

Keystone's new food center gets financial boost

HRA grants \$1.7M in loans for Merriam Park project

By Jane McClure

Keystone Community Services' planned new food center at 1790-1800 University Ave. has just gotten a \$1.7 million lift. The Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority board awarded two federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) loans on November 9 to the \$8.38 million project. Construction is expected to start in January, with completion later in the year.

"The funding gives us the boost we needed to get the project underway," said Mary McKeown, Keystone president and CEO. "It helped us fill a funding gap."

City Council members said they were pleased to see the project move ahead, noting that Keystone serves people throughout Saint Paul.

The social services nonprofit agency recently purchased two University Avenue buildings, which date from 1917 and 1923 and housed a transmission center and furniture store for many years. Keystone plans to consolidate its current food shelf on University and its Rice Street food shelf in the new center. Clients at many locations are

KEYSTONE FOOD CENTER ▶3



Season of giving.

Larissa Holland and her daughter Claudia, 21 months, basked in the glow of the 25,000 bulbs that lit up Rice Park on November 12 during the Tree of Lights ceremony. The downtown promotion kicked off the Salvation Army's annual Kettle Campaign for folks experiencing hard times. Like the downtown lights, the Kettle Campaign will continue throughout the holidays at stores and street corners across the Twin Cities. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Support builds for moving Justus Ramsey House to new location

Hearing set Dec. 5 on historic home's possible demolition

By Jane McClure

Historic preservationists are still holding out hope that the 170-year-old Justus Ramsey House can be saved either at its current West End site or a new location in the neighborhood. The two-room limestone dwelling is believed to be the oldest house in Saint Paul still in its original location. A permit for its demolition will be reviewed by the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) in a public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Monday, December 5.

A November 7 hearing before the HPC was laid over to give preservationists, neighborhood groups and property owner Moe Sharif time to consider how the house might be saved. The house is located on the patio of Sharif's Burger Moe's restaurant at 252 W. Seventh St. Sharif applied for the demolition permit this summer, citing the house's structurally unsound condition. Preservationists have since rallied to try to save the structure.

The house was built by Justus Ramsey, the brother of Minnesota's first territorial

JUSTUS RAMSEY HOUSE ▶2

State requires all schools to be smart about treating seizures

Training lowers learning curve on right response

By Frank Jossi

Health Fairview pediatrician Dr. Anna Milz knows well the importance of having school staff members understand what to do if a student has a seizure. The Mendota Heights physician has a school-age son and daughter who have epilepsy and suffer seizures.

"It's scary for an observer to watch somebody have a seizure and it's unnerving for the patient because they don't

know what's happening," Milz said. "It's important for staff and kids to know what to do in that situation."

November is Epilepsy Awareness Month and the Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota has an initiative called Seizure Smart Schools that trains students, teachers and staff throughout the state on treating students suffering seizures. The initiative builds on a program by the same name that the foundation has offered schools for 12 years.

At the start of this school year, all public and charter schools in Minnesota were required by state law to have someone on staff who is trained to respond to seizures.

Milz said school staff learned such techniques as catching students before they fall, placing a rolled-up jacket or pillow under their heads and rolling them onto their sides. Some episodes last seconds, others minutes. If a seizure continues, those who are assisting should call 911, Milz said.

According to Milz, students with seizures often carry medication with them, but sometimes bystanders are uncomfortable administering it. A school nurse or a trained medic will be a better option in those situations if students cannot take medicine on their own, Milz said.

Neither Milz's 12-year-old son nor 6-year-old daughter has had a seizure

while at school. However, her son suffers more attacks than her daughter, sometimes experiencing them at friends' homes.

Those family friends know how to respond because they recognize seizures. "They've been very supportive and understanding," Milz said. "I think having a background (in seizures) has helped them maintain their friendship with my son."

Glen Lloyd, executive director of the Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota, said about 55,000 Minnesotans live with epilepsy and sometimes face discrimination because of it. The Seizure Smart Schools program de-

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1◀ JUSTUS RAMSEY HOUSE

governor, Alexander Ramsey. It is believed to have been built in 1852, although some accounts date its construction to a few years later. The house has local and national historic designations, and is part of Saint Paul's scattered-site historic district of limestone structures.

Justus Ramsey apparently never lived in the house, but likely built it as an investment. One of its early occupants was Robert Smith, who later became mayor of Saint Paul. The house also has strong connections to Saint Paul's early African-American population. Saint Paul historian Jim Sazevich and West End resident and businessman Tom Schroeder have researched that history.

Former slaves George and Maria Perkins lived in the Justus Ramsey House from 1900-08. George Perkins worked as a railroad porter. Several other railroad porters called the house home over the years, according to Schroeder. Other tenants worked as maids, butchers and laborers.

Lizzie Battle, a hairdresser and hat-maker, lived in the house. She used a small wooden structure in front of the house as her shop. That shop was destroyed when West Seventh Street was widened in 1933. Other tenants included John and Daisy Hall, sisters Alice Dean and Hattie Key and Key's daughter Lucy, who were all from Alabama and shared the house with a boarder named Charles Alexander. The structure later served as an antique shop before Burger Moe's built its patio around it.

Schroeder, who owns the nearby Waldmann Brewery on Smith Avenue, has been working on the house's preservation with the Historic Irvine Park Association, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation, the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association and Historic Saint Paul. The parties are seeking an environmental assessment for



The Justus Ramsey House as it appeared in 1960, when it was being used as an antiques store.

PHOTO BY JACK BOUCHER, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

the house, which was condemned by the city in September. Options for the house include demolition, restoration on site or restoration at a new site.

Through his representatives, Sharif has made it clear that he wants the house moved. "Moe cares deeply about the community and Saint Paul's history," his representatives stated after the November 7 HPC meeting. "He's open to any conversation regarding the best way to preserve the building and the history it represents. The other challenge to address is the need for a quick resolution because the building now is not safe."

West Seventh Federation board members agreed on November 14 to continue sharing information on the house, its his-

tory and future prospects. The nonprofit organization Rethos (formerly the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota) has offered grant assistance.

Federation members are concerned that if the Justus Ramsey House is demolished, it could set a precedent for other historic structures, including Forepaugh's, the 1870 mansion at 276 Exchange St. that was turned into a restaurant decades ago but closed in 2019.

The roof and chimney of the Justus Ramsey House are damaged and one of its walls has collapsed. MacDonald & Mack, a consulting firm hired by the city to assess the house's condition, has stated that the damage can be repaired and that moving the house is feasible.

MacDonald & Mack's report on the Justus Ramsey House also indicated that the holes in the roof and gaps in the chimney appear to have been made by other than natural causes since the missing materials were not found in the debris inside the house. The report states that the "observed deterioration (of the house) does not correlate with natural deterioration mechanisms," though deferred maintenance and a lack of repairs has contributed to the deterioration.

Sharif released a report from BKBM Engineers that outlines the dangers posed by the structure and why it should be demolished. A letter from Advanced Masonry Restoration outlines the serious need for repairs. The letter estimates the cost of moving and rebuilding the house at about \$132,000.

However, according to structural engineers from Palanisami & Associates, the condition of the house "is not suitable for repair. The original building walls and roof have been modified over the years to accommodate modern materials such as roof shingles and a brick chimney. The front wall appears to be original construction. (However) it is not practical to reassemble deteriorated limestone pieces of the south and east walls to match the original condition. The building is not suitable for any occupancy without insulation and fire-rated walls in compliance with current code."

Richard Dana, a construction consultant and former chair of the HPC, submitted testimony supporting the MacDonald & Mack report. He cited the years of renovation to the house, including the removal and replacement of the wall that abuts Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub. "I really don't know how you maintain a building when everything you should do is a code violation caused by actions taken in the past," Dana said.



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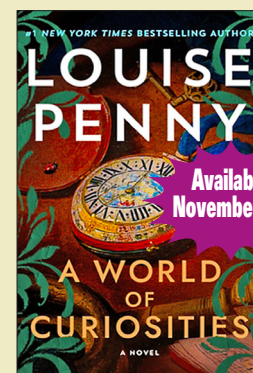
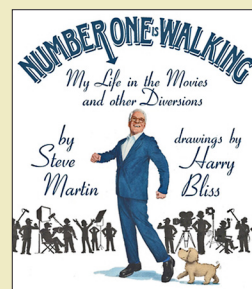
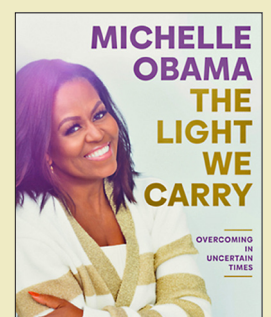
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14 KEYSTONE FOOD CENTER

also served by Keystone's two foodmobiles. The new 20,000-square-foot facility will vastly increase Keystone's capacity to receive and store food, improve logistical support for mobile food services, and provide a store-like shopping area. It will also have private spaces where Keystone personnel can meet with clients, and large meeting rooms for public meetings and events.

Another plus will be a parking garage for the agency's foodmobiles, which have had their catalytic converters stolen when parked outside.

The November 9 action is just the latest in a series of city efforts to help the food center open its doors. The City Council in August 2021 approved a \$56,443 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grant for the project. Then in October 2021 it approved a \$902,255 CDBG loan for Keystone. Part of the action taken on November 9 calls for all three CDBG loans to be combined. They are expected to be forgiven over time.

In 2021 the plan was to phase in work

on the building and continue fundraising, but increased costs and rising demand for services forced Keystone to rethink that approach. Its board voted instead to expedite the project and to assume debt, something not typical for a nonprofit project, McKeown said. City planning staff were approached to help fill a \$1.7 million funding gap.

Keystone just had a 2022 STAR funding request turned down. A request for state bonding was tied up in the 2022 Minnesota Legislature's gridlock. Keystone launched a fundraising drive this fall to raise another \$125,000.

The agency's food shelves and foodmobiles are currently experiencing a doubling of overall demand at a time when volunteer numbers still have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.

McKeown noted that this summer, Keystone saw the number of first-time clients more than triple, from 364 last August to 1,251 this August. According to her, households are coping with higher costs of goods and services, and wages are not keeping up with inflation.

"People cannot sustain these increases



The preliminary design for Keystone's new food center on University Avenue. IMAGES BY 4RM+ULA ARCHITECTS

and pay more for gas, food, utilities and housing," McKeown said, and Keystone anticipates further increased demand for food support in the years ahead. It is anticipated that the new center will serve as many as 50,00 people a year.

Keystone will maintain its other locations, McKeown said. Those include ad-

ministrative headquarters and senior programming at the Merriam Park Community Center, senior and youth programs at the West Seventh Community Center, and youth programs at the Keystone Best Buy Teen Tech Center and at McDonough Community Center. The Express Bike Shop on Selby Avenue will also remain open.

Handful of local projects earn slice of Neighborhood STAR funding pie

By Jane McClure

A total of 21 projects will share in Saint Paul's 2022 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funding, which was approved by the City Council on November 9. The vote ends a competitive process that began last spring.

The highest-ranked local project was Vina Restaurant, 756 S. Cleveland Ave., which came in third overall. Vina was awarded a \$100,000 grant and \$100,000 loan with a \$284,566 match to make its front entry accessible and add accessible restrooms, reconstruct its kitchen and add code compliant kitchen features.

Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., ranked fifth. DWD Group sought funding to resurface walkways, including the entrance from the patio, replace flooring, update electrical panels and replace kitchen equipment. The award included a \$50,000 loan and a \$50,000 grant with a \$50,000 match.

Mayor Melvin Carter added conditions to Billy's award. The longtime Grand Avenue business is undergoing review of its city licenses in light of repeated complaints about license violations. Carter asked that the STAR funding be placed in contingency for use on security improvements as rec-

ommended by the city's Department of Safety and Inspections and Police Department until licensing processes are successfully completed.

Ranking eighth was FilmNorth, 550 Vandalia St. The nonprofit was awarded a \$40,000 grant and has a \$1.07 million match to improve a vacant storefront in the nearby Creative Enterprise Zone for filmmaking classes, work space, a cinema and an outdoor gathering space.

Walker West Music Academy ranked 18th with its request for funding as part of an \$8.1 million capital campaign to purchase and renovate a former Wilder Foundation building at 650 Marshall Ave. A \$40,648 grant and \$40,648 loan will be matched with \$5.92 million. The STAR funds will be earmarked for building renovations.

Ranking 20th was the Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation, which was awarded an \$81,296 loan with a \$625,000 match to help with conversion of first-floor former retail space into eight affordable housing units on Selby Avenue and Milton Street as part of the new Selby Wilkins project.

The Neighborhood STAR fund requests totaled \$6.19 million. The 21 chosen projects were awarded \$611,561 in loans and

\$1.36 million in grants. Matches for the chosen projects total \$13.4 million.

Forty-eight proposals were not recommended for funding. Local projects that were shut out this round include outdoor classroom space at Groveland Park Elementary School, Keystone Community Services' new food shelf, and improvements for the Science Museum of Minnesota, Little Mekong business district, Minnesota Museum of Art and Victoria Theater.

Housing projects that were not funded

include Women's Advocates and new sober housing at Mary Kay's Place. Area small businesses with requests not funded include Alary's, Nothing But Hemp, Rouge Urban Salon, Trapped Puzzle Room and Plant Bar Cafe.

STAR funds come from the city's extra half-percent sales tax implemented in 1993, with half of the proceeds going to neighborhood projects and the rest split between Saint Paul RiverCentre and cultural projects. The 2022 round marked the program's 28th funding cycle.

Comments sought on rent control amendments

By Jane McClure

Public comments are being sought on amendments to Saint Paul's residential rent stabilization ordinance that were approved by the City Council in September. The comments are due by December 2.

The comment period is the latest in a series of steps taken since voters approved a 3 percent cap on rent increases in November 2021. The measure took effect on May 1. Changes approved by the City Council this fall will take effect on January 1. The changes are based in part on recommendations from the city's Rent Stabilization Stakeholder Group, which released its findings in June. The City Council took those findings and made further changes to the rent control measures.

The revised ordinance would continue to limit residential rent increases to 3 percent in any 12-month period. The council has added provisions that clarify terms such as "right to a reasonable return on investment" and create a 20-year exemption for

newly built residential rental properties.

Other key changes include:

- "Partial vacancy decontrol," which would allow landlords to increase rents by up to 8 percent plus inflation, measured by Consumer Price Index, after a "just cause" vacancy. Landlords would have to demonstrate a "just cause" vacancy to be eligible for the partial vacancy decontrol measures.

- Tenants would have to be notified by city staff when their landlord submits an application requesting an exception to the 3 percent rent cap. City staff would also notify tenants if the application is approved or denied.

- Tenants and landlords would have 45 days from the date of the city's determination on the exception request to file an appeal.

Additional information about how utilities would be considered in rental agreements, a list of what constitutes "just cause" and definitions of terms are included in the amendments. People can read more about the amendments and comment at tinyurl.com/4jrvx3wu.



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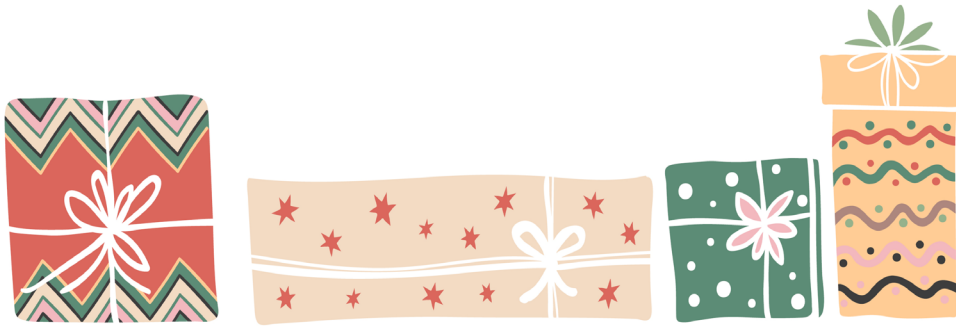
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The United in Epilepsy Twin Cities walk on September 17 at Allianz Field celebrated the implementation of Seizure Smart Schools, which requires all public and charter schools in the state to have staff trained in seizure response.

SEIZURE SMART SCHOOLS

mystifies seizures by explaining how they are a medical condition akin to a "lightning storm in the brain."

The push to make Seizure Smart Schools stronger through state legislation began in 2017 when Ridgewater College student Ruth Schmitz, who suffers from seizures, wrote a paper advocating for Minnesota to become "seizure smart." She sent the report to her local legislator, who approached the Epilepsy Foundation to build bipartisan support for the legislation.

State agencies have also stepped in to do their part. "We've seen a strong response by the Minnesota Department of Education and Department of Health to ensure that school nurses and other school personnel have free training through the foundation," Lloyd said.

School districts have embraced the opportunity to train staff, he said, and the Saint Paul Public Schools has been among the state's leaders. All 67 public schools and 72 charter schools in the city have received seizure training. Lloyd said reaching diverse populations has been critical in creating a broader understanding of what causes seizures and how to treat students

who have them.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with epilepsy do not have to reveal that information to school officials. But Lloyd and the foundation have been encouraging parents and students to disclose that they have the disorder because it results in individualized learning plans and additional resources.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota provides in-school classes, webinar videos, printed materials and information on designing "seizure action plans" for students. Lloyd said that parents of children with epilepsy often work directly with school staff on approaches to help their children if seizures occur.

Lloyd said the foundation customizes training to specific age levels. He believes the Legislature's action, combined with the work of school districts, will create a state that is genuinely "seizure-ready."

For Milz, who serves on the foundation's board of directors, it is all about making schools safer for students with epilepsy. "It's great if we can make sure schools can provide basic first aid and make sure they're safe and can get them on the right track to get help," she said.

HRA supports \$13.5M in funding for renovating Higher Ground Academy

By Jane McClure

The Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) board voted 5-2 on November 9 to give preliminary approval to issuing up to \$13.5 million in conduit revenue bonds for the renovation of Higher Ground Academy, 1381 Marshall Ave.

Mitra Jalali and Nelsie Yang cast the sole negative votes. They have been pushing for the city's planning department to look more closely at charter school financing. One concern is that charter schools take property off of the city's tax rolls.

The HRA is expected to take final action on the issue on December 14. No one spoke at the November 9 public hearing on the bonds.

The bonds would be for the Higher Ground Building Company, a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the K-12 charter school. Higher Ground Academy was founded by the late Bill Wilson and has operated since 1999 at 1381 Marshall Ave. It added an upper school at 1471 Brewster St. in 2018. It currently enrolls approximately 1,080 students at both locations. The school's authorizer is Osprey Wilds, a private, nonprofit, environmental learning

and retreat center.

In 1999 the HRA issued bonds to finance Higher Grounds' original facility. Additional improvements were financed through HRA-issued bonds in 2004 and 2009. In 2013, the HRA issued \$13.48 million in bonds for Higher Ground that refinanced all prior bonds and financed equipment purchases for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) labs to enhance academic programs. The current outstanding balance of the 2013 bonds is \$10 million.

Higher Ground has sought new space for several years. The HRA in 2018 issued \$14.33 million in bonds for the school to expand to 1471 Brewster St., the former home of Metro Deaf School. The second site serves students in grades 7-12.

The latest request for \$13.5 million would allow for refinancing of the 2013 bonds and paying for interior renovations. Planned improvements would provide more office space, enhance security, and relocate the cafeteria and convert that space for physical and recreational activities.

Higher Ground students currently travel to the Oxford Community Center/Jimmy Lee Recreation Center for recreation. Enrollment is expected to increase modestly to 1,175 within the next five years.

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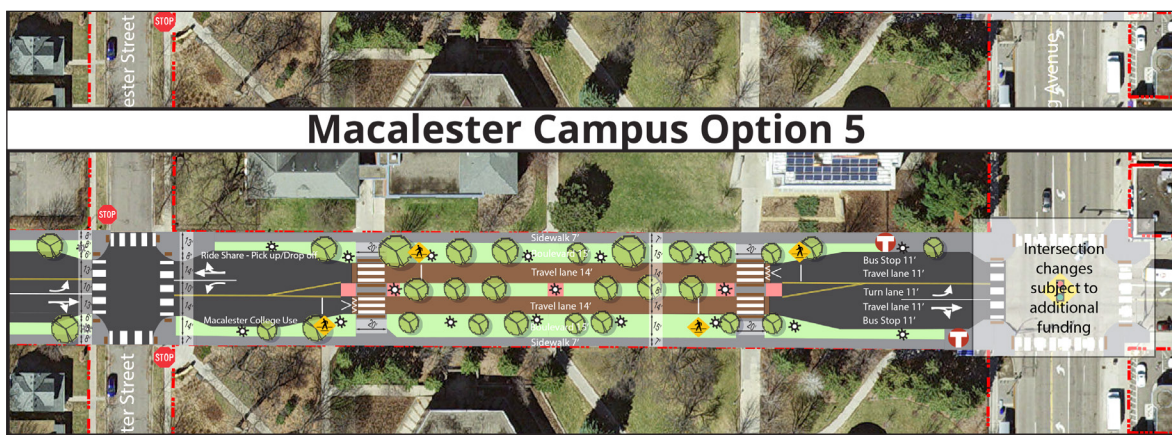
Mac-Grove weighs in on redesigning Grand between Snelling-Fairview

By Jane McClure

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council (MGCC) on November 10 wrapped up several months of studies by its Transportation Committee and weighed in with its recommendations on the city's plan to reconstruct Grand Avenue between Snelling and Fairview avenues in 2024.

Those recommendations and other public comments will be considered by the Saint Paul Department of Public Works over the next couple of months as design options for Grand are developed. Other than resurfacing near Macalester College a couple of years ago, Grand has not seen a lot of work along that stretch. The street is in very poor condition in places, with rankings of 13-51 on a scale of 100.

Reconstructing Grand between Fairview and Snelling has an estimated cost of \$6.7 million and will include new pavement, lighting, sidewalks and underground utilities. The cost does not include the Grand-Snelling intersection. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is currently eyeing reconstruction of that intersection as part of its resurfac-



One option being considered for the Grand Avenue median that bisects Macalester College would raise the road surface to be even with the curbs, widen the existing east and west pedestrian crossings and remove the center crossing.

ing of Snelling, a state highway.

The district council's Transportation Committee made its recommendations in October, and committee chair Hugo Bruggeman and Public Works project manager Joe Widing presented them to the full district council.

Preferred options were split by street section, with the committee and full district council having the most discussion of potential changes to the Grand Avenue median that bisects the Macalester College campus. The median currently has three mid-block crossings, none of which are accessible to people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

The committee debated several options presented by Public Works, including having fewer crossings. Bruggeman said the intent was to make a general recommendation of support for a raised crossing option, which vehicles would drive over as they travel on Grand. Having some sort of raised crossing is also favored by college students.

MGCC board president Art Punyko asked how a raised crossing would affect bus traffic. Widing said that as reconstruction plans are developed, the balance between vehicle and pedestrian needs will have to be weighed.

Several district council mem-

bers cited the danger to pedestrians crossing Grand, especially near the college, and urged Public Works to find solutions.

Grand and Cambridge Street is another area where major changes are on the table. The options include adding standard corner bumpouts, building a partial intersection median or installing a full median. The district council recommends a partial median. Bruggeman said that would remove a northbound left-turn lane from Grand onto Cambridge, but would provide a pedestrian refuge for Hidden River Middle School students and other pedestrians.

Several district council members cited the danger to pedestrians crossing Grand, especially near the college, and urged Public Works to find solutions.

A planted or paved median was proposed west of Cambridge Street by Public Works. No median is recommended by the district council to cut costs. Another reason is that a raised median could affect the safety of bicyclists.

The committee also recommended that corner bumpouts be placed on Grand at Fairview to reduce the crossing distance and provide more safety for pedestrians.

Grand's traffic volume has decreased in recent years. The most recent average daily vehicle count was 7,779 in 2017. That number had been around 10,000-12,000, but dropped after the 2005 installation of the median between Snelling and Macalester Street.

Efforts to preserve low-income housing continue at Selby Wilkins

By Jane McClure

The Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority board awarded \$426,200 in low-income housing tax credits on November 9 to the Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation (TCHDC) for its Selby Commons and Wilkins Townhomes projects, now known as Selby Wilkins.

The HRA also voted to consolidate several loans and modify terms and conditions for housing that the nonprofit TCHDC owns in the Summit-University neighborhood.

TCHDC is launching an ambitious project to rehabilitate some of the Selby Wilkins housing units, adding eight new apartments and setting the stage for some dwellings to be sold but continue as low- to moderate-income housing. The total project cost is \$22.9 million.

Barb McQuillan, executive director of TCHDC, said the nonprofit is excited to get the project rolling. "The work we're doing fits well with what the community needs to maintain deeply affordable housing," she said.

Wilkins Townhomes is a three-building, 23-unit, affordable townhome community

"The work we're doing fits well with what the community needs to maintain deeply affordable housing," said Barb McQuillan, executive director of TCHDC.

with 100 percent of the housing units holding Section 8 vouchers. The buildings are on Marshall, Ashland and Holly avenues east of Dale Street. They were constructed in the early 1980s, but have had no substantial improvements since then. TCHDC purchased the properties in 2020 with the intent of combining them with Selby Commons.

TCHDC has owned and operated Selby Commons since the early 1990s. The scattered-site development has 12 buildings along a five-block stretch of Selby Avenue, and offers a total of 38 two-, three- and four-bedroom dwellings. Most buildings are single-family homes, duplexes and triplexes. The largest and most prominent building is at Selby and Milton Street. It

has 10 affordable apartments and will soon add more.

The 120-year-old Selby-Milton building was recently granted a conditional use permit by the Saint Paul Planning Commission to allow the conversion of ground-floor commercial space into eight, two-bedroom apartments that are affordable to households making 60 percent of the Twin Cities' area median income. The commission also recommended that the building and its parking lot at 912 Selby be rezoned from commercial to residential use. The City Council is poised to act on the rezoning request by the end of the month.

The Section 8 housing is considered affordable to households earning 30 percent or less of Twin Cities' area median income (AMI), or \$35,200 a year for a household of four. The other units are affordable to households earning 60 percent of AMI, or \$70,400 for a household of four.

Combining Selby Commons and Wilkins Townhomes makes sense, according to the city staff report. "The scattered site design of both developments individually is inefficient and challenging to remain financially feasible," the report stated. "Combining the two developments will increase the

efficiencies of operating these units."

The city and HRA debt for the buildings is being consolidated and assigned to the new Selby Wilkins LLLP.

TCHDC plans to sell six of the 12 original Selby Commons properties. The six properties consist of four duplexes and two single-family homes.

A purchase agreement is in place with Land Bank Twin Cities, which will own and operate the dwellings as rental properties until the current tenants choose to move. Then it will seek a partner developer to help complete needed renovations and find low- to moderate-income housing buyers. The Land Bank will also work with the Family Housing Fund and possibly the Rondo Community Land Trust.

As part of the purchase agreement, TCHDC plans to loan \$300,000 to the Land Bank or its development partner to help fund the rehabilitation work on the properties.

In 2021, the HRA also awarded tax credits to TCHDC in the amount of \$914,334 for Selby Wilkins. That same year, the corporation also received an award of \$214,957 from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

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Incumbents and DFLers make a clean sweep of Nov. 8 election

DFL majorities in House and Senate may open way to much legislation

By Dale Mischke

The red wave of 2022 ran up against a blue tsunami in Minnesota on November 8 as DFL incumbents turned back challenge after challenge from their Republican opponents. In a year when incumbents were expected to be vulnerable because of a downturn in the economy, budget-busting inflation and a rising crime rate, the DFL held onto the offices of Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor and Attorney General. The party kept its majority in the state House of Representatives and captured the majority in the state Senate.

The next biennium will be the first time in 10 years that a single political party has held the governor's office and the majority in both houses of the Minnesota Legislature.

"The alignment...presents a tremendous opportunity to advance a legislative agenda that lifts up families and allows every person in the state the chance to thrive," said Representative Dave Pinto, who on November 8 won his fifth term in District 64B (Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland).

With Republicans in control of the state Senate, House DFLers have been unable to advance legislation expanding criminal background checks for gun sales, increasing funding for law enforcement and community violence prevention, and greater accountability in the criminal justice system, Pinto said. "I expect all of these to have much stronger support this coming session," he said. "I also expect to see significant funding increases for public education and strong support for quality child care and early learning."

Pinto said he also expects the Legislature to legalize the recreational use of marijuana by adults through a public health framework similar to that already passed by the DFL-controlled House.

Erin Murphy, a former member of the Minnesota House, won her second term in the state Senate in District 64 in the southwest quarter of Saint Paul. She was jubilant



District 64 Senator Erin Murphy

after the election. "I chaired the (DFL's) Senate Caucus Campaign in 2022," Murphy said. "We won a pro-choice majority, which many believed impossible."

Murphy said Minnesotans can expect to see the Legislature in the coming biennium "advance reproductive freedom and address worker shortages and workplace safety and the urgent issue of climate change. We'll structurally balance the budget and invest in our communities and families to make life a little easier."

Included below are the results of the November 8 general election in all of the statewide races and in the congressional, legislative, county and municipal races in the area served by MyVillager. Only those races in which there were more candidates than positions available are included:

Governor-Lieutenant Governor		
Walz-Flanagan	1,312,303	52.3%
Jensen-Birk	1,119,926	44.6%
McCaskel-Sandbeck	29,436	1.2%
Patterson-Huff	22,605	0.9%
McTavish-Winter	18,160	0.7%
Prosser-Dwire	7,240	0.3%
Secretary of State		
Steve Simon	1,345,684	54.5%
Kim Crockett	1,119,960	45.4%
State Auditor		
Julia Blaha	1,168,177	47.5%
Ryan Wilson	1,159,742	47.1%
Tim Davis	87,388	3.6%
Will Finn	44,270	1.8%



District 64B Representative Dave Pinto

Attorney General		
Keith Ellison	1,254,372	50.4%
Jim Schultz	1,233,573	49.5%

U.S. Representative - District 4		
Betty McCollum	200,052	67.6%
May Lor Xiong	95,493	32.3%

U.S. Representative - District 2		
Angie Craig	165,581	50.9%
Tyler Kistner	148,578	45.7%
Paula M. Overby	10,730	3.3%

State Senator - District 53		
Matt Klein	21,501	58.2%
Chris Rausch	15,374	41.6%

State Senator - District 64		
Erin Murphy	36,686	84.2%
Robert Bushard	6,823	15.7%

State Senator - District 65		
Sandy Pappas	20,228	80.1%
Paul Holmgren	4,960	19.7%

State Senator - District 66		
Clare O. Verbeten	23,987	78.4%
Mikki M. Murray	5,522	18%
Jeremy J. Peichel	1,061	3.5%

State Representative - District 53A		
Mary F. Clardy	10,777	54.5%
Todd Kruse	8,188	41.4%
Brent Jacobson	785	4%

State Representative - District 52B		
Ruth Richardson	13,934	61.7%
Cynthia Lonquist	8,636	38.2%

State Representative - District 64A		
Kaohly Vang Her	18,080	85.1%
Dan Walsh	3,128	14.7%

State Representative - District 64B		
Dave Pinto	18,126	82.6%
Lorraine Englund	3,790	17.3%

State Representative - District 65A		
Samakab Hussein	7,018	71.2%
John Schonebaum	1,522	15.4%
Miki Frost	1,302	13.2%

State Representative - District 65B		
Maria Pérez-Hedges	11,955	78.5%
Kevin Fjelsted	3,247	21.3%

State Representative - District 66A		
Leigh Finke	15,635	81.1%
Trace Johnson	3,569	18.5%

State Representative - District 66B		
Athena Hollins	8,640	78.4%
Jay Hill	2,364	21.5%

Ramsey Cty. Commissioner - District 3		
Trista MatasCastillo	14,852	74.8%
David A. Singleton	4,812	24.2%

Ramsey Cty. Commissioner - District 4		
Rena Moran	19,015	81.3%
Darryl Spence	4,177	17.9%

Ramsey Cty. Commissioner - District 5		
Rafael E. Ortega	18,497	70.8%
Bill Hosko	7,455	28.5%

Dakota Cty. Commissioner-District 3		
Laurie Halverson	16,905	74.7%
Janine Hudson	5,547	24.5%

Dakota Cty. Attorney		
Kathy Keena	84,520	51.5%
Matt Little	78,847	48.1%

Judge, 1st District Court 11		
Charles F. Webber	140,591	55%
Matthew R. Hanson	114,212	44.7%

Lilydale Mayor		
John E. Diehl	415	75.3%
Steve Grego	133	24.1%

Mendota Heights Mayor		
Stephanie Levine	4,343	59.1%
John P. Maczko	2,998	40.8%

Mendota Hts. City Council (two elected)		
Sally M. Lorberbaum	4,553	41.1%
John R. Mazzitello	4,281	38.6%
Jeff Nath	2,167	19.6%

'Open for business': Saint Paul eases the license application process

City eliminates petition requirement, shortens the notification period for 100 Class N licenses

By Jane McClure

Saint Paul businesses that apply for new city licenses should enjoy a smoother and faster application process under changes adopted on November 9 by the City Council. The changes, which have been in the works for four years, will take effect by the end of this year. Their intent is to streamline licensing while still allowing local residents and district councils to have their say, according to Dan Niziolek, deputy director of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections.

"We want to give the message that Saint Paul is open for business," Niziolek said.

City Council members Rebecca Noecker and Jane Prince led the charge for the business license changes. They had the support of the city's Business Review Council, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and the Macalester-Groveland Community

Council.

The provisions relax the notification requirements for license changes, eliminate the petition process for new licenses and eliminate public hearings for license renewals. The city will still have the ability to take adverse action against a business and its license if problems occur, Niziolek said. The requirement that new Class N licenses be reviewed and approved by the City Council has also been retained.

Class N licenses are the most likely to cause controversy. They include more than 100 different business licenses, including on-sale liquor service, entertainment, pawn shops, auto repair, auto body repair,

health clubs and used car sales.

Applicants for a new Class N license now must provide the local district council with specific information about their proposed business at least 15 days before submitting their license application to city staff. The four-page form must include information on operations and expected parking needs. However, the requirements for notifying neighboring property owners and getting

their signatures on a consent petition have been eliminated.

The notification requirements used to give the public 30 to 45 days to object to a new Class N license. That has been reduced to 15 days. However, it is the elimination of the consent petition that could be a

game changer for businesses.

Many neighboring property owners are not local and can be difficult to contact. When neighboring properties included a condominium building, the petition could

necessitate contacting dozens of condo owners for their signature. That problem became apparent a few years ago when restaurants near Selby and Western avenues wanted to add patio service. According to Niziolek, several prospective patio licensees are just waiting for the changes to take effect.

District councils have long been able to waive the required 45-day notice for an on-sale liquor license. However, just one objection could necessitate a public hearing, Niziolek said. Even if the district council supported it, the on-sale liquor license could be held up for 30 days or more to allow for the hearing.

Removed from the Class N notification requirements are licenses for pool halls, bowling centers, theaters, game rooms, recycling collection and processing centers, and second-hand motor vehicle parts dealers. Some of those businesses are not as controversial as they once were, Niziolek said. Those licenses are now Class R licenses, which include dozens of different business licenses ranging from agricultural vehicle permits to window cleaning.

The notification requirements used to give the public 30 to 45 days to object to a new Class N license. That has been reduced to 15 days.

Local officials invite public comment on property tax levies for 2023

By Jane McClure

Saint Paul property owners should have received mailed notices earlier this month of their estimated property taxes for 2023. The estimates are based on the maximum property tax levies established earlier this fall by Ramsey County, the city of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul School Board. In the next two weeks, property owners will have three opportunities to sound off on those levies and try to convince local officials to lower the amounts.

Public hearings on the tax levies will be held before the Ramsey County Board at 6:30 p.m. Monday, November 28, in the Red Cap Room at Union Depot, 214 E. Fourth St.; before the Saint Paul City

Council at 6 p.m. Tuesday, December 6, in City Hall; and before the Saint Paul School Board at 6 p.m. Tuesday, December 6, in Conference Rooms A and B of the school district Administration Building at 360 Colborne St.

The City Council wrapped up its 2023 budget deliberations on November 16. Council members have been looking for ways to trim the 15.3 percent tax levy increase proposed by Mayor Melvin Carter in support of his \$781.5 million city budget for 2023. About 7.74 percent or \$13.572 million of the levy increase can be attributed to the court-ordered shift of Saint Paul's street maintenance charges from assessments to property taxes.

Ramsey County has proposed a 4.54 per-

cent increase in its property tax levy for 2023 to support a \$785.4 million budget. That represents an increase of about \$2.3 million over the county's 2022 budget. The county is planning to increase its Regional Rail Authority levy by 2.7 percent—from \$29.6 million to \$30.41 million. Ramsey County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority levy would also be increased by 2.7 percent—from \$11.1 million to \$11.4 million.

The School Board is poised to levy \$201.03 million in 2023, a 1 percent decrease from the \$202.8 million levy in 2022.

All three public hearings will also be live-streamed online. The public may submit questions or comments during the hearings or beforehand. Prior to adopting their

2023 budgets, the three local jurisdictions may reduce their respective tax levies but they may not increase them.

The Ramsey County Board is scheduled to adopt its final 2023 budget and levy on Tuesday, December 13. The City Council is scheduled to adopt its final 2023 budget and levy on December 7. The School Board will approve its 2023 levy later in December, but will not act on the district's 2023-24 budget until next spring.

To comment on the city or county tax levies or to register to view the public hearings online, visit ramseycounty.us or stpaul.gov. To submit a comment on the school district levy, visit spps.org/Page/31813 or contact Sarah Dahlke at sarah.dahlke@spps.org.

City Council allocates another \$4.65M in American Rescue Plan funds

By Jane McClure

Another \$4.65 million in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds were allocated on November 16 by the Saint Paul City Council. The funds are intended to assist small businesses, support new public art projects and help homeowners make energy-efficiency improvements.

The city has a total of \$166.6 million in ARP funds to spend by December 31, 2026. So far, it has allocated \$123 million and spent \$44 million of that.

In this latest round, the council allocated \$2.5 million to the city's Locally Owned Cooperative Assistance Loan (LOCAL) program. LOCAL uses a shared ownership or cooperative model to help small businesses, according to Muneer Karcher-Ramos, director of the city's Office of Financial Empowerment, which administers the pro-

gram in partnership with the Department of Planning and Economic Development.

The plan is to use \$2.175 million of the allocation for loans and the rest for technical assistance, all of it in support of community-owned commercial real estate, employee-owned business startups and businesses that are expanding through employee ownership.

One focus of the funds is to occupy vacant and abandoned storefronts. Helping small businesses avoid displacement and own their own properties has long been a goal of the City Council. However, council members have pushed for more specifics.

Council member Rebecca Noecker asked if the program could give preference to areas where businesses face potential displacement.

Council president Amy Brendmoen questioned how businesses would be se-

lected for the LOCAL funds. Neighborhoods without community development corporations may be at a disadvantage, she said.

Council member Mitra Jalali cited the high number of commercial landlords in her ward who live outside of it. She expressed optimism that the LOCAL program could help them as well.

The City Council allocated \$1 million to the Creative Economy Project to pay artists to create both large and small art installations in the city's commercial corridors and culturally designated areas. Those areas include parts of Highland Park, Summit-University, Frogtown, Hamline-Midway, the East Side, West Side and North End.

Another \$1 million was allocated to Healthy Homes Saint Paul to help low-income homeowners make the necessary home improvements to qualify for home

weatherization and energy-efficiency programs. Mold or moisture issues, bad wiring, vermiculite insulation and other problems must be addressed before a home may take part in these programs, according to Kurt Schultz, program coordinator. Single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes are all eligible for the assistance.

The Sewer Availability Charges (SAC) program, administered by the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI), will draw on a \$150,000 allocation to help small businesses pay a portion of their Metropolitan Council SAC fees. Businesses pay the one-time fee when they open or expand and increase capacity. The fees are charged when restaurants add outdoor dining, which many have as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. DSI director Angie Wiese estimated that about 60 businesses can be helped through the allocation.

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VIEWPOINT

Summit Ave. trail plan overlooks needs of serious cyclists

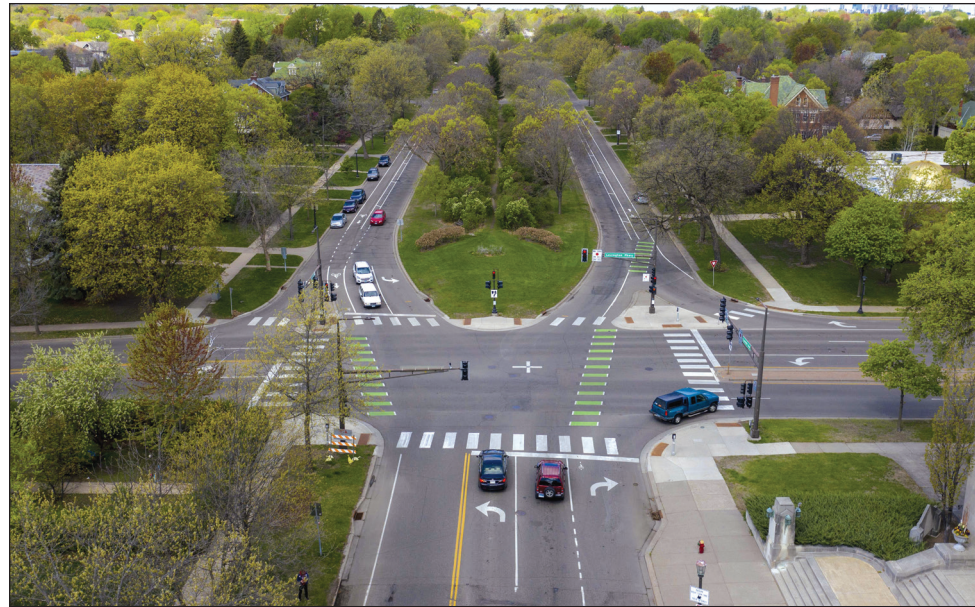
By Patrick Contardo and Robyn Roslak

Saint Paul's proposed \$12 million Summit Avenue Regional Trail is fraught with many unknowns that will likely result in unintended and irreversible consequences—and with no proven increase in its primary goal: bicycle safety. Before city officials approve the recently unveiled Regional Trail master plan, they must prove that the trail will not be one more civic improvement built on good but not fully thought-out intentions.

According to the master plan, regional trails are multi-use and “intended to pass through or provide connections between regional parks.” At a recent meeting of the city's Parks and Recreation Department, a citizen asked a design engineer if there were any dedicated regional bike trails similar in length and design that also run through a highly developed urban residential neighborhood. His answer was “no,” he and his staff were not aware of a similar bike trail in the region or even the nation.

The Summit Avenue trail would be the first of its kind: a 5.4-mile-long ribbon of off-road pavement running through the heart of an old and established neighborhood. It would intersect with 48 cross streets, seven of which are high-traffic connectors. The danger posed by those intersections is real and will not be diminished.

In the last 10 years, 32 accidents have been reported between vehicles and bicycles on Summit Avenue. Most of them occurred at one or another of its intersections. Two of the accidents, both at Snelling Avenue, killed the bicyclists involved. One accident was the fault of the motorist, the other the fault of the



Summit Avenue looking west from its intersection with Lexington Parkway, where efforts have been made in recent years to improve the safety of bicyclists using the on-street bike lane.

bicyclist. There is no evidence that the new trail will reduce or eliminate these types of accidents, given that it will intersect with the same 48 cross streets.

The Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan—the guiding document for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail—notes that “experienced bicyclists...want direct access to destinations at maximum speed with minimum delay. These bicyclists primarily rely on the road systems for routes, and value using roads for commuting, but occasionally enjoy independent trails if they are relatively

Saint Paul residents are being asked to buy the proverbial pig in a poke—a \$12 million pig. The master plan is little more than a bureaucratic fever dream for an untested and unproven concept.

continuous and not overly crowded.”

The proposed Summit trail would indeed be relatively continuous, but its chances of not being overly crowded are unlikely due to the avenue's popularity among residents and visitors. As the 2040 Regional Parks Policy

Plan states, “regional trails are primarily multi-use recreational trails. They may be used for walking in small or large groups, jogging, bicycling and other wheeled, activities (e.g., skateboards, in-line skates, roller skis).”

We must expect that those who ride electric bikes, electric scooters and

motorized mobility scooters will also favor the Summit trail. It is also likely that pedestrians will use the trail, especially in the winter when sidewalks are not cleared of snow and ice.

In short, there is a strong possibility that many experienced and commuter bicyclists will prefer not to ride on a multi-purpose trail in a high-density urban neighborhood. They will not want to slow down to maneuver around other riders. Instead, they will ride on the Summit roadway, as they do now, but without the benefit of the on-road bike lane, which will be eliminated. Motorists and cyclists will need to share a single lane. The master plan does not provide enough room for motorists to safely pass cyclists, which is a recipe for frustration, anger and accidents.

Saint Paul residents are being asked to buy the proverbial pig in a poke—a \$12 million pig. The master plan—seductive because it hits all of the high notes of what many consider to be good urban living—is little more than a bureaucratic fever dream for an untested and unproven concept. It leaves far too many unanswered questions, including the impact of the trail's construction on hundreds of mature trees and the impact on the character of a nationally treasured historic district.

Safe bicycling for all should be more than a goal; it must be a proven result. This goal can be achieved on Summit by less intrusive means, such as paving and striping the avenue, installing traffic-calming devices at each intersection and strictly enforcing current speed limits. If the city implemented these simple measures, Summit would provide an expedient and safe experience for all bicyclists at a fraction of the cost.

The writers are residents of Merriam Park.

Dilemma of Summit Ave. trail

It must be a great conundrum for tree-loving bicyclists to have historic Summit Avenue reconfigured for their noncarbon-footprint agenda. On the one hand, the cyclists want more shared space for their two-wheeled transporters. On the other hand, they don't want to destroy hundreds of the oxygen-generating trees lining their peddle-path from the banks of the mighty Mississippi to the streets of downtown Saint Paul.

I'm glad my bike was stolen a few years ago, so I can spare myself of this dilemma.

*Mark Kirchner
Highland Park*

Living the dream

Regarding “The expansion and contraction of the American dream” (*MyVillager* Inbox, October 26):

The housing of today and the housing of old reflect the capitalist society we live in. Housing doesn't get built unless the workers, the property owners and the developers get paid. Sometimes public funding is given to the developers and the owners and in theory the housing prices are lower. Sometimes private funders and bosses cheat the workers out of fair wages and in theory are held accountable. Sometimes renters lose the most and in theory policies are passed to lessen the impact.

Most new architecture does reflect the current time. The so-called 5-over-1 multifamily and mixed-use buildings are an example of modern materials, methods and building codes. The cladding functions to improve efficiency and safety. Homes are designed for the reality of an increasing number of households and fewer people per home. Policies that allow more multifamily homes also reflect current ideas. You shouldn't need to qualify for a \$500,000 mortgage to live in a high-amenity neighborhood. In a climate crisis, it's untenable to force

INBOX

people to live unsustainably in either unaffordable, low-density urban neighborhoods or on the exurban fringe.

I lived in a 1940s Highland Park apartment building that had a fire. My apartment was less than 500 square feet. There was no sprinkler system, no fire-rated walls or doors, no central alarm. My neighbors shouted to wake me up and get me out at 2 a.m. But at least the building is pleasing to look at.

*B. Frank
Highland Park*

City could tighten its belt, too

How many of us are cheerfully digging into our thin wallets and blithely spending money we don't have on fripperies? I'm not. But Saint Paul and Ramsey County go merrily along raising property taxes and other fees by staggering amounts to fund things we'd best sit on, think about some more and wait until we aren't paying for debt service at 6-plus percent.

MyVillager reported a short while back on a City Council public hearing which none of the public attended. No wonder. From what I saw when I attended, I figured, why waste my time? None of them is listening anyway. By the time they take their seats in the council chambers, their minds have already been made up. We taxpayers have more productive things to do with our time than to express our views and not have them listened to.

Mayor Carter needs to pare back his staff to what it was when he first took office and work a little harder. If we all have to tighten our belts, so does he. Ditto, the City Council. We've got to think smarter. A bus-driver friend recently told me about a place where the sidewalks were being widened, eliminating parking and making

the street a narrow two lanes. Anybody see thousands of walkers out on any section of the city's sidewalks?

New sidewalk pavers ought to be made 4 inches narrower. That would save money on concrete and provide more rain catchment. The bumpouts at city corners cost a lot to put in but really serve no purpose. I've lived 52 years at my address, yet my street has never been taken completely out and repaved with concrete, which is more ecological than all the tar-based macadam. This means that the city is refurbishing less than 2 percent of its streets each year. I suggest we quit building more of anything until we can maintain what we've got.

We are in dire need of tree replanting in a thoughtful manner—five different species on each street, assuring that if a new blight comes along it won't take out more than 20 percent of our trees.

We need to think of people on low Social Security incomes, as some cities have done, and freeze their property taxes for as long as they're living in their home. It would also make sense to offer residents a chance to opt-out of trash collection if they share a trash cart with a neighbor. People with little income do little spending and produce little trash.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

Do write, won't you?

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

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Home improvement fair redo—The Highland and Macalester-Groveland district councils are bringing back their home improvement fair next year under the newly titled Home Improvement Workshop Day. Presenters are being sought to give 45-minute to one-hour workshops during the event, which will be held from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, March 11, at Cretin-Derham Hall. For information and an application, visit macgrove.org/events/hiwd.

Western District crime meetings—Public meetings to discuss recent crime trends are being held at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at the Saint Paul Police Department's Western District Office, 389 N. Hamline Ave. Registration is not required. Contact olivia.scullark@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-266-5423 for more information. Updates will be posted on the district council's Facebook page.

Upcoming meetings—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, November 28; and Transportation Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 13. HDC meetings are held at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., with the option to join online. Get the Zoom link at highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

Summit-University

summit-university.org • 651-228-1855

Small Business Saturday—The Summit-University Planning Council is partnering with Selby Avenue businesses from Western Avenue to Lexington Parkway to celebrate Small Business Saturday on November 26. There will be guest artists, a window decorating contest and drawings for prizes. Stop in at one of the participating neighborhood businesses to pick up a map. The businesses will be listed on the SUPC website beginning November 23.

Stay informed—The public is invited to like the SUPC on Facebook and sign up for its e-newsletter, "The Porchlight," by visiting its website.

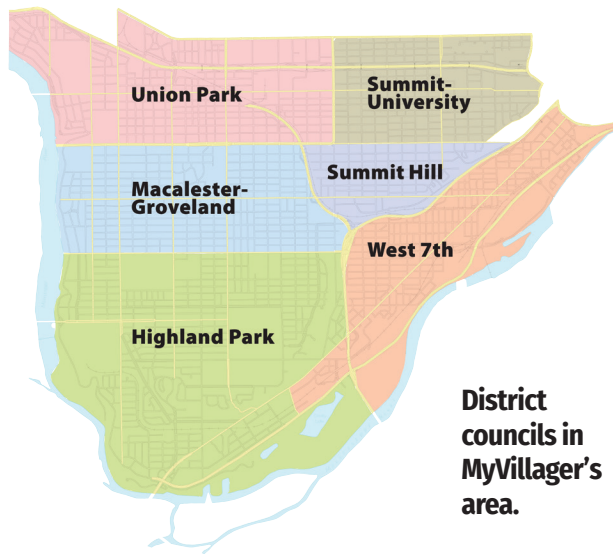
Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Last chance for century plaques—Looking to get your holiday shopping done early? Order a century plaque as the perfect gift. Homes and commercial buildings in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood that were built in 1927 or before are eligible for engraved plaques to identify their age. Order by November 28 to receive a plaque by the holidays by visiting macgrove.org/100years.

Join the snow team—Volunteers are needed to help keep the Macalester-Groveland organics recycling drop-off site free from snow and ice this winter. Volunteers can expect to shovel two or three times during the season. Sign up by emailing mgcc@macgrove.org.

Stay connected—The community council is looking for people who would like to add their interests, skills or voice



District councils in MyVillager's area.

to its programming and events. Email mgcc@macgrove.org to meet for coffee or virtually to chat.

Mac-Grove pride—Locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts can still be ordered online and delivered within days. Check macgrove.org/tshirts for current availability of sizes and colors.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation Committee on Monday, November 28; and Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, November 30. The meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. For monthly meeting notices and log-in details, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 7; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 12; Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 19; and Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 20. All board meetings will be held on Zoom. To access meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org, Leah@unionparkdc.org, or find the calendar on the website.

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 Leah@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Office notes—The West Seventh/Ford Road Federation has named Julia McColley as its new communications and outreach coordinator. The Fort Road Federation office at 882 W. 7th St. will be closed on November 24-25 for Thanksgiving.

Upcoming meeting—board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, December 12. The meeting will be on Zoom. For log-in details, visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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Names in the News

Jan Ormasa of Highland Park was presented with the Leadership Award at the National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota's annual conference on November 5 at Saint Paul RiverCentre. The award recognizes individuals who have given of their time, spirit, resources and skills in a leadership capacity for the organization. Ormasa served on the NAMI Minnesota board for nine years, beginning in 2013. She has served as board secretary and second vice president, and was involved in developing its Endowment Fund.



Fredrick Soukup of Macalester-Groveland was chosen as the winner of the NYC Big Book Award in the category of Literary Fiction for his novel *Blood Up North*. It is a story about a young Minnesota woman who agrees to help her brother hide cash he stole from a drug dealer. To protect herself, she must employ the very evil she has grown up despising. For more on the book, visit fredrick-soukup.com/blood-up-north.

Pramila Vasudevan has been named one of five winners of the 2022 Joyce Awards, which support the creation of innovative works by pioneering artists of color. Vasudevan and Public Art Saint Paul are teaming up on Prairie/Concrete, a project centered around the land and ecosystem that will explore local ties to Dakota history and culture. Events will take place in three Saint Paul parks next summer as part of the inaugural Twin Cities Triennial Art Festival. Each Joyce Award comes with a \$75,000 grant.

Mark Westlake, director of the innovation center at Saint Thomas Academy, was named one of Disney's 50 Magic Makers for making protective face shields for first responders and marshaling a network of fabricators across the country to do likewise early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jennifer Hissam has been named by Presbyterian Homes & Services (PHS) as campus administrator of Highland Path, 1925 Norfolk Ave. She will oversee operations and staff providing housing, support and care services for up to 150 older adults in independent living, assisted living and memory care apartments. Hissam has worked in the senior living sector for more than 20 years. Highland Path, formerly the Pillars of Highland Park, was acquired by PHS in 2021. PHS took over management in June of this year.

Center's swan song

Old Diamond Jim's is no more, but musical memories live on

By David Byrne

When the long-vacant stores in the former River Bluffs Center on Highway 13 were demolished this month to make way for the Lilia luxury apartments and Cascade condominiums, all traces of Lilydale's once-famous Diamond Jim's supper club were erased.

From 1961-80, Diamond Jim's was the main tenant of the property. The private club was known for its Gilded Age decor and women swinging overhead in the music hall. It was named for Diamond Jim Brady, a late-19th century millionaire who was synonymous with excess. He had a \$60 million diamond and gem collection, the first automobile in New York City and an appetite for extremely large meals.

Diamond Jim's booked big-name entertainment of the type that appeared on the Ed Sullivan or Johnny Carson shows. There were new headliners every week, with performers ranging from nostalgic acts, such as ventriloquist Edgar Bergen, to the bizarre, such as Detroit pitcher Dennis McLain who played the organ and

told jokes.

The house bands reflected the Gilded Age's fondness for Dixieland jazz and included performers who ended up in their respective state's music halls of fame. One of the groups was Freddy Powers & the Powerhouse IV, a banjo band that played Diamond Jim's several times in the mid-1960s.

Powers came from a musical family who often had surrounding Texas ranchers to their place for dances. Before he arrived in Minnesota, his band had already played the "NBC Today Show" and "Tonight Show." He had impressed Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard during his gigs at casinos and nightclubs in the late '50s and early '60s. He recorded a Nelson song and Nelson played bass in his band for a time.

According to Diamond Jim's employees, Powers was not an arrogant guy. Mike Kelleher, a retired bartender at the club, said Powers lived at the old Mendota Heights Motel, a postwar motor court already showing its age in the '60s. Kelleher said Powers had learned barbering after he left the military and offered to cut his hair for free. He would cut hair during the day



Freddy Powers (second from left) and the Powerhouse IV banjo band played Diamond Jim's a number of times in the 1960s.



After sitting vacant for more than four years, River Bluffs Center in Lilydale was recently torn down to make way for the Lilia luxury apartments and Cascade condominiums.

and play gigs at night.

Powers went on to have great success in the '80s due to his friendships with Nelson and Haggard. In 1981, he helped Nelson produce his successful album "Somewhere Over The Rainbow." He also became a lakefront neighbor of Haggard's in Shasta County, California, where they were musical pals for over seven years. Powers eventually wrote or collaborated on 10 top country hits for Haggard. Powers' wife, Catherine, co-authored a book about that period called *The Spree of '83*.

In the 1990s, Powers appeared on the national country music show Austin City Limits five times and had a cable TV show showcasing other songwriters. In 2000, he recorded an album called the "Country Jazz Singer" that received critical acclaim.

Powers was inducted into the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006. He died in 2016 at age 84.

The Swinging Ambassadors, which replaced Powers' group as the house band at Diamond Jim's in 1967, also played Dixieland but was very different. All five members of that group had gone to the University of Minnesota and four of them were music students. The band featured Tim Aune on guitar and trombone; Ken Baltzer on drums and piano; Jerry Beth on sax, banjo, piano and bass; Rick Clausen on trumpet and sax; and Tom Muehlbauer on sax.

When they started at Diamond Jim's, the band was required to play a variety of music. That included Dixieland jazz to go with the club's turn-of-the-20th-century vibe, and dance and listening music to cater to

an older demographic. They also had to accompany the headline acts, which included crooners and four-man groups like the Four Aces, Four Lads and Brothers Four.

Ken Baltzer, now in his mid-70s, described the Swinging Ambassadors. "In their shows, as well as their dance music, they doubled on 30 different instruments as well as singing and doing comedy routines," he said. Their musical selections varied from Dixieland and big bands to '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s contemporary numbers.

"We had fans who would drive hundreds of miles to see us," Baltzer said in a 2009 interview. "It got so we could almost guarantee the club a full house."

Adding to the group's fame was the fact that Diamond Jim's was a unique gig. In the 1970s, the club was also the site of a 30-minute TV show on Channel 5 called "Live at Diamond Jim's." The show featured the Swinging Ambassadors and the headliner from that week. It later evolved into a live series called "Stairway to Stardom" that auditioned local acts as a feeder to a national NBC talent show.

The band's tenure at Diamond Jim's ended when the club closed in 1980. Afterward, the Swinging Ambassadors had many good years playing regionally. The band also worked nationally with short gigs across the country from Lake Tahoe to Cleveland to Winnipeg to Orlando.

Their last show was in 1999. The Swinging Ambassadors were inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame in 2011. Since the induction, Jerry Beth has passed away.

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Saint Paul lays out five-year plan for street, bridge work

By Jane McClure

Reconstructing and rehabilitating streets, sidewalks, bridges and bike paths can cost Saint Paul upward of \$80 million per year, when all funding sources are considered by the city's Department of Public Works.

The Saint Paul City Council reviewed its five-year capital plan on November 2 with city engineer Paul Kurtz. According to him, the city did well in a recent Metropolitan Council regional solicitation round for 2026-2027, when eight of 10 submissions will receive a total of more than \$27 million in federal funding. Local projects include Wabasha Street between 7th and 11th streets (\$5.3 million), and Capital City Bikeway segments on Saint Peter Street and Kellogg Boulevard (\$10.7 million).

Public Works has applied for \$32.3 million toward replacing the eastbound Kellogg Boulevard bridge near Saint Paul RiverCentre. Federal officials will notify the city in late 2022 or early 2023 about that application. City officials have been seeking state dollars for years to replace the bridge, which was built in 1936.

Several other local projects are planned over the next five years. One of the biggest in 2023-2024 is the reconstruction of Minnesota Street in downtown at a cost of more than \$18.2 million. Summit Avenue improvements are expected to cost \$6.7 million in 2023, and Pleasant Avenue between Victoria and Saint Clair is penciled in for \$4.3 million in 2025.

Municipal State Aid (MSA) will cover several area projects in the next five years. One is Grand Avenue's reconstruction between Snelling and Fairview avenues, with Public Works earmarking \$800,000 for design in 2023 and \$6.7 million for construction in 2024. Another \$350,000 is allocated for new signals at Grand and Fairview in 2024, as well as \$502,000 for work on the Grand-Snelling intersection in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

City earmarks extra \$4M in funds to resurface streets rebuilt in '80s, '90s

By Jane McClure

Saint Paul's ambitious plan to reconstruct all of its residential streets was supposed to wrap up in 2005-2006. But with about 25 years of work remaining, some City Council members are getting impatient. They had difficult questions for city engineer Paul Kurtz during a November 2 budget review of the Department of Public Works' five-year capital plan.

Next year, the city plans to increase funding for its Saint Paul Streets program from \$12.5 million to \$16.5 million. The added \$4 million is earmarked to resurface neighborhood streets rebuilt during the city's 1985-1995 sewer separation and street reconstruction program. The program came out of a federal lawsuit that Wisconsin filed against Saint Paul, South Saint Paul and Minneapolis for allowing raw sewage to flow into the Mississippi River during heavy rain and snow runoff.

Kurtz said streets rebuilt under the program in the 1980s and '90s are showing their age and need mill and overlay work to prolong their life. The first area slated for resurfacing is Como-Valentine in Saint Anthony Park and, if funds are left over, then Cretin-Bayard in Highland.

Under sewer separation work and the city's subsequent Residential Streets Vital-

ity Program, three or four residential construction projects could be done in a year. Eighty-eight project areas were pending in 1995, with about 70 completed up to now. Fewer than 20 remain, but those will take as long as 25 years to complete without other funding sources.

Rising costs mean that during some years the city does half of one neighborhood area or no neighborhood projects at all. One example is the Griggs-Scheffer project in Highland. Due to some work having to be redone, that project has been extended over three years.

The program, now dubbed Saint Paul Streets, was expanded to include arterial streets in 2014. That is when then-Mayor Chris Coleman unveiled his list of the "Terrible 20" arterial streets in need of work. If an arterial street is not eligible for state or county dollars, the city must bear all of the costs. That puts more strain on budgets.

"We really need to start a residential mill and overlay program...\$4 million doesn't buy you a lot of reconstruction," Kurtz said. The work will keep residential streets in better shape and allow the city to put off having to fully rebuild them.

In the five-year Saint Paul Streets plan, four other areas in the North End and East Side are proposed for resurfacing through 2027 and beyond.

Other MSA area projects in 2024 include cost sharing on various traffic signals at Randolph and Fairview avenues (\$150,000), Cleveland Avenue and Highland Parkway (\$150,000), and Snelling and Saint Clair avenues (\$400,000).

Other 2023 MSA projects include the Shepard Road bridge near Otto Avenue at \$500,000, and a \$400,000 contribution to a MnDOT project on Snelling from Montreal Avenue to Ford Parkway. The city will be working with MnDOT on Snelling over the next five years.

The city also plans to contribute \$250,000 in MSA funds in 2023 toward construction of the B Line, a bus rapid transit system that will replace much of Route 21 along Marshall and Selby avenues. Another \$527,279 will be allocated in 2024.

Sidewalks will be added on Marshall in 2023 between Albert Street and Snelling with \$200,000 in MSA and \$200,000 from Ramsey County. The county will also contribute \$152,500 toward new sidewalks on Cleveland Avenue between Summit and Marshall in 2023.

Other MSA area projects in 2024 include cost sharing on various traffic signals at Randolph and Fairview avenues (\$150,000), Cleveland Avenue and Highland Parkway (\$150,000), and Snelling and Saint Clair avenues (\$400,000).

Several other signal replacement projects are looking for a green light for 2025-2026. The largest local project pending for MSA is the West Seventh Street/Highway 5 MnDOT project, with a city share of \$1.75 million for 2027.

Arterial street resurfacing projects are set for 2023-2024. The two local projects next year are Victoria Street between Summit and Concordia avenues, and Fairview Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Edgumbe Road. Set for resurfacing in 2024 are Concordia and Saint Anthony avenues between Snelling and Marion Street.

Capital improvement bonds include \$75,000 for safety improvements at the north end of Ayd Mill Road, and \$30,000 for Raymond Avenue lighting.

Kurtz also noted the city has carryover projects from 2022 into 2023. That includes cleanup on the Griggs-Scheffer street project and work on Edgumbe Road from Fairview to Saint Paul Avenue.

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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Burglary—Two suspects stole items at Level Up Saint Paul, 2493 W. Seventh St., at 4:20 a.m. Thursday, November 10.

—Jewelry, prescription drugs and cash were reported stolen during a home break-in on the 1300 block of Edgcombe Road between October 28-November 15.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1600 block of Bohland Avenue on November 5, the 1300 block of Hidden Falls Drive on November 9, and the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive on November 11-12.

—A shoplifting theft of items valued at more than \$1,000 was reported at Walgreens, 2099 Ford Pkwy., at 2:45 p.m. on November 9.

Arson—A 49-year-old woman was arrested at 6:54 p.m. on November 3 for starting a brush fire at Famous Dave's, 1930 W. Seventh St., and a dumpster fire at Wings Financial Credit Union, 1804 W. Seventh.

Miscellaneous—A pedestrian was injured after being struck by a vehicle on West Seventh Street and Alaska Avenue at 5:34 p.m. on November 7.

—A bicyclist suffered scrapes and bruises after being struck by a vehicle on Ford Parkway and Mississippi River Boulevard at 11:02 a.m. on November 10.

Lexington-Hamline

Robbery—A 48-year-old man and 33-year-old woman were arrested for felony robbery at knifepoint on Lexington Parkway and I-94 at 3:48 p.m. on November 2.

Assault—A girl reported being assaulted by another student at Central High School on November 2.

—A 24-year-old man was arrested for felony assault of an officer after he was stopped for shoplifting at the Midway Target at 7:03 p.m. on November 3.

—A gun-pointing incident was reported on Lexington Parkway and Concordia Avenue at 8:27 a.m. on November 15.

Weapons—A male suspect reportedly brandished a gun near Central High School at 3:11 p.m. on November 9.

—Gunfire was reported on Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 4:20 p.m. on November 10.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Home break-ins were reported on the 1300 block of Fairmount Avenue at 10:28 p.m. on November 5, and on the 1600 block of Saint Clair Avenue at 10:02 p.m. on November 14.

—A break-in was reported at Patagonia, 1648 Grand Ave., at 2:39 a.m. on November 8.

—An apartment was burglarized on the 1500 block of Saint Clair Avenue between 1:30-9 p.m. on November 15.

Theft—A trailer was reported stolen on the 1800 block of Saint Clair Avenue on November 7.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 2200 block of Princeton Avenue between 5:35-8:10 p.m. on November 9.

—A gun and a compound bow were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 2100 block of Jefferson Avenue during the evening of November 10-11.

Miscellaneous—A 41-year-old man was booked for leaving the scene of an accident after he reportedly hit a parked car with his tow truck and walked away on Randolph Avenue and Griggs Street at 9:25 p.m. on November 6. He was located in the backyard of a residence and was arrested. Additional charges included carrying an assault weapon and violating the open bottle law.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—Several items were reported stolen from a vehicle in an underground garage on the 700 block of Linden Street at 4 p.m. on October 29.

Theft—A laptop computer was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 500 block of Fremont Avenue at 8 p.m. on November 7.

—A suspect was arrested for felony theft of bicycles and threatening people with a knife on the 600 block of Mendota Road at 12:14 p.m. on November 8.

Miscellaneous—Police assisted the State Patrol with a pedestrian on the freeway at 7:28 a.m. on November 7 on I-35E south of Highway 13. The suspect had a warrant out and was taken to jail.

Merriam Park

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was

reported on the 2100 block of University Avenue at 5:39 p.m. on November 11.

Theft—A 38-year-old man was arrested for possession of stolen property and felony warrants after he was seen with a stolen vehicle on I-94 and Cretin Avenue at 1:52 a.m. on November 4.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 2100 block of Marshall Avenue between 1-6:30 a.m. on November 5, the 300 block of North Mississippi River Boulevard on November 13-14, and the 1600 block of University Avenue on November 15.

—Purse-snatchings were reported on the 1800 block of Feronia Avenue at 6:20 p.m. on November 12, and at the University of Saint Thomas at 4:54 p.m. on November 14.

Miscellaneous—Felony damage to property was reported at Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles, 520 N. Prior Ave., at 8:40 a.m. on November 3. Police said a suspect returned to the scene hauling a stolen trailer. When confronted, the suspect drove through a fence and struck two cars.

Snelling-Hamline

Theft—A bicycle valued at more than \$1,000 was reported stolen on the 1500 block of Selby Avenue between November 7-13.

—A laptop computer and two pairs of prescription glasses were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 300 block of North Hamline Avenue at 6:41 p.m. on November 8.

Assault—A 40-year-old man was arrested for felony assault of a police officer and attempting to flee during a traffic stop at Hamline and University avenues at 2:50 a.m. on November 8. Police learned that the driver had a felony warrant. Instead of exiting the vehicle, he tried to drive off and an officer was dragged several feet.

Summit Hill

Theft—Lottery tickets were reported stolen at Speedway, 925 Grand Ave., at 9:22 p.m. on November 10.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on Grand Avenue and Victoria Street at 1:44 a.m. on November 5.

Summit-University

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 100 block of North Milton

Street at 9:14 a.m. on November 2.

Theft—Bicycles valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen on North Oxford Street and Ashland Avenue between October 30-November 2, and the 400 block of Selby Avenue on November 8.

Assault—Police responded to a report of shots fired on Dale Street and Concordia Avenue at 4:48 p.m. on November 2. A vehicle that had left the area rolled over on I-94 and a victim with a gunshot wound was taken to the hospital.

Weapons—Officers responded to multiple reports of gunfire and found spent shell casings in the street and bullet damage to a residence on the 800 block of Selby Avenue at 1:54 a.m. on November 5. No one inside the house was injured.

—Gunfire was reported on the 600 block of Selby Avenue at 1:44 a.m. on November 12, and on the 200 block of Dayton Avenue at 6:29 p.m. on November 15.

Miscellaneous—A 44-year-old woman was arrested for drug possession and three felony warrants after she was found acting erratically in the community room of a building where she did not live on the 300 block of Laurel Avenue at 8:49 p.m. on November 8.

West End

Theft—A theft of items valued at more than \$1,000 was reported at Speedway, 1125 W. Seventh St., at 2:56 a.m. on November 6.

—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 100 block of South Western Avenue on November 5 and 14.

—A purse-snatching was reported on the 100 block of West Seventh Street during the evening of November 12-13.

Assault—An Uber driver reported being assaulted by a rider on the 200 block of Wilkin Street at 8:02 a.m. on November 9.

—An assault was reported at Grand Stop Station, 236 Grand Ave., at 3:50 p.m. on November 10.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on West Seventh Street and James Avenue and a shell casing was discovered outside Seventh Street Tattoo around 2:20 a.m. on November 14.

Sex crime—A man reportedly was seen exposing himself on Leech and McBoal streets at 6:44 a.m. on November 8.

Business Briefs

Robert Dorfman has been named the director of the Well-springs initiative and new play development at Six Points Theater, formerly Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, which performs at the Highland Park Community Center. Dorfman is an actor, director and producer who has worked in theater, television and film across the country. Six Points Theater was founded in 1995 by Barbara Brooks to engage people of all backgrounds in work rooted in Jewish content. The theater's work has garnered five Ivey Awards, as well as the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council's Arts Achievement Award.

Rethos' board of directors will hold its annual meeting from 5-6:30 p.m. Monday, November 28, in the company's new offices on Fifth Floor South of Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth St. The public is invited to hear about Rethos' building rehabilitation work in 2022 and what it is planning for 2023. The event is free, but registration is requested at tinyurl.com/3dsj24cw.

Wildflyer Coffee, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit specialty coffee company that provides jobs for homeless youths ages 16-24, plans to open a second location next March at 1362 W. Seventh St. in Saint Paul. The 1,440-square-foot space will include a full espresso bar, brewed coffee, tea and other non-caffeinated options, baked goods and a food menu. In addition, Wildflyer will work with RS EDEN

to use the shop to provide mental health and chemical dependency services. Store co-founder and executive director is Carley Kammerer.

Stephanie Larson has joined Jewish Family Service of Saint Paul, 1633 W. Seventh St., as a therapist in the counseling and community chaplaincy department. Larson is a licensed independent clinical social worker who has served as a psychotherapist for a diverse array of clients since 2019. She will help Dr. Mitchell Wittenberg and therapist Beth Johnson address the significant client waiting list for counseling.

Spot, a Twin Cities marketing agency, has moved from Lowertown into a newly built office on the third floor of Vandalia Tower, 550 Vandalia St., in Saint Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone. The agency, which was founded by Patty Voje, relocated to accommodate its growing workforce. With the move, Spot has more than doubled its space to 7,600 square feet, which allowed it to build a photo and video studio, along with meeting rooms and open collaboration spaces.

Dr. Dayle Quigley, a Summit Hill resident and member of the Saint Paul Rotary, has been chosen as governor of District 5960, which includes 61 Rotary clubs in a region that stretches from Albert Lea to Hayward, Wisconsin.

The Saint Paul Rotary also recently swore in its new officers: president David Dominick of the Midway YMCA, president-elect Heidi Fisher of Hamline University, past president Todd Nicholson of Baltic Properties of Minnesota, treasurer Paul Meekin of DealerAlly, director emeritus John Andrews of BSA's Northern Star Council, secretary Shelly Rucks of Regions Hospital Foundation and sergeant at arms Bob Cardinal of Calhoun Companies.

Pet Haven, the state's oldest foster-based pet rescue organization, has opened its first home for rescued animals at 505 W. Minnehaha Ave. in Saint Paul.

The Twin Cities Vegan Chef Challenge drew 29 local restaurants competing for top honors in the fourth annual event. Diners cast more than 1,100 votes to determine the winners, which were announced at Twin Cities Veg Fest on September 18. Reverie Cafe + Bar of Minneapolis won the grand prize with its Korean BBQ Mock Duck Tacos. Coming in second was French Meadow on Grand Avenue with its Mediterranean Kebab, and third was Insane Vegan on Arcade Street with its Texas Brisket on Toast. Other local winners include J. Selby's on Victoria Street for Most Authentic Southern Burger, La Cocina de Ana on West Seventh Street for Most Realistic Vegan Meat, and The Naughty Greek on Snelling Avenue for Best Date Night Dish.

School Notes

Saint Thomas Academy honored four graduates with the Fleming Alumni Veterans Award on November 11. The award is named for Captain Richard Fleming (class of 1935), a recipient of the Medal of Honor and the academy's highest decorated graduate. The honorees included Lieutenant William McGowan '37, U.S. Air Force, who was killed in action on D-Day on June 6, 1944; Captain John McErlane '39, U.S. Air Force, who was KIA when shot down in Germany on January 21, 1945; 1st Lieutenant J. Anthony Malerich '40, U.S. Marine Corps, who flew in WWII, spent almost 50 years as a Twin Cities physician, and recently turned 100; and the late Major Harry Paulet '43, U.S. Army, who fought in Europe, was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, and served in the Army Reserves until retiring



Cadet senior Hunter Mawn places an STA coin on the casket of Lieutenant William McGowan at a burial ceremony in Normandy, France, this past summer. Mawn is producing a documentary on McGowan's life.

in 1985. An STA student-produced documentary on Fleming Award recipient McGowan is due out next spring.

The **Saint Paul School Board** unanimously approved a new three-year contract for Superintendent Joe Gothard on November 15. The contract includes a base salary of \$256,000 in year one, which begins on July 1, 2023, with a 1.96 percent increase in each of the subsequent years. Gothard received high marks from the board on his most recent performance review, receiving a rating of "highly effective" in four out of six areas. He joined the Saint Paul Public Schools in July 2017.

Reading Corps and Math Corps were still looking for 29 reading, 27 math and 16 early learning tutors to place in Saint Paul schools. Tutors are fully trained and serve on-site at the school 35, 25 or 18 hours a week. They receive a stipend, education award, health insurance and childcare assistance. For more information, visit join.readingandmath.org.

The **Minnesota Department of Education** has released the districtwide results for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) for the 2021-22 school year. After two years of disrupted learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in the Saint Paul Public Schools showed gains across all subjects compared to last year, though the

results still lag behind pre-pandemic levels. The MCA is a standardized test taken each spring by students across the state in grades 3-8 and grade 1 for math, grades 3-8 and 10 for reading, and grades 5, 8 and high school for science. For a complete summary of the SPPS scores, visit spps.org/Page/31385.

Jackelyn H. Doyle-Eustice of Riverview West Side School of Excellence in Saint Paul has been named the Minnesota Council on Economic Education's 2022 Educator of the Year for Grades K-5. She received a \$500 award and a plaque certifying the achievement.

Macalester College (#23) and the **University of Saint Thomas (#49)** made the Princeton Review list of Top 50 Green Colleges. The schools were chosen for their sustainability practices and education, and quality of life for students on campus.

Patricia Pratt-Cook has been appointed the new executive chief of human resources and talent management for the Saint Paul Public Schools. Pratt-Cook most recently served five years as the senior vice president of human resources, equity and inclusion at Saint Catherine University. She has 17 years of experience working in preK-12 education, including with the Minneapolis Public Schools, Memphis City Schools, and Osseo Area Schools.

Volunteers

The **Hallie Q. Brown Community Center**, 270 N. Kent St., has received a \$5,748 grant from the Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless Foundation to help increase its food storage capacity, including two new refrigerators, for its Basic Needs program. The funds will enable the center to serve participants with a wider variety of healthy, nutritious food. To learn more, visit hallieqbrown.org/site/.

Jewish Family Service of Saint Paul, 1633 W. Seventh St., is leading the annual B'Yachad Gift Bag program, which plans to deliver more than 200 gift bags to isolated people in need. Each bag will contain a holiday treat, warm wish-

es in a holiday card, and a gift card for groceries and home essentials. Donations are being sought to help cover the cost of the \$36 gift bags. People also are needed to deliver the bags and create holiday cards. For more information, contact Anne Myers at amyers@jfsp.org.

Ramsey County residents looking to get rid of laptops, televisions, cellphones or other electronics can drop them off for free to be refurbished or recycled at Repowered (formerly Tech Dump), 860 Vandalia St. The partnership is for Ramsey County residents only. All data will be destroyed physically or electronically wiped. Items with

life left in them will be refurbished and sold. Other items will be deconstructed and recycled. Repowered processed more than 35 million pounds of electronic waste between 2011 and 2021. For more information, visit ramseycounty.us/electronics.

The **Twin Cities Salvation Army** still needs volunteer bell ringers to raise funds at its red kettles this holiday season to aid those in need. Currently, there are still 4,500 two-hour shifts that remain unfilled, as compared to last year's registrations. Individuals, families, churches, businesses and others can register to ring at tinyurl.com/bdh5u3dx.

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ON THE TOWN

Immigrant's story

History Theatre's Peluso bows out with one last staging of 'Servants' Christmas'

By Anne Murphy

The holiday drama *A Servants' Christmas* has deep meaning for Ron Peluso. It was the first play Peluso directed at the History Theatre back in 1988, and it will be the last. His 27-year tenure as the theatre's artistic director will end when the month-long run of *A Servants' Christmas* closes on December 18 on the stage at 30 E. 10th St.

Likening the seasonal favorite to the Guthrie Theatre's annual production of *A Christmas Carol*, Peluso said the themes of immigration and family loss are the primary reasons he has continued to produce the play year after year. Peluso's commitment to productions that have historical value as well as current relevance has been an integral part of his success at History Theatre, according to Candace Campbell, vice president of the theatre's board of directors.

"Ron's vision and energy have propelled History Theatre for more than a quarter century," said Campbell, a Merriam Park resident. "Telling 'real stories of real people' has been his mantra. His ability to gather talented artists—playwrights, performers, directors, composers, musicians, designers and choreographers—to make history and its lessons real on stage is unparalleled. We're so grateful for his contributions to History Theatre and the performing arts."

Written by Twin Cities playwright John Fenn, *A Servants' Christmas* is set in December

1899. A young immigrant, Rachel Leibovich, is hired as a servant in the Summit Avenue home of a Mr. Warner. Warner recently lost his wife, and it is a difficult time for him and his two young children. Warner is also a strict Christian, and Rachel fears that if she reveals her Jewish heritage, she may be let go. So she changes her name to Monica Leary to keep her faith secret.

When Peluso joined History Theatre in 1988, *A Servants' Christmas* was already part of its repertoire. "I wandered into the theatre to see a show there," he recalled. "The director for *A Servants' Christmas* had taken ill. I bumped into the artistic director, and after five minutes she hired me to direct the show. They apparently thought I didn't wreck it too badly, as they kept hiring me over the years. So in 1995, after I had directed about seven or eight of the shows, they hired me as the artistic director."

Over the years, Peluso and company made changes to the original script. In 2004 he and Twin Cities composer Drew Jansen added music to the show. Originally, Mrs. Warner was not present. Today, her spirit is alive and well in the production.

"No matter how old you are when you lose a parent, it's heartbreaking," Peluso said. "We just thought bringing the ghost of Mrs. Warner into the story would be touching. It adds something that all families deal with at the holidays, regardless of their religious background."

Of equal importance are the lessons related to acceptance, according to Peluso. "There has been so much anti-Semitism

unleashed recently, and it's just a horrible thing," he said. "Half of the hate crimes in the last year and a half or so have been against Jewish people. I just felt like this is an important story for that community and for the state of Minnesota to be reminded of the need for acceptance, understanding and love."

Jacob Hellman, the dramaturge and assistant director for *A Servants' Christmas*, agreed. "As a Jewish person, I was able to provide some insight on Jewish references and the pronunciations of Hebrew-derived words," he said. "I also kept an eye on historical accuracy, combining my knowledge with my research on turn-of-the-century Saint Paul."

A resident of Highland Park, Hellman approached History Theatre last summer after moving to the Twin Cities. "Out of all the theatres I emailed, History Theatre was the only one that responded," he said. "I sent (Peluso) my resume, and we met up in May or June. After learning more about the show and the History Theatre's mission, I was pleased to get on board."

Producing new works highlighting Minnesota history is a legacy Peluso trusts will continue after he retires. "I'm from the Pittsburgh area," he said, "and every time I fly somewhere and land in a city like Pittsburgh or New York or Dallas, the terminals have pictures of history. Every town has its own story of native people and immigrants and slavery and how this country came together through this complicated picture. That's the beauty of History



Ron Peluso (right) is directing this year's production of *A Servants' Christmas* starring Serena Brook (above) as Rachel Leibovich, alias Monica Leary.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



Theatre. We've always taken on stories that aren't always pretty."

Campbell has been involved in a nationwide search for Peluso's successor. "We're close to selecting a new artistic director to begin early next year," she said. The theatre's goal is to "build on Ron's legacy by preserving the quality and depth of our productions," she said. "We hope to continue to broaden our appeal to new corners of the Twin Cities and a statewide audience. We're confident the new artistic director will thrive, given the foundation Ron Peluso had laid, and still have space for new theatrical triumphs. Our history deserves it, and our future needs it."

For his part, Peluso plans to give the new artistic director space and any support needed. "I know how difficult it can be to follow somebody who's been relatively successful," he said. "I wasn't a total disaster. History

Theatre has been part of my life for over 30 years. So if they asked me to come back and do something, I'd probably be happy to do it."

A Servants' Christmas features actors Gary Briggie, Serena Brook, Jennifer Burleigh-Bentz, Erin Capello Kopp, Sullivan Cooper, Cathleen Fuller, Norah Wahl, Eric Morris and Nicola Wahl. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays and 10 a.m. Tuesday, November 22. Tickets are \$15-\$70. For reservations, visit historytheatre.com or call 651-292-4323.

ON THE TOWN Briefly

Theater

The Mysterious Affair at Styles, a new play based on an Agatha Christie mystery, is being performed through December 18 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Published in 1920, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* introduced readers to detective Hercule Poirot as he investigated the midnight poisoning of a family matriarch. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$25. Call 612-333-3010 or visit theatreintheround.org.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast, a musical adaptation of the classic folk tale, will open a month-long run on November 30 at the Ordway Music Theater. Rajané Katurah, Nathaniel Hackmann and Jamecia Bennett star. For reservations, call 651-292-3268 or visit ordway.org.

Nicolas, the story of the real-life Father Christmas, will be staged from December 2-29 at Open Window Theatre, 5300

S. Robert Trail in Inver Grove Heights. Written and directed by Open Window artistic director Jeremy Stanbary, the play tells of the 4th-century Saint Nicholas of Myra whose life of extraordinary faith, heroic generosity and humble service to the less fortunate gave rise to the modern-day Santa Claus. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays with additional shows on December 6, 13, 20, 21, 27 and 28. Tickets are \$18-\$28. Call 612-615-1515 or visit openwindowtheatre.org.

A Christmas Carol Krampus, or *It's A Pretty OK Life*, an irreverent mash-up of such familiar holiday characters as Frosty, Hermey, the Grinch and Dickens' ghosts, will be performed from December 9-17 by Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater. The new holiday production for adults is written and directed by Lisa M.W. Phelps. Show times are 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays at Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church, 1620 E. 46th St. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for students and seniors.

Music

"Poets and Rhapsodists," music inspired by poetry, will be played by the Capital City Brass Quintet at 3 p.m. Sunday, November 27, at Olivet Congregational Church, 1850 Iglehart Ave. The free concert will feature Poet and Peasant Overture by Franz von Suppé; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Liszt; "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen; Paeon by Charles Reskin; Trois Chansons by Debussy; and "Mouse, pl. Mice" by Ray Dempsey.

Lessons and carols for Advent will be performed by the Mount Olive Cantorei and organist David Cherwien at 4 p.m. Sunday, November 27, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The program will open with a solemn procession. Admission is free.

Virtuoso American harpist Bridget Kibbey will join acclaimed violinist Alexi Kenney in concerts at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, December 1, and 7:30 p.m. Friday, Decem-

ber 2, in the Ordway Concert Hall. The program will include a new work written for Kibbey and Kenney by composer Libby Larsen. For tickets, visit schubert.org or call 651-292-3268.

Folk, jazz and blues artist Claudia Schmidt will celebrate the release of her new CD in concerts at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, December 2 and 3, at Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 N. Snelling Ave. Tickets are \$20. Visit ginkgocoffee.com.

A Baroque Christmas, a concert featuring Marc Levine on violin, Immanuel Davis on traverso and Tami Morse on harpsichord, will be presented at noon Friday, December 2, in the Baroque Room, 275 E. Fourth St., Suite 280. Tickets are \$20, \$18 for seniors, \$5 for students and \$10 for the live stream. Visit lyrbaroque.org.

"East-West/North-South," symphonic music from around the globe, will be played by the Saint Paul Civic Symphony at 3 p.m. Sunday, December 4, at Saint

Artists pitch one-of-a-kind gifts for loved ones on your list

Make your holiday shopping a festive experience this year and purchase one-of-a-kind gifts for the loved ones on your list while you support local artists and craftspeople. These artisans will be taking part in a host of holiday markets and boutiques throughout the area served by *MyVillager*.

- **The European Christmas Market** returns on weekends from November 25 through December 18 on the plaza outside Union Depot, Fourth and Wacouta streets. Sixty vendors will set up shop on the expanded boardwalk offering a variety of handcrafted gifts, edible delicacies and other refreshments. Choirs, carolers and dancers will perform, and Santa will appear with his reindeer. The market is open from 4-9 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturdays and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sundays. Visit stpaulchristmasmarket.org.

- **An Old-Fashioned Holiday Bazaar** will fill the cortile of Landmark Center on December 1-3. More than 65 artisans will be showing and selling their wares. Jewelry, household decor, woven and wearable art, children's toys and clothing, handmade lotions, soaps and edible gifts will be featured along with live music, complimentary refreshments and prize drawings. The bazaar will run from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Admission is \$5, free for children age 12 and under. Visit landmarkcenter.org.

- **Friends for a Non-Violent World** will present its annual Holiday Fair from 1-9



The art of Robin Mueller (left), Cindy Syme (top right) and Jennifer Justad will be among the works displayed for show and sale at the 27th annual Art at Hidden River fair on December 3.

p.m. Friday, December 2, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, December 3, at the Friends School, 1365 Englewood Ave. Choose from a wide variety of gifts, craft items, candles, soaps, handmade winter accessories, used books, discounted gift cards to local businesses, Quaker treasures and Christmas trees and wreaths. Dinner will be served from 6-8 p.m. Friday. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. An online pre-sale is being conducted now through November 27. Visit fnvw.org.

- **The works of four local artists** will be featured in the seventh annual Holiday Art

Sale from 3-7 p.m. Friday, December 2, and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, December 3, at the home at 1896 Saunders Ave. (enter from the alley). Shoppers may choose among the greeting cards and photographs of Kelly Povo, the Lake Superior stone jewelry of Pauline Oo, the fused glass and wood ornaments of Michelle Wright, and the children's books of Phyllis Root.

- **The 27th annual Art at Hidden River** (formerly Art at Ramsey) will be held from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday, December 3, at Hidden River Middle School, 1700 Summit Ave. Cosponsored by Artists' Circle, the

juried event features 81 artists from across the Upper Midwest. They will be showing and selling acrylic and oil paintings, photography, silver and gold jewelry, woven scarves, art dolls, blown glass, woodcut prints, hand-dyed silk apparel, leather and fabric handbags, turned wood, hand-carved wooden birds, handwoven rugs, pottery, clay tiles, vases, and holiday cards and ornaments. Also featured will be the art of local youths ages 8-18. Visit artist-circle.org.

- **The Summit Avenue Artisan Festival** will be presented from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, December 3, at Saint Paul's United Church of Christ, 900 Summit Ave. There, the halls will be decked with handcrafted gifts by more than 40 local artisans. Live holiday music and a silent auction will be featured. Saint Paul's signature frozen pot pies will also be available for purchase. Santa will appear from 10 a.m.-noon. Children's activities will be held during those same hours. For an updated list of vendors, visit spuconsummit.org. To bid on auction items, visit 32auctions.com/artisan-festival.

- **Vis the Season**, a Christmas marketplace featuring local vendors and a variety of products, will be held from 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, December 3, at Visitation School, 2455 Visitation Drive in Mendota Heights. Santa Claus will stop by for complimentary photos between 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Visit visitation.net/vistheseason.

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Matthew's Catholic Church, 510 Hall Ave. The concert will feature "China Dreams" by Bright Sheng, Symphony No. 8 by Beethoven, "Reedbird" by Emilie Doolittle, and Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4 by Heitor Villa-Lobos. Admission is free and children are welcome. Visit spcsmusic.org.

Hamline University's A Cappella Choir will present its annual Christmas concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 4, at Hamline Church, 1514 Englewood Ave. Admission is by donation.

Have Yourself an OK Xmas, a concert celebrating the release of the vinyl "OK Xmas," will be presented by the string duo OK Factor at 7 p.m. Sunday, December 4, at the Parkway Theater, 4814 48th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Cellist Olivia Diercks and violinist Karla Colahan have recorded some of their most popular holiday tunes. Tickets are \$15-\$25. Copies of the limited edition LP will be available at the show.

"What Sweeter Music," the Singers' annual Christmas concert, will be presented on December 4, 10 and 11. Along with beloved carols and seasonal favorites, the program will feature compositions by Reena Esmail and B.E. Boykin and new works by Timothy Takach and conductor Matthew Culloton. The music begins at 3 p.m. Sunday, December 4, at Westwood Lutheran Church in Saint Louis Park; 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 10, at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 4801 France Ave. S. in Minneapolis; and 2 p.m. Sunday, December 11, at Nativity Catholic Church, 1938 Stanford Ave. Tickets are \$35. Visit singersmca.org.

Exhibits

"Threads of Freedom," the art of veteran Jeffrey Stenbom, is being displayed through January 8, 2023, in the North Gallery at Landmark Center. Using primarily glass, Stenbom has created works shaped by his experiences in the Armed Services. Stenbom will discuss his art in the gallery at noon Thursday, December 8. Admission is free.

Christmas in Saint Paul circa 1910 will be recreated from November 25 through December 31 in guided tours of the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The hour-long tours highlight holiday memories of both the Hill family and their domestic staff. The tours will step out between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily. The cost is \$18, free for children age 4 and under.

Dance

Ballet Co.Laboratory will reprise its holiday show, *The Snow Queen*, in four performances on December 2-4 at the Cowles Center, 528 Hennepin Ave. in Minneapolis. In 2020, amidst COVID-19, the ballet was presented online. This year the Hans Christian Andersen tale has been expanded with new scenes and choreography. Show times are 7 p.m. Friday, 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets start at \$28. Call 612-206-3600 or visit balletcolaboratory.org.

Books

"The Praxis of Love," a conversation about *All About Love: New Visions* by bell hooks, the pen name of Gloria Watkins (1952-2021), will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, December 1, online and in person at United Theological Seminary, 767 Eustis St. Moderated by the Reverend Dr. Ry Siggelkow, director of the Leadership Center for Social Justice at United Theological, the discussion will be led by the Reverend Dr. Jessica Chapman Lape of United Theological, Dr. David Todd Lawrence of the University of Saint Thomas and Milwaukee artist and storyteller Rosy Petri. To register to attend, visit content.unitedseminary.edu/all-about-love-bell-hooks by November 28.

A free poetry workshop will be offered by Cracked Walnut from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, December 3, in the first floor meeting room of the Highland Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Participants are asked to bring eight to 10 copies of an original poem to share. For reservations, email Patrick Cabello at pcreate@gmail.com.

Family

The Twin City Model Railroad Museum, 668 Transfer Road, has brought back Night Trains. From 3-7 p.m. on Saturdays (except Christmas Eve) now through February 25, the lights will be turned down and the model trains and the snow-covered villages through which they pass will be softly aglow in holiday cheer. Admission to the museum is \$15 for Night Trains, \$10 at other times, free for children age 4 and under. Visit tcmmr.org or call 651-647-9628.

Learn the basics of clowning and create larger-than-life characters with help from Cahoot Theatre at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 29, at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Call 651-266-7000 or visit sppl.org.

The Snowy Day, a drama about the joys of the season through the eyes of a child, will be staged from December 1-23 by SteppingStone Theatre for Youth. Written by Jerome Hairston with music by Victor Zupanc, the play is based on the books by Ezra Jack Keats. The curtain rises at 7 p.m. Fridays, 3 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, and 7 p.m. on December 22 at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place. Tickets are \$16-\$20. Visit steppingstonetheatre.org.

The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota will present "Movie Matinee," its annual family concert, at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 4, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The program includes music from and inspired by *The Wizard of Oz*, *Encanto*, *An American Tale*, *Bambi* and *Mary Poppins*. It will conclude with the finale of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for seniors, free for students and children. Visit chambermusicmn.org.

Discover what it means to be a hero when Disney on Ice skates into Xcel Energy Center on December 8-11. Mickey, Minnie and the gang will lead this magical adventure through a medley of classic and modern tales. Show times are 7 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m., 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday and 1 and 5

p.m. Sunday. Tickets are available at the box office or by visiting ticketmaster.com.

Et cetera

Celebrate a German Christmas with authentic food and beverages, imported gifts, live music and craft activities. The free event will run from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, December 3 and 4, at the Germanic-American Institute, 301 Summit Ave. Gingerbread cookies, homemade soups and hot mulled wine will be served along with bratwurst, imported beer, artisan bread, pretzels, traditional cakes and roasted nuts. An alpaca petting zoo and German model train will be featured, and Sankt Nikolaus will be there from noon to 2 p.m.

Celtic Holiday Hooley, a two-hour Irish variety show with live music, stories and sketches, carolling, step dancing and more, will be presented from December 9-17 at Celtic Junction, 836 N. Prior Ave. Emceed by comedians Joshua Will and Natalie O'Shea, the all-ages show will feature performances by singer Norah Rendell, Todd Menton of the band Boiled in Lead, multi-instrumentalist Dennis Curley, fiddler Kelsey Gunn, guitarist Dean Magraw and choreographer Cormac O Sé and the O'Shea Irish Dancers. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sunday. For ticket information, visit celticjunction.org.

Circus Juventas flips, tumbles and soars through the seasons in *Solstice*, the youth circus school's third annual holiday show running December 9-18 under the big top at 1270 Montreal Ave. From the candlelit opening procession to the snow-cascading finale, the Nordic-inspired adventure is filled with dazzling aerial feats. Written and directed by mother-daughter Betty Butler and Rachel Butler Norris, the whimsical production will be presented at 7 p.m. Fridays, 1 and 7 p.m. Saturdays, and 1 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$35, \$25 for children ages 3-12, seniors and active military personnel. Visit circusjuventas.showare.com or call 651-309-8106.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Missing state does not diminish Nova volleyball season

Tom Dobbs watched the state volleyball tournament at Xcel Energy Center a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately, it was from the stands, not the sidelines. For 10 weeks, Dobbs and his Nova Classical Academy volleyball team led a charmed life. The Knights bulldozed their way through their opponents to earn a 28-0 regular-season record, losing just seven sets along the way. One of those wins was a 3-1 decision at Concordia Academy on October 4.

After eliminating Richfield and Mounds Park in the Section 4AA playoffs, Nova and Concordia squared off again in the section final on November 5. The Knights got off to a rough start, losing two close sets in a row. They rallied to win the next two, but dropped the fifth and deciding set 15-12.

And just like that, the season that had brought so much joy came to a crashing halt. "They played loose and probably a little better than the last time we played them," Dobbs said of Concordia 10 days after the section final match. "We didn't serve as well and didn't hit as efficiently as we did the first time."

Accordingly, Dobbs showed up at Xcel and for the banquets around the state tournament in the role of a spectator rather than a participant. "It was hard at times," he admitted. "The all-state banquet was difficult to attend."

This was the season the Knights had been gunning for after having lost in last year's section final and finishing 23-5. This fall, Nova had a solid senior nucleus and a talented group of younger players. The Knights earned regular-season victories over eventual state Class AA champ Cannon Falls and runner-up Pequot Lakes. In its own way, that gave a sense of genuine accomplishment to Dobbs and his team.

"It hurts to lose," he said, "but I told the team they know who they are and what they accomplished. They made a name for themselves."

To emphasize the point, Dobbs quizzed his players, asking them who won the state title two years ago. A few players ventured guesses, making Dobbs' point clear. High school athletics is about making your own memories. Even though this year's ride didn't go as far as hoped, it still was one to remember.

With the high school season completed, the Knights took a couple of days off to recover. By the next weekend, the players were ready for more action in preparation for

WRIGHT CALL ▶17



CDH's Stella Hadac and Lily Anderson battle for the puck as Stillwater's Addison Finn closes in behind in the first period of their Suburban East Conference clash on November 15 at the Highland Ice Arena. The Ponies defeated the Raiders 6-0. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Girls' hockey preview

Coaches express concerns over drop in numbers

By Bill Wagner

When talking with local high school girls' hockey coaches, the number of participants in their programs is front and center on their minds, although the scope of the problem seems to be varied.

"We've got to start growing the game again," said Cretin-Derham Hall coach Tony Scheid, noting the number of teams now cutting junior varsity programs.

Scheid said the reasons for the decline in participation at several schools are varied. The start of the pandemic in 2020 left its mark on many parents who might not have wanted their youngsters participating anymore. The high cost of ice time and equipment is also a concern.

The numbers crunch has shown itself in other forms, too, as more schools are forming co-op teams in order to build stronger squads. Not only are teams from the same school

districts merging, such as Irondale and Mounds View, but so are schools farther apart, such as Roseville and Mahtomedi.

Locally, the Minnehaha United co-op team dissolved after last season, and any Redhawk players have now been absorbed by Blake. Saint Paul Academy, which also used to be with Minnehaha United, is now part of the Metro-South Phoenix, a Burnsville co-op that includes DeLaSalle, Saint Agnes, Faribault and Bethlehem Academy.

Scheid said the same sales pitch that brought about the rise of girls' hockey as a varsity prep sport three decades ago can be employed again—that playing hockey is fun.

Saint Paul Riveters coach Allie Duellman agreed. "The numbers issue is a concern," she said. "We lost six JV games at the start of the season" when their opponents couldn't attract enough players to put a team on the ice. She replaced those games with other competition.

Duellman said the Riveters, a co-op team of players from Two Rivers, Highland, Central and Como, has been doing all right numbers-wise with 35 players between its varsity and JV teams. But she added that the growth of co-ops does demonstrate a numbers deficiency.

"Tartan and North Saint Paul are now a co-op and there's no JV team," Duellman noted. "But I think our future is bright. Our co-op seems to be working."

New Visitation coach Tom Anitzberger said numbers are not a problem for his squad, adding that chances are very good the Blazers will add a JV program as soon as next year.

Here's how the shrinking list of local girls' teams looks this season:

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL
League: Suburban East
Previous record: 17-8-2
Coach: Tony Scheid

GIRLS' HOCKEY ▶17

Cadets' undefeated season comes to end in state football opener

By Bill Wagner

For the second time in two years, Saint Thomas Academy entered the state Class AAAAA football tournament with high hopes and an undefeated record but saw its bid for a championship dashed in the opening round.

Last year, the Cadets ran up against fellow unbeaten Mankato West and lost 21-14. This time, they faced a tough Mahtomedi squad and fell by the same score in overtime.

STA knew going in that the game against Mahtomedi would be a dogfight. The conference rivals had slugged it out in the regular season, with the Cadets winning 28-14. Coach Dan O'Brien said heading

into state that their previous battle was a lot closer than the score indicated and that his club would need to play its best to beat Mahtomedi a second time.

The Cadets, who went into the game following blowout victories over Apple Valley and Two Rivers in sectional play, lost this time despite holding Mahtomedi to zero yards passing. Instead, the Zephyrs rode their ace running back Corey Bohmert, who carried the ball 46 times for 284 yards and three touchdowns. The scores came from 20, 14 and 1 yard out, with the last one being the difference in overtime.

The Cadets had proven all season that they could mount a good ground game of their own with senior running back Love Adebayo and junior Savion Hart. But the

Zephyrs simply kept possession of the ball for too long.

Mahtomedi led by 14-7 at the half before the Cadets drew even in the fourth quarter when senior defensive back Jonny Miller returned a loose ball off a botched punt for a 1-yard touchdown. With junior Declan Wilson's conversion kick it became 14-14.

The Cadets got good yardage out of Adebayo and Hart as each amassed over 100 yards. But the closer STA got to scoring, the tougher Mahtomedi's defense became. It also didn't help that the Cadets uncharacteristically turned the ball over twice during regulation while inside Mahtomedi's 15-yard-line. Plus, there was a fruitless trip down to the Zephyrs' 8 in overtime.

"They got us. They made more plays than we did," O'Brien said. "And we didn't tackle as well as we would've liked to. We couldn't get the ball in when we got close. Whenever they needed to make a stop, they made it. It was a tough one, but you have to take your hat off to them. They were solid."

This was the fourth consecutive and 26th overall state tourney appearance for STA, which has a 20-2 record for the past two years. The Cadets were the state runners-up in 2018 and 2019 (there was no tournament in 2020).

"I told the kids that they shouldn't let one game define their season," O'Brien said. "We worked hard, but unfortunately things don't always go the way you want them to."

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the club volleyball tryouts that will soon take place.

“They’re very resilient,” Dobbs said of his players. In short, getting back in the gym was therapeutic for them. There was a new batch of girls ages 12-14 anxious to move up the ladder and to work out with the older players to see what it takes to successfully compete.

Dobbs understood perfectly. “I do strength and conditioning for Northern Heat,” he said, and the next season is just around the corner.

Northern Heat started its club volleyball programs under the direction of former Cretin-Derham Hall coach Rick Kuehlwein in 1986. Ellen Schafer, who played for Kuehlwein and later coached at CDH, now oversees the operation. Most of the Northern Heat players attend CDH. There are several teams, including ones for players as young as age 12. Tryouts and practices are scheduled through the end of the month. Tournaments will follow. In its own way, volleyball has become as organized and widespread as youth hockey and traveling basketball leagues.

Dobbs’ work with his seniors is not quite over. There’s another season now afoot—the college recruiting season. There were seven seniors on the Nova roster, and Dobbs said he’s ready to help any of them who ask for help when it comes to choosing a college.

“Playing a sport is part of the equation, but the most important thing is to find a college that works for you,” he said. “I was once told that boys battle to bond and girls bond to battle.”

In other words, whether any of the Knights play in college or not, finding the right fit is key. Dobbs didn’t have to look far for an example. His son, Owen, is a 6-foot-2 attacker in lacrosse. When looking at schools, Owen, who scored 20 goals for CDH last season, considered

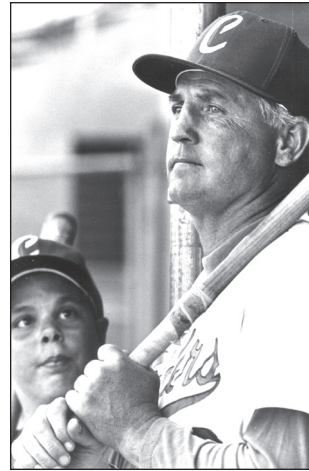
North Carolina, which would have accepted him as a walk-on with no guarantee of playing time or financial aid. Instead, Owen accepted a scholarship offer from Division II North Greenville University in South Carolina. “I’m looking forward to seeing him play,” Dobbs said. The next Nova volleyball season can wait a bit.

Farewell Dennis Denning, we knew you well

Dennis Denning, who passed away on November 16 at the age of 76, is being properly praised by many for his lengthy and highly successful coaching career that included winning a pair of NCAA titles at the University of Saint Thomas and six state high school crowns at Cretin-Derham Hall. Prior to that he was a grade school basketball and baseball coach at Saint Luke’s and Nativity.

What isn’t as well known is the role Denning played in the longest uninterrupted professional baseball game ever played in the United States.

Denning never forgot what happened on June 14, 1966. At the time, he was a third baseman for Miami, the Baltimore Orioles’ affiliate in the Florida State League. On that warm evening, the Marlins were at Saint Petersburg, which was managed by Sparky Anderson. Denning had two hits in the game, normally something to be pleased with. However, it came in 11 at-bats as the two teams



Dennis Denning at CDH in 1989. PHOTO BY MIKE LONG

slogged their way through the seven-hour, 29-inning marathon that ended with Miami winning 4-3.

It was a game in which Denning was nearly the hero. In the 22nd inning, he drilled a shot to deep left field that initially looked like it would go out, only to see left fielder Bob Taylor haul the ball in on the warning track. It took seven more innings before the Marlins pushed over a run to decide the game that ended at 2:29 a.m. When he finally got home, Dennis’ wife was a little suspicious regarding his whereabouts that night. He produced the box score to prove he hadn’t been out enjoying a night on the town.

Occasionally, Denning would bring that game up to his players as a reminder that baseball isn’t a game run by a clock and that nothing is decided until the final out is recorded.

Although he also served as an athletic director in grade school and high school, Denning was happiest when he was on a baseball field—whether it was 80 degrees with no breeze or 35 and drizzling. Either way, his teams would be dressed and ready to play well before the first pitch.

But he was also more than a coach. Denning understood people. Steve Aronson was an outstanding hockey player at Saint Thomas who also loved baseball. Indoor baseball practices started on February 1 while the hockey season was still in full swing, and Denning assured Aronson he’d get his chance to earn a spot in the lineup after the hockey season ended. As soon as hockey was over, Aronson traded his skates for spikes. He ended up being a regular on two NCAA second-place finishers in baseball.

“He’s my kind of guy,” Denning once said of Aronson. “He loves to play and he’ll do anything necessary to win.” Just like his coach was.

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

16◀ GIRLS’ HOCKEY

Key players: senior forward Lily Anderson, senior forward Meredith Anfang, sophomore forward Abby Broz, sophomore defender McKinley Haycraft.

Outlook: The Raiders have some good skaters and are quick, fast and skilled on both offense and defense. CDH opened the season with two losses, but coach Scheid likes what his team brings to the table. “We’re going to have a really good team,” he said. “Our first goal is to win our conference, but beyond that our goal is to get to the state tournament.”

SAINT PAUL RIVETERS

League: Metro East
Previous record: 14-12-1
Coach: Allie Duellman

Key players: junior forward Ella Johnson, senior defender Josie Daly, junior defender Lilly Leitner, junior forward Kate Reubish, junior forward Evie Daly.

Outlook: The Riveters have a good junior class that they hope will offset a hard hit from graduation. The defense should be particularly strong. Duellman noted that making the section finals is not out of reach. The team started out the season with a win at home over Rock Ridge and a loss away at Osseo/Park Center. “We’re looking forward to seeing who’s going to step up this year,” Duellman said.

VISITATION

League: Independent
Previous record: 12-13-1
Coach: Tom Anitzberger

Key players: sophomore forward Gracia Munoz, freshman forward/defender Abigail Hemauer, freshman forward Kate Lee, junior forward Kate Killian.

Outlook: Anitzberger has some skilled players who can skate and shoot, but the new coach said it may take some time for them to play cohesively as a unit. The Blazers started out 1-2. “We want to make sure that we click come sections,” he said.

Vis swamps Class A swim field

A deep pool of swimmers helped Visitation blaze its way to a ninth straight state Class A swimming championship on November 18 at the University of Minnesota. The Blazers took first in three individual and a pair of relay events en route to scoring 397, which bested second-place Delano by more than 200 points. The nine consecutive titles is the longest run since Virginia won 12 in a row from 1930-41.

Vis senior Ella Passe won the 200 freestyle in 1:51.38 and the 500 free in 5:00.44. Fellow senior Senior Elizabeth Burke took second and third, respectively, in those two events. Anna Farley topped the field in the 200 individual medley in 2:05.55. Sophomore Katie Miller took third.

Passe, sophomore Maggie Farley, Miller and Burke teamed up to win the 200 free relay. In the final race of the day, Miller, Burke, Passe and Anna Farley roared to a six-second triumph in the 400 free relay.

In all, coach Nate Lindscheid had 11 different swimmers earn points. Anna Farley took second in the 100 butterfly and Maggie Farley was third in the 50 free. They were also on the 200 medley relay team that took second with junior Kathryn Bonneville and senior Meghan Gerend.

Cretin-Derham Hall was 15th with 50 points. Two Rivers was 23, with junior Grace Marek taking second in 1-meter diving.

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3BR, 2BA. Mid-century charmer features perennial gardens, wood-burning FP, attached gar. & potential to make MCM design dreams come true. One block from MRB, enjoy walking thru winding streets as the sun sets over the river. www.SocialResponsibleRealtors.com

MYA HONEYWELL-THE HIVE
651-329-3619 • \$450,000



BLACK FRIDAY SPECIAL!

Call agent for details! 3 bedroom, 2 ceramic tile bathrooms, in this spacious condo with treetop views from its two balconies. Gorgeous updated eat-in kitchen with in-unit washer/dryer and 1 car garage.

GARY FABEL
651-334-3659 • \$198,500

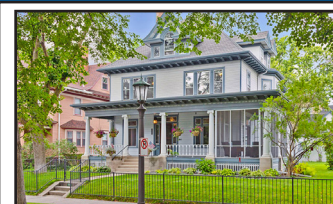


Highland Park 1991 Ford Pkwy.
651-698-2481

Crocus Hill 821 Grand Ave.
651-227-9144



coldwellbankerhomes.com



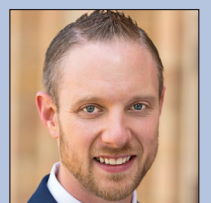
HISTORIC SUMMIT HILL BEAUTY!

Stunning woodwork and original details in this stately home on oversized lot. 4,700 sq ft, 2 car garage, plus charming 2BR carriage house. Motivated seller just reduced price! 911 Lincoln Ave. www.wahlbergtoohy.com

MICHAELA TOOHEY
PHILIP WAHLBERG
651-336-2410
\$995,000



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



JOE UEBEL
651-341-3599



MICHAELA TOOHEY
651-253-6830



DEB SOUCHERAY
651-263-0552



TRADITIONAL BRICK TWO STORY!

You'll love the gourmet kitchen w/high-end appliances, expansive granite counters, large informal dining room & sunroom that walks out to the backyard. Owners' suite w/ custom designed walk-in closet, wet bar & lavish bath. Located in the Mounds View School Dist. & close to Pleasant Lk.
www.NorthOaksDream.com

KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106 • \$1,495,000



CLASSIC NORTH OAKS WALKOUT RAMBLER!

This walkout rambler by Michel's Construction features main floor living at its best! Quality and detailing abound with crown molding, high ceilings, built-in cabinetry, brick flooring and accents, and hardwood flooring. Open kitchen features a center island, granite counters, walk-in pantry, informal dining room and inviting hearth room space. Beautifully landscaped yard with boulder retaining walls and cedar deck off the kitchen.



KRISTA WOLTER
612-247-5106
\$1,495,000

www.ClassicNorthOaks.com



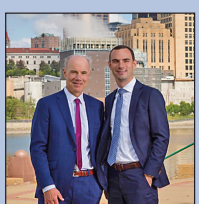
VILLAS ON QUAIL IN MAHTOMEDI!

One lot left in the Villas of Quail! Welcome home to a unique opportunity in the heart of Mahtomedi. Experience main floor living at its best with the option of 2BRs on main floor, a finished LL & 3 car gar. Within minutes of White Bear Lake & miles of bike trails.
www.VillasOnQuail.com

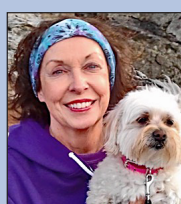
KRISTA WOLTER
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HENRY EDELSTEIN, CRS
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