles.

HPC review is needed because the

planned first phase of the Kellogg bikeway would pass by several historic properties. Some already have historic designation, including the Women's City Club building and the City Hall/Ramsey County Courthouse. Other sites may be eligible for future designation.

The commission and city staff discussed whether Kellogg Boulevard itself could be considered a historic resource. Originally constructed as Third Street, the roadway was rebuilt in the 1920s and named for Frank B. Kellogg, an attorney who served in the U.S. Senate and as U.S. Secretary of State. He co-authored the Kellogg-Briand Pact, an international agreement that outlawed war, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929.

The current median design near Kellogg Mall Park is original to the 1920s construction. However, when a streetscape project was planned along Kellogg in 1999, studies determined that the street itself was not eligible for historic designation because of the changes it underwent over the years.

The 4.2-acre Kellogg Mall Park, which was built as a promenade, was also discussed by the HPC. However, it has undergone many changes since it was laid out in 1922. The park was extensively redesigned in the 1980s in an effort led by Public Art Saint Paul and the city. A pergola, foundation, sculptures and new pavers were added to reflect the city's history.

Macalester receives OK to turn Lincoln Ave. home into offices

Macalester College was given the green light on January 21 to turn a single-family home at 1657 Lincoln Ave. into offices for its Sustainability Department and High Winds Fund. The Saint Paul Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit that extends Macalester's campus boundary to include the house. The home has been owned by the college since the 1990s and has been used as a faculty residence.

According to Deanna Seppanen, director of the High Winds Fund, Macalester is seeking the additional office space in light of ongoing COVID-19 concerns. The college has no plans to substantially increase its enrollment over the next two decades, she said. Its goal is to have a total of 2,250 students, or about 200 more than it had in the fall of 2020.

Noting that Macalester owns other rental houses on that block of Lincoln Avenue, Seppanen said the home at 1657 Lincoln could be converted back to residential use in the future.



Groveland Park Elementary School 4th- and 5th-graders gathered last week on the playground stairway during recess with their principal, Sarah Lightner. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

10◀ GROVELAND PARK TURNS 100

Groveland Park has 375 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In its marketing materials, the school emphasizes academic excellence, creative arts, technology, cultural diversity and environmental awareness. The 5th-graders are traditionally rewarded with four days at Camp Widjiwagan in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

According to Groveland teacher Jeff Sambs, technology has changed the look of education since he began working at the school 21 years ago. Still, much remains the

same, including chalkboards, Friday soccer matches and the annual trip to Camp Widjiwagan.

Teacher Daniel Andersen, who worked in other schools for 30 years, came to Groveland three years ago. "This year, I have a nice bunch of kids, maybe one of my best," he said. "I like teaching here because the kids are interesting, and I've received good support from colleagues."

"It's not like all schools aren't the pride of the local community," Lightner said. "But Groveland Park is a special place, something the city and the community invested in. It's a cornerstone of the neighborhood."



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Crime Report

The following criminal incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police reports. For more reports not in this print edition, go to MyVillager.com.

Highland Park

Burglary—Erik's Bike Shop, 2191 Ford Pkwy., was burglarized at 5:30 a.m. Saturday, January 8.

Theft—A handgun was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 600 block of South Snelling Avenue during the evening of January 5-6.

—A woman was arrested for driving a stolen vehicle and felony possession of narcotics on the 2100 block of Ford Parkway at 8:26 a.m. Saturday, January 15.

—Three suspicious vehicles containing multiple males were seen pulling into a parking lot on the 1100 block of Rankin Street at 7:20 a.m. Monday, January 17. The suspects fled when police arrived, but at least two of the vehicles had been stolen.

Assault—A domestic assault with a gun that included the theft of a vehicle was reported on the 1200 block of Randolph Avenue at 11:05 a.m. Monday, January 10.

Miscellaneous—A 39-year-old man was arrested for violating a restraining order after he was found sleeping inside a victim's apartment on the 800 block of South Cleveland Avenue at 6:07 p.m. Tuesday, January 11.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—An occupied apartment was broken into on the 1200 block of Marshall Avenue between 10:29-11:42 p.m. Friday, January 7.

Theft—Two male shoplifters were seen carrying two vacuum cleaners out of the Midway Target at 11:16 a.m. Saturday, January 15. The suspects were located at the Hamline Avenue light-rail station, where they left the vacuums behind and fled.

Macalester-Groveland

Car with puppy stolen—A vehicle containing a 4-month-old puppy was reported stolen on the 1700 block of James Avenue at 6 a.m. Monday, January 17. The owner had reportedly left the vehicle running while he went back inside his home for a moment and returned to find the vehicle and dog missing. The dog is a tan bullmastiff named Kua and was wearing a red collar.

The stolen vehicle, a dark blue 2006 Audi A6 wagon, had Wisconsin plates AMY-3255. A \$5,000 reward was being offered for the return of the dog. Visit findkua.com.

Burglary—A home break-in was reported on the 2100 block of Stanford Avenue on January 13-17.

—Saint Croix Cleaners, 300 S. Snelling Ave., was burglarized at 8:32 a.m. Monday, January 17.

Theft—A hit-and-run accident involving a stolen vehicle was reported on Hamline and Jefferson avenues at 8:10 a.m. Friday, January 7. The suspect got out of the stolen vehicle and fled the scene.

—A trailer was reported stolen on the 2100 block of Berkeley Avenue at 4 p.m. Wednesday, January 12.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—Break-ins at two construction sites were reported on the 1800 block of Orchard Heights Lane at 10:16 a.m. Monday, January 3.

—A business break-in was reported on the 700 block of North Plaza Drive at 10:34 a.m. Monday, January 14.

Theft—Multiple thefts from vehicles were reported on the 1400 block of Highway 13 on January 8, and the 900 block of Mendota Heights Road on January 11.

—Police responded to a theft in progress and arrested a male with some of the stolen property in his possession at 7:26 p.m. Wednesday, January 12, on the 1300 block of Highway 13.

Merriam Park

Homicide—The Ramsey County medical examiner identified Otis Rodney Elder, 38, of Saint Paul as the man who was fatally shot around 9:30 p.m. Monday, January 10, on Prior and Oakley avenues. Officers who rushed to the scene found him lying in the street suffering from a gunshot wound. He was taken to Regions Hospital where he was pronounced dead. No suspects had been identified, no motive had been determined and no arrests had been made. Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call 651-266-5650. It was the second homicide of the year in Saint Paul.

Burglary—An apartment break-in was reported on the 1900 block of Marshall Avenue between 8:02-8:31 a.m. Wednesday, January 12.

Assault—An assault with a dangerous weapon involving two employees was reported at Cooperative Plating, 271 N. Snelling Ave., at 7:20 p.m. Thursday, January 6. The victim suffered head injuries, but was cleared by medics.

Snelling-Hamline

Robbery—A strong-arm carjacking was reported on Snelling and University avenues at 2:05 p.m. Thursday, January 6. The vehicle was later found crashed into trees on the 800 block of University.

Burglary—A dirt bike was reported stolen from a garage on the 1500 block of Selby Avenue at 10:43 a.m. Friday, January 14.

Summit Hill

Robbery—A woman was the victim of a strong-arm robbery that was reported on the 700 block of Grand Avenue at 5:11 p.m. Sunday, January 9.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on Milton Street and Linwood Avenue on January 14, the 600 block of Lincoln Avenue on January 16, on Lexington Parkway and Lincoln on January 18, and the 500 block of Lincoln on January 13.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1100 block of Grand Avenue on January 15, on Victoria Street and Goodrich Avenue on January 15-16, and the 800 block of Saint Clair Avenue on January 15-16.

Summit-University

Burglary—The front door was broken and several items were reported stolen from the hallway of an apartment complex on the 200 block of Selby Avenue at 9:33 a.m. Wednesday, January 5.

—A break-in of an apartment storage locker was reported on the 100 block of Mackubin Street at 10:35 a.m. Thursday, January 6.

—A burglary was reported on the 800 block of Ashland Avenue on January 7-8.

—A woman said two suspects entered her apartment, assaulted her, and demanded money and prescription drugs around 11:25 a.m. Wednesday, January 19, on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue.

Theft—A gun was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 400 block of Dayton Avenue between 6:31-8:54 a.m. Wednesday, January 19.

Assault—A staff member was assaulted by a parent at J.J. Hill School, 998 Selby Ave., at 2:35 p.m. Monday, January 10.

—A felony assault was reported on the 300 block of North Saint Albans at 9:45 p.m. Friday, January 14. A male victim said his friend's child pulled a gun on him and threatened to shoot him. A police dog was unable to track the suspect after he fled.

—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on the 800 block of Holly Avenue around 10 a.m. Tuesday, January 18.

Miscellaneous—A woman reported that two of her vehicle's tires were slashed by a suspect who was violating an order for protection at 11:51 a.m. Sunday, January 9, on the 800 block of Dayton Avenue.

—A 38-year-old man was arrested for trespassing and an outstanding warrant after he was found sleeping in the hallway of a building on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 11.

—A male tenant was cited for disorderly conduct after police received multiple complaints of loud noises coming from his apartment on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 11:25 p.m. Wednesday, January 12.

West End

Robbery—The Speedway on West Seventh Street and Albion Avenue was robbed at gunpoint at 6:25 a.m. Sunday, January 9.

Burglary—The Beer Dabbler, 1545 W. Seventh St., was broken into and several tools were taken between 10:22 a.m.-12:06 p.m. Tuesday, January 18.

Theft—A trailer was reported stolen on the 300 block of Webster Street around 8:44 a.m. Tuesday, January 18.

—A suspect reportedly was seen using a modified trailer to enter a manhole and steal copper from underground utilities at Smith Avenue and McBoal Street around 2 a.m. Tuesday, January 18. The suspect was gone upon police arrival.

Miscellaneous—A 49-year-old man was arrested for operating a disorderly house after police located a stolen vehicle with a stolen license plate in front of a residence on the 1000 block of Otto Avenue around 6:10 p.m. Tuesday, January 18.

Weapons—Police received a report of gunfire and a male suspect was seen running from the scene near West Seventh Street and James Avenue at 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 11.

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ON THE TOWN

Doing the time warp again

Theatre 55 revisits 'The Rocky Horror Show' of their youth

By JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

Theatre 55 has once again reached back into the counterculture of the company's youth for a play that still has relevance today. The troupe that debuted in 2019 with its production of the 1960s rock musical *Hair* will present a fresh take on the 1970s spoof *The Rocky Horror Show* in six performances from January 28 through February 6.

Theatre 55 was founded by Macalester-Groveland resident Richard Hitchler to draw on the prodigious talent among senior actors in the Twin Cities and to enrich the lives of people 55 and older "as artists, audience members and lifelong learners," he said.

Hitchler, the artistic director of Theatre 55, directs *The Rocky Horror Show*. The play tells of a young engaged couple whose car breaks down in a storm and, seeking help, stumble upon a bizarre gathering of social misfits. It was a parody of the science fiction and horror movies that were popular back in the 1930s through 1960s and broached the once-taboo topics of transgenderism and bisexuality.

The comedy first opened on the London stage in 1973. A 1975 film version, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* starring Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon, Barry Bostwick and Meat Loaf, bombed at the box office, but soon after became a cult classic and a phenomenon of audience participation. The movie ran for many years at the Uptown Theater in Minneapolis, attracting devotees who dressed like the actors, brought their own props and danced and sang along with the film.

Hitchler said he chose *The Rocky Horror Show* for several reasons. One was to promote the social acceptance of queer individuals and same-sex couples in senior assisted-living facilities. Another was to overcome the "prevalent but untrue notion that people over the age of 60 are nonsexual beings," he said.

"*Rocky Horror* explores the idea of alienation," Hitchler said. Like the characters in the play, seniors can be alienated and made to feel they are not part of the broader society, he added.

Hitchler's cast of 15 includes actors who are making their first stage appearance since high school as well as seasoned theater professionals. Several actors are veterans of Theatre 55 while others are new to the company.

Jeff Goodson, who plays the role of Brad, the fiancé, has seen the movie many times going back to his college days. An



Lawrence Hutera plays Dr. Frank 'N' Furter in Theatre 55's production of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

actor, singer and songwriter, Goodson is well-known to Twin Cities audiences and has appeared in three previous Theatre 55 productions.

"As mature performers we bring lots of stage and life experiences," Goodson said. "While we may take more time to learn a particular song or scene, I think the energy and wisdom and talent developed over the years by everyone in our cast bring more depth and understanding to the production. That's something I've seen our audiences connect with in a big way."

Lori Constable, who plays Janet, the fiancée, said she has seen the film version so many times that she could probably sing every song from memory even before she auditioned. As a college sophomore, her impression was "how over the top the film was," she said. "It combined campy fun with the crossing of boundaries and, of course, had great performances, costumes, staging and musicality."

Constable, who broke into theater in high school, has a master's degree in media and theater performance. She has directed high school productions while teaching secondary English and has acted professionally. Encouraged to audition for *Rocky Horror* by her actor-daughter, she thought she might be able to land an

"Our society is no longer shocked by transgender, nonbinary, LGBT people," Hitchler said. "We're producing Rocky Horror to show that, although society has come a long way in the acceptance and inclusion of all people, we still have a long way to go."

ensemble role. So when she ended up with the ingenue lead she was shocked. Since then, she has been taking voice lessons and is being coached by her daughter for the demanding role.

Lawrence Hutera is cast in the role of Dr. Frank 'N' Furter. He has been active on Twin Cities stages for five decades, and at 72, he is likely the oldest actor to play the gender-fluid mad scientist.

A few minor changes in the production give a wink and a nod to the original show and to Theatre 55's vintage cast, Hitchler

said. For example, Dr. Frank 'N' Furter's motorcycle has been replaced by a scooter, the kind seniors use to get around in assisted living.

Hitchler and the cast are also looking forward to audience participation. "This will not be a sit-in-your-seat-and-keep-quiet kind of show," Goodson said.

"In addition to some great laughs and leaving the theater singing the songs, I hope the audience will come away with the understanding that human beings are sexual beings, that seniors are being isolated and alienated at alarming rates, and that people over the age of 60 have a lot to offer younger generations," Hitchler said.

The shock value of *The Rocky Horror Show* of 1973 is long gone, according to Hitchler. "Our society is no longer shocked by transgender, nonbinary, LGBT people," he said. "We're producing *Rocky Horror* to show that, although society has come a long way in the acceptance and inclusion of all people, we still have a long way to go. Sometimes it takes seniors to say, 'We've been there, we've done it, we're still fighting for it.'"

Theatre 55 has been nimble in providing theater opportunities for seniors during the pandemic. The show is being produced in accordance with CDC guidelines. All members of the cast and staff are vaccinated and subject to frequent testing, and rehearsals are conducted in masks. Patrons will be asked for proof of vaccination and will be required to wear masks in the theater.

The Rocky Horror Show will be performed with a live four-person band on stage. The curtain rises at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and at 3 p.m. Sundays, January 28-30 and February 4-6, at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. Fourth St. in Minneapolis.

For tickets, which are general admission and priced on a pay-what-you-can basis ranging from \$5-\$40, visit theatre55.org.

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Winter Carnival's signature events will return to downtown

After some activities were cancelled last year due to the pandemic, the 136th edition of the Saint Paul Winter Carnival will be held from January 28-February 6, with the majority of events returning to downtown Saint Paul, in and around Rice Park and Landmark Center, as well as at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.

Lisa Jacobson of the Saint Paul Festival and Heritage Foundation said most events will be free or low-cost, though a few fundraisers have been added to help support the production of this year's carnival.

One such fundraiser is the carnival's first Beard Growing Competition. Participants will compete in three categories: Clean Shaven, Lumberjack and Freestyle.

Another is the Winter Carnival Fire & Ice Run/Walk from 8:45-11 a.m. Sunday, January 30, at the State Fairgrounds. This year, runners and walkers may participate in person or virtually in a 5K, 10K, NoK (pay to not run) and Kid's Run.

The State Fairgrounds will also be home to the Vulcan Snow Park, which will run throughout the carnival. It will feature a snow maze, visits by Vulcanus Rex and his Krewe, and the Minnesota State Snow Sculpting Competition.

Rice Park will once again serve as the central location for many carnival festivities, including the ice carving competitions from January 27-30, live musical entertain-



ment, food and merchandise vendors, ice bars and the culmination of both parades.

CynCity Tours will serve up history and hauntings in the heart of downtown Saint Paul as part of the new Gangsters and Ghosts Walking Tours from January 27-February 6, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting the Winter Carnival.

The Orchid Show will be held at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park

with free admission on Saturday and Sunday, January 29-30, while the 45th annual Sainly City Cat Show will take place that same weekend at Saint Paul RiverCentre with admission of \$3-\$4.

Saint Paul Scavenger Hunts will take place on Monday, January 31, and Sunday, February 6, via the GooseChase app, with a small fee to support the festival.

Other highlights of the 2022 Saint Paul Winter Carnival include the following:

Friday, January 28—Royal Coronation of King Boreas and Aurora, Queen of the Snows. The ticketed event will begin at 5:30 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. and the coronation at 8 p.m. Live music will run from 5-10 p.m. on the Rice Park Stage.

Saturday, January 29—Jigsaw puzzle competition featuring four divisions running from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in the Landmark Center Cortile.

—King Boreas Grande Day Parade from 2-4 p.m. starting near Smith Avenue and traveling down West Seventh Street before ending in Rice Park.

—Klondike Kate Cabaret beginning at 8 p.m., followed by the Royal Guards' Rock the Palace at the Saint Paul Hotel. Both are ticketed events.

Sunday, January 30—A new Winter Carnival Ice Palace Minecraft Event, featuring carnival historian Bob Olsen and the Victoria Theater Arts Center assisting

players with creating their own virtual ice palace. The cost is \$5, with proceeds benefitting the festival.

Tuesday, February 1—Frozen Family Fun Night from 5-8 p.m. outside Landmark Plaza, with snow princesses, a bouncy house, and Royal Family appearances.

Wednesday, February 2—Drag Queen Bingo from 7-10 p.m. at the Saint Paul Event Center, 400 Wabasha St. Admission is \$22 (parking included) and bingo is \$30.

—New World Cup qualifier watch parties will be held from 6-11:30 p.m. at local establishments to see Team USA vs. Honduras at Allianz Field.

Saturday, February 5—Union Depot's Doggie Depot beginning at 10 a.m. featuring the crowning of the Canine King & Queen, giveaways, marketplace, interviews with pet experts and dog yoga.

—Kids and Family Day from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Landmark Center, with exercise, performances, and arts and crafts.

—Vulcan Victory Torchlight Parade from 5:30-7:30 p.m. starting at Mears Park and making its way to Rice Park. The Overthrow of Boreas on the library steps, fireworks and Vulcan Victory Dance (\$25-\$30) will follow.

Carnival participants are encouraged to be fully vaccinated or have a negative COVID test within 72 hours of attendance. For updates, visit wintercarnival.com.

ON THE TOWN Briefly

Music

Classic compositions by Bernstein, Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Erich Korngold, Florence Price and Mary D. Watkins will be performed by the Saint Paul Civic Symphony in a free concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, January 30, at Landmark Center.

Music by Beethoven, Buxtehude, Castello and Haydn will be performed by guitarist Chris Kachian and harpsichordist David Jenkins on Saturday, February 5, in Saint Mary's Chapel, 2260 Summit Ave. The free concert by the University of Saint Thomas faculty members begins at 8 p.m. Masks are required. Call 651-456-0123.

Theater

'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 bucketbrigadetheater.com or call 612-547-9839.

The Anonymous Lover, the 1780 opera by groundbreaking Black composer Joseph Bologne, will be staged from February 5-13 by the Minnesota Opera. Sung in French with English translations, the comic romance tells of a beautiful young widow who doubts she will ever find love again until she begins receiving letters from a secret admirer. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. February 5, 10 and 12 and at 2 p.m. February 13 at the Ordway Music Theater. Tickets are \$22-\$225. Visit mnopera.org.



"Reverberating Bodies." The work of Vietnamese-American artists Christine Nguyen (above) and Dao Strom will be displayed from February 5 through March 20 in the Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at Saint Catherine University. Nguyen pairs large paintings (above) with porcelain mobiles to illustrate the interconnectedness of nature and the cosmos. Strom combines poetry, music, imagery and video to address displacement, myth and memory. A reception for the artists will be held from 5-7 p.m. Saturday, March 19. For gallery hours and COVID protocol, visit gallery.stkate.edu.

Not for Sale, a new play by Kim Hines and Barbara Teed about real estate agent Arnold Weigel and his efforts in the 1950s and early '60s to overcome redlining and help families of color buy homes in the all-white neighborhoods of the Twin Cities, will open on February 5 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Andrew Erskine Wheeler and Charity Jones star. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and at 2 p.m. Sundays through February 27. Tickets are \$15-\$53. Call 651-292-4320 or visit historytheatre.com.

La Boheme, the beloved opera by Puccini reimagined by director Peter Rothstein, is being performed by Theater Latte Da through February 27 at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE. in Minneapolis. Tickets start at \$35. For reservations, call 612-339-3003 or visit latteda.org.

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/.

The Triple T Square Dance Club will offer weekly classes for beginners from 6:30-8 p.m. Mondays starting February 7 at Saint Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, 550 W. Seventh St. The first night is free. After that it is \$5. No partner is necessary. For information, call 651-503-7040.

Books

Minnesotans describe what it was like to live through the upheaval of an historic year in *This Was 2020*. Edited by the Ramsey County Library, the anthology of poetry and short prose will be discussed at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, February 3, at Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. Tickets to the program and copies of the book may be reserved at nextchapterbooksellers.com.

A Cracked Walnut poetry workshop will be held from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, February 5, in the first floor meeting room of the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Bring six copies of an original poem to share and be critiqued. Admission is free. Attendees must be vaccinated and masked. Email donna@donnaisaacpoet.com to RSVP.

"Love: A Universal Language," a reading by Somali-American poets, will be presented by Cracked Walnut from 2-3:30 p.m. Sunday, February 6, at Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. Taking the dais will be Khadijo Abdi, Halima

Hagi-Mohamed, Samira Hussein, Hudda Ibrahim and Abdi Mahad. Admission is free, though donations will be accepted. Attendees must be vaccinated. Visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

Author Andrea Gilats will discuss her candid and deeply moving *After Effects: A Memoir of Complicated Grief* in a virtual program at 7 p.m. Thursday, February 10. In the book, Gilats describes the desolation that followed her husband's death at 52 and the slow and torturous 20-year journey to reclaim her old life. To register for the free link, visit subtextbooks.com.

Film

Poly Styrene: I Am A Cliche, a documentary about the British punk rock musician of the late 1970s and the daughter who sifts through the archives of her turbulent life, will be screened by Sound Unseen at 7 p.m. Wednesday, February 2, at Trylon Cinema, 2820 E. 33rd St. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$12. For reservations, visit soundunseen.com.

Family

The first Frozen Fun Fest will be held on Friday through Sunday, February 4-6, in Mendota Heights. There will be a public hike from 4-5 p.m. at Valley Park on Friday; ice carving at 10 a.m. at Market Square Park, and live music, food and fun from 2-5 p.m. at Mendakota Park on Saturday; and youth ice fishing lessons from 9-11 a.m. at Rogers Lake Park, and a family kickball tournament from 2-5 p.m. at Mendakota on Sunday. The fest will also include a coloring contest that begins January 28 and a medallion hunt that starts February 3. For information, visit mendotaheightsmn.gov/frozen-fun-fest.

Tour Ghana without leaving Saint Paul. Landmark Center's Urban Expedition program will present the art, music, crafts and cuisine of this West African country from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, February 13. Admission is free. For information, visit landmarkcenter.org or call 651-292-3225.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Willie Taylor now enjoying life at SPA

To most high school girls' basketball teams, losing a game by more than 100 points would qualify as a major disaster and serious setback to the program. To Saint Paul Academy varsity head coach Willie Taylor and his players, it's another step in a growing process.

The Spartans, beset with COVID issues and lacking much experience, crossed the river on January 7 to take on a Minnehaha Academy team that was averaging nearly 80 points a game and ranked No. 1 in the state in Class AA. The final score was 121-17 Redhawks.

"The expectations (for that game) weren't great," Taylor said. "I just told our girls to keep playing. And they did."

SPA quickly put the memory of that night on the back burner. Four days later, the Spartans earned their second win of the season with a 44-32 victory at Nova Classical Academy. It was a step up in what Taylor says is his most enjoyable season ever as a head coach.

That may seem odd to some, considering Taylor has been a winning coach for three decades. Along the way, he has guided girls' basketball teams at three different schools—Mounds View, Central and Stillwater—to state tournament berths. His Central teams won Class AAAA titles in 2007 and 2008, and his Stillwater team fell to undefeated Hopkins in the 2020 Class AAAA title game. (He also spent a year as an assistant women's hoop coach at Hamline.)

Taylor said he enjoyed his Stillwater stop, but he also felt something was missing. He wanted to be in attendance for events such as plays and concerts in which his daughter, Julia, was participating. At the end of last season, he told Stillwater he wasn't coming back.

Late in the summer, he learned about the SPA opening. Naomi, his wife, works at the school and Julia was headed there for her freshman year. Retirement could wait.

"I got hired at the end of August," Taylor recalled. "I knew little about the team."

One of his first tasks started at home. Julia had played basketball when she was younger and Taylor convinced her to take up the sport again. When practice started, Julia found five freshman classmates and an eighth-grader on what's probably one of the youngest teams in the state.

In short order, Taylor deduced he needed to go back to the basics with his players. "It was dribble, catch, pass and shoot," he said. "We had a lot of kids who had played either very little or not at all, but these kids are darn bright. They believe what I tell them and we're getting better."

That's all well and good, but nothing encourages players more than success. The first SPA win came in the season's third game—a 53-31 decision at home over Hope

WRIGHT CALL ▶17

Center of attention

Lucie Bond shines on ice for Minnehaha United

BY BILL WAGNER

Whether it's skating her regular shift, working on the power play or killing penalties, Lucie Bond can usually be seen with the puck. And the senior center for the Minnehaha United girls' hockey team knows what to do with it when she gets it.

The most recent stats has Bond ranked among the state's top 10 in three offensive categories. Through January 18, she was third in total points with 68, fourth in goals with 36 and sixth in assists with 32.

Bond has helped lead Minnehaha United to a 13-6 overall record and 2-0 in the Independent Metro Athletic Conference, with just a handful of games left in the regular season.

According to coach Dan Berthiaume, Bond doesn't have any flaws as a player. "She can skate, she can pass, she can shoot and she's smart with the puck," he said. "She does so many things for the team. She's an outstanding student, and just an amazing individual."

Defenders don't have much time to react when Bond has the puck, because she knows right away what to do with it—whether taking a quick shot herself or setting up a teammate to do the same.

"I'm a pretty fast skater and I can see the ice well," Bond said. "When I see (the action) develop, I'm able to quickly make the play."

Bond, who lives in Summit Hill and



Minnehaha United senior captain Lucie Bond is among the top scorers in the state in girls' hockey. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

attends Saint Paul Academy, is a natural leader and captain for Minnehaha United. "It's nice to go out there and set an example for your teammates," she said.

She started her prep career as an

impressive freshman for the Saint Paul United cooperative team, which is composed of players from SPA and Visitation. When Visitation broke off

UNITED'S LUCIE BOND ▶17

Spartans off to strong start in boys' basketball

BY BILL WAGNER

The Saint Paul Academy boys' basketball team jumped off to an 8-3 record this winter—a nice bit of news for coach Kevin Keto. Still he's the first to admit that despite the hot start, the Spartans' schedule will only get tougher as they proceed to the postseason.

"We're young and we're growing," Keto said about his squad, which was 1-2 in the Independent Metro Athletic Conference. "We could be decent by the end of the year. Hopefully, we'll continue to get better."

SPA started off with four straight

wins before falling to league-leading Providence Academy in mid-December. The Spartans rebounded with three more wins until suffering a 63-76 loss at Concordia Academy that didn't showcase SPA at its best.

"They played very well and we didn't," was Keto's blunt assessment of the loss to the Beacons.

There's still much to like about the Spartans, who fell to Breck on January 20, but topped Chisago Lakes on January 22. Keto said he sees progress since last season, particularly in his players' mental tenacity.

"We're tougher than last year," he said. "I don't think we could grind out

(a victory) last year like we can now. We have a little more grit."

For sure, the Spartans need everybody pulling in the same direction to succeed. They don't have a lights-out scorer who can take over a game on his own, and they don't usually do their best playing up-tempo basketball. However, they have some decent offensive threats and can thrive if they play a good half-court game.

"We still have a lot of work to do on our man-to-man defense," Keto said, "and we still need to get better at creating shots for one another."

SPA BOYS' HOOPS ▶17



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16◀ WRIGHT CALL

Academy on December 21. January started with a pair of losses. With one exception, Taylor and his team didn't discuss the second of those losses—the Minnehaha game. The exception was when Julia asked her dad if he had ever lost a game by 100 points before. The answer: No.

As this was being written, the Spartans were 2-6 overall—a far cry from the 32-0 season Taylor's Central team had in 2006-07. Nevertheless, the veteran coach is having a ball this winter. "This has been the best," he said. "I'm loving my experience here."

Wanted: Officials in all shapes, sizes and age

In mid-December, 71 men and women gathered for a luncheon at Mancini's Char House on West Seventh Street. Many of them were retired from their full-time jobs, but they all shared a part-time gig—they'd all been or were still sports officials. Tom Perrault, who organized the get-together, was a long-time baseball, football and basketball referee who now handles scoreboard and time clock duties at high school and college games.

"When I was in eighth grade at Saint Mark's, we used to referee the fifth-grade basketball games," he recalled. Six years later, Perrault started working high school football and basketball games for the princely sum of \$12.50 a contest.

Times have changed a bit. A high school basketball referee working with two compatriots now gets \$82 for a varsity game and a little less for a junior varsity match. If you're good enough, you can progress to the MIAC college level, where officials can earn triple digits for

a game. Advance to the NCAA Division I level and that number jumps into the thousands per game. Progress to the pros and the take-home pay runs into the hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

Those numbers make such employment financially enticing, yet nearly all amateur levels are now struggling to find enough officials in all sports. High school basketball games were once played only on Tuesday and Friday nights. Now games are scheduled on every day but Sunday to find enough people available to officiate.

It gets even trickier for guys like Dawson Blanck, executive director of Minnesota Youth Athletic Services. Blanck decided to team up with the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission and several other organizations, such as the Saint Paul Saints and Minnesota Twins, to form Play Together MN. That group is sponsoring a Referee Expo at the National Sports Center in Blaine from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, February 12. The goal is to find ways to convince more young folks to start officiating at the same age as did people like Perrault and former Major League Baseball umpire Tim Tschida, a CDH grad who abandoned his high school playing days to start calling balls and strikes.

"We're looking for high school kids," Blanck said. "You can start at the youth level (ages 9-10) and earn \$25-\$27 a game. You can easily get three or four games a week if you want."

A combination of things has led to the referee shortage. At the high school and college level, the improvement in the skills of the athletes means that some folks simply can't keep up and work as long as their predecessors did. There was a time when 60- and 70-year-olds could easily handle a basketball or hockey game. One must be in very

good physical and mental shape to do so at that age now.

But the bigger problem involves issues off the court, field or ice. When Perrault started, it was common for younger officials to work prep or college games outside the metropolitan area. "Nobody wants to travel anymore," he said.

At the youth level, the big issue involves spectators who simply can't control themselves. "We need to do a better job of working with the parents," Blanck said. Translation: Adults who yell profanities at 16-year-old kids working a game where 10-year-olds are playing are not conducive to getting young officials to come back for the next game.

One of the toughest sports for Blanck to find officials for is baseball, where games can be lengthy affairs and are often played in chilly April weather. Add to the mix that there are more teams than ever and the increased participation in sports like soccer, volleyball and lacrosse, and you have a lot greater need for officials than before.

Perrault agreed with some of the difficulties in finding officials, but he also pointed to some of the attendees at the Mancini's luncheon who had graduated to the big time. In addition to Tschida, those on hand to greet old comrades included Central grad Tom Barnes, who worked in the NFL for 26 years before retiring, and Harding grad Ken Mauer, who is in his 35th season as an NBA referee. They started like Perrault did and worked their way up the ladder.

In the end, you can't have games without somebody to oversee them. For more information on the Blaine clinic, visit mnsports.org/referee-expo.

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

16◀ UNITED'S LUCIE BOND

on its own during last year's shortened season, SPA joined what is now the five-school Minnehaha United. (The team also includes players from DeLaSalle, Providence Academy and Saint Agnes.)

Bond acknowledged that the dissolution of Saint Paul United was not good news. "It was kind of hard at first because I had

a lot of friends at Vis," she said, "but it's worked out really well. I like the coaching staff here. We don't play Vis this year, but I think it'd be really fun."

Bond named Winny Brodt, a longtime Minnesota Whitecaps defender, as a role model. Brodt has a long resume as a summertime coach for girls' youth hockey programs, and Bond said it was a thrill to be tutored by Brodt as a young player.

"She had a huge influence on me," Bond said. "In general, there aren't a ton of women coaches. It's good to have some as role models."

She also credits her dad, who she said has been greatly involved with coaching her throughout her years as a hockey player.

Bond's skills have attracted the attention of college scouts and she is slated to play

next season for Williams College, a Division III program in Massachusetts.

"Obviously, the play in college will be at a faster pace," she said, "and coming in as a freshman, I'm not expecting to get the playing time that (veteran) players get. But I really like the coaching staff there, too."

Berthiaume believes Bond is good enough to be able to play there right away.



The Spartans' Tysen Hayes grapples for the ball as his teammates race in to assist in Saint Paul Academy's 74-61 win at home over Chisago Lakes on January 22. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

16◀ SPA BOYS' HOOPS

We haven't had a ton of assists, but we can score by committee. As the season moves on, we're going to find our true identity."

SPA has four players scoring in double figures. Senior wing Brandt Baskerville leads the way with 14.6 points a game. He is followed closely by sophomore guard Ethan Carter, who was averaging around 14 points and adds good rebounding to the Spartans. Keto cites Carter as the team's best defensive player.

Senior wing Clarke Baskerville is averaging 11.3 points a game and has a newfound physical strength that has helped him get to the rim. The Baskerville twins actually play a similar type of game.

Sophomore Tysen Hayes adds 10.5 points a contest and is the team's best post-up player inside.

Senior Charlie Johnson also plays a consistent post game, handling a lot of the

blue-collar stuff down low. Senior post Gregory Forsberg plays a lot bigger than his 6-foot-2 frame. Senior guard Mukeil Rizvi doesn't make mistakes with the ball and is also a solid defender.

Keto, who likes to go with a rotation of eight players, doesn't kid himself. He knows that his Spartans will face a much tougher schedule over the remainder of the season. A big test of three straight games will begin on January 27 when SPA faces Minnehaha Academy, which got off to a 1-4 start but is ranked among the top five teams in Class AA. That will be followed by games against conference rivals Blake and Providence on February 1 and 4.

Still, Keto knows his team has established something to build on and believes the Spartans will only get better if they can improve their defense and be more explosive on offense.

"We've had some 11-0 and 15-4 runs," Keto said, "but we need to get a few more."

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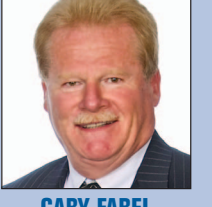
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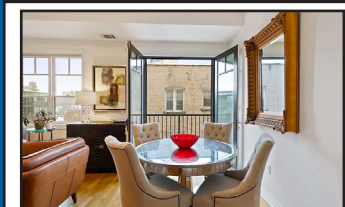
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