

Council approves enabling language for rent control with reservations

Public comment sought on DSI's proposed rules

By Jane McClure

As the May 1 start date of rent control approaches, Saint Paul officials are hurrying to get all of the processes in place for enforcing the new ordinance. The City Council on April 6 voted 5-0 to approve the enabling language for enforcement as well as a set of necessary definitions.

Rent control supporters cheered as council members Nelsie Yang, Chris Tolbert, Jane Prince, Rebecca Noecker and Mitra Jalali voted for the measures (Amy Brendmoen and Dai Thao were absent). At the same time, some council members expressed their frustration with the lateness of Mayor Melvin Carter's administration in presenting the enabling language for council adoption. They also acknowledged that the processes they have in place are less than perfect and will need scrutiny and possible amending in the future.

Prince said she supported the enabling language and definitions with reluctance. She also questioned whether they would hold up in court. "We've had six months since the ordinance was passed,"

RENT CONTROL ▶5



A Grand tradition. Three generations of Grafstroms are now getting their locks trimmed by Bill Parsons (above) at Squire Barber Shop, 1575 Grand Ave. Anders Johan, 19 months, sat for his first professional cut last week while dad Peter Jon gathered up the clippings. Grandpa John (right) has patronized Parsons for 55 years. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

With help of members, MyVillager is making new impressions daily

By Michael Mischke

For almost 70 years, this publication has been printed and delivered to our readers free of any subscription price. Until two years ago when we initiated a voluntary membership drive, virtually the entire cost of bringing neighborhood news to you was borne by local businesses and organizations that realized our avid local readership added greatly to the value of their advertising dollars.

For nearly seven decades, that business model worked. It doesn't anymore.

More than 2,000 newspapers have closed across the United States in the past two decades—more than 100 of them alone since the onset of the pandemic in 2000. Local newspapers continue to face daunting challenges to stay in business, and many of them are not expected to survive the decade.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition of the value of local newspapers by people who understand that when their local newspaper closes, their community suffers in multiple ways. *MyVillager* is fortunate to be among the increasingly rare surviving publications of its type.

But survival is not guaranteed. Far from it.

In the past few years, we've done everything we can to remain afloat, from freezing staff salaries to, in my own case, eliminating it altogether. From trimming employee benefits to leaving departed staff positions unfilled. From moving our office to less expensive quarters to reducing circulation in South Minneapolis and Mendota Heights.

Donations from hundreds of generous readers, the infusion of funds from the federal Payroll Protection Program, and the thousands of readers who have answered our invitation to become paying members have all helped, and we're grateful for all of it. However, the pandemic cut deeply into what had already been falling advertising revenue, and together with soaring inflation now threatens

NEW IMPRESSIONS ▶3

Redesigning Summit Avenue

Master plan is in works to improve recreational opportunities & safety

By Jane McClure

A master plan for Summit Avenue will be unveiled by the city of Saint Paul this spring that could bring a future regional trail as well as pedestrian and transportation changes to the popular roadway.

Public engagement for the plan is now underway, and the last of three virtual open houses will be held from

12:30-1 p.m. Wednesday, April 13. The meeting link is at tinyurl.com/mrxktche. A chance to submit ideas and take a survey are also available through the city's Engage Saint Paul website at engagestpaul.org/summit.

One focus during the process is to develop a more detailed plan for the segment between Lexington Parkway and Victoria Street. That part of Summit is slated for reconstruction in 2023. Plans are also being developed for other stretches of the 4.5-mile-long street.

In an interview, Mary Norton and

SUMMIT AVENUE MASTER PLAN ▶5

In wake of lawsuit, West 7th day shelter seeks new location

Homeless clients may be back on street in May

By Jane McClure

Freedom House, a day shelter for people who are homeless at 296 W. Seventh St., will close its doors when its lease expires in May. Its building could become a fire station again to meet the growing demand for fire and medical services in

the area. Where that leaves the people who have been served by Freedom House for the past 15 months is not clear.

Freedom House opened in January 2021 as an extension of Listening House, a non-profit organization that operates a similar day shelter in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood of Saint Paul. Freedom House has provided a place for people to relax during the day, nap, use showers and restrooms, and access an array of social services through partner agencies.

However, the day shelter also drew complaints from local residents and businesses for being a source of unsavory behavior and crime. Open drug dealing and drug use, public urination and defecation, prostitution, theft and vandalism were all attributed to Freedom House clients.

Several local businesses and residents filed suit against the city and Listening House last November seeking monetary damages and demanding that Freedom House be closed. The plaintiffs claimed

that Freedom House encroached on their personal and property rights. They cited 105 incidents ranging from people bathing in the Irvine Park fountain to someone being chased by a person wielding a knife.

In late March, Ramsey County District Judge Patrick Diamond issued a temporary restraining order against Freedom House. The judge ruled that the city did not give proper notice of a public hearing in 2020

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Walker West Music Academy outgrows Selby Ave. site

Capital campaign aims to raise \$5.4M to buy Marshall Ave. building

By Jane McClure

Braxton Haulcy likes to tell the story of how music changed his life. “I was a ‘D’ and ‘F’ student in second grade,” he said. When his mother got him started in piano lessons, his grades improved to A’s. Music, he said, helped him focus, become a successful student and enjoy a long career as an executive.

In 2018 Haulcy became executive director of Walker West Music Academy, a fixture in the Summit-University neighborhood for the past 34 years. Over the past four years, he has greatly expanded its mission of teaching musical performance to children.

Through an array of partnerships and with an ambitious strategic plan, Walker West has grown to include programs for students of all ages—everything from music to stimulate preschoolers’ developing brains to digital music production to a dementia chorus that exercises its elderly members’ recall of songs from their past.

In the process, the Music Academy has outgrown its space at 760 Selby Ave. It needs to move before its lease expires in 2023. Walker West is now conducting a capital campaign in hopes of

moving to larger quarters. The campaign aims to raise \$5.4 million for a building and \$4.7 million for new programming needs.

As part of that campaign, Walker West is seeking \$5.4 million from the Minnesota Legislature to purchase and renovate the former Amherst H. Wilder Foundation building at 650 Marshall Ave. The appropriation bill was introduced by state Representative Rena Moran (DFL-District 65A), and it is now making its way through the House committee process.

Haulcy said it is important for Walker West to remain in the Summit-University neighborhood and continue its involvement in such local activities as the annual Selby Avenue Jazz Fest and the occasional performances at neighborhood venues. “We’re rooted in this community,” he said.

Walker West was looking for larger quarters when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020. Recitals were getting crowded. Instrument storage was overflowing. The lack of a recording studio on the premises was presenting challenges. And the pandemic only added to the space crunch with the need for social distancing. Rooms were reconfigured, desks were moved into hallways, and offices were turned into classrooms. Programming moved online.

The virtual lessons and performances at Walker West will con-



Walker West cofounders Grant West (left) and the Reverend Carl Walker (right) posed last June with executive director Braxton Haulcy and students Jay Marr, 15, and Josiah Walker, 14, at the music academy. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

tinue for the foreseeable future, but there is a growing demand on in-person space. The music academy has reached its capacity on Selby with 230 students attending classes each week and 5,700 participating in programs annually. The academy has about two dozen instructors.

Walker West’s Selby facility has other shortcomings. Outside, there is no designated parking or drop-off and pickup areas, creating hazards for students and concert-goers. “It’s a dangerous situation,” Haulcy said.

The Wilder building on Mar-

shall offers several advantages, according to Haulcy. It would increase Walker West’s space from 6,000 to 16,000 square feet, including 3,000 square feet for instrument storage. “We have to turn down instrument donations now,” he said. The new facility offers improved rehearsal spaces and a larger performance space. Plans call for greatly upgraded technology as well as better soundproofing.

According to the academy’s website, Walker West was founded in 1988 when Grant West and the Reverend Carl Walker joined

forces to provide piano instruction to children. With one rented piano in the upstairs of a duplex, the founders pursued a vision that went well beyond teaching music.

“The idea was to build a safe place where neighborhood children could pursue something positive and life-affirming,” Walker West states on the website. “We were teaching piano and building self-confidence in children who often didn’t have many people encouraging their success.”

Several months ago, Wilder Foundation moved its healthy aging and caregiving services from the Marshall building to Frogtown. Walker West used the building last summer for its music camps and gained an appreciation for what the building could mean for the academy.

The sale of the Marshall building is proceeding, with action by the Wilder board expected in mid-April. In the meantime, Walker West is lining up interim financing. Haulcy expects it will take about 60 days to close on the purchase. Renovation would then begin.

“We’re in communications with Walker West about their interest in the building,” said Wilder spokesperson Andrew Brown. “We’re excited about the building’s potential to be a place where the community can continue to gather.”



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Grand Avenue was a river of humanity on the 45th annual Grand Old Day, held on June 3, 2018.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Summer of '22: Although COVID is subsiding, most fests take a pass

By Jane McClure

Expect another spring and summer in Saint Paul without large festivals and other civic events due to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual Festival of Nations in May has been scratched. Organizers of Cinco de Mayo and the Grand Old Day celebration in June are already looking ahead to 2023. And Highland Fest as people have known it will not be back in July.

The Minnesota Irish Festival is moving ahead with plans for August, and the Ramsey County Fair will return in July, but without the traditional White Bear Avenue parade due to increasing costs and security requirements.

This will be the third summer without a Grand Old Day and Highland Fest. James Farnsworth, executive director of the Highland Business Association, said his group may hold a smaller event or a series of events in lieu of Highland Fest.

Speaking for the Grand Avenue Business Association's board of directors, GABA president Chris Jensen said, "while we considered bringing Grand Old Day back in 2022, we ultimately decided that our community will be better served with a well-planned event in 2023."

The last Grand Old Day in 2019 attracted 200,000 people, even though the event had been canceled that spring and was only revived at the 11th hour. GABA will be going ahead with its pet-friendly Paws on Grand in August.

Business groups that have traditionally sponsored large festivals have experienced a big downturn in revenue over the past two years. For some, the uncertainty of the pandemic and the need for lead time to raise money was an issue. However, COVID-19 has not been the only factor curtailing festivals. Rising police costs and increased safety measures are other factors.

The cancellation of the White Bear Avenue parade was announced in February by Lisa Theis of the White Bear Avenue Busi-

ness Association. Volunteers used to block the side streets during the parade. That task would have been handled by concrete barricades and law enforcement personnel this year. As a result, security costs rose from around \$5,000 to \$15,000, Theis said.

Visit Saint Paul, the city's convention and visitors bureau, promotes festivals and other events as part of its mission to support tourism. However, it is struggling to catch up from deep cuts in revenue caused by the pandemic. According to Terry Mattson, president and CEO of RiverCentre/Visit Saint Paul, tourism in Ramsey County generated \$2.3 billion in sales and supported 30,000 jobs in the years before the pandemic. Since then, Saint Paul has lost more than \$1 billion in sales, more than \$70 million in related tax revenue and as many as 20,000 jobs.

One big source of revenue for Visit Saint Paul has been the hotel and motel tax. Hotel occupancy in downtown Saint Paul has run at around 60 percent historically. However, downtown hotel occupancy was only 25 percent in 2020 and 32 percent in 2021. The resulting drop in hotel and motel tax revenue led to a 70 percent decline in Visit Saint Paul's sales and marketing budget, Mattson said.

Saint Paul's hotel and motel tax raised \$4.6 million in the prepandemic year of 2019. Visit Saint Paul's share of that was \$2.3 million. The lodging tax was increased by 1 percent in 2020, and a record \$5 million in revenue was expected, but only \$1.5 million was collected.

The Saint Paul City Council has attempted to rectify the shortfall in festival and other event money with a \$4.5 million grant program funded through the federal American Rescue Plan. Grant applications were due on March 28, and city officials hope to announce the recipients soon. Applicants had to demonstrate that their normal, prepandemic operations made a significant contribution to tourism in Saint Paul, and that they draw 40,000 or more visitors to the city each year.

City declares COVID state of emergency is over

Saint Paul's state of emergency regarding the COVID-19 pandemic officially ended on April 5. Since March 2020, Mayor Melvin Carter's emergency declaration gave him authority to issue a wide range of executive orders, including face-mask and vaccine requirements.

The orders changed skyway hours, imposed additional regulations on some types of businesses, changed an array of licensing requirements, and made it easier to close streets and use rights-of-way for sidewalk cafes. The orders also temporarily eliminated a petition requirement for many zoning and land-use requests. The end of the state of emergency means all of those orders have ceased.

City Council members agreed in February to set the end date for the state of emergency, raising concerns about the length of time it had gone on. The end to virtual meetings was announced by city officials in mid-March.

In a statement on April 5, Carter said it was a "huge relief" to have the city's state of emergency come to an end. Minnesota's pandemic state of emergency ended last summer, but Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey retains his emergency powers.

COVID-19 case rates have continued to trend downward statewide. For an update on the COVID situation in Minnesota, visit the state Department of Health website at tinyurl.com/2bpv65tm.



The cover of MyVillager from March 30, 2022.

The Highland Villager from January 9, 1969.

14 NEW IMPRESSIONS

to undo the pivoting business model we've embarked on. Like never before, we need readers like you to recognize the absolutely vital role they play in sustaining this operation.

But not all is doom and gloom. As part of the pivoting business model that I mentioned, we've invested in new technology to make digital publishing more streamlined. From the more than 7,000 readers who now follow us on Facebook, to the more than 18,000 readers who visit us regularly at MyVillager.com on their phones, laptops and home computers, we're attracting a substantial and rapidly growing audience for the type of local news content those readers can't get anywhere else.

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MyVillager members regularly receive via email. And we're publishing online something we could never before do in print: an archive of past publications that we've printed since the first edition in March 1953 up to December 1976, and we'll eventually add all those editions from 1977 up to the present.

All of that has been done not only to better accommodate the growing number of readers who want to get their local news in the medium of their choice, whenever they care to access it. We also hope to attract more and more advertisers who appreciate the added value of reaching our readers with these new channels.

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State aid sought for homeless shelters in St. Paul

Even with aid, two of the four overnight shelters will need new locations

By Jane McClure

Ramsey County's effort to obtain new funding for its emergency homeless shelter network continues on several fronts at the state Capitol. Without additional support, local officials fear that people who are homeless will have no place to shelter when the current federal funding runs out.

Heading Home Ramsey County, a city-county-partnership, is asking the state Legislature for \$14.5 million a year for five years to keep four emergency shelters operating. The bills (HF-3950 and SF-3710) are being carried by state Representative Rena Moran (DFL-District 65A) and Senator David Senjem (R-Rochester). They would pay for the homeless shelters in the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet's former Provincial House at 1880 Randolph Ave., a former dormitory at Luther Seminary, the former Bethesda Hospital near the Capitol and Mary Hall in downtown Saint Paul.

The four shelters have served hundreds of men, women and children

over the past several months. If additional state support is not found, they will have to close in May. Funding is also running out for the Freedom House day shelter, which after 15 months is losing its location on West Seventh Street (see story on page 1).

"We have just a few weeks before we could see a real impact and maybe even see folks moving outside," said Ramsey County Board chair Trista MatasCastillo. "That's the thing keeping me up at night."

The county and city have spent more than \$35 million in emergency federal funding on increased homeless shelter needs during the pandemic. Since the summer of 2020, Saint Paul has reduced the number of people living in outdoor encampments from about 400 to 25.

Even with the appropriation, about half of the shelter beds will need new locations. The Bethesda space is closing this spring. Owner M Health Fairview wants to open a new psychiatric facility there. Ramsey County will also need to replace its beds at Mary Hall. Built more than a century ago as housing for nurses working at nearby Saint Joseph's Hospital, Mary Hall was recently purchased by the non-profit Aeon for renovation as 88 affordable apartments.

Another bill before the Legislature,

HF-4255, would provide \$145.95 million over the next two years and \$92.7 million over the following biennium for homeless services statewide. That bill includes \$8 million for Heading Home Ramsey. The rest would go to safe harbor grants, Hennepin County needs and other emergency homeless shelters and services.

HF-4255 was presented on March 30 in the House Preventing Homelessness Division and moved on to the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee on a 7-4 party-line vote. A Republican effort to require matching funds for some grants failed. The bill, authored by Representative Aisha Gomez (DFL-Minneapolis), incorporates several other individual bills. It has no Senate companion bill, although some of the combined requests do have Senate companions.

Gomez called HF-4225 "transformative" in its approach to homeless needs statewide. Not only would it provide additional funding for existing programs, it would make it easier for veterans and people on Social Security or Social Security Disability to maintain housing, would require studies specific to homeless youth, and would extend the duration of transitional housing from 24 to 36 months.

◀ FREEDOM HOUSE

about the zoning change that allowed Freedom House to occupy the former fire station. The judge called for Listening House and the city to either find a new location for Freedom House or remedy the procedural error on the rezoning.

At recent meetings of the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation, Listening House staff members said they would like a new site for the services Freedom House provides. However, it would take several months to raise the necessary funds and secure a new location. Freedom House used the money it received through the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to open and operate on West Seventh, but that funding runs out soon.

"We were always aware that Freedom House was a short-term solution during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic," said City Council member Rebecca Noecker, whose Ward 2 includes the old fire station. Saint Paul saw large increases in the number of people living in outdoor encampments in 2020 and 2021. There were more than 400 campers citywide in the summer of 2020. That number declined to about 25 as of mid-March 2022.

Listening House and Saint Paul officials have indicated that they will abide by Judge Diamond's order. "We continue to take the safety of our guests, staff, volunteers and community very seriously," said Molly Jalma, executive director of Listening House. "And we thank all of our public and private partners who are committed to working with us on developing positive, long-term solutions for our city and all of its residents."

"We've received the court's order and are working to determine the next steps for the city," said Saint Paul City Attorney Lyndsey Olson. "We remain committed to supporting safe day space, shelter and housing options for people experiencing home-



Richard Howell, a homeless client of Freedom House, took a break last spring outside of the former fire station at 296 West Seventh St. PHOTO BY CASEY EK

According to assistant fire chief Roy Mokosso, the Fire Department is considering reusing the Freedom House building as a fully operational fire station.

lessness." The attorneys for the plaintiffs at Winthrop and Weinstine declined to comment for this story. However, some of the relief sought in the lawsuit remains unresolved, including more than \$50,000 in damages.

A decision also has yet to be made on the future of the West Seventh property. According to assistant fire chief Roy Mokosso, the Saint Paul Fire Department is considering reusing the building as a fully operational fire

station. The building was one of 16 fire stations in the city in 2010, Mokosso said. When a new fire station opened at West Seventh and Randolph Avenue more than a decade ago, the department closed another station on Randolph and renovated 296 West Seventh as a training facility.

"(Downtown's Fire) Station 8 has been very busy as our run volume continues to grow in our most densely populated area," Mokosso said. According to him, the best use of the former fire station is to staff it with full fire and emergency medical service personnel to support downtown and the Seven Corners entertainment district. Reopening the station would also reduce the need to pull fire and emergency medical services personnel out of surrounding neighborhoods when they are needed downtown, Mokosso said.

1◀ SUMMIT AVENUE MASTER PLAN

Brett Hussong of the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation reviewed the work done so far and what lies ahead.

Summit carries between 7,000 and 10,000 motor vehicles per day. An estimated 800-1,000 bicyclists per day join the traffic flow during warmer months. That number drops to about 30-50 bicyclists a day during the winter.

Some priorities have emerged during studies so far, Norton said. One focus is on improving green space and determining where an improved regional trail can best be placed. Regional trails can take many forms, with some offering combined uses for pedestrians and cyclists, and others having separated uses.

Summit has one of the city's oldest on-street bike lanes in Saint Paul, dating from the 1990s. The lanes west of Lexington were restriped and widened slightly in 2020. Some cycling advocates have called for the bike lanes to be separated by curbs or barriers.

Summit has sidewalks on both sides, and some stretches are in poor condition. The street itself also needs work, with needs ranging from addressing the annual pothole problem to improving pedestrian crossings. "We want to make being on Summit a safer experience," Norton said.

The study of Summit Avenue began last fall. An advisory committee has been meeting to discuss ideas, and design and master plan concepts are in the works. That group



One focus during the master planning process for Summit Avenue is to develop a more detailed plan for the segment between Lexington Parkway (shown above) and Victoria Street.

hopes to wrap up its work this spring.

Preferred alternatives are to be released by early summer, launching more public comments. A final master plan is to be unveiled in June, followed by another round of public engagement. Final approval by the City Council is expected this fall.

The project will be reviewed by the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission's Transportation Committee and the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). The Minnesota Department of Transportation and Capitol Region Watershed District will also

be involved.

Summit has more space than most Saint Paul streets, with a 100 feet of right-of-way and 200-foot medians for part of its route. The roadway is in both the Historic Hill and Summit Avenue West districts, and those historic designations will have an effect on the design that is finally approved.

The project's Design Advisory and Technical Advisory committees have analyzed existing conditions and are developing regional trail concepts, Norton said. The study of existing green spaces will include the area northwest of the Summit Avenue

The street itself also needs work, with needs ranging from addressing the annual pothole problem to improving pedestrian crossings. "We want to make being on Summit a safer experience," Norton said.

bridge over Ayd Mill Road. That property has long been treated as a park, but is actually city right-of-way.

Another part of planning has involved identifying ways to protect city-designated landmark trees. Those trees along Summit would need additional root system protections in any future construction.

The master plan eventually will go to the Metropolitan Council for inclusion in the regional trail system. The Twin Cities has 45 proposed regional trails without Met Council-approved master plans. Many of those trails, including Summit, have been considered part of the regional park system for years. However, without formal approval, they are not eligible for regional park system funding.

Norton said another goal of the Summit Avenue master plan is improved connections to other regional trails, including Mississippi River Boulevard and the Samuel Morgan Trail along Shepard Road.

1◀ RENT CONTROL

Prince said. "We've asked repeatedly for the administration to work with us."

Prince, who is an attorney, questioned whether some of the ordinance language is legally defensible. She criticized the 22-page form that landlords must file to apply for an exemption to the 3 percent cap on annual rent increases and the 17 pages of "dense" rules proposed by the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) to offer guidance on the ordinance.

The rent control ordinance was approved by voters in a citywide referendum last November. However, Mayor Carter did not bring forward the necessary budget and administrative changes until March. The City Council in March earmarked \$635,000 to cover the administrative costs of implementing and enforcing the ordinance for the rest of 2022. That includes six staff positions, three of them in DSI.

The ordinance approved by voters allows landlords to apply for an exemption to the 3 percent cap if a higher increase is needed to realize a reasonable return on their investment. City officials will determine what is meant by a reasonable return by using what is called a landlord's "maintenance of net operating income." A reasonable return could cover higher operating costs, inflationary pressures and an increase in the Consumer Price Index. The city will provide the worksheets to make such calculations, and it reserves the right

Exeter, a Saint Paul-based developer and property management company, described rent control as an "ill-advised ordinance that is proving to be a political and economic mess for the city."

to audit the completed worksheets.

DSI's proposed rules include a process whereby landlords can apply for a hardship exemption. Under the rules, landlords who provide detailed information on several kinds of expenses would be allowed to self-certify rent increases that are between 3 and 8 percent. To increase rent by more than 8 percent, a landlord would need a determination by DSI staff. Landlords who disagree with DSI's determination could file an appeal with a legislative hearing officer. Tenants may also challenge a higher rent increase by taking their landlord to court.

The City Council held a public hearing on the implementation of rent control on March 23. More than a dozen comments were received, mainly from tenants and tenant advocates urging the council not to delay in putting the measure in place. Some speakers told of the steep rent increases they are facing in advance of the May 1 effective date. Erin West, an organizer with

Home Line, a statewide tenant advocacy organization, reported 87 complaints from Saint Paul tenants who have faced large rent increases in the wake of the November referendum. That is almost three times the number of complaints typically received in that period, West said.

West told the City Council about the additional fees some landlords are charging Saint Paul tenants. Some landlords, she said, are charging tenants separately for utility costs when those charges were included in the monthly rent before.

"The longer we wait to implement these policies, the more harm is being done," said Ann Schulman, a tenant in Merriam Park who said her rent increased by 9 percent recently.

Exeter, a Saint Paul-based developer and property management company, testified in favor of broad exemptions to the rent control cap. In written comments, Exeter described rent control as an "ill-advised ordinance that is proving to be a political and economic mess for the city." Exeter pointed out that since November, new housing permits in Saint Paul are down 80 percent from the previous year. The construction of more than 3,000 affordable and market-rate apartments have been postponed or canceled, Exeter wrote.

Mayor Carter has asked the City Council to consider amending the rent control ordinance with an exemption for new construction. However, under the City Charter, an ordinance adopted by referendum

may not be amended for at least a year, or not before November 2022.

A *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* analysis of construction permits for multi-family housing confirmed Exeter's numbers: From late December 2021 to early March 2022, permits were pulled for 231 such units in Saint Paul. That is down from 1,393 units during the same period in the previous year, a decrease of more than 83 percent.

The growth in residential property values is also lagging in Saint Paul, according to an analysis of real estate transactions by University of Southern California researchers. The economists studied several factors to determine the change in Saint Paul real estate prices following the rent control referendum in November 2021. They compared that change to the change in property values in Denver, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Nashville and Saint Louis. The economists concluded that if rent control had not been adopted by voters, residential property values in Saint Paul would be 6 to 7 percent higher today.

DSI is seeking public comment on its proposed rules for the rent control ordinance. Comments may be submitted through April 22 via the city's website at stpaul.gov/rent-stabilization-rulemaking; emailed to rent-stabilization@ci.stpaul.mn.us; or mailed to DSI-Rent Stabilization, 375 Jackson St., Suite 220, Saint Paul, MN 55101. For more information, visit that website, email rent-stabilization@ci.stpaul.mn.us or call 651-266-8553.

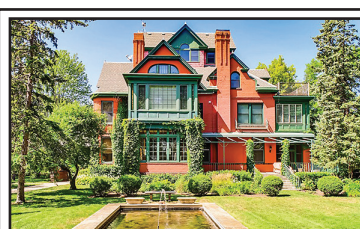
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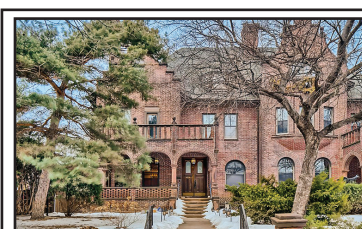
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Ramsey County weighs four options for redrawing its seven districts

Biggest changes proposed in four Saint Paul districts

By Jane McClure

The Ramsey County Board is poised to adopt new boundaries for the county's seven commissioner districts at its meeting on April 19. A majority of commissioners are leaning toward options that do not greatly alter the boundaries but bring each district close to the average of 78,907 residents according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

Minnesota counties must set their new district boundaries by April 26. The new districts will be used in this fall's election for county commissioners, including the four commissioners who represent dis-

tricts in Saint Paul. Toni Carter in District 4 and Jim McDonough in District 6 have said they will not seek a new term. Rafael Ortega in District 5 and Trista MatasCastillo in District 3 are expected to run for reelection.

Redistricting at all levels of Minnesota government has been on a fast track, given the delays in the 2020 U.S. Census brought about by the pandemic. A court-appointed panel released the congressional and state House and Senate districts on February 15. Cities had to have their municipal precincts and wards in place by March 29. County Boards have 20 days to complete their redistricting once the cities in each county have approved their new districts.

Ramsey County commissioners reviewed three different redistricting plans at a virtual town hall meeting on March 29. A fourth option was presented prior to an April 5

board workshop. In all of the plans, most of the boundary changes are in the four Saint Paul districts.

One plan extends District 3, which currently includes the east Midway, Frog-town, Como, North End and Payne-Phalen areas, into parts of Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park. Another plan removes Saint Anthony Park from District 4, shifting the district to the east into downtown, Dayton's Bluff and the southeastern part of Saint Paul.

Most of the comments at the March 29 town hall meeting were from East Side residents, who objected to proposals to radically change their districts and split up neighborhoods that had long been in the same district.

McDonough said he appreciated the efforts to redraw district lines to promote

racial diversity on the County Board. He noted how much more diverse the county and the County Board had become since he was first elected in 2000. According to him, transition to a more diverse County Board can happen without radically redrawing district lines. McDonough, who is white, said that with three people of color already running for his board seat, "I'm confident that whoever replaces me come November will be a person of color."

Carter expressed ambivalence about the four redistricting plans, saying that she would like more demographic data before making a decision. "I have always appreciated the district I serve because of its great diversity," she said.

To view the four plans, visit ramseycounty.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/redistricting.

Area district councils urge county to purchase old CP Rail spur

Right-of-way eyed for new recreational trails

By Jane McClure

Calls for Ramsey County to purchase the 4.5-mile-long Canadian Pacific Railway spur through the Highland Park and West End neighborhoods of Saint Paul are growing louder. The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation on March 14 joined the Highland District Council and Macalester-Groveland Community Council in pressing the county's Regional Rail Authority to buy the dormant railroad spur as soon as possible.

The railroad right-of-way extends from

Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant to the area around the former Schmidt Brewery. Though it has not been used for years, the spur is not considered to be abandoned. However, a potential plan by the University of Saint Thomas and Ford site master developer Ryan Companies to construct a new hockey arena and ball-fields on the site of an old rail yard at the west end of the spur has raised concerns that the rest of the railroad property could be sold off piece by piece.

The Saint Paul City Council in 2018 approved a Reimagine the Ford Spur study which called for reusing the CP Railway spur for new biking and pedestrian trails and possibly a route for mass transit. Part of the right-of-way could be used for the

proposed Riverview Corridor streetcar line that is currently being studied.

CP Railway is not commenting on the rail spur's future. If the tracks are legally abandoned and the land sold piecemeal to adjacent property owners, public use of the right-of-way would be lost.

"Our neighborhood is bordered by high-speed roadways (Shepard Road and I-35E) and bisected by very busy West Seventh Street," said Casey Carmody, who chairs the West Seventh Federation's Transportation and Land Use Committee. "It'd be nice for us to have a longer recreational trail."

Federation president Dana deMaster said she often bikes to and from Highland Park on Randolph and Montreal avenues. A repurposed rail spur would provide an

attractive alternative, she noted. It could also be linked to bike routes that run to and from downtown Saint Paul. "As someone who bikes for her main mode of transportation, (the rail spur) would be a game-changer," she said.

Ramsey County commissioner and Regional Rail Authority chair Rafael Ortega has said the county has not taken a position on the CP Railway spur's future. However, he believes the county is in a good position to work on the issue when the time comes.

Railroad companies have to follow a process laid out by the federal Surface Transportation Board before railroad property can be declared abandoned and put up for sale. At any time during that process, another entity could acquire the property.





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Work on reparations is focus of sessions for advisory committee

Saint Paul's process of making amends to Black American residents of the city for racist conditions endured by their ancestors will continue with public hearings this spring led by a city advisory committee.

The Saint Paul City Council passed a resolution in January 2021, formally apologizing for the city's role in systemic racism and discrimination. The council also appointed an advisory group whose tasks include looking at reparations and the possibility of establishing a permanent reparations commission.

The advisory group has met for much of the past year and is hosting four virtual and in-person public sessions. One virtual session has been held. The second will take place from noon-1 p.m. Friday, April 29. Register at tinyurl.com/4buembuj.

In-person sessions are scheduled from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, April 14, at the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center, 800 Conway St., and 6-7 p.m. Thursday, April 21, at the Rondo Library, 461 N. Dale St.

During the sessions, the committee will present its work and hear comments that could further shape its recommendations for the permanent commission. The recommendations are to be presented to the City Council in June.

Saint Paul sets meeting on River Learning Center at Crosby Park

The city of Saint Paul and Great River Passage Conservancy are inviting the public to attend a virtual meeting from 7-8 p.m. Thursday, April 14, to learn more about plans for creating a River Learning Center at Crosby Farm Regional Park.

The meeting will include a short presentation of the project's goals and timelines, followed by a discussion for people

NEWS BRIEFS



Mattocks was really hopping.

Angela Doheny cradles 4-month-old daughter Amelia alongside 4-year-old son Theo as they pose with the big bunny himself at an egg hunt sponsored by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation on April 9 at Mattocks Park. At right, youngsters scour the turf for prized eggs.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



to share comments.

The city and conservancy are currently working with W Architecture to complete a schematic design for the center. The mixed-use, river-focused space would include the National Park Service headquarters. The schematic design will in-

clude a site analysis, design concepts, and an overview of the River Learning Center's basic features and programs.

The design team hosted tours of the site and surveyed key stakeholders and advisory committees in early 2022 to kick off the public engagement process for the project.

In March, it met with focus groups.

A survey will be conducted following the public meetings to collect more feedback, and additional meetings will be held over the summer. The final schematic design will be shared in the fall.

For more information and updates on the project and to register for the April 14 meeting, visit the Great River Passage website at tinyurl.com/yc4ws72t.

Variance paves way for city to sell parking lot at Midway Peace Park

Midway Peace Park at 410 N. Griggs St. and an adjacent parking lot can become separate properties as a result of a setback variance approved for the park by the Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals on April 4.

The variance was required since off-street parking must be a minimum of 4 feet from all lot lines. The proposed new lot line would have a zero-foot setback from the adjoining parking spaces.

A lot split is still needed for the separation to allow the city's Department of Parks and Recreation to sell the lot and no longer have to share in its maintenance costs. The lot is a parking area used by the former Central Medical Building, which is now owned and occupied by Concordia University-Saint Paul.

The public can still use one stall in the 262-space lot, which was redesigned by city staff after it and the current park property were acquired by the city in 2015. Alice Messer of Parks and Recreation said the city has paid \$49,400 over the years as its share of lot maintenance costs and no longer wants to bear that burden.

The Union Park District Council took no action on the request. The Parks and Recreation Commission supported it, as did the Friends of Midway Peace Park.

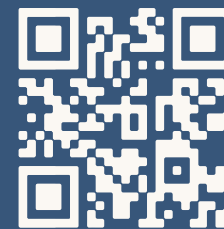
News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.



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VIEWPOINT

INBOX

Don't mow the grass this May

Twin Cities suburbs such as West Saint Paul and Edina are ahead of Saint Paul in officially adopting No Mow May, a growing movement to protect pollinators by forgoing yard work until bees and other insects have had a chance to emerge from their winter slumbers. Appleton, Wisconsin, was one of the first U.S. cities to adopt this initiative. It found that participating residents had five times as many bees and three times as many bee species in their yards than regularly mowed areas.

I contacted Russ Stark, Saint Paul's chief resiliency officer, about adopting a similar program. He was supportive and curious to learn more, and suggested the city may look into it. But for this year at least, the city ordinance requiring grass and weeds taller than 8 inches to be mowed remains in effect.

I, for one, am willing to risk judgment from passersby and even a visit from the city for the sake of the bees. In addition to not mowing, I will be leaving my leaf piles alone until June, and under no circumstances will I use any pesticides. If you'd like to join me, consider printing out a "No Mow May" sign from the Bee City USA website (beecityusa.org) and putting it in your front window or making your own pollinator-friendly yard sign.

Let's show Saint Paul, and each other, that some things are more important than a freshly mowed lawn.

*Erica Wacker
Macalester-Groveland*

The bane of the neighborhood

April 4 marked five years since a perfectly safe and usable house was demolished at 507 S. Cleveland Ave. In dismay, I filmed the building's destruction while reminiscing about the families who had been our neighbors over the years. The house had been sold to the final occupants for a price they were thrilled to accept. Later, I learned from the new property owner of his decision against renovating the house for rental property. Instead, demolition and conversion to an empty lot for future development was planned. The lot remains vacant and the bane of my neighborhood.

Initially, a city demolition permit was posted, which specified that the curb cut be removed within nine months if no new construction took place. The driveway remains, frequently used by adjacent apartment dwellers despite it being on private property. A complaint to the city regarding this matter was never acknowledged.

We read of the need for more housing in the city, so I cannot understand why this parcel remains undeveloped. At one time I was informed by city officials that the

Parents hold the key to reducing juvenile crime

By Scott Raskiewicz

My first job after college was in a juvenile detention facility in my hometown in Michigan in the late 1970s. Behavior back then among youths in the juvenile justice system was generally not as bad as it is among today's juvenile offenders. Guns were rarely involved. Apart from one or two kids, I couldn't imagine any of the teens I worked with taking part in armed carjackings or other violent crimes so common today.

My job was to help the teens with school work, participate with them in recreational activities, have meals and snacks with them, be a role model and counsel them in better ways to deal with the problems they faced. I was paid to be a kind but strict older brother. I worked the second shift. One of my tasks was locking the kids in their cinder-block cells for the night. I never became accustomed to the locking of the steel door that shut them off from the world.

As soon as I could, I found work that was better suited

to me. But before leaving the detention facility, I learned an important lesson about human behavior. The lesson came when I worked an occasional Sunday. Sunday was visiting day, and many of the parents brought to mind the old saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

Since then, I've raised questions that few in a position of authority want to address: What percent of children in the U.S. are born to parents who have the time and the emotional, financial, intellectual and social resources to be loving and effective parents? Why does the U.S. have such an ineffective family planning system, particularly for the poor? What is it about our society that makes it so difficult to be loving and effective parents?

Unless we address these questions and the failures implicit in them, we can count on more carjackings and other violent, antisocial, self-defeating behavior that threatens everyone.

The writer is a resident of Macalester-Groveland.

zoning was for multifamily housing, perhaps a duplex or triplex with a permit. A new apartment building would not be allowed, I was assured, primarily due to the lot's size.

I'm the third generation owning and living in a house built in 1934 by my grandfather. Seeing and experiencing this makes me sad. When I was raised, I was taught to show pride in the neighborhood. This meant keeping our property in pristine condition, even sweeping the street and alley. We seemed to compete with one another in a friendly manner. Nostalgic, perhaps, but I believe it's still essential for residents living in a community.

*Stephen Lilly
Highland Park*

Free meals for all in K-12

Since the beginning of the pandemic, schools have had the option to serve meals to all students at no cost regardless of household income. It has been a critical component of our country's pandemic response. As a mom of two and a policy analyst for a national anti-hunger organization, I don't think we should ever go back to the old system of students paying different prices for the same meals. Healthy meals available to all should be a standard part of the school day, supporting good nutrition, health and learning.

I recently spoke with state Representative Dave Pinto and Senator Erin Murphy about legislation that would

do just that. In short, it would get meals to students who need them, address stigma in the lunchroom and end unpaid school meal debt. I hope they will support legislation that ensures all students in Minnesota are hunger-free and ready to get the most out of school. California and Maine have already passed legislation to make free meals a permanent part of the school day. Hopefully, Minnesota will be next.

*Alexis Bylander
Macalester-Groveland*

Carter leads on firearms storage

Thank you to Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter for asking the City Council to pass a safe firearm storage ordinance and also for his plan to use American Rescue Plan funds to distribute firearm safes and trigger locks.

Safe firearm storage—storing firearms locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition—decreases the risk of legally owned firearms falling into the wrong hands, whether they be children, suicidal loved ones or thieves. Less firearm theft means less chance that legally owned firearms will end up on the illegal market and ultimately used in crimes. As we continue to wait for our state and federal legislators to break their impasse and make progress on gun violence prevention, leadership on this issue from our mayor and City Council is so appreciated and so necessary.

*Dr. Emily Benzie
Merriam Park*



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District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Solar workshop—The public is invited to join the Highland District Council and Tangletown Neighborhood Association for an Explore Solar Virtual Panel at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 21. Three experts will discuss ways to incorporate solar into residents' energy use. Learn more and register at tangletown.org/explore-solar-virtual-panel.

Clean up Highland Park—The HDC and College Nannies + Sitters + Tutors will be the hosts for Saint Paul's 2022 Citywide Spring Cleanup from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 23. Meet at the Highland Park Pavilion to clean up parks and public spaces in the neighborhood. Gloves and trash bags will be provided. There will also be free coffee at the pavilion and a limited number of food scrap starter kits from Ramsey County. Register at stpaul.gov/citywide-cleanup and click the Highland Picnic Pavilion option.

Jie Ming expansion—A public meeting to learn more about the Saint Paul public school district's plan to remodel and expand Jie Ming Mandarin Immersion Academy, 1845 Sheridan Ave., will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 26, at the school.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Citywide Spring Cleanup—Macalester-Groveland will be a host site for the 2022 Citywide Spring Cleanup that will be held from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 23. Volunteers will be cleaning up along Summit and Grand avenues from Mississippi River Boulevard to Ayd Mill Road. Meet on the sidewalk off Cambridge Street near Door No. 2 at Ramsey Middle School. Cleanup supplies will be provided. There will also be free coffee and a chance to win a Macalester-Groveland T-shirt. Sign up at tinyurl.com/yc4smnby and select the Ramsey Middle School option to register.

Board elections—Applications to run for the community council's board of directors will be accepted through April 14. Apply online at macgrove.org/boardelections or pick up a form in the office at 320 S. Griggs St. Board elections will take place between April 21-28. Learn more about the voting process at macgrove.org/boardelections.

Annual meeting—The community council will host its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21, via Zoom. Participants can learn what is happening in Macalester-Groveland and meet board candidates. They also will hear about the city's new Office of Neighborhood Safety from director Brooke Blakey and meet Saint Paul district council coordinator Cat Beltmann. Register for the meeting at macgrove.org/event/annualmeeting2022.

Upcoming meetings—Inclusivity Task Force on Wednesday, April 20; annual meeting on Thursday, April 21; Transportation Committee Monday, April 25; and Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, April 27. All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. For log-in details, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Citywide Spring Cleanup—Saint Paul's citywide spring cleanup is scheduled from 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 23. Summit Hill Association's group will meet at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave. Sign up by visiting SummitHillAssociation.org/calendar.

Join the dialogue—Diversity and inclusion coach Lissa Jones Lofgren facilitated goal setting with the SHA's Racial Dialogue & Action Committee. The group has created a Facebook page to interact with the public, collect information and increase participation in its efforts. It can be found at facebook.com/groups/sharacialdialogueandaction.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, April 14; Racial Dialogue & Action Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, April 18; Neighborhood Plan Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 19; Streetscapes Committee, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 20; Zoning & Land Use Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 26; and Development Committee, 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 27. For updates and Zoom log-in information, visit SummitHillAssociation.org/calendar.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Union Park resource map—Staff at the Union Park District Council are working on creating a map of resources in the neighborhood. Those who know of an establishment or organization that they consider vital to the quality of life in the neighborhood are being asked to email jonah@unionparkdc.org.

Upcoming meetings—Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 18; and Environment and Parks/Neighborhood Involvement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 20. See unionparkdc.org/calendar for the Zoom links.

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

Annual meeting—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's annual meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 26, at the Summit Brewery Ratskeller, 910 Montreal Circle. A social hour begins at 6 p.m., and the meeting at 7 p.m. The keynote speaker will be Brooke Blakey, director of Saint Paul's new Office of Neighborhood Safety. Board members will be elected and Federation pint glasses and the new neighborhood cookbook will be available for purchase.

Upcoming meeting—Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21. The meeting will be held via Zoom. For details, visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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Volume 70, Number 3

Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

Real showstopper

West End's Asian-inspired rebuild opens doors for MSP Home Tour

By Frank Jossi

A decade ago, Joe Landsberger bought his next-door neighbor's home in West Seventh's Upper Town area with the dream of one day turning it into his own, complete with custom balconies for viewing the Mississippi River, and nooks and crannies for showcasing his art collection.

Now a reality, Landsberger and his partner Steve Shimer's home at 112 Leech St. will be part of the Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour from April 30-May 1. After a two-year hiatus, the live tour returns with 25 homes, including two accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in Union Park, a 1902 Victorian with a law office in Summit-University, and four homes on the West Side.

Tour coordinator Margo Ashmore said the prepandemic tours usually had nearly 50 homes. This year, the recruiting process took place, as usual, in winter when the omicron variant was sweeping through the country. Though it is a smaller number this year, many homeowners told her they would be willing to have their home on the tour next year. "They were very nice about it," she said.

The trends Ashmore sees for the 2022 tour are tweaks to make old homes more livable, and new structures that fit well into their older neighborhoods. Ashmore said nine homes on the tour have sustainable features, including the Minneapolis home of architect Michael Anshel, who is known for energy-efficient construction and rehabilitation.

The city of Saint Paul, one of the tour's sponsors, gave Ashmore a few leads on ADUs and one of their owners plans to give a talk during the event.

Other homes are engaging and colorful, such as Sid Korpi's 1917 art-infused home at 1234 W. Seventh St. Owner of the garage painting studio Arting Around, Korpi has

been described as an "artist, teacher, actor, author, wedding officiant, editor, dog-walker, dancer and animal chaplain."

Landsberger's new home features an expansive Japanese garden on his corner lot. Over the past four years, the 1950s-era home has been entirely redone. The exterior features Shou Sugi Ban, traditional Japanese fire-preserved cypress, and a new floor offers spectacular views of the neighborhood and river valley. The three-story home boasts an elevator to allow the owners to age in place.

"When I first started thinking about the project, I had both my knees replaced, so I thought the elevator would be a good idea," Landsberger said. He credited the home's engaging design to architect Gary Hittle and contractor Todd Gapinski.

The Japanese-inspired garden he designed, which slopes down to Goodrich Avenue, features groupings of Chinese elms, Norway spruces, Temple Junipers, Magnolias and Crab Apples, among others. "I have a passion for trees," Landsberger said.

The garden offers an open seating area he calls a "moon-viewing pavilion" near a wood-beamed, gable-roofed gate. Tank cradles that once held vats at the Schmidt Brewery were turned into a lovely seating bench by a local craftsman.

Fencing is also from the brewery and scattered throughout the garden are sculptures by local artists. The garden formally opened in 2014 with a performance by Japanese drummers and has been featured on West End garden tours for many years.

In a walk through the house, Landsberger said much work still needs to be done. "It's basically a brand-new home," he said.

On the ground floor, he spoke about having one room for an art gallery that will offer seating facing the garden.

Reached by a wooden staircase in the middle of the home, the second floor opens to a kitchen composed of materials from



Joe Landsberger (standing) and Steve Shimer pose with pet Aide in their updated West End residence that will be featured during the Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour. At right is the gated entrance to the home's expansive Japanese garden.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



a building outlet center. A decorative touch features a sizeable circular window and dining room. Shimer's suite takes up the rest of the level, with a sitting room, bedroom, bathroom suite and special exit to the backyard for the dog. Landsberger has his bedroom on the third story, where another space may serve as a guest room.

Landsberger is a bit of a jack of all trades. After a three-decade career at the University of Saint Thomas serving in various administrative roles, he started and later sold an international study guide website. He has written several histories of neighborhoods along West Seventh, and has served on nearly every nonprofit organization in the neighborhood.

The 1880s-era home he currently lives in was once featured in *This Old House Magazine*. He is putting the new place on

the Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour to allow people to see it before he moves in. Landsberger said he would be running a visual presentation both days of the tour that chronicles the home's transition and will give a talk about it at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, May 1.

"Neighborhood historians are not passive," he said. "We welcome you to our lived experience in building gardens and our new home."

The home tour will run from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, April 30-May 1. For information, including a list of the homes and the latest guidance on COVID protocols, visit msphometour.com.

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Ramsey Hill homeowners' plan for accessory dwelling passes muster

By Jane McClure

The Saint Paul City Council relaxed regulations governing the building of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on single-family lots earlier this year as part of an effort to address the city's housing shortage.

The city no longer requires a minimum lot size for adding an ADU. It no longer requires one of the occupants of the ADU or the main house to be an owner of the property. The city has also increased the maximum size of an ADU from 800 square feet to 75 percent of the floor area of the principal unit. However, adding a dwelling on a single-family lot in one of the city's historic districts can require extra steps, including additional design work and a longer permit review process.

Zindziswa McCormick and Timothy Drinan found that out several months ago when they submitted plans for a new ADU behind their home in the Historic Hill District.

ADUs have been permitted in Saint Paul's single-family zones since 2018. However, the city's older neighborhoods have had similar dwellings for well over a century. Small houses, called alley houses, have existed for years in the backyards of homes in the Frogtown neighborhood. Similarly, carriage houses or servants' quarters were commonplace above the garages or in the backyards of homes in the Summit Hill and Ramsey Hill neighborhoods.

The McCormick-Drinan house at 525 Holly Ave. was built in 1885. It has had a 1½-story garage in back, though the homeowners do not know for how long. Backyard structures appear on old fire maps of the neighborhood, but it is not known if the same structure the homeowners want to tear down and replace with an ADU is one of them.

Demolishing a structure in the Historic Hill District requires a permit review by the city's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). In the case of 525 Holly, the HPC found that the garage had been altered so many times over the years that there was little left of its historic character.

McCormick and Drinan are planning to replace the garage with a new two-car garage and a one-bedroom ADU above it.

Adding an accessory dwelling in one of the city's historic districts can require extra steps, including additional design work and a longer permit review process.

They completed a series of HPC reviews in March and now have the city's blessing to begin demolition. They also have a construction permit. The HPC attached a dozen conditions to the construction permit, mainly to ensure that the materials complement the adjacent houses.

The new 1½-story structure will measure 24 by 29 feet, or about 4.5 square feet larger than the existing garage. It will have an upper deck facing the main house with a workout area below the deck. The new structure has also been designed to complement the main house, which was designed by noted architect Clarence Johnston.

The homeowners worked with Eric Johnson of the Saint Louis Park-based architectural firm of Christopher Strom. The new structure will have cedar-shingle siding to match the siding on part of the main house, and a simple gable roof with a ridge that runs perpendicular to the house. The alignment of the roof is meant to minimize scale and shadows in the alley.

One issue that can arise with ADUs in older neighborhoods is their impact on adjacent properties, especially where the houses are close together. Five neighbors of the Holly Avenue homeowners association testified in support of their plans. However, two of them had concerns. Sharon Pfeifer was concerned that the new structure might cast a shadow on her garden and make it more difficult to store snow removed from the alley.

According to Johnson, the new structure will be situated to minimize its impact on the neighborhood, including the Holly Tot Lot, which is on the other side of the McCormick-Drinan house.

"The proposed ADU is specifically designed to be contextual with its historical neighborhood while being a product of its own time," Johnson said in a letter to the HPC.

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Crime Report

The following criminal incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police reports. For stolen cars, catalytic converter thefts and other reports not in this print edition, go to MyVillager.com.

Highland Park

Burglary—Two suspects made off with more than \$5,000 in cigarettes during a break-in at MSP Tobacco & Vapor in Sibley Plaza around 10:40 p.m. on March 29. The suspects entered through an adjacent business and then pried through the sheetrock to gain access to the tobacco store.

Miscellaneous—The Minnesota State Patrol was in pursuit of a vehicle wanted in Lakeville for a drive-by shooting at 10:31 p.m. on March 27. The suspect took off on foot at Randolph Avenue and Brimhall Street, but was located by officers.

Lexington-Hamline

Shooting—A man was shot in the leg on the Green Line light-rail train at Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 1:41 p.m. on March 25. The suspect was on the train and fled north on Lexington.

Miscellaneous—A 29-year-old woman was arrested for felony damage to property after she reportedly removed a manhole cover and threw it at an off-duty police officer's marked squad car outside the Midway Target at 7:28 p.m. on April 4. The woman was a known trespasser and had been told to exit the store by loss prevention staff.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 2000 block of Goodrich Avenue on March 24, and the 2100 block of Wellesley Avenue on March 26.

—The Green Mill, 57 S. Hamline Ave., was burglarized between 11:17 a.m. and 12:06 p.m. on March 27. A former employee was seen on camera entering the business multiple times with keys he still possessed.

—A man learned that his garage had been burglarized on the 1800 block of Berkeley Avenue between April 1-3 after his electric mower was discovered in a neighbor's front yard.

Mendota Heights

Robbery—A suspect was arrested following a foot chase after he was seen spray-painting a stolen vehicle near the 1600 block of Lilydale Road at 1:38 p.m. on March 29. It was later determined he was a suspect in an attempted robbery.

Theft—Aluminum wire was reported stolen from a business on the 2000 block of Pilot Knob Road at 3:28 a.m. on March 19.

—A utility trailer was reported stolen on the 500 block of Marie Avenue at 8:44 a.m. on March 31. It was later recovered in a school parking lot.

Merriam Park

Robbery—The Holiday Station, 281 N. Snelling Ave., was robbed at gunpoint at 10:16 p.m. on March 27.

Burglary—A residential burglary was reported on the 400 block of Herschel Street during the evening of March 24-25.

—Boehm Heating & Air Conditioning, 1598 Selby Ave., was broken into at 5:22 a.m. on March 26.

Theft—A gun was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 400 block of Fry Street between 2:45-3:18 p.m. on March 26.

—A U-Haul trailer was reported stolen at Auto Tech, 461 N. Wilder St., during the evening of April 3-4.

Assault—A man was punched in the face by a male using brass knuckles at 4:38 p.m. on March 27 on Shields Avenue and Fry Street.

—A 31-year-old man rammed a squad car multiple times with the stolen vehicle he was driving when police tried to stop him at the Quality Inn, 1964 University Ave., at 8:54 p.m. on March 28. The suspect then tried to flee the scene, but crashed in the parking lot and was arrested.

—A 27-year-old woman was cited for assault after an officer saw her pull another woman by the hair and drag her on the ground at the Holiday Station, 281 N. Snelling Ave., at 7:57 p.m. on April 1.

Snelling-Hamline

Assault—Two 24-year-olds assaulted staff members at the Holiday Station, 1345 Marshall Ave., at 2:35 a.m. on March 26.

Summit Hill

Burglary—A break-in was reported at Lloyd's Automotive, 982 Grand Ave., at 2:32 a.m. on March 29.

Theft—A male suspect reportedly stole more than \$1,000 in merchandise from CVS Pharmacy, 1040 Grand Ave., at 4:18 p.m. on March 31.

Assault—A woman said she was assaulted by an unknown male suspect at 2:10 a.m. on March 26 on Avon Street south of Grand Avenue.

—A woman was taken to the hospital by paramedics after reportedly being assaulted on the 800 block of Grand Avenue at 7:41 p.m. on April 3.

Miscellaneous—Officers responded to Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., at 12:58 a.m. on April 1 on an assault call from a 27-year-old man who said a bouncer had pointed a gun at him. It was determined that no assault had occurred, but the caller was arrested on an outstanding felony warrant.

Summit-University

Robbery—A carjacking at gunpoint was reported on the 800 block of Laurel Avenue at 9:17 p.m. on April 4.

Burglary—An apartment burglary was reported on the 100 block of North Grotto Street at 11:21 p.m. on March 30.

Theft—A gun was reported stolen from a residence on the 900 block of Carroll Avenue at 9:04 p.m. on April 3.

Weapons—Six shell casings were found after multiple callers reported hearing gunshots on Iglehart Avenue and Saint Albans Street at 3:32 a.m. on March 30.

Miscellaneous—A 27-year-old woman was arrested on a warrant for violating an order for protection after police investigated a 911 hang-up call at 3:57 a.m. on April 4 on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue. The complainant said the suspect had threatened to go downstairs in the apartment building to "beat her with a bat."

West End

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 400 block of Vance Street at 4:06 p.m. on March 24.

Burglary—An apartment was burglarized while the victims were asleep during the early morning of March 26. The suspect stole a purse and car key, then drove off with the victim's vehicle.

—A 31-year-old woman was arrested after she reportedly followed a resident into an underground garage and tried to steal parked vehicles at the Waterford Bay Apartments, 380 Randolph Ave., at 4:56 p.m. on April 2.

Miscellaneous—Officers responded to a call about two adults slumped over in a vehicle with a baby in the back seat at 2:24 a.m. on April 2 on the 300 block of Sherman Avenue. One of the occupants, a 28-year-old man, was arrested for drug possession and child endangerment.

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ON THE TOWN

Lure of the stage

Would-be stars come out for open mic and chance to jam with others

By Carolyn Walkup

It was a pretty good crowd for a Monday at Bogey's Lounge. The regular crowd shuffled in. Many of them had guitars or harmonicas in hand because Monday is the night for the open jam at Bogey's, 970 Sibley Memorial Hwy. in Lilydale.

The weekly jam of amateur and professional musicians begins at 7 p.m. with the four-piece Bogey's House Band performing several blues standards. While John McCann, Tom Harkness, Kent Dougherty and Nick Zwack play their respective harmonica, guitars and drums, the "jammers" sign in on a large white board and wait for their turn to play.

McCann recalled how he had been sitting at Bogey's bar one night fooling around with his harmonica when the owners brought up the idea of an open jam night.

"I didn't think Bogey's had enough space. It's like a real juke joint," he said. "But one thing led to another, and here we are two years later."

Almost every kind of music is welcome at Bogey's jams, though blues and rock predominate, according to McCann. "I started out as a jammer," he said. Now he has his own group, the Johnny Mac Band.

Midway bassist and guitarist Roger Anderson rarely misses a Monday at Bogey's. He is not in a band currently, so he enjoys playing with other musicians at Bogey's. "The jams are becoming more popular here," he said. "People want to play, but it's a lot of effort to get a band together. I really got into playing electric guitar here. It's a supportive environment, but there's enough competition to keep

you on your toes."

Another Bogey's regular, Midway bass player Scott Johnson, said he loves playing with bands again after a five-year hiatus while raising two children on his own. Johnson had been in a band and used to own a music store. Now he plays at several metro area jams each week. "I run into people I haven't seen for a long time," he said. "It feels good to play again."

Tom Tait of Macalester-Groveland is fairly new to jamming. A trumpet player in his college jazz band, he began studying the harmonica after retiring as an attorney and legal writer. He took lessons from Harold Tremblay of Macalester-Groveland. "At first I was pretty nervous," Tait said about playing the harmonica in the jams at Bogey's. "But I got over it. Musicians are very forgiving."

In addition to Bogey's, Tait occasionally plays

at the open jam from 7-11 p.m. Mondays at the Midway Saloon, 1567 University Ave. Hosted by veteran guitarist Moses Oakland and his mates David Beattie on bass, Mike DuBois on drums and Jordan Hedlund on organ, the jams at the Midway Saloon attract about half regulars and half newcomers, Oakland said. The jammers play a variety of instruments, including horns. "Three trumpet players make it their regular haunt," Oakland said. He expects attendance to pick up as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.

Bambi Alexandra, a vocalist with her own blues and country bands, enjoys singing at the Midway Saloon jam because of the house band's expertise. "I get to stretch a little," she said. "It's a great opportunity to sing or play with high-

Bambi Alexandra, a vocalist with her own blues and country bands, enjoys singing at the Midway Saloon jam because of the house band's expertise. "I get to stretch a little," she said.



Host Johnny Sincerely raises the microphone stand for a performer called Six Nine during the Open Mic Night on a Wednesday in March at kj's hideaway, 408 Saint Peter St. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

caliber musicians."

Alexandra has been working on writing songs, and she has tried out some of her new compositions at the weekly Songwriters Showcase from 9 p.m.-midnight Sundays at Plums Bar, 480 S. Snelling Ave. Hosted by Nicholas Hensley of Macalester-Groveland, the open showcase provides singers with professional backup on guitar and bass. Participants come from all over the state, Hensley said. They sign up ahead of time so that everyone has a chance to sing.

Two fairly new open mic nights are being offered weekly at Keg and Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St., and kj's hideaway, 408 Saint Peter St. Players of all ages have been coming to display their talents and gain experience playing in front of a crowd.

"The goal is to make space available for musicians who want to play," said Keg and Case marketing director Tanner Montague. All kinds of music and even comedy and poetry are welcome at the West Seventh market. "Online signups

usually fill up in a couple of hours," Montague said.

Held from 5-8 p.m. Sundays in a former restaurant on the first floor, Keg and Case's open mic event offers performers a full sound system, keyboard, electric bass, acoustic guitar and electronic drums. Musicians may bring their own instruments, but using the house instruments saves time, Montague said.

Kj's open mic is held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays. It may be the only one in town that provides a baby grand piano for performers, in addition to drums and acoustic guitar and bass. Both cover songs and original music are welcome, according to host Debbie Briggs. A jazz singer and guitarist, Briggs usually gets the sessions started with her own renditions.

"We thought having open mic nights would be a great way to get people in here," said kj's co-owner Kristen Siers, who with her husband Jeremy Siers took over the former Vieux Carré nightclub last year. "It's been fun. You never know what you're going to get."

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Books

A Natural Curiosity: The Story of the Bell Museum will be discussed by co-authors Lansing Shepard, Don Luce, Barbara Coffin and Gwen Schagrin in a virtual program from 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 20. Participation is free. To register for the link, visit z.umn.edu/042022.

Douglas Stuart, Booker Prize-winning author of *Shuggie Bain*, will read from his second novel, *Young Mungo*, at 6 p.m. Friday, April 29, at Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. For the required tickets or more information, call 651-225-8989 or visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to virtual readings and discussions by James Lenfestey and Wang Ping from the poetry anthology, *The Uncommon Speech of Paradise*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 13; and West End novelist Larry Millett from his latest mystery, *Rafferty's Last Case*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 21. The programs are free. To register for the link, visit subtextbooks.com/events or call 651-493-2791 for more information.

Dance

Class of '85, an exploration of high school stereotypes and a celebration of acceptance and inclusion, will be presented by Collide Theatrical Dance Company from April 15 through May 1 at Gremlin Theatre, 550 N. Vandalia St. Dancers Jarod Boltjes, Renee Guittar, Rachel Seeholzer, Patrick Jeffrey, Javan Mngrezzo, Grace Kidder, Megan Carver and Ben Siglin perform. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$30-55. Visit collidetheatrical.org or call 651-395-7903.

Theater

The Little Prince, an adaptation of the beloved French novella, is playing through May 1 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The classic story of love, loss and hope tells of a world-weary aviator and the mysterious child he meets while stranded in the desert. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for students. Visit theatreintheround.org or call 612-333-3010.

Jelly's Last Jam is being staged by Theatre Latté Da through May 8 at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE in Minneapolis. The Tony Award-winning musical tells the story of Jelly Roll Morton, the classically trained pianist who spread the sounds of ragtime, blues and jazz from the back alleys of New Orleans to the dance halls and clubs of Chicago and New York. Reese Britts stars as Morton and Andre Shoals plays the Chimney Man. Kelli Foster Warder directs. Tickets start at \$35. For reservations, call 612-339-3003 or visit latteda.org.

Atacama, playwright Augusto Federico Amador's metaphorical story of the choices, views and actions that tear families and countries apart, will be performed from April 20 through May 1 by Full Circle Theater. Lara Trujillo directs. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday on the proscenium stage at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place. For ticket information, visit parksquaretheatre.org.

Avi Aharoni and Nathan Keepers star in Six Points Theater's production of *Two Jews Walk Into a War*. The play by Seth Rozin tells of Zeblyan and Ishaq, the last two Jews living in Kabul who are intent



Vanessa Gamble (right) stars as the delusional Florence and Michael Pearce Donley plays her accompanist Cosme McMoon in *Souvenir*. Playwright Stephen Temperley's drama about American socialite and would-be opera star Florence Foster Jenkins will be performed from April 29 through May 14 by Bucket Brigade Theater. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 3 p.m. Saturday, May 7 and 14, at Art House North, 793 Armstrong Ave. Tickets are \$20, \$30 and \$40, or whatever you can afford for the additional show at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 9. Call 612-547-9839 or visit bucketbrigadetheater.com.

on repopulating the ancient Jewish community but cannot agree on how to do it. Sally Wingert directs. Sixteen evening and matinee performances are scheduled from April 30 through May 22 in the auditorium of the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Tickets are \$14-\$38. Call 651-647-4315 or visit sixpointstheater.org.

Set in Paris in the 1920s, Moliere's satire *The Miser* will be performed by Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater Company from April 29 through May 7 at Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church, 1620 E. 46th St. in Minneapolis. Show times are 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for students, or whatever you can afford for the additional show at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 30. Call 612-724-4539.

Exhibits

"Totally Radical, Designing the 1980s," an exhibit that captures the variety and idiosyncrasies of styles prevalent during the 1980s, is being displayed through May 27 in the University of Minnesota's Goldstein Museum of Design, located in Gallery 241 of McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave. The exhibit includes objects from the Goldstein collection and photos and print material from U of M archives and the Minnesota Historical Society. Admission is free. For gallery hours, visit design.umn.edu/goldstein-museum-design.

The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at Saint Catherine University is displaying two new exhibits through May 22. "Not Here" presents drawings, prints, collages, illustrations and cabinets of curiosities by Minneapolis artist Jody Williams. "Rooted Forward" features the art of St. Kate's students Liz Connors, Mathis "Blue" J. Edwards, Cora Dean-Wyatt, Ellie Leonard, Carolina Lopez, Megan Riley and Theo von Weiss. The students will discuss their art from 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Thursday, May 5. Admission is free. Visit gallery.stkate.edu or call 651-690-6644.

"Mestizaje: Intermix-Remix," the art of eight Latino artists, is on view through June 12 in the sidewalk and skyway galleries of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, 350 N. Robert St. Marcela Rodríguez Aguilar, María José Castillo, Luis Fitch, Bobby Marines, Dougie Padilla, Maria Cristina Tavera, Xavier Tavera and Vlocke Negro explore what it means to identify as

mixed-race. A panel discussion on what it means to be mestizo will be held from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 12, via Zoom. Visit mmaa.org or call 651-797-2571.

More than 20 artists will take part in Art on the Island, a show and sale on April 22-24 on the fourth and fifth floors of Warehouse 2, 106 S. Water St. Paintings, drawings, prints and works in wood, clay and textiles will be featured from 5-9 p.m. Friday and noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Art demonstrations, live music and refreshments will be offered.

"Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II," a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, will be displayed from April 23 through July 3 at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Through personal stories, historical images and objects, the exhibit examines the complicated history set in motion by President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese nationals following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. An opening day program will be held from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, April 23. It will feature demonstrations of traditional Japanese origami, Japanese drumming by TaikoArts Midwest and Japanese dancing by Sansei Yonsei Kai. The documentary film *And Then They Came for Us* will be screened at noon and 2 p.m. Admission to the History Center is \$12, \$10 for seniors and college students, \$6 for children ages 5-17.

Music

A coed Drumline Jam with toms, snare and bass drums will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Friday, April 22, at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. No experience is necessary. Cost is \$10. Drums will be provided. Visit womensdrumcenter.org.

The Saint Paul Conservatory of Music welcomes the season with Spring Rhapsody, a musical showcase of its faculty and students at 3 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at the conservatory, 1524 Summit Ave. A cocktail reception will follow the showcase with hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction and live music by faculty members Rachel Holder on vocals, Randy Sabien on violin and Harry Chalmiers on guitar. Tickets for the reception are \$35 in advance, \$50 at the door. Visit thespcm.org.

Lyra Baroque Orchestra will be joined by soprano Maria Jette and traverso player Immanuel Davis in "Vivaldi and His French Friends" on Saturday, April 23. The program will be presented at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. It will highlight the influence that Italian cantatas and concertos had on the music of 18th century France. Tickets are \$30, \$25 for seniors, \$5 for students. Call 651-321-2214 or visit lyrabaroqueorchestra.org.

Singer-songwriter Cliff Eberhardt will take the stage at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 N. Snelling Ave. Tickets are \$20. Call 651-645-2647 or visit ginkgocoffee.com.

Korean-American composer Earl Kim's song cycle, *Three Poems in French* for Soprano and String Quartet, will be performed by the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota as part of a Journey East program at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Works by Piyawat Louilappasert, Ariana Kim, Steve Heitzeg and Zhou Long will also be played. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for seniors, \$15 for students. Visit chambermusicmn.org or call 651-560-0206.

The Kupinski Guitar Duo of Poland will make its Minnesota debut at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 30, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The husband and wife duo will play compositions by Sor, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Gershwin and Sergio Assad. Tickets are \$10-\$25. Visit mnguitar.org.

Family

Tour Italy without leaving Saint Paul. The Italian Cultural Center will present the music, dance, crafts, cuisine and other facets of the Bel Paese from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at Landmark Center. Call 651-292-3063 or visit landmarkcenter.org.

Alice's Looking Glass, dance theater that combines Lewis Carroll's *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* with his *Through the Looking Glass*, will be performed on April 26 and 27 by Out on a Limb Dance Theatre. A cast of more than 70 will take the stage at 7 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday in the O'Shaughnessy at Saint Catherine University. Tickets are \$32, \$30 for seniors, children and military personnel. Visit oshag.stkate.edu.

Et cetera

Join Friends of the Mississippi River for the annual Earth Day cleanup of the river gorge from 9:30 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 23, along West River Parkway in Minneapolis. After two years of pandemic-related restrictions, the family-friendly event has returned in full force. To participate, simply show up at 9:30 a.m. on West River Parkway at either East 36th Street or East 44th Street. All supplies will be provided, though if you have your own gloves bring them. Sturdy shoes are recommended. Masks are also encouraged when in close proximity to other volunteers. Groups of 10 or more are asked to call Sophie Downey at 651-222-2193 ext. 27. Groups of 20 or more are asked to call Aaron Briner at 612-230-6479.

The city of Saint Paul's 36th annual Spring Cleanup will be held from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 23, at 21 different locations across the city. Groups and individuals of all ages are invited to help pick up litter in the parks and along the streets. For more information, visit stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/natural-resources/volunteer-resources/citywide-spring-cleanup.

SPORTS

Prep softball preview

Coaches say decision to move pitchers back was good one

By Bill Wagner

Newly established state high school softball rules in 2011 increased the distance between home plate and the pitcher's mound from 40 to 43 feet. The change made the prep pitching distance the same as that of college. Many believed at the time that it would generate more offense.

It did that, even though some local coaches still say they enjoy a good close pitchers' duel. Others point to the safety factor as a reason for the move, giving pitchers more time to react to hard shots hit back to the mound.

"I think moving it back was a good move," said Minnehaha Academy coach Megan Thurow. "And it's safer, too."

Two Rivers coach Jennifer Carpenter said the change has created more offense, but added that pitchers in general have gotten better. "The kids pitching now don't know the difference," she said. "It's not hurting anybody who's throwing to us."

New Cretin-Derham Hall coach Aaron Vail agreed. Still, he said that doesn't mean pitching is less important. Far from it. "If you have a great pitcher, you have a leg up on everybody," he said.

Central coach Fiona Lodge is also a fan of the added distance. "I like it at the varsity level," she said. "It makes it easier to get used to college ball."

Visitation coach Dan Jameson said the change has been a plus. "I'd say the extra 3 feet enabled a lot more hitters to barrel up and hit the ball hard," he said. Jameson was quick to add that pitching needn't suffer because when a pitcher has good movement on the ball, most of it comes during the last few feet before it gets to the catcher's glove anyway.

Here's a look at the local teams as they make their pitch for a successful season:

CENTRAL

League: Saint Paul City

Previous record: 10-9

Coach: Fiona Lodge

Key players: senior catcher Bella Lauer, senior pitcher Maddie Griggs LeRoux, senior first baseman Ella Bangorp, senior shortstop Ellynor Haack.

Outlook: Central is capable of winning the conference title, said Lodge, whose club usually vies with Highland and Como for the top of the conference. "We have some pitching, our infield is good and we have some speed," she said.

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East

Previous record: 11-13

Coach: Aaron Vail

Key players: senior shortstop Anna Caruso, senior catcher Sammy Muetzel, freshman pitcher Brooke Nesdahl.

Outlook: The Raiders made a late charge to make it to state last year. Their schedule is a rugged one, but Vail has some confidence. "We have seven players returning who saw some good action last year," he said. "We have some good pitching and our defense is good, too."

HIGHLAND PARK

League: Saint Paul City

Previous record: 12-8

Coach: Louie Neurer

Key players: senior shortstop Kathleen Cacigalupi, senior catcher Tess Grundhoefer, sophomore pitcher Ella Johnson.

Outlook: The Scots have only 14 players on varsity, but Neurer has six starters returning from a team that won the conference a year ago. He thinks his squad should be able to play good defense, even if its offense takes time to click. "I'd think we'd be able to win the conference title," Neurer said.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Ind. Metro Athletic

Previous record: 10-11

Coach: Megan Thurow

Key players: junior first baseman Camryn Thurow, senior pitcher Payton Glenn, senior center fielder Caroline McHugh, sophomore shortstop Maddie Ciccarelli.

Outlook: The Redhawks will have an offense that can score runs and pitching that can stop opponents. A big key for the season will be how well the defense does. "We're capable of winning the conference," Thurow said. "It'll be a very positive year."

SAINT PAUL ACADEMY

League: Ind. Metro Athletic

Previous record: 0-12

Coach: Lauren Janssen

Key players: senior pitcher Rowan Venz, junior catcher Greta Magnuson, senior first baseman Sarah Oppenheim.

Outlook: Janssen has no delusions that her club is going to become a contender overnight. "We need to build a program in which we don't have to rely on one pitcher at a time," she said. The Spartans should benefit from a collaboration with Twin Cities Academy, Great River School and Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists.

TWO RIVERS

League: Metro East

Previous record: 9-13

Coach: Jennifer Carpenter

Key players: senior pitcher Kallie Fratt, junior pitcher Sofia Braun, senior infielders Becca Tuvey and Molly Shetka, senior center fielder Ella Bannie.

Outlook: With good talent returning,



SPA seventh-grade pitcher Tamari Christopher warms up her arm during practice. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Carpenter thinks her squad will make a serious move this spring. "We have nine seniors, seven who played a lot for us," she said. "It's exciting."

VISITATION

League: Tri-Metro

Previous record: 11-10

Coach: Dan Jameson

Key players: junior third baseman Jana Christensen, junior pitcher Grace Ritzenthaler, senior shortstop Jaci Young, senior catcher Hannah Allen.

Outlook: The Blazers have a rugged schedule, but Jameson is used to that. "In this conference, you're always going to have a dogfight," he said, "but we have some good young talent."



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Bob Tschida ends long coaching career

When the Catholic Athletic Association (CAA) baseball coaches met on April 12 to go over the ground rules for the 2022 season, a longtime regular was noticeably missing. For the first time in over four decades, Bob Tschida was relaxing at home instead of meeting with his coaching brethren.

The man who helped pave the way for future major leaguer Jack Hannahan and several others who dreamed of going pro had decided the time had come for somebody else to teach young baseball players how to bunt, pitch and turn double plays.

Connie Mack was still managing the Philadelphia A's at age 87. Tschida is only 86, but a bout with COVID-19 that sapped his energy level a bit helped drive his decision to step away from baseball. "I think it's time," Tschida said. "I'm sure I'll miss it. In fact, you'll probably still see me at some games this spring."

Tschida has been coaching youth baseball for a long time. He coached the baseball teams at Highland Catholic School for 34 years. Before that, he was at Saint Luke's for three years and at Immaculate Heart of Mary for six.

He also coached Highland Catholic's hockey team for 23 years. It might seem that, after a work schedule like that, a fellow might want to take some time off in the summer. For 23 years, however, Tschida also coached the North End's American Legion baseball team.

"I know there's probably somebody who doesn't like me," CAA athletic director Mark Courtney said last week, "but I don't know anybody who doesn't like Bob Tschida."

Highland Catholic athletic director Rob Petersen has been Tschida's boss for the past 15 years. "The first day of practice, he showed up with a bucket of balls, then put them aside and just talked to the kids," Petersen recalled. "He controlled the room without raising his voice. All it took was his gentle smile and he had their attention."

"You need to be patient with eighth-graders," Tschida said. "You need to get through to them that it's OK to make mistakes. You just need to learn from them."

One year, Tschida discovered his infielders were having trouble catching a throw and then relaying the ball to first to complete a double play. To help fix the problem, he found a couple of pieces of wood, a stapler and small strips of fabric. As the picture at right illustrates, the infielder slips the device on his glove hand to get used to trapping the ball against the wood before throwing it to first.

It may not be as slick as watching Carlos Correa turn a double play, but the Hi-C lads warmed to the idea. "Kids like something new," Tschida said. "If it helps them get better at something, they'll do it."

Tschida considers himself fortunate to have coached players like Hannahan, his brother Buzz, Tony Leseman and many others who went on to have stellar high school



and college baseball careers.

One of his young charges who had a different career in baseball was Tim Tschida (distant relation), who played hockey for Bob when he was in seventh grade. Tim started umpiring when he was in high school and went on to work more than 3,400 major league games before retiring a decade ago.

Tim remembers Bob fondly. "You had a lot of fun with him, but he took the games seriously," he recalled.

Another early Bob Tschida trainee was current University of Saint Thomas men's basketball coach John Tauer, who played on the Hi-C baseball team as an eighth-grader. "He was my third head coach in three years there," Tauer said. "We won the championship that year. It was a big deal."

Tauer remembers Tschida's patient approach. "He built up our confidence," Tauer said. "He had high standards, but didn't scream at you to reach them."

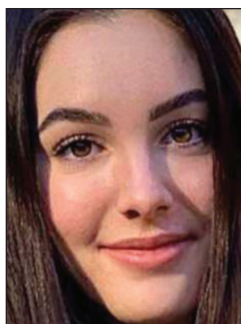
A decade ago, Petersen thought Tschida would be an excellent candidate for the CAA Hall of Fame. "When I brought it up, people thought it was an obvious choice," he said. So in 2013, Tschida joined the hall. "Some folks were surprised he wasn't already in there," Petersen said.

A month or so ago, Petersen had a conversation he had been dreading. The time had come to talk about the upcoming season. Tschida was straightforward with his boss. "He told me he was too tired to do it," Petersen said. "COVID had left him with not a good feeling."

Scott Helgeson, who had assisted Tschida in the past, has the task of succeeding a coach who, as Petersen put it, "knows the kids long before they know him. A lot of times, his players don't get what he's teaching them until later. It's the end of an era."

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

Athena Awards mark 28th year of recognizing city's top female student athletes



Lilian Hamacher



Ari Evans



Molly Moening



Naomi Straub



Jaylen Rosga



Ella Sukup

The 28th annual Saint Paul Area Athena Awards ceremony will take place on April 20. Forty-eight young women representing the Saint Paul area's public and private schools will be honored for excellence in athletics and academics. The local winners include:

Central—Lilian Hamacher

Sports: volleyball (letter, Academic All-State); gymnastics (2 letters, 2-time all-conference, Future Coach Award, captain); track and field (3 letters, state qualifier, 2-time captain, Academic All-State); swimming and diving (letter).

School activities: student council, Women in STEM Club, student leadership, homecoming, National Honor Society, Environmental Committee.

Scholastic honors: 4-time academic Top 10, 3.98 unweighted GPA, 4.86 weighted GPA, full International Baccalaureate Diploma candidate, fluent in German, 2-time Academic All-State.

Post-high school plans: attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison or the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, major in physics and business.

Cretin-Derham Hall—Ari Evans

Sports: soccer (5 letters, rookie of the year, 2-time all-conference honorable mention, all-conference, section champs, state participant, MVP-offense, captain); hockey (5 letters, 2-time all-conference

honorable mention, all-conference, rookie of the year, Hustle Award, Academic All-State, captain); lacrosse (3 letters, section champs, state tournament, Most Improved Player, all-metro, all-state, MVP-defense, captain).

School activities: People Finding People, CDH Leadership Outreach Team, Art Club.

Scholastic honors: 4.05 GPA, Marcia Black Olsen Scholarship, Academic All-State teams, President's List Honor Roll.

Post-high school plans: undecided.

Highland Park—Molly Moening

Sports: cross-country (6 letters, 6-time all-conference, 5-time all-state, 6-time conference champion, 5K school record holder, 6-time state meet); Nordic skiing (6 letters, 6-time all-conference, 5-time all-state, six state appearances, 4-time conference champion, 5-time section champion, 2-time state champion, 2-time girls' Nordic skier of the year, 5-time all-American U.S. Junior Nationals, U.S. Ski Team National Training Group); track and field (5 letters, 5-time all-conference, 6-time all-state, 12-time conference champion, school record-holder in the 1600M and 4X500M).

School honors: Dare to be Real Equity Group, Voice in Sport Advocacy Leadership Group.

Scholastic achievements: Nordic skiing and cross-country Academic All-State.

Post-high school plans: attend the Uni-

versity of Vermont, compete in Nordic skiing and study environmental science.

St. Paul Academy—Naomi Straub

Sports: soccer (4 letters, 3-time all-conference, all-state, conference champions, rookie of the year); basketball (captain, 2 letters, All-Academic Silver Award); track and field (captain, 2 letters, fourth place sectionals in 4x100); Saint Paul Blackhawks premier team soccer (Sweet 16 at Gothia Cup).

School activities: Outdoors Club, ASL Club, Honors Art Seminar.

Scholastic honors: 7-time honor roll.

Post-high school plans: attend Carleton College, play soccer and study biology and Chinese.

Two Rivers—Jaylen Rosga

Sports: lacrosse (2 letters, Team USA U18 member, 3-time Under Armour All-American, US Lacrosse All-American, Academic All-American, Player of the Year, all-state, all-section, all-conference, first in state in points per game and third in total points, state meet, state all-tournament team, ranked #6 lacrosse player in the country); cross-country (6 letters, 6-time all-conference, state participant); track and field (2 letters, state participant 4x800, 2-time all-conference; basketball (4 letters, all-conference honorable mention).

School activities: student council president, National Honor Society, 3-time Spot-

light on Scholarship selection, Link crew leader, district leadership team, Unity Club, homecoming royalty.

Scholastic honors: seven years on "A" honor roll.

Post-high school plans: attend the University of Maryland on a lacrosse scholarship, major in business.

Visitation—Ella Sukup

Sports: soccer (4 letters, 2-time all-conference, honorable mention, 2-time all-state, rookie of the year, most dedicated player, MVP, captain); track and field (3 letters, 2-time all-conference, honorable mention, 2-time section event champion, 3-time state qualifier, rookie of the year, MVP, captain).

School activities: student council president, Investment Club co-president, newspaper editor, Leadership Club.

Scholastic honors: 3 years High Honor Roll, National Spanish Exam bronze award, 2-time Academic All-State, 4.3 GPA.

Post-high school plans: attend Williams College, run track and study biology and statistics.

The luncheon will take place from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, April 20, at Vadnais Heights Commons, 655 E. County Road F. Dr. Nicole M. LaVoi of the Tucker Center at the University of Minnesota will be the keynote speaker. Visit stpaulathena.com.



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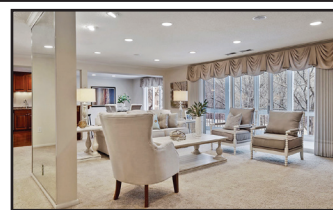
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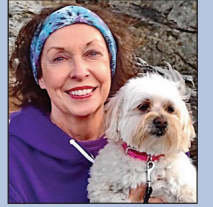
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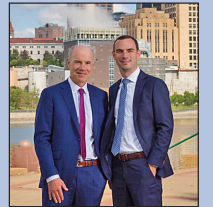


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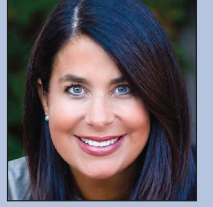
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