

Summit at a crossroads: Two sides in bike trail debate pack Parks & Rec hearing room

By Jane McClure

The controversial plan for an off-road recreational trail along the 4.7 miles of Summit Avenue will return to the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission for a recommendation on May 11. Commissioners have until then to sort through more than two hours of testimony presented on April 13 during a sometimes raucous public hearing.

More than 250 people packed a meeting room of the Palace Community Center. Others stood in an adjacent hallway to hear arguments for and against the one-way trails that would run down either side of Summit. Almost 80 signed up to testify. Although some commissioners expressed concerns about the project, they voted down a motion to table any action on the plan for six months.

The city is under a tight deadline to approve a master plan for the project, a detail that only came to light during a recent court proceeding. Saint Paul and the Metropolitan Council entered an agreement in April 2021 that gave the city \$125,000 in state funding for planning. If the city were to get any additional regional funds for the project, a final plan needs to be approved by June 30, 2023.

The City Council is expected to hold a public hearing on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail on May 24. The Planning Commission Transportation Committee heard a presentation on the project on April 17, and the full Planning Commission will review the plans on April 28.

The regional trail would extend from Mississippi River Boulevard to downtown. Its design would vary somewhat depending on the width of Summit and the presence of medians. For the most part, however, it would be constructed within the existing curbs to minimize the loss of trees.

Proponents said a trail that is raised and separated from motor vehicle traffic would provide the safety cyclists need, and families and children using the trail would be safer than in Summit's existing on-street bike lanes. A raised trail that is built outside of

SUMMIT TRAIL ▶5



Driftwood piled up on the edge of Raspberry Island, framing the Mississippi River on a snowy April 16 as the floodwaters continued to rise.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Father of Waters rises toward major flood stage

Mississippi is now expected to crest at 18.5 feet on April 23

By Jane McClure

The rising floodwaters of the Mississippi River are expected to crest in Saint Paul on April 23 with a high probability of major flooding. That prompted city officials to declare a flood emergency earlier this month, allowing them to seek financial and tactical help if needed, pool their other

resources and implement a flood response plan. It also enabled the city to make needed purchases and seek reimbursement later from other agencies.

On the morning of April 17, as this *MyVillager* went to press, the Mississippi River had reached a level of 13.5 feet in Saint Paul—six inches below minor flood stage. The National Weather Service was predicting a crest of 18.5 feet, or 1.5 feet above the major flood stage of 17 feet.

The city closed Lilydale Road and Water Street on

MISSISSIPPI FLOODING ▶6

Friends group celebrates 30 years of advocating for Mississippi

By Frank Jossi

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), an environmental advocacy and research organization, is marking its 30th anniversary this year. For nearly all of the Saint Paul-based nonprofit's history, Summit Hill resident Whitney Clark has served as its executive director.

Clark, 60, and FMR's staff have been busy this year at the state Capitol advocating for the University of Minnesota's Forever Green Initiative. The initiative aims to develop winter-hardy perennial crops

that preserve soil and use less water. About a decade ago, FMR changed direction to work on legislation and projects that have a much more significant impact than preserving hundreds of acres of land from development.

"Most of the water pollution in Minnesota comes from agricultural sources and we realized we needed to be focused on solutions that can take place at scale," Clark said. "We started getting interested in ideas that could transform the ecological footprint of agriculture."

He hopes the university's new perennial

grain called Kernza will gain interest from farmers interested in helping out without sacrificing income to do it. In this case, he believes market-based solutions will work better than government regulation.

That has been one of the roles of FMR from its inception—encouraging better land management next to the Mississippi River. Clark said the organization was founded as "a voice for the river" that has grown from just a few staff members to more than two dozen today, supported by grants and financial help from more than 2,500 members.

FMR's largest endeavor, land conservation, includes four full-time ecologists who work with government agencies and landowners to protect the Mississippi River and its tributaries through easements or purchases. Clark said more than 40 sites have been identified for preservation from Elk River to Goodhue County.

Closer to home, FMR's land conservation program is working to preserve areas within the Mississippi River Gorge, the Mississippi's confluence with the

FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER ▶2

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Minnesota River and Mounds Bluff Park on Saint Paul's East Side. One of its collaborators is the Flint Hills oil refinery in Rosemount that manages its bluff area with FMR's expertise, Clark said.

Two of the largest projects FMR has undertaken have been helping the 25 communities within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) adopt rules to protect their shorelines. The state Legislature assigned the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to work with communities on ordinances that cover a 72-mile stretch of the river from Dayton to Hastings, which is considered a national park.

The MRCCA also enforced height restrictions on buildings being constructed at Highland Bridge, Clark said, and master developer Ryan Companies has complied. "They could ask for variances, but they would be hard to get and could be challenged," he said.

FMR's advocacy also led the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to install new monitoring wells on a former waste site along the river across from Highland Bridge. With flooding expected this spring, the monitoring will determine if pollutants there are leaching into the river.

Another FMR goal is to stop Asian carp from coming upstream to the Twin Cities and beyond. Clark hopes the Legislature will fund a sound, light and bubble barrier inside Lock and Dam No. 5 near Winona. The barrier would deter carp while still allowing boats to pass through.

FMR began in 1993 when Peter Gove chaired a commission working with the U.S. Forest Service on a management plan for the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area (MNRRA). Gove, who had served as commissioner of the state's Pollution Control Agency and founded its Environmental Quality Board, noticed at hearings that



Friends of the Mississippi River executive director Whitney Clark stands near the East 44th Street and West River Parkway site of the organization's Earth Day events set for April 22. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

business interests were well represented, but not the public.

With a McKnight Foundation grant, Gove and three other river advocates created FMR to increase citizen participation in decisions that affected the river. The others were attorney George Dunn, former MNRRA superintendent John Anfinson and dispatcher Hokan Miller.

Initially, Cove figured the organization would exist until the river's management plan concluded. But FMR kept going and grew significantly under Clark's leadership.

Cove said he is proud of the FMR's role in assisting communities with water quality issues and identifying problems with pollutants. The new challenge for FMR will be supporting Congresswoman Betty McCollum's Mississippi River Resilience and Restoration Initiative, which calls for the 10 states lining the river to work together on water conservation and restoration.

Long-time board member Sue Vento, the wife of late Congressman Bruce Vento, said FMR has been "extraordinary" in working

with environmental groups on river issues and doing it in "such a way as not to alienate the agricultural industry, especially family farmers."

Vento said FMR also has been instrumental in creating a new generation of river advocates. "They're growing future environmental and river advocates, and Bruce, having been an educator and a passionate environmentalist, would give high marks for that," she said.

FMR sponsors many volunteer events. Next up is the annual Earth Day cleanup of the Minneapolis River Gorge from 9:30 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 22, on West River Parkway at East 36th and 44th streets. Supplies will be provided, but volunteers should bring their own gloves.

An Earth Day picnic is also being held in connection with the cleanup from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. that day at West River Parkway and East 44th Street. The public is invited to join the FMR for free food and drinks, poster making and other activities. For more information, visit fmr.org.

30 ways to help the river

In celebration of its 30th anniversary, every other month this year Friends of the Mississippi River is sharing five ways people can help the river.

1. Five ways to protect habitat and wildlife: garden for pollinators, make your windows bird-safe, be a mindful dog owner, become a community scientist, steward the places you love.

2. Five ways to reduce lesser-known water pollutants: avoid contributing to microplastic pollution, eat clean-water crops, adopt your street's storm drain, don't flush pills, use a car wash.

3. Five ways to educate yourself and others about the river: learn about the Dakota and indigenous history here, stencil storm drains with a clean-water reminder, encourage pride in our national parks, get involved in community or state decision-making, visit and explore the river.

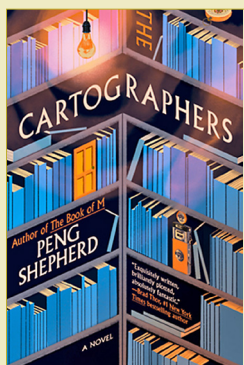
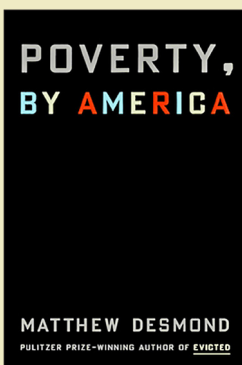
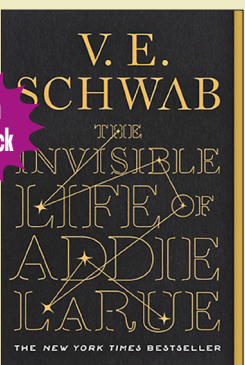
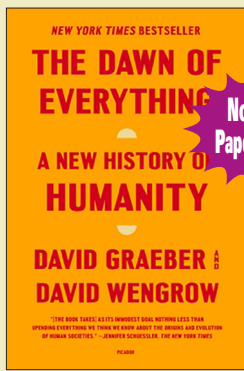
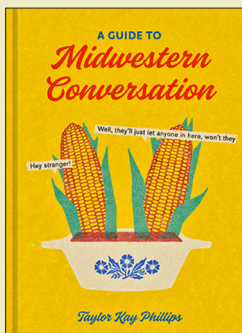
4. Five ways to improve water quality at home: grow native plants, reduce fertilizer use and leave the leaves, rig up a rain barrel, prevent runoff, use less deicing salt.

5. Five ways to care for the river while enjoying it: know the guidelines before exploring parks, respect the plants and animals around you, stop the spread of invasive species, pick up litter as you go, get the lead out of shot and tackle.

6. Five ways you can join FMR to help the river: volunteer, become a member, learn, advocate as a river guardian, connect with FMR.

Learn more at fmr.org/30-ways.

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Crater-like potholes near the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Milton Street have harvested a bumper crop of hubcaps in recent weeks. Local resident Dusty Thune (left), on evening walks with his dog Loki, has rounded up the silver discs and hung them on a bush in hopes of someday reuniting them with their owners.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Hot mix to the rescue: The patching of city's potholes begins in earnest

Mayor uses the opening of asphalt plant to push for a sales tax increase

By Jane McClure

You know spring has sprung in Saint Paul when the city's asphalt plant roars to life, generating acres of hot mix to fill the potholes winter has left us with. This year the plant's reopening on April 6 merited a news conference, not just because of an especially prolific spring for potholes, but to draw attention to the city's long-term street maintenance needs, according to Mayor Melvin Carter.

City lobbyists have been working the halls of the state Capitol this session, buttonholing legislators in an attempt to convince them to approve a referendum in the fall on an increase in Saint Paul's local sales tax from 0.5 to 1.5 percent. The lion's share of the new sales tax revenue would be used to rebuild arterial and collector streets across the city. Carter and other elected officials used the news conference to promote the sales tax request, which is expected to raise almost \$1 billion over the next 20 years for both street and park projects.

The request has been heard in the Minnesota Senate Tax Committee, though it has stalled in the House. More than three dozen Minnesota cities and counties are seeking local option sales taxes this session, and they are competing with metro-wide proposals for sales tax increases to pay for affordable housing and transportation.

In his call for a sales tax increase, Carter cited a "generation of underinvestment in our streets" by his predecessors who chose to "kick the can down the road" rather than address the city's increasingly deteriorated infrastructure.

The proposed increase would make Saint Paul's the highest sales tax in Minnesota, equal to Duluth's sales tax of 8.875 percent if the measure is approved by a majority of voters in a citywide referendum. The pros-

pect of a higher sales tax has met opposition from the Saint Paul Area Chamber, which is urging city officials to find other ways to pay for the city's backlog of street maintenance projects.

DFL Senator Sandy Pappas of Saint Paul's District 65 is the lead author of the city's sales tax bill in the Senate. She expressed optimism about the bill's prospects, saying her colleagues at the Capitol and their staffs are all too familiar with the sorry condition of Saint Paul's streets.

The asphalt plant in the city's North End provides hot mix for about 100 other communities and private contractors in the region. Trucks line up for blocks every spring to load up on asphalt.

Carter was riding in the Public Works Department truck that received the first load of hot mix on April 6. Filling potholes is fine, he said, but "when you fill a pothole, you still have a pothole. Saint Paul needs to stop chasing potholes" and rebuild the city's streets.

All of the potholes in the city will be filled in the next month or two, according to Saint Paul Public Works director Sean Kershaw. City workers will fill the largest and most dangerous potholes first, he said, focusing on collector and arterial streets initially. To stay on top of the problem, Public Works will likely keep the asphalt plant running six days a week, he added.

It takes several days for the 61-year-old asphalt plant to warm up and begin turning out the hot mix. This year's opening ran into a complication. The asphalt plant's rebuilt holding pond sprang a leak. On April 5, the repaired pond was approved for operations by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, but for the preceding two weeks the city had to purchase hot mix from a contractor.

The city has received an estimated 475 claims from motorists for damages caused by potholes in the first three months of 2023. There were 85 such claims from motorists in all of 2022. The claims this year have averaged about \$800 each.

To report a pothole or make a claim for damages, visit tinyurl.com/nw4fwdtp.

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Assessing the damage

St. Paul's 20-year experiment with street maintenance assessments ends with another setback in court

By Jane McClure

The long court battle over Saint Paul's street maintenance assessment program appears to be over. Without comment on April 5, the City Council approved seven legal settlements totaling more than \$640,250. The settlements cover the assessments charged by the city for street work done between 2018 and 2022. In the settlements, the city is not admitting to any wrongdoing but maintains that its past actions were legal. The plaintiffs, meanwhile, have freed the city from any future claims.

Some of the cases focused on the assessments charged for routine street maintenance services. Others were tied to the assessments charged for mill and overlay work. Most of the cases were filed by attorneys Jack Hoeschler and Ferdinand Peters. Peters assumed Hoeschler's cases following the latter's illness and death last year. The seventh case was filed by Kelly Hadac, the attorney for downtown property owner Madison Equities. It also focused on assessments for mill and overlay work.

Peters said he is pleased with the settlements. According to him, the city's shift of right-of-way maintenance costs from property taxes to assessments should never have happened. "I've lived in Saint Paul for more than 30 years," he said. "I love the city. I want to continue to live in Saint Paul. But I've never seen the streets in such bad condition."

Prior to the most recent settlements, the city had shifted all of the street maintenance costs back to property taxes. In fact, in 2023 that accounted for about half of the 14.65 percent increase in the city's portion of the property tax levy.

Saint Paul's street maintenance assessment program was started in 2002 under then-Mayor Randy Kelly as a way to hold the line on property taxes and get the owners of the city's many tax-exempt properties to help cover the cost of street maintenance. About a quarter of the properties in Saint Paul are owned by nonprofits, including hospitals, colleges and universities, other private schools, churches, synagogues and other places of worship. The thinking was that these nonprofit organizations should pay their fair share for the

wear and tear on the streets.

City officials claimed a 1967 state law allowed for the street maintenance assessments. By 2007, Saint Paul was assessing every property owner in the city a fee to cover the costs of such services as street sweeping, snowplowing, tree trimming and streetlight and sidewalk repair. Eventually, the assessments were bringing in more than \$30 million per year.

First Baptist Church and Saint Mary's Catholic Church in downtown sued the city in 2011, contending that the charges were actually a tax that they as tax-exempt nonprofit organizations should not be required to pay. The churches noted that the assessments were based on linear frontage on the street. That meant they were paying as much if not more than large for-profit corporations that owned or occupied downtown skyscrapers.

Property owners on arterial streets downtown were also assessed at a higher rate than those on neighborhood streets. First Baptist, for example, was paying \$16.29 per frontage foot, or more than four times the rate charged to churches in residential areas outside of downtown.

The city amended the assessment program following the first court rulings in 2016, trimming it to just a few services, such as street sweeping, sealcoating and mill and overlay work. However, the street maintenance assessments still drew objections, and the legal dispute continued.

Many of the plaintiffs in the initial court cases were churches and other nonprofits, including country clubs, railroads and Minnesota Public Radio. Commercial and residential building owners, developers and other for-profit property owners joined in the seven court cases that were settled this spring. The seven cases involved a couple of hundred plaintiffs and more than 400 parcels of property.

Other plaintiffs in the most recent cases were homeowners on arterial streets, who said it was not fair for them to be assessed for mill and overlay work on streets that carry high volumes of traffic from outside of the neighborhood. They challenged the city's assertion that street maintenance work such as mill and overlay provided a special benefit.

Peters said he is pleased with the settlements. According to him, the city's shift of right-of-way maintenance costs from property taxes to assessments should never have happened.

Bike, pedestrian project planned for Capitol area

Work coincides with John Ireland bridge rebuilding

By Dale Mischke

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is seeking public comment on possible improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians on John Ireland Boulevard between Kellogg Boulevard and Rice Street. The project includes rebuilding the four-lane John Ireland bridge over I-94. Constructed in 1967, the bridge is safe, but repairs are needed.

The bridge will be rebuilt within its existing footprint. Three different options for

bicycle and pedestrian facilities are on the table. Other safety and cosmetic changes are planned, including new railings and handicapped accessibility upgrades.

MnDOT will hold a public meeting on the bridge design from 4-6 p.m. Tuesday, April 25, at Saint Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave. The meeting will include a brief presentation and time to ask questions and make comments. Participation can be in person or virtually. MnDOT will also post a recorded video of the meeting.

Final designs for the bridge project will be released this summer. The work is expected to take place in 2025 and 2026. For more information or to register for the virtual meeting, visit tinyurl.com/33cxz7tj.

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City ordered to release all Summit trail planning documents

Judge calls city's response to data requests deficient

By Jane McClure

Ramsey County District Court Judge Patrick Diamond has given the city of Saint Paul until noon on April 26 to meet a request for public documents related to planning for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail.

The documents were sought under the Minnesota Data Practices Act by attorney and Summit Avenue resident Robert Cattanach. Cattanach filed a civil lawsuit against the city in late March. His case was heard on April 5, and it goes back to court on April 27.

Judge Diamond released his ruling on April 13, hours before a Parks and Recreation Commission hearing on the contro-

versial plan for a recreational trail along the 4.7 miles of Summit Avenue. The judge has also allowed the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association (SARPA) to intervene in the lawsuit, saying the organization has an interest in the trail issue.

Diamond is asking the city to explain how it has handled the many data access requests Cattanach has filed. He has ordered the city to appear in court to submit to cross-examination. The judge could decide whether the city has remedied its violation of the act, and if it should be subject to an injunction against further proceedings on the proposed bike trail.

"Judge Diamond's decision sends a critical message to all citizens that the city is not above the law, and cannot force a terrible idea down the throats of its residents simply by hiding the facts from them," said

Cattanach, who filed the suit on behalf of SARPA and the ad hoc group Save Our Street. "We have been begging for these documents for months, but the city refused to give them to us and forced us to get the court involved. As Judge Diamond so succinctly stated, the law does not allow a governmental entity to play hide and seek with public data."

The city of Saint Paul does not comment on ongoing litigation. At the April 5 hearing, its attorneys said that the city did respond to Cattanach's requests.

In his 23-page ruling, Diamond took issue with the city's response to Cattanach's data access requests, stating that the city's responses show "procedural difficulties" and "substantive deficiencies." While Cattanach and SARPA may not be entitled to a guarantee that the city will locate documents, Diamond said they are entitled to

have their requests addressed. The judge called the city's defense of its actions "not credible."

Diamond in his ruling cited the tight timeline the project is under. An affidavit filed by Parks and Recreation Department staff indicates that if the city does not have a master plan for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail approved by June 30 or fails to receive an extension, it would be unable to apply for regional trail funding.

The deadline was included in an agreement the city made with the Metropolitan Council in 2021 when it received a \$150,000 grant to help plan the regional trail. The city's planning costs have grown to more than \$270,000. Parks and Recreation staff alone have put in more than 2,700 hours of work on the plans. About 300 to 365 more staff hours are needed if the city is to meet the June 30 deadline.

1◀ SUMMIT TRAIL

the parking lanes would also eliminate the possibility of driver's-side car doors suddenly opening in the path of bicyclists.

Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition cochair Andy Singer said a raised bike path is the "gold standard" when it comes to safe design. The coalition supports the city's plan to separate the Summit trail from the traffic lane with a parking lane where possible, and the off-road trail should be easier to keep clear of snow.

On-street bike lanes do not work well in winter, Singer said. He cited a recent effort to keep the bike lanes on Marshall Avenue open throughout the cold months. That resulted in vehicles towed, neighbors upset and bike lanes left in poor riding condition.

"I'm so glad to see this proposal, especially for the buffer," said Lexington-Hamline resident James Slegers. "(Summit) would be greatly improved," he said, not only because of the safety of the trail, but the promise of a new surface without the loose gravel, bumps and potholes that plague Summit's existing bike lane.

When new bike lanes were striped on Cleveland Avenue several years ago, "there was a lot of doom and gloom," said Ben Challberg. He uses those lanes frequently and has been able to live without a motor vehicle. He contends that improved bike facilities elsewhere would allow others to do the same.

Hamline-Midway resident Paul Nelson said Summit has a long history of being a corridor for bicycles and that the proposed trail plans provided a much better and safer experience. "This would make Summit safe for all who use it," he said, "not just the bicyclists."

Union Park resident April King urged the Parks and Rec Commission to consider studies that demonstrate the safety of raised, separated bike lanes. She said the design eyed for Summit could reduce bike-vehicle crashes by half.



Sonja Mason (center left), flanked by Christine Graf and Jennifer Nelson, and avid cyclist Stu Barron (right) were among more than 250 people on both sides of the issue who turned out for the Parks and Recreation Commission's April 13 hearing on the proposed Summit Avenue Regional Trail. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER



Project opponents raised an array of arguments against the recreational trail, from the effect it would have on the historic character of Summit, to the loss of trees, to the harm it would cause by removing much of the on-street parking on the eastern half of Summit. Removal of parking was an issue for businesses as well as residents, especially women who said they worry about having to walk long distances at night.

Save Our Street (SOS) focused its arguments against the plan on the potential loss of trees. City officials have estimated that 221 trees could be lost to the reconstruction of Summit with the recreational trail. An arborist hired by SOS estimated the potential loss at more than 950 trees.

"We don't want what happened on Cleveland to happen on Summit," said SOS member Gary Todd, referring to a Ramsey County Public Works project in Saint Anthony Park that resulted in the loss of many more trees than anticipated.

Several people argued for more time to discuss the project and consider alterna-

tives. According to Todd, the project's impacts are not well understood and the risks of change need to be evaluated. "Please postpone your vote," Todd said. "Summit Avenue is too valuable an asset."

The project would alter the historical integrity of Summit, according to many opponents of the plan. They also said the design proposed by the city does not meet national historic standards.

"Once we lose this, we don't get it back," said Summit Avenue resident Bethany Gladhill, referring to the historic charm of Summit.

Representatives of the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association and Ramsey Hill Association spoke against the plan. So did the owners of Summit businesses and organizations. The University Club, German-American Institute, James J. Hill House and Cathedral of Saint Paul all bring many visitors to Summit.

Christopher Keith, an architectural historian who owns rental property on Summit, said his tenants and many of his neighbors who rent apartments or own

condominiums on Summit are concerned about the loss of parking.

David McLaughlin's family has owned and operated the Summit Manor reception house at 275 Summit Ave. for many years. His parents were leaders in the drive to restore the historic homes in Ramsey Hill years ago. "If you take away half of the parking, you're really going to challenge my business," he said.

McLaughlin served on a design review committee for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail. He said the April 13 meeting was the first time he had really felt listened to.

Not being heard was a theme for project opponents. Most of the public testimony on the project has been taken online due to the lingering fears of the COVID-19 pandemic. Summit Hill resident Liza Gibba said she wished city officials would listen to more ideas. Her comment, "just remember how well the city led us through organized trash collection," drew loud cheers.

For information on the draft plan for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail, visit tinyurl.com/mt3h9c93.

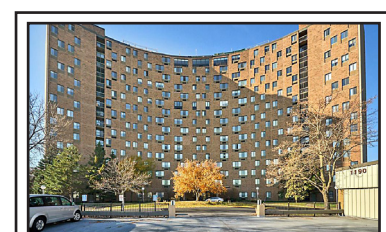
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Council says Billy's on Grand operators can seek own licenses

Possible revocation of old licenses is on hold for now

By Jane McClure

The current operators of Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., can apply for their own on-sale liquor and other business licenses, the Saint Paul City Council decided on April 5. That has prompted objections from several neighbors, who say ongoing problems of gun violence and other bad behavior are linked to Billy's patrons.

Neighbors also question why the city has not revoked Billy's licenses, as recommended by the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI). While the April 5 vote sets that possibility aside for now, revocation could be brought back if the application for the licenses is denied.

Council member Rebecca Noecker said that though the April 5 vote allows current Billy's operator Wes Spearman and the DWD Group to proceed with their application for licenses, there is no guarantee the licenses will be granted. Billy's is currently being operated through a management agreement under a previous owner's licenses.

The council's vote launches a process that includes scrutiny by the city's DSI. "You have a new application that's ready to move," DSI deputy director Dan Niziolek told the council. "If there's an objection, which we expect there would be, there would be a hearing before a legislative hearing officer. And then all of that would be presented for your consideration."

The process could also include a neighborhood meeting of the Summit Hill Association.

Objections are likely as more than half

a dozen neighbors sent letters asking the City Council to deny the license request or impose more stringent operating conditions. They cited late-night fights, gunfire, bullets going through windows and other property damage that has occurred in the vicinity of Billy's.

The attorney and the operators of Billy's could not be reached for comment for this story.

Liquor license revocation is a rare occurrence in Saint Paul. Some businesses faced with that possibility surrender a license instead. Once an on-sale liquor license is revoked in the city, Niziolek said, a business cannot obtain another on-sale liquor license at that address for 15 years.

Billy's on Grand was operated for more than 30 years by Bill Wengler of East Mall Associates, which owns the building in which the restaurant is located. He sold the bar and restaurant in 2020 to Randall

Johnson and the RJMP Group. Spearman and DWD Group have been managing Billy's since May 2021 under an agreement with RJMP.

DWD has continued to operate under RJMP's licenses since then while continuing to seek its own. However, license violations have continued to push back action on the new licenses. The city fined Billy's \$500 in February 2022 and \$1,000 this past February as the result of license violations. The most recent fine was imposed after Billy's appealed a May 2022 notice of license violations from the DSI in response to 128 police calls in the vicinity.

One violation occurred that May when police responding to a disorderly conduct call said they were barred from entering Billy's. That incident and the restaurant's previous history of violations prompted the DSI's recommendation for revocation of all of Billy's licenses.

14 MISSISSIPPI FLOODING

Saint Paul's West Side on April 14. It closed Shepard and Warner Roads in downtown on April 16. Sibley and Jackson streets between Kellogg Boulevard and Second Street will be closed to through traffic. These one-way streets will be temporarily converted to two-way traffic to access the buildings there.

The City Council also authorized the lease of a former K-Mart parking lot in Saint Paul's North End for use as an impound lot if the impound lot on Barge Channel Road is no longer available.

Saint Paul's worst flood on record was in April 1965 when the Mississippi crested at 26.01 feet. That flood inundated homes in low-lying areas of Lilydale and the West Side. The river crested above 20 feet in 1952, 1969, 1997, 2001, 2014 and 2019. In 2019 the flood lasted for 84 days or almost three times the standard flood emergency of about 30 days, leaving behind a lot of damage.

Despite the 89.7 inches of snowfall this winter in the Twin Cities—the third most in recorded history—flooding is not expected to be as severe this spring thanks to the gradual snowmelt in March and the first week of April, according to Rick Schute, Saint Paul's emergency management director. However, the high temperatures of April 11-14 and the possibility of more rainfall may make matters worse,



Driftwood carried downstream by the floodwaters on April 16 was caught on a railroad bridge in downtown Saint Paul as the Mississippi River continued to rise toward a crest of 18.5 feet. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

he said.

"Our flood response plan includes robust measures to ensure we can take reasonable and necessary steps," Schute said. "Coordinated efforts with partners at the county, state, and federal levels are ongoing as we work to mitigate flood impacts."

Flood preparations in Saint Paul are largely handled by Schute's department,

as well as the city's Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments. The city must notify property owners along the river who could be affected by flooding. The city will also be working with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, state officials and Ramsey County's emergency management staff as needed.

In an interview, Saint Paul Public Works

director Sean Kershaw said his staff is ready to protect the city's streets and sanitary and storm sewers in the case of a flood. "We're really good at dealing with Mississippi River floods," he said. "We need to make sure that infrastructure is protected and that we can implement procedures quickly." Saint Paul does not budget for river floods, Kershaw added, but applies for reimbursements as needed.

The city routinely posts all street and park facility closings necessitated by a flood. As this issue of *MyVillager* went to press, no streets or parks had been closed. However, city forestry staff were still cleaning up from the hundreds of trees and branches that were downed in the heavy April 1 snowstorm.

Parks staff have been reminding citizens who visit parks along the river not to go around barricades if trails are closed as a precautionary measure. Before visiting a park or trail, they recommend checking the city's website for the latest flood information.

The city's flood information page at stpaul.gov/flood includes links to information on road and park closings. The website provides real-time flood information from the National Weather Service, and has live video from cameras that give various perspectives of the Mississippi River Valley. It also has links to Xcel Energy for information on what to do in the event of a flood.


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Snelling median plan put on fast track

By Jane McClure

A plan to install an 8-foot-wide median on Snelling Avenue between Ford Parkway and Montreal Avenue will be addressed at a Transportation Information Fair hosted by the Highland District Council (HDC) from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, May 11, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) representatives will be on hand to discuss the project and solicit public comments. The median would narrow Snelling on that stretch from four lanes to two and eliminate on-street parking. Left-hand turn lanes with breaks in the median would be provided at Bohland and Saunders avenues. A 10-foot-wide recreational trail would be constructed on the east side of Snelling. The work is scheduled for the spring and summer of 2024.

The project was reviewed on April 3 by the Planning Commission's Transportation Committee and on April 11 by the HDC's Transportation Committee. The HDC committee voted to ask MnDOT to continue to work with local residents on the design of the project. According to committee member Tom Romens, neighbors are frustrated that the median project was presented with the design already well on the way to completion. "(The project) only comes to us for minor tweaks," he said.

Jesse Thorsen of MnDOT said the median would be installed as part of a resurfacing project on that part of Snelling. The area was seen by MnDOT as a good candidate for conversion from four lanes to two, he said. MnDOT looked at traffic volume, accident history and the need for pedestrian improvements. Traffic volume in the area is about 13,000 vehicles per day.

MnDOT was originally considering a

street restriping and sidewalk project for that part of Snelling in 2026, according to Thorsen. However, it later received a \$1 million federal grant for the project, and that needs to be spent by fiscal year 2024.

The tight deadline has constrained the public engagement process, Thorsen said. MnDOT is about 60 percent of the way to final design, according to him, and expects to complete the design by August. Among the factors being considered is Snelling's status as state Highway 51 and a major truck route. Drainage is another longstanding issue.

The median is intended to provide a refuge for pedestrians crossing Snelling. New crosswalks would be marked at intersections. The traffic signals at Snelling and Montreal avenues would be redesigned. The intersection is just north of Highland Park High School and Middle School.

The HDC is hearing concerns about street and alley access and the impact for neighbors whose driveways face Snelling. Motorists would no longer be able to make left-hand turns from or to Hillcrest, Beechwood or Rome avenues or any of that area's east-west alleys. Another issue is access to the high school, middle school and Highland Park Elementary School. MnDOT staff said they have been in contact with the Saint Paul Public Schools and will be working with the school district on bus routing.

A few local residents have supported the proposed project at neighborhood meetings. Saunders resident Dan Cornejo said he believes the project will provide needed pedestrian safety improvements. Others have noted the city's plan to develop new field space on the former Highland reservoir site on Snelling and that safe access will be needed to those future facilities.

For more information on the proposed median, visit tinyurl.com/47s5udzn.

Troubled Oxford Center gets ARP funds

By Jane McClure

The Saint Paul City Council on April 12 allocated \$429,454 in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to hire additional staff and promote youth programs at the Oxford Community Center, 270 N. Lexington Pkwy. The money was drawn from the \$4 million in federal pandemic-relief funds that the city's Office of Neighborhood Safety has to spend by 2026.

The American Rescue Plan Act was a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021. It was intended to speed up the country's recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The money for Oxford comes in the wake of a shooting in January that critically injured a 16-year-old boy outside of the Summit-University community center. A city Parks and Rec employee was arrested that same day and charged with the shooting.

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation director Andy Rodriguez called the shooting at Oxford "one of the most challenging and tragic" incidents in his career. "This impacted all 26 of our recreation centers across the city," he said.

Oxford and the adjacent Jimmy Lee Recreation Center were closed for about a month as parks staff worked with the Office of Neighborhood Safety and its nonprofit partners to support workers and plan for the next steps to take.

The funding approved on April 12 will pay for 14.5 full-time-equivalent staff members at Oxford, including a facility and program supervisor, community recreation coordinator, youth workers and recreation leaders. Communication between Oxford and

Central High School across the street will also be addressed with employees from nonprofit organizations meeting students at Central and escorting them to Oxford.

A city security audit that is almost complete could recommend updating the cameras and related security technology at Oxford, Jimmy Lee and other recreation centers. Brooke Blakey, the city's director of Neighborhood Safety, has moved her office into Oxford.

City Council members applauded the efforts of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and the Department of Parks and Recreation to make recreation centers safer and intervene with youths. However, they also questioned how these programs will be able to continue once the ARP money is spent. Addressing security at park facilities will be an ongoing expense, City Council members noted.

Blakey said she sees the allocation on April 12 as "triage" until the entire recreation center program can be evaluated.

The city has allocated a total of \$37.6 million in ARP funds to support public safety. That money has gone to police hiring, police overtime, library security, domestic abuse intervention, and case backlogs in the City Attorney's Office, among other things. Parks and Rec has previously used \$1.5 million in ARP funds to expand its services, add Saturday hours at some rec centers, increase programming, purchase equipment and waive athletic fees for youths age 10 and older.

Rodriguez said change has to be considered carefully in post-ARP budgets. He noted that his recreation center employees' roles have changed as they deal with increasingly complex issues. "It's not just handing out basketballs," he said.

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VIEWPOINT

INBOX

Grieving another teardown

It has become commonplace to see well-constructed historical homes torn down and disposed of in landfills. I have walked past many of them and looked at them sadly, their old bumpy bricks lying in a heap near the sidewalk. I learned last week that the home I lived in for 17 years on Juno Avenue is being torn down to be replaced with a larger, more modern one. This information left me stunned and heartbroken. Built in 1950, the home was found by an inspector to have no problems when we bought it in 1997. The Realtor confirmed the home's solid integrity, saying "the best houses were built before 1959."

In 2005, our family invested more than the asking price to redo the kitchen, replace all of the windows with energy-efficient double-hungs, add patio doors and a fireplace with a green marble inset, redo the woodwork, restucco the exterior and put on a new roof. We were proud and happy as we raised our daughter in a true home of celebration and comfort. We sold it to a family with young children, confident that they could enjoy the then 65-year-old house on a street with diversity, history and trees.

I love that house. It is part of my family memories of who we are. It is also part of the story of the people who lived on the block with me, whose children ate cookies in our kitchen and played Monopoly in front of the fireplace. The house fits in on the street and adds to the variety and richness of the neighborhood in a time when so many things are changing unpredictably. Far more than a piece of real estate, it is a place of soul, vitality, joy and community. Its worth is far beyond money.

Can we start honoring the past and the character of older buildings instead of tearing them down and wasting valuable construction materials when we know the damage it does to the earth?

*Katherine Barton
Macalester-Groveland*

A need for frisking on Grand?

I have lived near Grand Avenue for close to 28 years and have eaten at most of the restaurants along the avenue multiple times.

Our daughter and her family flew into town recently and wanted to get something to eat after their arrival. There weren't a lot of options at 9 p.m. on a Sunday, but Billy's on Grand was one. We had frequently had good meals there in the past.

It had been several years since we had eaten at Billy's, and I was aware of some of the violence problems they have had, but I thought those were mostly after midnight. I was quite shocked that there were security people at the entrance and they had to frisk us before letting us in. Other than at the airport, when the TSA occasionally needs to "wand" you, I have never had this experience.

To be honest, I was taken aback to think that a restaurant on Grand Avenue felt they needed to do this to keep their patrons safe. We won't be back again.

*Sheldon Berkowitz
Summit Hill*

Billy's on Grand's management responds: Unfortunately, we live in a world today where regardless of our signage to oppose weapons in our establishment, people will ignore that. Having security on site is one of our commitments to the community and our patrons so that everyone can have an enjoyable time inside our business. The area where we are located has had some issues with crime in the past, and that trend seems to be continuing. We are determined to do our part in helping our patrons feel safe. We have security on staff most nights and lightly search guests upon entry after 9 p.m.

Please, let us eat bread

Enough! Our sales tax in Saint Paul is already 7.88 percent on almost everything except food, clothing and prescription drugs. Our mayor and City Council want to add another 1 percent to fix our streets, which have become a lacework of potholes. When I came to the Twin Cities in 1970, the sales tax was under 4 percent and did not apply to food, services, electricity, gas or heating oil—to the necessities of life. In my quilt and yard goods shop, I had to apply the sales tax to cloth sold for quilts but not

Existing taxes should be enough for streets, parks

By Bill Hosko

Once in office, few politicians can avoid the powerful urge to spend massive amounts of money. In Saint Paul, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by the city annually. Saint Paul's city budget was about \$500 million in 2013. It is nearly \$800 million in 2023. The feeling of power is seductive and addictive, and unless these individuals are truly grounded in life before taking office, they will succumb to the desire to spend other people's money in ways they never would if the money were their own.

Mayor Melvin Carter is now lobbying state lawmakers for the right to hold a referendum on raising the city's local sales tax by 1 percent. The increase would raise an estimated \$984 million over 20 years—\$738 million for road repairs and \$246 million for improvements to parks and recreation facilities. How these numbers were arrived at would be interesting to know. Regardless, City Hall has a fiduciary responsibility to use existing tax receipts to maintain our roads and parks and recreation facilities. Though our mayor and City Council continue spending tens of millions of dollars more each year, 100 miles of roadways across our city have fallen into disrepair. How is this possible? They've made a mess of things.

City Hall knows—as does state Senator Sandy Pappas, who is sponsoring the local sales tax legislation—that 80 percent or more of eligible voters often do not vote in city elections in the odd years. This almost assures their success in raising Saint Paul's sales tax to the highest in the state (tied with Duluth) at 8.88 percent.

When I opened my art gallery and frame shop in Saint Paul 30 years ago, I was among perhaps 300

Though our mayor and City Council continue spending tens of millions of dollars more each year, 100 miles of roadways across our city have fallen into disrepair. How is this possible?

other retailers in downtown. Today, I am one of only a handful. Some local elected officials will say this is part of a national problem. I disagree. Saint Paul's receding position is not Governor Walz's nor President Biden's fault.

Repaving our roads will never change our city's declining economic standing and reputation. What will? Restoring public safety, a true sense of safety, not only downtown, but across our city, and for each of us to embrace personal responsibility and respect for differing opinions. Instead, City Hall encourages us to feel aggrieved about this city, its past and even our very own neighbors, while the city spends massive sums on a utopian vision for the city and how we should live.

The result has been record homicides year after year, America's most dangerous light-rail system, and a bus system where barriers were added to protect drivers from assault. Shoplifting has been normalized, private employers continue taking their workforces to the suburbs, and a great number of parents are taking their children out of the public schools. Like them or not, when a city's lone Walmart leaves, the future is not bright. Saint Paul's last Walmart closed in 2019.

On the city's website, Mayor Carter concludes his introduction with, "Let's move forward together and build a Saint Paul that works for all of us." I agree. That is why, if a referendum is held to raise our local sales tax, the fairest path forward for "all of us" is to ensure that the referendum is not placed on the ballot in this fall's odd-year election, but on next year's even-year state and county election ballot when a much larger portion of Saint Paul voters will go to the polls.

Bill Hosko was a candidate for mayor of Saint Paul in 2021.

to cloth sold for clothing. Through the years, the tax has risen and been applied to more items, until now it applies to almost everything.

We have already seen cutbacks in library hours and staff, in traffic policing, in police youth programs, etc., while ever more ridiculous things such as curb bumpouts are built and new proposals are made for such things as changing Summit Avenue's configuration, which involves yet another study.

I say it's time to unelect the entire bunch in City Hall, the mayor and City Council. They have no idea that we taxpaying citizens do not have endlessly deep pockets. And the city has a debt of almost 7 percent that needs to be paid. Perhaps we should elect single heads of households with small incomes—people who know how to pinch pennies until the best value is obtained for the least cost. One eats bread when one can't afford cake.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

Blame the landlords

Regarding "A CUP of prejudice around UST campus" (*MyVillager* Inbox, January 11):

I am a graduate of the University of Saint Thomas and was a student renting in the neighborhood. I never felt discriminated against. I now live between two properties that are rented to Saint Thomas students. There have been some problems, but they are mostly good kids who are just passing through the neighborhood for a couple of years. It helps that I have the landlord's phone number, and he responds well.

Despite the rules against creating more student rental properties, the student rentals on my block have risen from two to five since 2008 when I bought this house. I love this neighborhood, but the student rental houses can be a blight. There are some ghastly new rentals on the 2000 block of Selby Avenue that don't fit in the neighborhood because of the cheap construction to cram more renters in.

This winter was the worst. With the rise in rental properties comes the absence of pride in homeownership.

Though I had a broken rib, I was forced to walk my dogs through the mess of unshoveled rental sidewalks in the neighborhood. For months, the rental properties did not clear their snow properly. I blame the owners, not the student renters.

*Jenny O'Donnell
Merriam Park*

Boycott your property tax bill

A Saint Paul Tea Party. No, not Lipton or Boston, but because of the 15 percent increase in the tax levy citywide. Boycott your property tax bill in 2023. Don't pay it. Bring the mayor and City Council back to the table. Like Joe Soucheray said, how many of us got a 15 percent raise? I didn't.

*Steve Horak
West End*

Concern for the grotto at UST

The diagram of the University of Saint Thomas' proposed arena published in the February 22 *MyVillager* raises a concern for me as a UST neighbor who frequently walks the beautiful campus. How close does the arena come to the grotto, and how much does it overshadow the grotto and the tree whose roots anchor the grotto's sculpture niche? Changing the amount of sunlight that plants receive can be as damaging as disturbing their roots. What impact might the arena have on this natural sanctuary?

*Wendy Eidukas
Macalester-Groveland*

Ward 3 candidate impresses

I recently had the opportunity to have coffee with Isaac Russell, who is running for the Saint Paul City Council to succeed retiring Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert. To say that I was impressed is an understatement. Isaac is smart, experienced and level-headed, and he is deeply versed on all of the key issues affecting Highland and

Highland's old Station 19 makes historic register

By Jane McClure

The original Saint Paul Fire Station 19 in Highland Park is one of the city's latest additions to the National Register of Historic Places. The announcement was made this spring by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The single-bay, two-story brick structure at the southeast corner of Snelling Avenue and Highland Parkway has a distinctive fire hose tower and red tile roof. It was built in 1930 and was originally leased from the city's water department for \$1 a year. It was used by Station 19 until a new firehouse was built in 1958 at 2530 Edgumbe Road.

A ladder truck from another station was assigned to the old building until it was put out of service in 1959. The building was briefly used for youth activities by neighboring Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. For many years it has been used by Saint Paul Regional Water Services.

The property's nomination for the National Register is unusual in that it did not go through the city's Heritage Preservation Commission for vetting. It was reviewed by SHPO and a state board before being sent to the National Park Service, which oversees the National Register.

Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert, who sits on the city's Board of Water Commissioners, said he was pleased to see the structure get recognized for its ties to Highland Park and city history. "It's a great building," he said. "It's an iconic part of the neighborhood."

The National Register nomination was prepared by the 106 Group. Lindsey Wallace, senior architectural historian and planner for the group, said work on the nomination started last year.

"This project was really interesting to me because of the fire station's significance in the development of the Highland Park neighborhood, and in the growth of supporting city services in Saint Paul," she said.



The original brick Fire Station 19 on Snelling Avenue and Highland Parkway has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

"This project was really interesting to me because of the fire station's significance in the development of the Highland Park neighborhood, and in the growth of supporting city services in Saint Paul," said Lindsey Wallace of the 106 Group.

The nomination notes how Highland Park grew in the years leading up to the fire station's opening. The neighborhood's namesake park was acquired by the city in 1925. Ford Motor Company opened its Twin Cities Assembly Plant in Highland that same year.

Architecturally, the old fire station is classified as late 19th and early 20th century Mediterranean Revival. Its lower level was used for fire apparatus and its upper level for firemen's living quarters. There once was a fire pole, but it was removed.

The building was designed by

the city's architect office, headed by Charles A. Bassford. Clarence "Cap" Wigington was employed by the office and has been recognized as the nation's first Black city architect.

The nomination provides details about the history of fire station architecture in Saint Paul and how it changed over the years. Fire Station 19 was one of four Saint Paul fire stations that opened in 1930. The others were Station 5 at Ashland Avenue and Victoria Street, Station 7 at Ross and Earl streets, and Station 17 at Payne and Hawthorne avenues. Those other three stations are still active.

One obstacle in the research was that no blueprints, plans or drawings of Fire Station 19 have been located. Wallace instead used stylistic similarities, contextual clues and other historic evidence to associate the station's design with Bassford and Wigington.

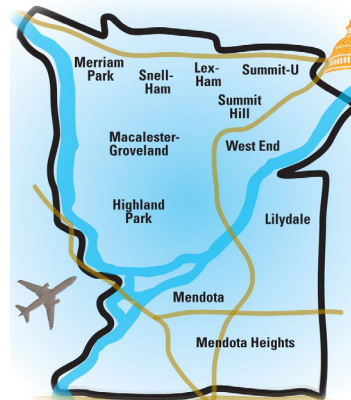
Fire Station 5, which has been proven to be Wigington's work, has many design details similar to those of the Highland station. Wallace pointed out that the design is also similar to that of the nearby historic Highland Water Tower, which was also designed by Wigington.

My Villager KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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84 INBOX

Macalester-Groveland. Most impressive of all is his enthusiasm, which is contagious. I walked away from the meeting believing that Isaac Russell is the best candidate to fill the shoes of Chris Tolbert. If elected, he'll work hard to make our neighborhoods and Saint Paul the very best they can be.

Steve Kinsella
Highland Park

For a meaningful family leave

In Minnesota, only about 13 percent of workers have access to paid family and medical leave through their employers. More than 530,000 unpaid family caregivers in Minnesota provide critical assistance to help their older parents, spouses or other loved ones live independently. Unpaid family caregivers contribute more than 500 million hours of unpaid care—valued at \$10 billion—each year. And many do so while juggling full- or part-time jobs. The work can be isolating and stressful, even without the fear of losing a paycheck or job.

This year, paid family and medical leave legislation faces many obstacles. One obstacle is limiting the number of family caretakers eligible for paid leave to only one per incapacitated person. Under this provision, an elderly parent in hospice could only choose one of her children to be with her and qualify for paid leave. Even if employed and paying into the fund, the other children wouldn't be allowed to claim a benefit.

Today's caregivers greatly benefit Minnesota taxpayers by keeping their loved ones out of taxpayer-funded nursing homes. They shouldn't have to risk losing

their own economic security. Lawmakers must pass a meaningful paid family and medical leave bill this year,

Mark Giorgini
Mendota Heights

The electoral issue of our day

It has been reported, correctly, that abortion dictated the blowout in the recent Wisconsin Supreme Court election. If conservatives have any vision of election success, they better recognize the absolute immutable fact that abortion is wonderful and the critical overriding political issue today. Nothing else matters.

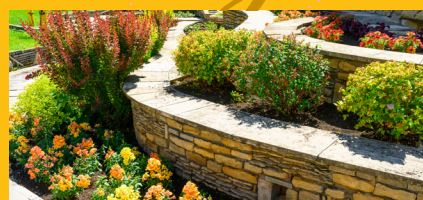
If the left can tag an opponent as even only unenthusiastic about abortion, the election result is a given. Witness the last Minnesota election. Governor Walz and all the DFL candidates beat the abortion drum incessantly. The next time around they will do the same and win handily. For an overwhelming majority of voters, abortion is not just an issue, it is THE issue.

T.J. Sexton
Highland Park

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.

UPCOMING ISSUES

MOTHER'S DAY/GARDENING/
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HOME IMPROVEMENT



Barn doors with leaded glass close off the entryway to the kitchen.



David Tousley and Margaret Brandes will show off the remodeled kitchen and addition to their Watson Avenue residence during the MSP Home Tour on April 29-30. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MSP HOME TOUR

Best of city living

Unique West End remodel joins 34th MSP Home Tour

By Janet Lunder Hanafin

David Tousley said he took the approach in remodeling his West End home that “if I’m going to do this, I’m going to make it unique.”

He and his wife, Margaret Brandes, will show off the distinctive addition and kitchen remodel of their mid-century residence at 922 Watson Ave. during the 2023 MSP Home Tour on April 29-30.

When the couple decided to downsize from their Northeast Minneapolis home five years ago, they found just what they were looking for in a 1952 single-story, two-bedroom home with detached garage.

“From the foundation up, this is a solidly constructed house,” Tousley said. “It had an open, unfinished basement, hardwood oak floors, updated bathroom, a kitchen suitable for the remodeling I envisioned, and a beautifully kept yard and garden.”

He described the update to the home as “50 or 60 micro-projects” that he worked on himself. They moved in September 2017 and that fall he built a new double garage that houses his workshop. The house update began in early 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Being in isolation enabled me to dig into the design elements of the project without distraction,” Tousley said.

The result is a redesigned kitchen and a new 10-by-13-foot addition for a back door entry with access to both the main level and basement.



Floating staircases provide access to the home’s main level and basement.

Though he did most of the work, Tousley hired out the framing and foundation construction, exterior stucco and interior plaster repair, as well as the installation of the granite countertops in the kitchen.

The kitchen has been enlarged and the lighting updated. It features an island cooktop and seating for six. Tousley installed an exhaust fan over the island and built 10 rollout drawers. He also removed walls, added a five foot elliptical arch between the kitchen and living room, and crafted barn doors to close off the basement and entryway to the kitchen.

“My wife and I like a lot of natural wood,” Tousley said. His parents live on property where beavers cut down oak, pine and birch trees, and he has friends who have a sawmill, so he brings the cut trees to them in exchange for aged boards.

Much of the wood in his project has been harvested, though he has also made some trips to Menards, he said. He removed some of the home’s original cabinets and made new glass-paneled doors using harvested birch.

One wall that was torn out was held up by Douglas fir. Contractors find that fir difficult to work with because it is so dense, Tousley said. However, realizing it was fine wood, he planed the boards and made three new doors for the kitchen out of them.

“They have an aged look,” he said. “A lot of the things I put in I deliberately made to look distressed. It’s kind of a cabin feeling.”

The cooktop counter is made of red cedar with a live edge. “You remove the bark, but leave the unevenness of the edge,” Tousley explained. He used around 60 feet of live-edge boards to accent different features in the kitchen.

Tousley said he learned plenty of new skills during the last couple of years. He had never done welding or worked with leaded glass, but he tackled both. Nor had he built a cabinet, cut a dovetail joint or cut a hole in his roof to install an exhaust hood. Now he can chalk up several glass panels,

nine cabinets, 21 drawers with 84 dovetail joints, and a working fan with no roof leaks.

The couple stayed in the home during construction. “The week we removed the wall was a bit hellish as you might imagine,” Tousley said.

As the kitchen project nears completion, he is looking ahead to creating a full basement family room and adding a bathroom.

Tousley and Brandes had enjoyed touring remodeled homes before they decided to do their own. They were particularly inspired by homeowners who added unique features, making a special effort to personalize their environment.

Over the years, Tousley said he learned from his father, who was a craftsman of sorts, as well as friends. He plans to be on hand during the upcoming MSP Home Tour to explain his work.

“I intend to talk my brains out those two days,” he said. “I’d like to encourage people that they can do this type of work on their own. Anybody is capable if they have enough time.”

The 34th MSP Home Tour will take place from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, April 29-30. The free, self-guided tour started as a program of Minneapolis and Saint Paul to showcase city living. It has been led by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry of Minnesota since 2021. For more information, visit msphometour.com.

Other homes on this year’s tour

• 1760 Yorkshire Ave.—The 1950 rambler features a bathroom and kitchen remodel by New Spaces Design-Build-Remodeling. Norse influences are evident throughout the remodeled kitchen, including Tigereye Walnut cabinets and simplistic finishing touches. Modern light fixtures and fresh cabinets in the bathroom were designed in coordination with the kitchen to create consistent flow through the main level.

• 2105 Princeton Ave.—An accessory dwelling unit was created above a garage by Refined Homes to serve as a home of-



1760 Yorkshire Ave.

office. A three-stall garage occupies the lower level. The owners like to say “it’s an office by day and a place for the family to watch movies in the evenings.”

• 1841 Selby Ave.—The 1907 single-



2105 Princeton Ave.

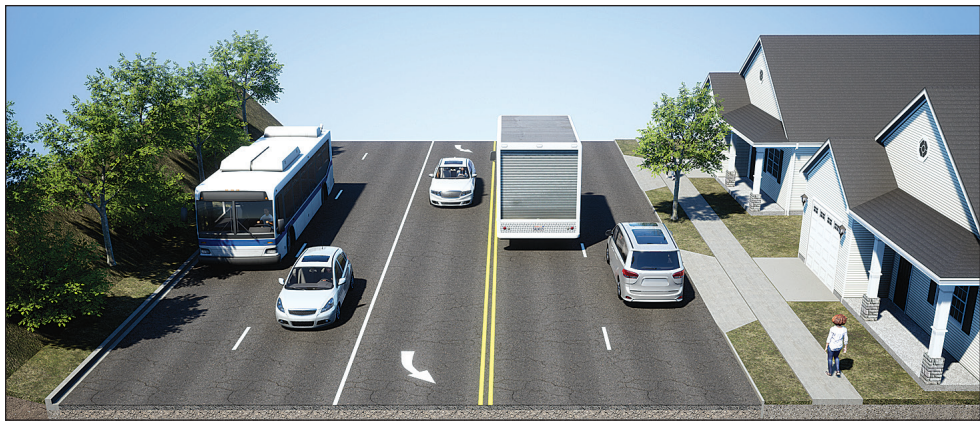
family home underwent a bathroom and kitchen remodel by OA Design + Build + Architecture. The flow from the kitchen to the dining room and family room was opened up using an arched design. An ad-



1841 Selby Ave.

dition was constructed on the back of the kitchen to allow for a powder room, mudroom and additional storage.

For more information on the MSP Home Tour, visit msphometour.com.



An example of the five-lane segment of West Seventh Street from Munster to I-35E.

Long-awaited plan to resurface West Seventh St. gains traction

By Jane McClure

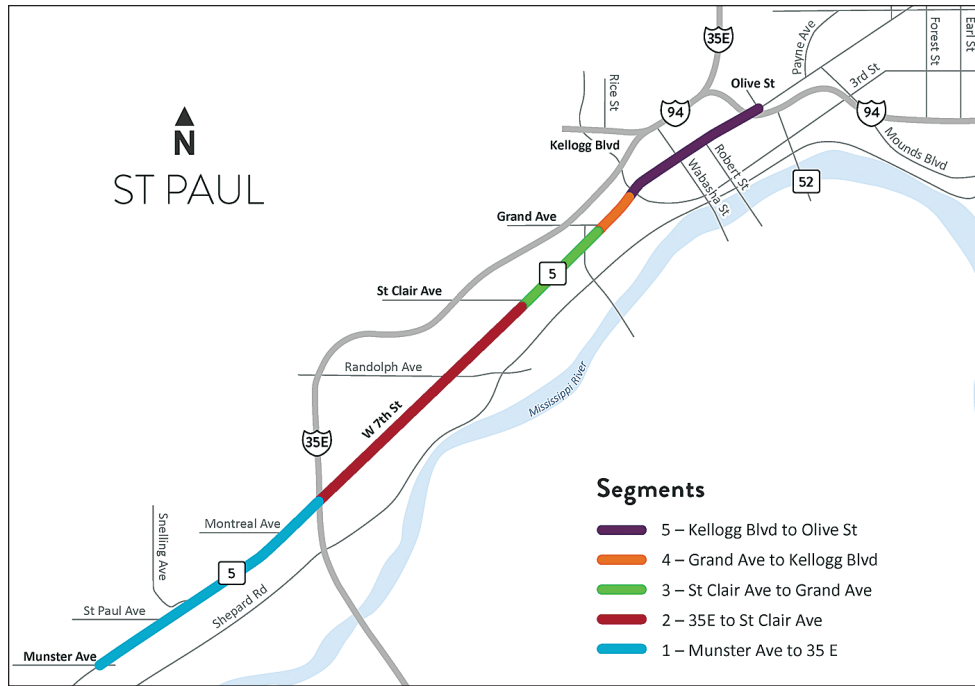
Dozens of West End residents turned out on March 30 to review options with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) representatives for a long-debated plan to resurface and make accessibility and safety improvements to West Seventh Street between Munster Avenue and Olive Street.

The 6.5-mile project, which is scheduled for 2027-2028, calls for resurfacing the street and repairing sidewalks and curbs. Sidewalks at intersections will be made accessible under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. Traffic signals will be replaced and lighting will be improved. Nu-

merous intersections are also being eyed for pedestrian islands, medians and even street closures.

MnDOT has met with neighborhood groups along the street. One of the most frequently asked questions from residents and business owners has been the timing of West Seventh's resurfacing, considering Ramsey County's proposed Riverview Corridor streetcar project in the offing. Riverview would extend along much of West Seventh from downtown's Union Depot to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and Mall of America. The project is currently undergoing reviews.

Riverview's construction is not anticipated until 2028, with service to start in



The proposed West Seventh resurfacing project has been broken into five segments. The first phase would take place between Munster and Saint Clair in 2027, followed by Saint Clair to Olive in 2028.

2032 at the earliest. Its construction still depends on several unresolved issues, including federal funding.

Jesse Thornsen of MnDOT said work on West Seventh (state Highway 5) should proceed regardless of what happens with Riverview.

Many questions on March 30 centered on slowing vehicular traffic and creating safer pedestrian crossings on West Seventh. Side streets cross the road at angles in many places, creating hazards for motorists and pedestrians alike.

The first phase of the proposed West Seventh resurfacing would take place between Munster and Saint Clair avenues in 2027, followed by the second phase between Saint Clair and Olive in 2028. The project has been broken into five segments:

1. Munster to I-35E. Options for that five-lane segment include design changes for Saint Paul Avenue and the southbound ramp to I-35E. The public is being asked whether there should be a sidewalk or shared-use path between Saint Paul and Montreal avenues, and if raised medians should be added there and between Homer Street and Deaton Avenue.

A pedestrian island is proposed on the west end of Montreal. Other suggestions would relocate the westbound bus stop and pedestrian crossing at Rankin Street and add a similar island there.

2. I-35E to Saint Clair. Ideas for that three-lane section include making changes to the right-turn lanes at the northbound I-35E exit and entrance, realigning Chatsworth and Rogers streets to intersect north of West Seventh, and looking at traffic control measures at Victoria Street.

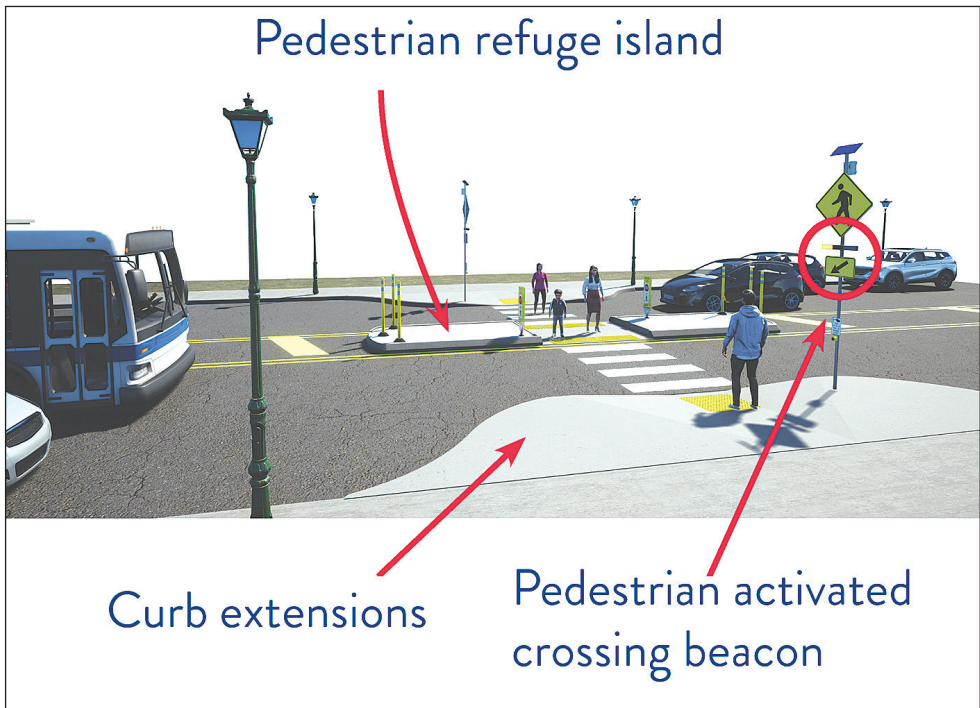
Pedestrian islands are being considered at Montreal Way, Eleanor, Watson and Armstrong avenues, and Thurston, Perlman, Canton, View and Erie streets. Restricted street access changes are possible at Milton and Daly, and at Tuscarora and View streets, Armstrong and Bay Street, and Toronto Street. Access closures are being eyed at Palace Avenue and Oneida Street.

3. Saint Clair to Grand. That segment is being considered for conversion from four lanes to three. Pedestrian islands are proposed at Goodhue and Ann streets, and at McBoal Street. Removing the traffic signal and making changes at the Ann-Goodhue intersection also are being suggested. Access restrictions with medians would be located at Michigan Street and Western Avenue, and Ann and Goodhue. Access closure or modifications are being suggested at Dousman, Goodrich and Leech streets.

4. Grand to Kellogg Boulevard. Converting the street from four lanes to three is being proposed. That is an area where bicycle lanes could also be added, either on both sides of the street or two-way lanes on one side. In either case there would be a potential loss of on-street parking.

5. Kellogg to Olive. That segment is also being eyed for conversion from four lanes to three. Suggestions include adding bicycle lanes, realigning the curb between Wall and Broadway streets, creating a sidewalk connection on the I-94 bridge, and eliminating right-turn lanes at Kellogg and Sixth Street.

For more information and to comment on the design options by the April 20 deadline, visit tinyurl.com/4j6xjwn3.



Proposed improvements on West Seventh Street could include curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands and pedestrian-activated crossing signals.

Prepare ye the way: Road construction season begins in earnest

By Jane McClure

Winter has given way to spring and with it road construction. Several city, county and state projects are in the works for streets in the area served by MyVillager.

The Saint Paul City Council recently approved two street construction projects for this year—Minnesota Street between Kellogg Boulevard and Sixth Street, and Annapolis Street between Smith Avenue and Robert Street. Minnesota Street has an estimated cost of \$8.2 million paid with the help of close to \$1.19 million in assessments on 11 abutting property owners.

Other city street projects planned for this year include mill and overlay work on Summit Avenue between Victoria Street and Lexington Parkway, Victoria Street between Summit and Concordia Avenue, Fairview Avenue between Randolph Av-

enue and Edgcombe Road, and the Cretin-Bayard area where streets were reconstructed several years ago.

Marshall and Selby avenues will receive improvements in preparation for the future bus rapid transit B Line. Work is also planned for Edgcombe Road between Saint Paul and Fairview avenues and in the Griggs-Scheffer street reconstruction area.

One big project downtown is work on the Kellogg Boulevard bridge by RiverCentre. The Shepard Road bridge near Otto Avenue will also receive improvements.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will continue its reconstruction of the Mendota Bridge, which started in 2022 and will finish in the fall of 2024. The surface of the bridge is being replaced and the lighting and bridge railings updated.

Ramsey County recently released its Transportation Improvement Program for

2023-27. It includes road reconstruction, pavement preservation, bridge maintenance, traffic signal, stormwater management and pedestrian-bicycle improvements.

Among the county's 16 road reconstruction projects for 2023 is completion of the Lexington Parkway reroute in Highland Park. The project includes the elimination of the dangerous intersection of Lexington-Montreal Avenue and West Seventh Street. Lexington has been given its own signaled intersection with West Seventh. It is also being connected directly to Elway Street and Shepard Road.

Planning, design and right-of-way work is scheduled this year on Dale Street between Grand and Iglehart avenues. The project will continue through 2025 when road construction is planned. Dale Street will also receive \$650,000 in traffic signal improvements in 2025 between Grand and

Front avenues.

Ramsey County's five 2023 pavement preservation projects include Cleveland Avenue between Ford Parkway and Randolph Avenue, and Randolph Avenue between Cleveland and Brimhall Street.

For 2024, the county is planning bike-pedestrian improvements on Cleveland Avenue between Summit and Marshall avenues and along Marshall Avenue between Snelling Avenue and Albert Street.

The county's largest area project is the new Riverview Corridor modern streetcar line between downtown Saint Paul's Union Depot, Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. The project is slated for \$6.78 million in 2023, \$29.78 million in both 2024 and 2025, and \$96 million in both 2026 and 2027. Most of that money is from Ramsey County, although Hennepin County will share in some of the costs.

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Citywide spring cleanup—The 37th annual citywide spring cleanup will be held from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 22. Locally, volunteers should meet at the Highland Park Pavilion, 1200 Montreal Ave., from where they will disperse throughout the Highland Park neighborhood to pick up trash. Gloves, bags, treats and coffee will be provided. The cleanup is being hosted by the Highland District Council and Jovie (formerly College Nannies and Sitters). Visit stpaul.gov/news/spring-celebrations-events.

New board members—The HDC would like to thank everyone who voted in this year’s board election. The following were elected to join the volunteer board: at-large directors Lindsay Shimizu and Bob Whitehead, at-large alternates Elizabeth Brenes and Frank Jossi, Grid 1 Julie Griep, Grid 5 Tom Griep, Grid 7 Matt Clark, Grid 9 Kevin Vargas and Grid 11 Oscar Corral.

Seeking Grid 3 candidates—The HDC is seeking candidates 18 and older who live in or represent a business in Grid 3 to run for a two-year term on its board of directors. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, April 27. Learn more by visiting the website, calling the office or emailing info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org. The Grid 3 election will be held from May 4-9. Grid 3 residents and business representatives can vote at surveyMonkey.com/r/2023grid3.

Upcoming meetings—No meetings will be held in April. The next board meeting is at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 4, at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., with an option to join online. Get the Zoom link and meeting agenda at highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Spring cleanup—The 2023 Citywide Spring Cleanup will be held in Saint Paul from 9-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 22. The Macalester-Groveland Community Council will be cleaning up along Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard. Volunteers are invited to meet outside Dunn

Brothers on Grand for the former project and at the monument on the west end of Summit for the latter. Cleanup supplies and removal of trash and recycling will be provided by the city. There will be free coffee and a chance to win a Macalester-Groveland T-shirt. Register at bit.ly/MGCitywideCleanup.

Annual meeting—The community council will host a virtual annual meeting from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, April 20. All those who live, work, learn or play in Macalester-Groveland are invited to participate. Tune in to learn more about the neighborhood, meet board candidates, and connect with current grid representatives. Register for the meeting by visiting the website.

Board elections—The Macalester-Groveland board elections will take place from April 20-27. Cast your vote to elect two representatives each from Grids 2, 4 and at-large. Find out more about the candidates and vote electronically at macgrove.org/boardelections or request a paper ballot by emailing mgcc@macgrove.org.

Upcoming meetings—annual meeting on Thursday, April 20; Transportation Committee on Monday, April 24; Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, April 26; Community Building Team on Monday, May 8; and Inclusivity Task Force on Wednesday, May 17. All of the meetings will be held via Zoom beginning at 6:30 p.m. To receive monthly meeting notices and log-in details, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Reimagine Linwood Park—The SHA is working on a plan to refresh Linwood Park and its playground. Take a moment to fill out a survey on the SHA website. Those interested in being on the steering committee may send their contact information to info@summithillassociation.org.

Earth Day cleanup—Join the SHA for an Earth Day cleanup at Linwood Park from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 22. Volunteers should meet at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave., to pick up supplies.

Summer garage sale—The SHA is teaming up with the Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park district coun-

cils to put on a garage sale extravaganza on June 2-3. Bargain hunters can visit sales in all three neighborhoods on the same weekend. Watch the SHA’s Facebook page and website for more details.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 3; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 8; Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 15; and Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 16. All of the meetings will be held via Zoom. For access information, email info@unionparkdc.org or see 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 info@unionparkdc.org.

Office hour appointments—Union Park District Council office hours are currently by appointment only. Contact executive director Leah Timberlake Sullivan at leah@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Looking Back, Moving Forward—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation will celebrate its 50th year when it holds its annual meeting and board elections from 6-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 25, at Summit Brewing Company, 910 Montreal Circle. The evening will include a celebration and conversation. Snacks will be provided and beer will be available for purchase. Participants will be able to vote for the neighborhood T-shirt design and in the annual election. For more information, visit the website or email fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org.

Upcoming meetings—Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 20; and Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 3. Visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.



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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from three vehicles at Crosby Farm Park between 6:20-10 p.m. on March 29.

—Items worth more than \$1,000 were reported stolen at a commercial building at 625 S. Snelling Ave. on March 31.

—Items worth more than \$500 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1500 block of Ford Parkway at 5:25 p.m. on April 4.

—Four female suspects reportedly walked out with stolen items at Walgreens, 2099 Ford Pkwy., around 8:47 a.m. on April 12. One of the suspects also pushed a store shelf to the floor on the way out.

Assault—Police were dispatched to the Highland Shopping Center for a car theft in which the suspects tried to run over a bystander at 6:16 p.m. on April 6. The suspects fled in a tan Audi SUV toward Minneapolis.

—Two girls entered Highland Middle School and struck another girl numerous times at 1:43 p.m. on April 10.

Miscellaneous—A pedestrian was hit by a vehicle on Cleveland and Saint Paul avenues at 9:40 p.m. on March 31. Both parties declined medics and claimed the other was at fault.

—A driver was cited for failing to obey a traffic signal and driving without a license following a crash that sent a male to the hospital at 6 p.m. on April 3 on I-35E and Shepard Road.

—A 46-year-old man was arrested for trespassing at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy., at 1:24 p.m. on April 5. He had multiple warrants, including one for felony criminal damage to property.

Lexington-Hamline

Robbery—A juvenile was arrested for robbery at the High School for Recording Arts, 1166 University Ave., at 2:23 p.m. on March 30.

Theft—A 28-year-old woman was arrested for felony theft, fleeing police, criminal damage to property and leaving the scene of an accident after getting caught shoplifting at 2:24 p.m. on March 31 at the Midway Target. When police tried to stop the suspect, she ran to a vehicle and struck a parked car while driving away. She was arrested on Ford Parkway and Kenneth Street.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle at the Midway Target on the evening of March 30-April 1. Other incidents at the store included a 29-year-old woman arrested for felony theft at 3:21 p.m. on April 1, a pick-pocketing at 12:35 p.m. on April 2, and a purse-snatching at 3:30 p.m. on April 3.

—A boy was arrested for trying to steal a cartful of groceries and fleeing police at the Midway Target at 8:32 p.m. on April 11. He tried running away before falling in the parking lot and hitting his head on the cement. He reportedly had a seizure and was taken to the hospital.

—A 17-year-old boy was arrested for theft, providing false information and fleeing police after stealing liquor from the Midway Target at 7:31 p.m. on April 11.

—A 37-year-old man was arrested for tampering with a vehicle and a felony warrant after officers responded to a report of a stranger sleeping in someone's car on the 1100 block of Marshall Avenue at 7:37 a.m. on April 12.

Assault—A patient committed an as-

sault at a counseling center at 1246 University Ave. at 9 a.m. on March 30.

—Gunfire was reported by multiple callers and spent shells were recovered near Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 4:31 a.m. on April 8. Police said two males also shot at a witness while attempting to steal a vehicle a block to the north.

Miscellaneous—A man smashed the windshield of a car with a hammer on University Avenue and Syndicate Street at 3:45 p.m. on March 29.

—A bicyclist was taken to the hospital after being struck by a vehicle on Lexington Parkway and Portland Avenue at 5:58 a.m. on April 7.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1800 block of Jefferson Avenue at 7:20 a.m. on April 7, and on the 1300 block of Fairmount Avenue at 9:20 p.m. on April 7.

Assault—A 25-year-old man was arrested for assault after reportedly biting a male victim multiple times on the 1800 block of Princeton Avenue at 12:11 a.m. on March 31.

Miscellaneous—A pedestrian was struck by a vehicle on Snelling and Randolph avenues at 8:12 p.m. on April 2.

—Someone reportedly was impersonating a police officer on the 1800 block of Stanford Avenue at 10 p.m. on April 5.

Mendota Heights

Theft—A suspect was seen removing mail from mailboxes on the 1100 block of Ivy Hills Drive at 11:52 a.m. on April 4.

—A bronze vase was reported stolen from a grave at Resurrection Cemetery at 10:15 a.m. on April 5.

—Someone reportedly drilled holes in two work vehicles to siphon out gas on the 1300 block of Mendota Heights Road, it was reported at 9:39 a.m. on April 6.

Weapons—A male driver was arrested for possession of a stolen gun and outstanding warrants following a traffic stop on I-35E and Highway 62 at 3:21 a.m. on March 28.

Miscellaneous—A man was arrested for DWI after being pulled over for speeding on I-35E at Wagon Wheel Trail at 2 a.m. on March 30. The suspect blew a breath test that measured three times over the legal limit. He also was found to have multiple open bottles of liquor in his vehicle.

—A driver was arrested for DWI and possessing a firearm while intoxicated after police found him asleep in a vehicle at 1:28 a.m. on April 7 on the 1000 block of Highway 62.

—A male was arrested for domestic assault at a hotel on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 2:15 a.m. on April 7. Police responded to a 911 hangup call and were advised that building staff heard yelling and saw someone covered in blood. Officers spoke with both parties and released them, but later learned about an order of protection that was in place and arrested the male after he fled toward 494.

—A hit-and-run accident was reported on the 700 block of Main Street at 12:40 a.m. on April 13. A driver reportedly struck the back of the building, causing damage to the brick wall and sliding glass door.

Merriam Park

Robbery—A 29-year-old man was arrested for robbery with a sharp weapon at the Day's Inn, 1964 University Ave., at 7:56 p.m. on April 7. He also was arrested for drug possession and had several warrants.

Burglary—An apartment burglary was reported on the 200 block of Exeter Place between March 26-28.

—An apartment break-in was reported

on the 1500 block of Saint Anthony Avenue between 1:45-4:15 p.m. on March 31.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1600 block of Selby Avenue between 1:20 a.m.-2:20 p.m. on March 30, at Dunkin' Donuts at 143 N. Snelling Ave. at 9:16 a.m. on April 5, and on the 400 block of West Lynnhurst Avenue between 2:22-5:52 p.m. on April 7.

Assault—An assault with a gun was reported on Summit and Fairview avenues at 12:53 p.m. on April 5.

Weapons—A male suspect yelled at another man and fired gunshots into the air before driving away on the 1900 block of Saint Anthony Ave. at 1:48 a.m. on April 2.

Arson—A vehicle fire was reported on Pierce Street and Shields Avenue at 10:58 p.m. on April 4.

—A dumpster fire was reported near Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles, 520 N. Prior Ave., at 7:22 p.m. on April 11.

Miscellaneous—A 33-year-old man was arrested for DWI, drug possession, driving after revocation of his license and driving without insurance after he was stopped for not wearing a seatbelt on Snelling and Marshall avenues around 4:09 p.m. on April 12.

—Police responded to the University of Saint Thomas at 1:25 p.m. on April 14 to assist medics with 19-year-old man who reportedly has been assaulted at a bar. He was taken to the hospital.

Snelling-Hamline

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen at the Midway Cub Foods at 1 p.m. on April 4.

Assault—An assault was reported on the 100 block of North Snelling Avenue at 11:28 p.m. on April 13.

Miscellaneous—A 32-year-old man was arrested on an outstanding felony vehicle theft warrant after he was found living in a vehicle in a parking lot at 1450 University Ave. at 7:19 p.m. on April 5.

Summit Hill

Theft—Two men, ages 33 and 35, were arrested for tampering with autos and felony possession of burglary tools after they were seen checking door handles and looking into vehicles with flashlights on Summit Avenue and Saint Albans Street at 12:04 a.m. on April 4.

Assault—An assault and felony damage to a vehicle were reported on Grand Avenue and Grotto Street at 3:24 p.m. on April 11.

Weapons—The window of a residence was struck by a bullet and 25 spent shell casings were recovered following a burst of gunfire on Summit Avenue and Avon Street at 11:25 p.m. on April 7.

Miscellaneous—An attempted theft and criminal damage to property was reported at Coulee Bank, 733 Grand Ave., at 11:23 p.m. on April 12.

Summit-University

Robbery—Two men, ages 27-28, were arrested for armed robbery on the 900 block of Saint Anthony Avenue at 1:20 p.m. on March 30.

Burglary—A television was stolen from the community room of the Selby Milton Victoria Apartments, 852 Selby Ave., between 4-5:48 p.m. on April 1.

Theft—A trailer was reported stolen at the Dale Street Place Apartments, 313 N. Dale St., between March 22-30.

Assault—A felony assault was reported on the 1000 block of Hague Avenue at 3:53 p.m. on April 1.

Sex crime—A case of indecent exposure was reported on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue at 7:40 p.m. on April 12. Officers

were unable to locate the suspect.

Weapons—Four people, ages 21-26, were arrested for possession of a gun without a permit and drug possession following a traffic stop on Mackubin Street and University Avenue at 4 a.m. on March 30.

—An assault with a gun was reported on Concordia and Western avenues at 1:58 a.m. on April 8. The complainant said he was sitting in his vehicle when a male pulled a gun on him.

Miscellaneous—A 47-year-old man was arrested for DWI and drug possession after running a red light on Carroll Avenue and Dale Street at 12:21 a.m. on April 9.

West End

Burglary—A burglary was reported at Wild Bill's Sports Saloon, 175 W. Seventh St., at 3:34 p.m. on March 31.

—A 49-year-old woman was arrested for felony burglary after police found two homeless individuals on the main floor of a residence at the Oxbo Apartments, 202 W. Seventh St., at 2:49 a.m. on April 7.

—A 49-year-old woman was arrested for felony burglary after she was found inside an occupied residence on the 200 block of South Exchange Street at 2:02 a.m. on April 12.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from the Irvine Exchange building, 200 S. Exchange St., at 2:25 p.m. on March 29; from vehicles on the 300 block of Toronto Street at 3:26 a.m. on April 5 and the 100 block of North Western Avenue at 9:45 p.m. on April 10; and from the Riverview at Upper Landing Apartments, 400 Spring St., at 11:03 a.m. on April 12.

—A woman said she allowed someone to use her phone and had more than \$1,000 stolen from her bank account at noon on April 5 near the Grand Stop station, 236 Grand Ave.

—A motorized scooter was reported stolen on the 300 block of Michigan Street between 12:15 a.m.-1 p.m. on April 7.

—A gun was reported stolen from a vehicle at the Holiday Inn garage, 234 Kellogg Blvd., during the evening of April 8-9.

Assault—An assault by a student was reported at Journeys Secondary School, 90 S. Western Ave., at 2:30 p.m. on April 11.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 300 blocks of Arbor Street and South Osceola Avenue at 12:52 a.m. on April 3.

Miscellaneous—Two front windows were broken at Jumbo Wash, 606 W. Seventh St., at 8:40 a.m. on April 1.

—Officers responded to a report of a 52-year-old woman stealing items from customers at 10:16 p.m. on April 4 at Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub, 258 W. Seventh St. The items were returned and the woman was arrested for DWI.

—Felony damage to property was reported on Grand and Smith avenues on April 2-3.

—A 42-year-old man was arrested for felony DWI after he was found slumped over in a vehicle at McDonald's, 551 Jefferson Ave., at 1:19 a.m. on April 6.

—A 33-year-old man was arrested for drug possession after police responded to a disturbance involving a daughter and her boyfriend who refused to leave the vehicle they had been sleeping in at 12:43 p.m. on April 7 on the 400 block of Erie Street.

—A 45-year-old man was arrested on an outstanding warrant for felony burglary after he was pulled over for not wearing his seatbelt around 7:50 p.m. on April 12, on Osceola Avenue and West Seventh Street.

—A 41-year-old man was arrested for felony domestic assault by strangulation of a woman on Grand Avenue and West Seventh Street at 9:50 p.m. on April 13.

ON THE TOWN

Band of neighbors

Thirty years on, Lex-Ham ensemble is making beautiful music together

By Anne Murphy

Music has a way of bringing people together, and playing music together in a band can take that relationship to a higher level. Those were Urban Landreman's thoughts when he suggested that his neighbors in Saint Paul's Lexington-Hamline neighborhood form a band a little over 30 years ago.

"It started with a chitchat with Richard Norris, who was the band director at Concordia College (now University) at the time," Landreman said. "I played the clarinet, and I was just looking for a group to play with. I said, 'Hey, would you be interested in directing a community band?' And he said, 'Sure.'"

The Lexington-Hamline Community Band "started real small, maybe five or six people," Landreman said. "We started rehearsing and then we started giving concerts. We played at the Lex-Ham Ice Cream Social, the Highland Art Fair and Grand Old Day. We started to have concerts at senior homes."

Landreman has played clarinet in the band all along and now serves as its administrator. In January, longtime band member Bill Teeple was chosen as the band's seventh music director. He picked up the baton from Austin Virasy-Ertelt, who left after eight years at the podium.

Teeple will lead the now 25-piece ensemble in performance at its annual BandWidth Music Festival from noon-5 p.m. Sunday, April 23, at Landmark Center. Begun in 2011, the free and family-friendly festival will feature five bands, including Brio Brass, the Fridley City Band, the Roseville Community Band and the Saint Louis Park Community Band.

A Hamline-Midway resident, Teeple played in the Lex-Ham Band's trombone section for the past eight years. His wife Julie Schramke plays in the flute section. It was out of his experience with the band

and a lifelong love of music that Teeple applied for the director's position.

"I've always had an interest in conducting," said Teeple, who has a degree in vocal music but is now retired after a career in information technology. "Being in front of the band and getting to hear everything right in front of me, as opposed to sitting in the back and playing, is a really positive change."

"Bill has just flowed into the (director's) position," Landreman said. "He knows how the band works and what the band likes to play and plays well. It made the transition easier for him and for the people in the band, too."

Alto-saxophonist Helen Patrikus, a Lex-Ham resident who was among the first to join the band, agreed. "There's always a level of uncertainty with a new director," she said. "But Bill Teeple previously played with the band, so I have confidence that he understands the band. Now that we've had a number of rehearsals

and a concert, I'm very pleased with the results."

"There are a number of stalwart members who've been with the band for certainly longer than I have," Teeple said. "There's a pretty wide age range and a wide range of experience as well. It's great that our community band can show younger people that music is something you can do your whole life. Just because you aren't going to become a Grammy-winning performer doesn't mean you can't play and perform throughout your life. One of the things I love about the band is the big age spread."

The Lex-Ham Band's oldest member is in his 80s. "But it's great having younger people, too," Landreman said, "because sometimes people in my age group don't run into young people. And in the band, not only do you get to know the people you're playing next to, you develop a relationship with them."

"There are a number of stalwart members who've been with the band for certainly longer than I have," Teeple said. "It's great that we can show younger people that music is something you can do your whole life."



Bill Teeple (top) leads the Lex-Ham Community Band in its April 8 concert at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. Performing with the ensemble were John Rudberg (above left) and Jackie Pickar and Dan Carlson (right). PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

The Lex-Ham Band's focus from the very beginning was to play music they thought audiences would enjoy and might inspire other musicians to join the group. That is the hope that gave rise to BandWidth, according to Teeple and Landreman.

"In the beginning, we had the Lex-Ham Music Festival," Landreman said. "But then we thought our festival needed something jazzier, and so we came up with BandWidth, as in computer terminology. Think of electrons flowing back and forth. The event showcases the diversity of music that bands from the Twin Cities and across the state play."

Each year the Lex-Ham Band suggests that groups performing at BandWidth play music of a particular genre. "The idea has been to expose both the performers and the audience to the wide variety of music that's out there," Landreman said.

"I think it was Duke Ellington who said, 'There is not one good music; there are lots of good music,'" Teeple added.

This year, BandWidth participants have been asked to perform at least one

piece by a female composer. The Lex-Ham Band will perform "Chasing Sunlight" by Canadian composer Cait Nishimura.

For the future, Teeple is considering building concerts around a particular theme. At Como, for example, "I might want to do a water music suite," he said. "I think that would be a fun little juxtaposition. You have the lake and you're playing a concert in the pavilion, which is lovely. We've also had some interest lately in people playing solos. I think there are people in the band more than capable of that."

Following BandWidth, the Lex-Ham Band will be preparing for a May 20 concert under the Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road. "It's a wonderful performance space," Landreman said. "You wouldn't think so, but it really is because the bridge makes this acoustic shell and it's just perfect. So if families can't make it to BandWidth, they can hear us under the bridge at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 20, right next to a little park that's perfect for listening."

ON THE TOWN Briefly

Theater

Playwright Sam Shepard's *True West* will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays from April 21 through May 14 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Skirting the line between darkly funny and violently tragic, this classic drama tells of two brothers who clash over the production of a Hollywood movie. Tickets are \$25, or whatever you will pay for the additional show at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 1. Call 612-333-3010.

Returning to Haifa, about a Palestinian and an Israeli family who are forced into an intimacy they did not choose, will open on April 21 at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. Fourth St. in Minneapolis. The

play was adapted by Naomi Wallace and Ismail Khalidi from a novella by Ghassan Kanafani. Directed by Dipankar Mukherjee, it stars Ernest Briggs, Rasha Ahmad Sharif, Mohamed Haji, Sayli Khadilkar and Esther Ouray. Show times are 7:30 p.m. April 21, 22, May 3, 4 and 5, and 2:30 p.m. April 23 and May 6. Panel discussions will be held at 7:30 p.m. April 28 and 2 p.m. April 29. Tickets are \$22, \$18 in advance, \$15 for students and seniors. Visit pangeaworldtheater.org.

The classic American drama *Our Town* will be staged as playwright Thornton Wilder would have wanted it from April 28 through May 28 by Open Window Theatre, 5300 S. Robert Trail in Inver Grove Heights. Directed by Kari Steinbach, the story about the Webb and Gibbs families of Grover's Corners stars Pete

Colburn, Katherine Kupiecki, Craig Johnson and Katie Kaufmann. Show times are 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays and 2 p.m. Saturdays, May 13, 20 and 27. Tickets are \$18-\$28. Call 612-615-1515 or visit openwindowtheatre.org.

From the creators of *Glensheen* comes ***The Defeat of Jesse James***, a time-warping, nail-biting, side-splitting ride through Northfield on September 7, 1876, when the Minnesota town bravely put an end to the James Gang's crime spree. The drama by Jeffrey Hatcher and Chan Poling runs from April 29 through May 28 at the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Directed by Richard D. Thompson, it stars Sasha Andreev, Jen Burleigh-Bentz, Suzie Juul, Jordan Leggett, Adam Qualls, Jim Ramlet, Randy Schmeling, Dane Stauffer and Angela Timberman. Show times are 7:30

p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$15-\$70. Visit historytheatre.com or call 651-292-4323.

The Wanderers, a new play by Anna Ziegler about two couples from different worlds and their responses to the pleasures and challenges of commitment, will open on April 29 on Six Point Theater's stage at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Avi Aharoni, Lynda J. Dahl, Amanda Cate Fuller, Lea Kalisch and Tony Larkin star. Miriam Monasch directs. Show times are 8 p.m. Saturdays, 1 p.m. Sundays, and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays through May 14 with a final show at 7 p.m. May 14. Tickets are \$15-\$40. For reservations and COVID protocol, visit sixpointstheater.org or call 651-647-4315.

14 ON THE TOWN BRIEFLY

Music

The **Minnesota State Band** marks its 125th anniversary with a musical nod to Earth Day from 1-2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 22, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. The free program will feature storytelling, a tribute to band alumni and an announcement of the winner of the band's Brass Fanfare Composition Contest. A reception follows.

Gloria Dei music director Timothy Strand will perform at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 23, on the new 57-rank pipe organ at the Lutheran church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. The free recital will feature the music of Bach, Durufle and Vierne as well as two works commissioned for the occasion. A festive reception will follow. Call 651-699-1378.

Lyra Baroque Orchestra will celebrate "Il Violino Moderno" 3 p.m. Sunday, April 23, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Music by Muffat, Rosenmuller, Schmelzer, Biber and Froberger will be played. Tickets are \$5-\$35. Call 651-321-2214.

The **Jasper String Quartet** of Philadelphia will be joined by Venezuelan soprano Maria Brea in concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 23, at Saint Anthony Park United Church of Christ, 2129 Commonwealth Ave. Tickets are \$23 and \$33. Call 651-292-3268 or visit schubert.org.

Mother's Day blossoms early in Ramsey Hill when local pianist Steven C and his mother Mary Anderson celebrate the season with duets on his Bosendorfer grand piano from 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 27, at the Commodore Bar and Restaurant, 79 N. Western Ave. Violinist Nate Wilson and singers Gillian Gubash, Jack Cassidy and Aimee Lee will also perform. Tickets are \$20. For reservations, visit eventbrite.com.

Violinist Ariana Kim and pianist Ieva Jokubaviciute will present the Minnesota premiere of Maksimal by Daniel Tempkin in concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 7, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Violinist Young-Nam Kim, violist Sally Chisholm and cellist Jane Cords O'Hara will then join the duo in Schumann's E-flat Piano Quintet. Tickets are \$15-\$25. Call 651-560-0206 or visit chambermusicmn.org.



Live from the U.K. come the Kanneh-Masons, seven siblings who will perform the music of Brahms, Mendelssohn, Shostakovich, Vittorio Monti, Bob Marley, Florence Price and Jerry Bock at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 7, at the Ordway Music Theater. Tickets start at \$36. Visit schubert.org or call 651-292-3268. The concert will be streamed free of charge at 6 p.m. that evening on a 23-by-13-foot screen in Rice Park.

Books

Stephanie Hansen will demonstrate how to make strawberry shortcake drop biscuits, a recipe from her *True North Cabin Cookbook*, from 1-2 p.m. Saturday, April 22, in the Baking Lab at Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. Call 612-341-7555.

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host Claire Wahmanholm and her book *Meltwater*, about the possibility of doom and the temptation to numb oneself to it, and Emily Strasser and *Half Life of a Secret*, her book about the United States' covert nuclear weapons facility in Tennessee, at 6 p.m. Monday, April 24; World Fantasy Award finalist Kat Howard and her book, *A Sleight of Shadows*, 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 25; Indie Bookstore Day from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, April 29; and author Lynn Miller and her story collection, *The Lost Archives*, 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 3. Call 651-225-8989.

A sale of books from the library of the late Jeanette Gertrude Kamman, aka the Book Lady, will open from 3-8 p.m. Wednesday and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday, April 26-27, at 678 W. Seventh St. The sale will continue from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Fridays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sundays through May 21.

Author David Mura will discuss his book,

The Stories Whiteness Tells Itself: Racial Myths and Our American Narratives, in a free program at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 27, at the East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier St. To register for the Zoom version of this hybrid event, visit eastsidefreedomlibrary.org.

Themes of history, immigration and loneliness will be discussed by *How To Become an American* author Daniel Wolff in a free program at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 27, at Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. Call 612-341-7555.

Author Jody Lulich will discuss her book, *In the Company of Grace: A Veterinarian's Memoir of Trauma and Healing*, at 7 p.m. Monday, April 24, at **SubText Books**, 6 W. Fifth St. Call 651-493-2791.

Exhibits

"**Ukraine: War and Resistance**," photos depicting life in Ukraine during the Russian invasion, is on view through May 14 at Mill City Museum, 704 Second St. S. in Minneapolis. The large-scale photographs were captured by Fulbright scholars in the war-torn Eastern European country. The exhibit is open to the public free of charge from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Call 612-341-7555.

"**Defying Sameness 2**," 72 works by 72

artists that fly in the face of expectations, are being displayed through May 28 at Argyle Zebra Gallery, 308 E. Prince St., Suite 130. An opening reception with live music and light refreshments will be held from 5-9 p.m. Saturday, April 29. Admission is free. Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Call 651-224-3757 or visit theazgallery.org.

The **Catherine G. Murphy Galleries** at Saint Catherine University is displaying two new exhibits through May 21. In the West Gallery, "When Women Were Girls" features portraits by artist Lissa Karpeh of Liberian-American women in Minnesota. She will discuss her art at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 26. In the East Gallery, "The Living Room" features the art of SCU students Mathis J. Edwards, Callie Korzeniowski, Maya O'Reilly, Dee Taropurua and Theo von Weiss. The five students will discuss their works from noon-1 p.m. Thursday, May 4. Admission is free. Call 651-690-6644.

Dance

"**Opera in Motion**," newly transcribed excerpts from Mozart's *Magic Flute* and *Marriage of Figaro* and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Eurydice*, will be played on period instruments by the Wolfgang ensemble on Sunday, April 23. Advanced students from the Saint Paul Ballet will accompany the music with choreography by Penelope Freeh. The concert begins at 4 p.m. at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. Admission is by donation.

Film

The Fabelmans (2022, PG-13), director Steven Spielberg's autobiographical coming-of-age story and ode to the power of film, will be shown at 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 25, at the JCC's Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. Admission is free. Call 651-698-0751.

Family

The **Minnesota JCC Symphony Orchestra** will present a free family concert from 3-5 p.m. Sunday, April 23, at the JCC Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. For reservations, visit eventbrite.com.

THURSDAY/APRIL 20

SAINT MARK'S CCW presents its spring rummage sale today through Sunday, April 23, in the parish hall at Dayton Avenue and Moore Street. The sale fills four rooms with gently used clothing, household goods, sports equipment, furniture, books, records, toys and games at bargain prices. Admission is \$5 from 5-7 p.m. Thursday and free from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Everything that is left will be sold for a free-will offering from 9 a.m.-noon on Sunday.

FRIDAY/APRIL 21

ART AS A COVENANT between the artist and the public will be discussed at 7 p.m. in the Hearth Room of the Anderson Student Center at the University of Saint Thomas. The free program will feature artist Moira "Miri" Villiard. It is sponsored by the Institute of Theological and Interdisciplinary Studies and will be preceded at 6:30 p.m. by a free buffet. For reservations, call 651-430-0361.

SATURDAY/APRIL 22

A FREE "SHRED IT" EVENT will be hosted from 9 a.m.-noon at Coldwell Banker Realty, 1991 Ford Pkwy. Dispose of your documents confidentially, and while you are at it, enjoy free coffee and doughnuts served by the Distad Team. For information, contact Claire Bisanz Distad at 651-307-7260 or claire.distad@cbrealty.com.

WARD 3 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES Saura Jost and Isaac Russell and District 64B Representative Dave Pinto will discuss their strategies for advancing a multi-racial democracy with a caring economy from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Lumen Christi Church, 2055 Bohland Ave. The forum is sponsored by the ISIAH coalition. To register, contact Kathy Chinn at 651-361-0395 or akchinn@gmail.com.

KIOSK

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY and help clean up a winter's worth of litter along the Mississippi River from 9:30 a.m.-noon. Sponsored by the Friends of the Mississippi River, the family-friendly event will begin in the parking lots on West River Parkway at 36th and 44th streets in Minneapolis. Bring gloves if you have them. Other supplies will be provided. Groups of more than 10 should register in advance by calling 651-222-2193 ext. 27.

SUNDAY/APRIL 23

GENDER IDENTITY will be discussed at the Next Chapter for Women program from 10-11:30 a.m. at Jewish Family Service, 1633 W. Seventh St. Lindsey Hoskins of the Family Tree Clinic will lead the discussion. Admission is free. For reservations, contact Anne Myers at 651-359-7775 or amyers@jffssp.org.

TUESDAY/APRIL 25

ADVANTAGES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD education and current legislation aimed at overcoming barriers to high-quality child care will be discussed online by the League of Women Voters from 7-8 p.m. Guest speakers include Dr. Megan Gunnar of the University of Minnesota and former state Representative Ami Wazlawik. To register, visit tinyurl.com/bdh252r9.

SATURDAY/APRIL 29

QUALITY USED GOODS at bargain prices will be available at the rummage sale from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, 700 Wesley Lane in Mendota Heights. For information, call 651-452-5683.

HISTORIAN FRANCESCA AMMON will explore how postwar America came to equate destruction with progress in "Bulldozer: Demolition and Clearance of the Postwar Landscape." The history forum will be offered at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Pkwy. Tickets are priced from \$10-\$16. Visit mnhs.org/historyforum.

SUNDAY/APRIL 30

THE SAINT PAUL HIKING CLUB will take a five-mile hike along the Mississippi River from Lilydale to Mendota and back. The hike will step out at 2:30 p.m. from the Pool & Yacht Club, 1600 Lilydale Road. New members are welcome. For more information, call Sharon at 651-207-5926.

THURSDAY/MAY 4

THE MINNESOTA MUSEUM of American Art, 350 N. Robert St., will hold its annual benefit from 6-8:30 p.m. Join executive director Dr. Kate Beane and the M's board of directors for entertainment and an art auction featuring the work of Harriet Bart, Jose Dominguez, Luis Fitch and others. A tour of the exhibit, "Im/perfect Slumbers," and a behind-the-scenes look at the M's renovation and expansion will be featured along with food, drinks and dessert. For tickets, visit mmaa.org.

SATURDAY/MAY 6

"**THE LIGHT WE GIVE: Sikh Wisdom for Cultivating Empathy and Justice**" will be addressed by Simran Jeet Singh of the Aspen Institute at 11 a.m. in the outdoor amphitheater of the Iversen Center for Faith at the University of Saint Thomas. The lecture is the centerpiece of a day-long Multifaith Leadership Workshop that is also free and open to the public. Visit tinyurl.com/wkwtxe83.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Lessons learned from two icons

Bud Grant and Bill Hafner likely never met, but both men, who passed away recently, shared a lot in common.

Grant, 95, who hadn't coached a football game in nearly four decades, was fondly remembered by former players and local media types for his unwavering stances on a wide range of issues while he was head coach for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the Minnesota Vikings. He was famous for keeping the game simple. Unlike the current Vikings coach, Grant didn't have 29 assistants. Four to six were plenty for him. He didn't oversee long practices, and he made do with what he had.

For a lot of his tenure on the gridiron, the Vikings practiced at the original Midway Stadium because Met Stadium wasn't available due to baseball games and later soccer. Bob Klepperich, who managed Midway Stadium, remembered Grant as a guy "who went about his business. He was firm but polite."

It was a different era and Grant generally went with the flow. Occasionally, that meant performing some non-football tasks. On one occasion, the Vikings arrived to discover Midway's field in disarray following an outdoor concert. There was still broken glass on the field, so Grant had his players walk shoulder to shoulder to collect all the glass before practice started.

Later, when the team moved to Eden Prairie, a deer feeder was installed near the team's practice field. Grant was an inveterate hunter, but also a sportsman who respected wildlife and wanted the world to know it.

On the field, Grant demanded discipline and respect. He was famous for not having heaters on the sidelines during games in November and December. His players knew not to argue with him. The flip side was he stood up for his players to a league that was used to running roughshod over them. He was probably the first head coach to contend that the league should hire full-time officials.

Grant didn't tolerate laziness by a player or anyone else. One year, the Vikings were playing in the Super Bowl at old Rice Stadium in Houston. When sparrows were discovered in the showers in the team's locker room, Grant invited the media in to have a look-see. The NFL was not impressed with the move during the league's glamour week, but Grant didn't care.

While he could be stern, Grant was also thoughtful. Ralph Reeve, who covered the Vikings for the *Pioneer Press* for years, was handicapped. Grant's press conferences never started until he saw that Reeve was seated and ready to report.

Grant was also a character. After he retired, he was honored at a ceremony at the Metrodome. When it came time for him to speak, he simply said, "Thanks for not smoking" at the indoor event.

Famously, he walked out in short sleeves in frigid weather before a December playoff game at U.S. Bank Stadium. Unfazed, he simply noted it was a sunny day.

An old-school ref

Hafner, 93, was a lifelong Saint Paulite. If you played high school or college baseball, football or basketball in Minnesota in the 1970s to early 2000s, he probably officiated one of your games.

Like Grant, Hafner was also old school. His full-time job was as a meter reader, which allowed him to break free to trek to Bemidji, Moorhead, Winona, Saint Peter, Duluth and just about every other city around the state to officiate games.

If game time was 3:30 p.m., Hafner was there at 3:15 ready to go. It didn't matter to him if it was a section championship game, a national tournament or two teams looking for their first win. Hafner would give it his full effort regardless.

Prep baseball preview

Local coaches look for leaders behind the plate

By Bill Wagner

It used to be that when a catcher would gather his gear to get behind the plate, cynical baseball wags would call such equipment the "tools of ignorance."

Now, baseball on all levels treats the catcher position with a lot more respect. And prep coaches are no exception. There are simply too many things that a good catcher can do to win you games, such as blocking balls in the dirt, throwing out runners and calling pitches. And that doesn't even touch on a catcher's value if he swings a good bat or can run well.

"Catching is vitally important," said Central coach Adam Hunkins. "It's one of the most important positions on the field, along with pitching."

He added that good catchers often fly under the radar, too. "You can have the best catcher on the planet, and you won't even know they're there," Hunkins said.

"Any good pitcher likes to have a catcher he can trust," said Nova Classical Academy coach Scott Lindholm. Minnehaha Academy coach Scott Glenn adds an amen to that. "It's probably the most important position on the field defensively," he said. "You have to be tough enough to block balls in the dirt, but also athletic enough to move around and make good throws."

Glenn said he always wants to start a team's defensive alignment with a good catcher and work outward from there.

Saint Thomas Academy coach Bobby Thompson said not to forget about the intangibles of catching—such as handling pitchers and deploying defensive players on the field.

A team doesn't necessarily have to have its best athlete behind the plate, but coaches say it helps a lot, along with possessing good leadership qualities.

Here's a chance to catch up on how local prep baseball teams look this spring:

CENTRAL

League: Saint Paul City
Previous record: 8-11
Coach: Adam Hunkins

Key players: senior pitcher Cole Spitzer, senior catcher Payton Vang, senior shortstop/third baseman Ben Olson, senior first baseman/pitcher Ezra Harris.

Outlook: The Minutemen graduated 10 players, and there will be five starters this year who will be new. Hunkins likes the talent of his youngsters and the team will not lose many games because of its pitching. "We expect to compete for the conference title," Hunkins said. Of the new starters, he said, "If they hit the ball, they'll stay in the lineup."

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East
Previous record: 11-13
Coach: Buzz Hannahan



Minnehaha Academy catcher Owen Hoffner lunges to grab a long throw from the outfield as Highland's Max Cornelius scores during the Scots' 17-8 win on April 13. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Key players: senior pitcher/catcher John Taxdahl, senior infielder/pitcher Trey Gnetz, junior outfielder Jake Quinn, junior first baseman/pitcher P.J. Jones.

Outlook: The Raiders have the ingredients of a really good team. "We swing the bats really well, and our defense has been solid," Hannahan said. "Our question mark is pitching. We need to throw more strikes. But everybody's baseball IQ is just off the charts." The Raiders started the season with a 12-2 win over Park and 19-8 clobbering of East Ridge. Asked if this is the best CDH team since Jim O'Neill was coach back in the 1990s and early 2000s, Hannahan responded, "Yes, that's accurate."

HIGHLAND PARK

League: Saint Paul City
Previous record: 14-7
Coach: Chris Steenberg

Key players: senior catcher/first baseman/third baseman George Bullard, senior pitcher/center fielder Shea Landa, junior pitcher/shortstop Peter Douma, senior infielder/outfielder Thomas Bradford.

Outlook: Steenberg will have some good senior experience to fall back on this year, unlike in seasons past. "(The league title) is one of our goals," Steenberg said. "Staying focused and maintaining that winning mentality will be key." The Scots got off to a promising start with a 17-8 win over Minnehaha Academy on April 13.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic
Previous record: 3-13
Coach: Scott Glenn

Key players: junior pitcher/shortstop/third baseman Zeke Barbatiss, senior pitchers/outfielders Benji

Koeckeritz and Thomas Gesick, junior catcher Finn Christiansen.

Outlook: The Redhawks are hoping that their defense is better than last year. "We made too many errors last year," Glenn said, "but I think we'll make some improvements. Our pitching could be our strength."

NOVA ACADEMY

League: Skyline
Previous record: 5-13
Coach: Scott Lindholm

Key players: junior shortstop/catcher/pitcher Alex Ehlebracht, junior first baseman/pitcher/outfielder Mark Evenson, freshman second baseman/pitcher Will Choi.

Outlook: The Knights have the highest turnout of players ever for their baseball program, Lindholm said. The team had a rough go a year ago, but he likes the chances for improvement. "I think our team can play with anybody in the conference," Lindholm said. "Having our pitchers be efficient will be the big thing. We're a versatile team and we have some athletes."

SAINT PAUL ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic
Previous record: 11-13
Coach: Rob Thompson

Key players: junior catcher Griffin Schwab-Mahoney, senior second baseman/pitcher Tommy Verhey, freshman left fielder Ezra Cunningham.

Outlook: The Spartans have strong junior and senior classes, and the coach believes that this will bode well this spring. The conference title is within reach, he said. "We're in really good shape to have a really good year," Thompson said.

Mpls. Athena Awards mark 51st year

The 51st Minneapolis Athena Awards will be presented on May 5 to 54 of the best and brightest female student-athletes from public and private high schools throughout greater Minneapolis. The winners include:



Camryn Thurow

Camryn Thurow
Minnehaha Academy
Sports: softball (6 letters, captain, 2x conference awards, 64 hits in last 41 games over sophomore and junior seasons, led team in doubles, had .581 batting average and .649 on-base percentage); volleyball (2 letters, captain, conference award, led team with .913 serving percentage); basketball (2 letters).

Other activities: service intern at Minnehaha organizing four schoolwide projects, member of Athletic Leadership Track, violinist in school's orchestra.

Scholastic achievements: National Honors Society, High Hon-

ors GPA, PSEO student at University of Northwestern.

Post-high school plans: Play softball at Bethel University and major in business.

The Minneapolis Athena Awards luncheon will begin at 11:15 a.m. Friday, May 5, at the Earle Brown Heritage Center, 6155 Earle Brown Drive, Brooklyn Center. The featured speaker will be Connie Fortin, a former Athena Award winner and long-time leader in environmental protection. Allie Cronk, long-time Athena Awards announcer, will be the presenter.

For information, visit minneapolisathena.com. For reservations, email Kelsey.Hans@minneapolisathena.com.

16- BASEBALL PREVIEW

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

League: Metro East
Previous record: 19-9
Coach: Bobby Thompson

Key players: senior pitchers Mike Miller and Nick Becker, junior pitchers Jonathan Dobis and Max Sims, senior first baseman Gavin Engelbert, senior catcher Bennett Kotok.

Outlook: The Cadets were ranked among the top 10 in Class AAA in a preseason poll and have a good shot at being among the top four in the Metro East, Thompson said. "We're an experienced group. We only lost six seniors," he said. "It'll come down to how well we stay focused." STA started out the season with a loss to Simley and a win over Tartan.

TWO RIVERS

League: Metro East
Previous record: 18-7
Coach: Greg Fehrman

Key players: senior second baseman Braden Bruns, senior center fielder Jimmy Lynch, senior outfielders Owen Watson and Carson Christiansen, senior infielder Will Karlen, senior pitcher/outfielder Johnny Youness.

Outlook: The Warriors seem to have good pitching and defense and can expect to finish among the league's top division. "We should be alright by the end of the year," Fehrman said. Two Rivers opened with a loss to league-leading Mahtomedi on April 12, but rebounded with a decisive win over Hill-Murray the next day.

16- WRIGHT CALL

Saint Paul native Tim Tschida, who had a long career as a Major League Baseball umpire, agreed that Hafner was "an official's official." He knew the game wasn't about him. At the same time, he expected players and coaches to show him the same respect he showed them.

Hafner knew how to defuse angry coaches and players. He'd give them their due, but when he'd heard enough he'd make it crystal clear that another angry outburst wouldn't be tolerated. During the recent NCAA women's basketball championship game between LSU and Iowa, Hafner wouldn't have allowed LSU's head coach to get on the floor to argue a call. He also would've pulled aside players using taunting hand signals and tell them to knock it off or risk a technical foul.

As he got older, Hafner was willing to work with young officials. A few months ago, a story appeared in this

column about Cretin-Derham Hall baseball coach Dennis Denning bypassing league rules and agreeing to pick up a game suspended by snow the next afternoon with his team trailing Como Park 2-0 in the bottom of an inning. Bob Turner, the Como head coach, pleaded to at least finish the inning before suspending the game.

Hafner approached Turner and said, "Relax, Bob. Go home. The lead will still be here tomorrow." The home plate umpire was a relative newcomer who was thrilled his older partner stepped in to calm down an excited coach.

Like Grant, Hafner was a character off the field, but he was all business on it. When the MLB umpires went on strike in 1979, he was one of the local subs, working seven games. His one stint behind the plate—a 9-6 Minnesota win over Detroit—was played with minimal fuss in a snappy 2 hours, 18 minutes.

Stayed true to their beliefs

Grant and Hafner were throwbacks from a different era. One wonders if they could have ever done today what they did so well in their prime. Neither suffered fools gladly. Both adapted as best they could to the changing times while they worked. Meanwhile, they stuck to their basic beliefs.

Many of today's coaches, players and officials at the professional and Division I levels often seem to be working under a different belief system than Grant and Hafner had. The game never seems enough for them. Showmanship seems to be a requirement.

While that may make for entertaining television and talking points, one wonders if our sporting events are better for it.

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

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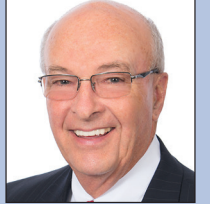
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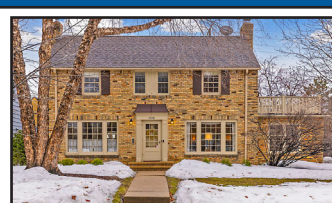


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856 DELAWARE IS NEW!!
Sweet starter just steps from Cherokee Park offers 2 spacious bedrooms, dream eat-in kitchen and main floor living and sun room plus lower level future expansion space. Location, location!! Call Lolly Salmen for details.

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$229,900



PREMIER OFFER - 759,900!
1728 Highland Pkwy is classic 3BR, 4BA Chicago brick Colonial now available for first time in over 42 years! Formal & informal areas include flexible main floor office/den & sun/gathering RM along w/spacious L & DRs plus eat-in cook's kitchen.

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HOT HIGHLAND LIST!
Sweet 3BR bungalow just steps to the river and all things Highland Bridge! Hardwood floors, gas fireplace, newer kitchen, patio, large primary bedroom and sun room plus opportunity for expansion above and below! Call Lolly Salmen for details.

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$349,900



NEW CONSTRUCTION IN MAC GROVELAND!
New construction with all the walkable amenities of the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood. 5 BRs/5BAs, over 4,300 square feet of timeless luxury and detail. 1524 Lincoln Ave. www.wahlbergtoohey.com

MICHAELA TOOHEY
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\$1,495,000



CARRIAGE HOUSE/CONDO!
Carefree living within a 2-bedroom/bath condo with 1 car attached heated garage. Gleaming wood floors, light filled, superb craftsmanship finishes and design. Walkability is a ten within Ramsey Hill. 449 Portland #3.

BRIAN WAGNER
651-497-4387 • \$750,000



ACCEPTED OFFER IN 1.5 DAYS ON MARKET!
Simplify your life with main floor living. Maple kitchen built in breakfast nook & an abundance of storage cabinets. Maple HW floors throughout. Freshly painted interior. Large front porch. Laundry & storage in the unfinished basement. CA. Fenced yard nicely landscaped. 1408 Sargent Ave.

TJ PIERRET
651-755-6669 • \$285,000



39 HILLTOP LANE!
A polished gem on a premier block of Highland Park. 39 Hilltop features 4BRs, 3BAs w/nearly 3,000 sq ft. Every inch of the home has been meticulously renovated with modern finishes that enhance the mid century aesthetic. Call for a private showing before this home is available to the public.

TOM DISTAD
612-432-4771 • \$749,900



HIGHLAND PARK SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX!
Beautifully updated and meticulously maintained 3BR, 2BA. The home features a new kitchen, two updated BAs, renovated laundry room & huge upper level owner's suite w/two walk-in closets. The back yard has privacy fencing, two car garage, huge patio and wonderful landscaping.

TOM DISTAD
612-432-4771 • \$479,900



JUST LISTED!!!
1236 Sandhurst Dr: Exceptional opportunity to work a little and save a lot. The house offers hardwood floors, newer windows, and Leafguard type gutters.

JIM BURTON 612-723-7653 • \$255,000



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