

Grand Ave. shop keeps Ukrainian folk art alive

Wet Paint artist's class in Ukrainian Easter eggs will benefit war-torn country

BY ANNE MURPHY

Justin Terlecki has been decorating Easter Eggs in the Ukrainian tradition of pysanky since his childhood in Youngstown, Ohio. After moving to the Twin Cities nearly 25 years ago, the Lowertown artist has continued the tradition through his annual demonstrations and classes at Wet Paint, the art supply store at 1684 Grand Ave. where he has worked since 1999.

This spring his class has taken on even greater meaning with the war in Ukraine. "I've felt helpless," Terlecki said of the war. "But by celebrating Ukraine's culture and bringing awareness of this beautiful tradition, it feels like I'm doing something."

Terlecki will be conducting a virtual class in pysanky for beginners on Saturday, April 9. The five-hour class costs \$34, and all of the fees and any additional donations will be sent to the Ukrainian Red Cross, according to Scott Fares, co-owner of Wet Paint.

"We didn't think twice about dedicating the event to the people of Ukraine," Fares said. "Justin's Ukrainian egg painting classes and demonstrations have been special. People love to watch him work through the intricate process of making these beautiful eggs while simultaneously hearing the story of his family tradition of creating them growing



Artist Justin Terlecki displays his personal collection of handcrafted Ukrainian Easter Eggs in the classroom at Wet Paint Artists' Materials & Framing, 1684 Grand Ave. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

up. We had been looking forward to celebrating a kind of return to normal with this year's class, but this year is anything but normal."

"I think it's amazing," Terlecki said. "(Wet Paint has) been very supportive. They think of my egg decorating as a springtime tradition and this year as especially important. I don't have words to convey the feelings I have."

Terlecki has found it painful to watch news reports of the war. "I haven't been to Ukraine, but growing up in Ukrainian churches, I know how beautiful their architecture is," he said. His Youngstown grade school was connected to a Byzantine Ukrainian church. "I grew up with beautiful icons," he said. "I was an altar

UKRAINIAN EASTER EGGS ▶4

Saint Paul reaches for status quo in drawing new ward boundaries

Critics contend plan falls short in promoting racial minorities

BY JANE MCCLURE

Saint Paul's Charter Commission voted 12-1 on March 16 to approve new boundaries for the city's seven wards despite a late appeal for an alternative plan that advocates argued would provide greater opportunities for Saint Paul's racial minorities.

The approved plan keeps the boundaries of the city's seven wards similar to their existing ones. The alternative plan backed by Common Cause of Minnesota, Concordia University professor Bruce Corrie and Hamline University professor David Schultz would greatly alter the boundaries, especially for wards 1, 2 and 3 (see maps on page 2).

Advocates of the Common Cause plan said that their Ward 1 would unite the diverse neighborhoods of Frogtown and the area north and east of the Capitol with the diverse Summit-University neighborhood while ceding the mostly white neighborhoods of Snelling-Hamline and Lexington-Hamline. That would boost Ward 1's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) population from 35 to 37.2 percent, they said.

Similarly, Common Cause's new Ward 2 would connect the African immigrant communities at the west end of West Seventh Street with the Black and Hispanic areas on the West Side while ceding the majority-white Summit Hill neighborhood to Ward 3. That would boost Ward 2's BIPOC popu-

NEW WARD BOUNDARIES ▶2

Plan is pitched to replace Twin Cities' stretch of I-94 with boulevard

Shops, transit, bike and walking paths would fill 7.5-mile freeway trench

BY JANE MCCLURE

Rethinking I-94, an effort by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to reimagine the 7.5 miles of interstate between the downtowns of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, is expected

to culminate this summer with a host of options for rebuilding a roadway that now averages between 114,000 and 167,000 vehicles per day.

Those ideas are likely to include Reconnect Rondo's proposal to build a land bridge over the freeway between Lexington Parkway and Dale Street. Our Streets Minneapolis would like MnDOT to also consider removing I-94 entirely and replacing it with Twin Cities Boulevard. Our Streets presented its concept earlier this month in a program at Macalester College

and is scheduled to appear in April before the Union Park District Council's transportation committee.

Alex Burns, transportation policy coordinator for Our Streets Minneapolis, said MnDOT has provided the Twin Cities with an opportunity. "We could perpetuate the status quo and rebuild a freeway that would last for another 60 years," he said. Or the Twin Cities could consider the interests of the people who live and work along I-94 by filling in the trench and creating a boulevard that is connected to the neigh-

borhood street grid, he added.

Burns described a wide strip of biking and walking paths, neighborhood businesses and new transit options where the freeway now runs. "We need to create a vision while there is still time to do so," he said.

When I-94 was constructed in the 1960s, it displaced densely populated neighborhoods all along its length, including parts of Merriam Park and the old Rondo neigh-

RETHINKING I-94 ▶5

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FOR PUBLIC SAFETY'S SAKE

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1◀ NEW WARD BOUNDARIES

lation from 37.7 to 42.2 percent, according to Common Cause. Common Cause also wanted to extend Ward 3 north and east into Snelling-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline and Summit Hill, and to extend Ward 4 south into Macalester-Groveland and northeast into the Como area.

“The Common Cause map is the best for inclusion and shared governance,” said Corrie, a former director of Saint Paul’s Department of Planning and Economic Development. He called the plan “neighborhood-centric.”

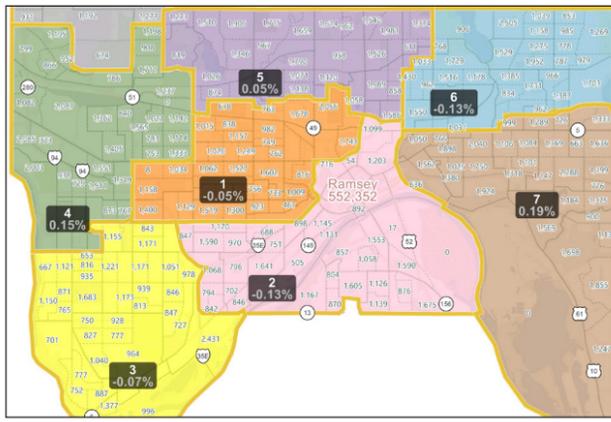
“Saint Paul is a majority non-white municipality with distinct racial housing patterns,” said Schultz, an expert in election law. “A fair redistricting plan is one that enhances representation for communities of color and offers residents the best protection for their right to vote. The Common Cause map recognizes the racial housing patterns and would strengthen the voting rights of people of color better than any other proposed alternative.”

Despite the assertion of Schultz and others, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that Saint Paul’s population is 50.7 percent white (or 55.2 percent when counting Hispanic and Latino people who also identify as white), 19.1 percent Asian, 15.5 percent Black or African, 9 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1 percent American Indian, and 6.3 percent two or more races.

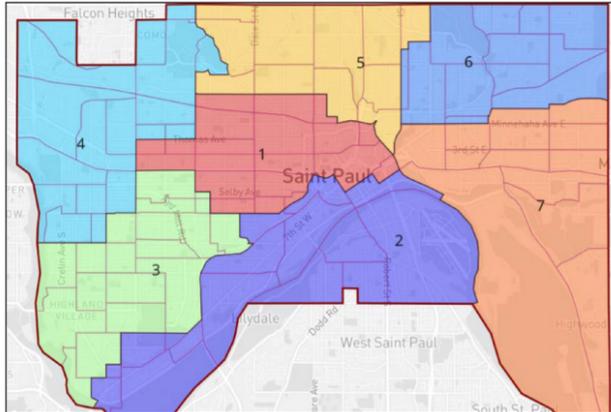
Though the City Council reviewed the new ward boundaries on March 23, the Charter Commission’s boundaries are final barring a legal challenge. The council did review and approve new precinct boundaries and polling locations, which reduce the city’s 95 precincts to 87.

Among the changes in the new ward map is the extension of Ward 3 southeast into the Victoria Park area, which was formerly in Ward 2. Ten blocks of Macalester-Groveland that had been in Ward 3 have been moved to Ward 4. Ward 1 now includes the neighborhood around Oakland Cemetery, which was in Ward 5. Ward 1 also extends east of Summit Avenue to Irvine Avenue, which was in Ward 2. Ward 2 now includes the Railroad Island neighborhood northeast of downtown that was in Ward 5. Meanwhile, Ward 5 has shifted east into an old area of Ward 6 and west to include all of the area around Lake Como.

The Charter Commission considered half a dozen different redistricting plans. Prepared by consultants from Park Street Public, the goal of the plans was to balance the wards’ populations, keep communities of color and ethnicity together, and establish precinct lines and polling



The new boundaries of Saint Paul’s seven wards as approved by the Charter Commission (above). Pictured below are the boundaries of the seven wards as proposed by Common Cause of Minnesota.



places that did not inconvenience voters. According to David Heller of Park Street, the seven wards in the approved plan are all within about 83 of the average population of 44,500.

Dozens of people commented on the redistricting plans at public hearings and in written testimony. Some plans were criticized for their jagged lines, others for splitting planning districts or neighborhood associations. A successful push was made by several Summit Hill residents to keep all of that neighborhood in Ward 2.

“It helps us to be in one ward, to better advocate for our organization,” agreed Lexington-Hamline Community Council president Jesse Hennem.

While Lexington-Hamline and Summit Hill remain in-

tact, the Macalester-Groveland and Union Park districts remain split between two wards. The West 7th/Fort Road Federation, mostly in Ward 2 before, is now split among Wards 2, 3 and 1.

Longtime Charter Commission member Bridget Faricy cast the sole vote against the redistricting plan and resigned from the commission after the meeting. “The census data bears out that Saint Paul is no longer a majority white city,” Faricy said in her resignation letter. “Considering that the census was conducted during a pandemic and was politicized by the Trump administration, the diversity is likely even greater.”

According to Faricy, the Common Cause plan would have strengthened the political clout of communities of color. Leaving the ward boundaries largely unchanged, she said, “continues the systemic racism that has underserved our communities of color and immigrant communities.”

Faricy objected to the tight timeline the Charter Commission worked under. Work on the 2020 U.S. Census was completed later than usual, and that was partly due to the pandemic. As a result, the new boundaries of the state legislative and federal Congressional districts were not announced until February 15, leaving the Charter Commission with a little over a month to draw the new ward and precinct boundaries. The commissioners set to work immediately and held three public hearings before the final vote.

Faricy noted that after the 2010 U.S. Census, the Charter Commission met for several months before approving a redistricting plan. She said the commission should have sought an extension this year.

“If I had my druthers, I would’ve had more hearings and more time,” said Charter Review Committee chair Matthew Freeman. However, he and Charter Commission chair Brian Alton said the commission needed to have the redistricting plan in place before the City Council meeting on March 23.

The statutory deadline for the redistricting plan was March 29—19 weeks before the primary election. City Council president Amy Brendmoen said the council was willing to call a special meeting after March 23 to review the plan. “I made it clear to the chair that with notice, the council can call a meeting anytime,” she said, “so it was not appropriate to use the deadline as an excuse to rush through the process.”



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Members of the Saint Paul Federation of Educators demonstrated outside Highland Park Middle School on the first day of the teachers' strike back in March of 2020.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

St. Paul teachers agree to contract, avoid 2nd strike in as many years

BY CASEY EK

Wage and salary increases, more mental health staff, maintaining the cap on class sizes and a one-time payment of \$3,000 for every teacher who continued to work during the two years of the pandemic are included in the new two-year contract between the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) and the Saint Paul Public Schools. The 4,000-member teachers' union voted overwhelmingly on March 16 to ratify the agreement and avoid a second teachers' strike in as many years.

Federation president Leah VanDassor called the agreement "pretty solid" prior to the union's vote, though she said she would have liked a larger hourly wage increase for educational support staff. As it is, educational assistants (EAs) will receive an average 13.5 percent increase in their hourly wages.

Teachers and school and community service professionals got a 2 percent salary increase in each of the two years. The contract increases the employer contribution for health insurance coverage and the employer match on 403b plans. It also provides for the hiring of six additional school psychologists at a cost of \$650,000.

Saint Paul Superintendent Joe Gothard declined to answer any questions from MyVillager about the contract. However, in a statement on the district's website, Gothard described the agreement as "fair" and "equitable."

Gothard wrote: "Our staff, students, families and administrators all want Saint Paul Public Schools to be the best district it can be, and the only way we can do that is by working together."

"(School district negotiators) had come to the table with a lot of removal language," VanDassor said. "For teachers, there was a lot of defending of what we already had (in the previous two-year contract)."

The new contract maintains most of the caps on class sizes. However, it lowers the maximum class size in grades 1-3 from 28 to 27 (or from 26 to 25 in high-poverty schools) and in grade 9 from 37 to 36 (35 in high-poverty schools). It also continues to guarantee recess time for students.

The new contract comes as the district is projecting a nearly \$43 million deficit for the 2022-23 school year, driven in part by a projected drop of roughly 1,900 students from the 33,365 students enrolled in the

"(School district negotiators) had come to the table with a lot of removal language. For teachers, there was a lot of defending of what we already had."

district this year.

The Saint Paul School Board is expected to vote on the contract on April 19. If approved by the board, the contract will be good through June 2023. The school district had not released the total cost of the new contract before press time, but prior to the agreement with the teachers it had projected wage increases for SPFE employees to total around \$12.6 million. The money for the one-time payments of \$3,000 is coming from the federal American Rescue Plan fund.

School Board chair Jim Vue was relieved that the district was able to avoid a strike. A teachers' strike like the one in the Minneapolis Public Schools would have been counterproductive, he said.

That is a sentiment shared by the Minnesota Parent Union. Rashad Turner, president of the Parent Union, could not be reached for comment, but prior to the agreement in Saint Paul the Parent Union stated: "Parents and community leaders are frustrated with the (teachers') unions' repeated attempts to overlook the outcomes our kids are getting in both the Saint Paul Public Schools and Minneapolis Public Schools."

VanDassor acknowledged that teachers' strikes are difficult for all involved, but insisted that the caps on class sizes would have been worth the fight. "Not having class size limits in place, especially at the secondary level, is something a lot of parents haven't experienced," VanDassor said. "We have to have (manageable class sizes). It's important for all our families to have that relationship with teachers."

Vue and VanDassor agreed that the success of the recent round of negotiations may be a sign of better things to come between management and the rank and file. They said it gave them hope that negotiations on the next teachers' contract will not be as acrimonious.

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City accepts feds' help in beefing up police force

By Jane McClure

With the help of new federal funds, Saint Paul will be adding up to 30 police officers, replacing over 1,200 public safety radios and stepping up efforts to reverse the rising incidence of carjackings and gunshots fired. The City Council on March 23 also voted to revise the qualifications for a new chief of police in an attempt to broaden the search for a successor to retiring Chief Todd Axtell.

The Reverend James Thomas, leader of the Black Ministerial Alliance, and Tyrone Terrell, president of the African American Leadership Council, urged the City Council to remove the requirement that police chief candidates have supervisory experience in a law enforcement department with at least 500 officers. Without that change, they said, only two Black law enforcement officers in the state would be eligible for the job.

Terrell told the council that among Blacks, the post of police chief is the most important job in the city. "Our community is the most impacted by crime," he said. "Our community has been most impacted by police shootings."

"We do want to have a person who is connected to our community," Thomas said.

The City Council was unanimous in agreeing with the change. Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker said it is important to cast as wide a

net as possible.

The other qualifications for Saint Paul's new police chief remain. Candidates must have at least four years of administrative-level experience as a police chief, deputy chief commander or the equivalent. And that experience must be in a metropolitan area with at least 200,000 residents.

The council also heard from several members of ISAIHA, who urged city leaders to take their time in the hiring process and consider a chief with a background in social services, mental health and working with diverse communities.

The City Council voted 4-2 to accept a \$3.75 million federal COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) grant. The grant, which will assist in the hiring of up to 30 new police officers, must be matched by the city with an outlay of at least \$1.8 million per year for the next three years.

Council members Noecker, Amy Brendmoen, Dai Thao and Chris Tolbert voted to accept the grant, Mitra Jalali and Nelsie Yang voted against it, and Jane Prince was absent. Thao cited the recent uptick in carjackings and violent crime in supporting the grant. Jalali and Yang have consistently supported more nontraditional law enforcement measures. Jalali said she was also concerned about the financial implications for the city once the federal money runs out.

Mayor Melvin Carter has expressed support for the COPS grant, which is from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The city's match will come from federal American Rescue Plan dollars.

The COPS grant will supplement the city's plan to hire 80 new police officers in the coming months through the two police academies that are being conducted in Saint Paul this year. That plan does not increase the police department's authorized strength of 619 officers, but is meant to fill vacancies. The department is currently at 589 officers, a number that includes more than 50 recent hires. However, the police are anticipating more retirements.

The Saint Paul Police Department initially applied for the COPS grant without vetting it with the council. That prompted the council to make technical changes in how city departments apply for outside funding.

Saint Paul and Ramsey County officials recently announced other public safety measures that will be coming with the help of federal funding. They include almost \$2 million to replace about 1,300 hand-held and vehicle radios used by Saint Paul police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

A \$900,000 federal grant will go to a Ramsey County violence prevention project that focuses on such crimes as carjackings and gunshots fired. That project is directed at the people who are most at risk of becoming involved in violent criminal activity. It includes such interventions as jobs and skills training and substance abuse counseling.

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boy. It's so upsetting to realize that towns and buildings that have been around for centuries are now destroyed, not to mention the many thousands of people who have been harmed by this unnecessary war.

"In Ukrainian culture, there is such an emphasis on beauty and design in traditional folk clothing, pysanky and church icons. Growing up, my grandparents would talk about how important it is to keep Ukrainian traditions alive. They'd talk about how Russia wanted to absorb the culture. Keeping the tradition of pysanky alive honors my grandparents and the rich heritage of Ukraine."

Terlecki earned a BFA in painting and printmaking from Youngstown State University. Not long after moving to the Twin Cities, he ventured into the Ukrainian Gift Shop in Minneapolis. There he met Luba Perchyshyn, a member of the family that founded the shop. "I was star-struck," Terlecki said. "I was so honored to meet her."

Back in Youngstown when decorating eggs at their school, Terlecki and his classmates were shown a filmstrip about pysanky. Remarkably, the person demonstrating the art was Perchyshyn. Terlecki and his classmates used to joke that they needed to do their Ukrainian Easter eggs the Luba way. "I had no idea Luba was from Minneapolis or that she had a store here," he said.

Terlecki has been demonstrating the art of pysanky at Wet Paint for the past two decades. "When I interviewed for the job, it was late April 1999 and I noticed they had Ukrainian Easter egg kits. I told them I knew how to make pysanky. Then when I was hired, they asked me if I'd be willing to demonstrate. Every year after that, I did free demonstrations on Saturdays. People would come and stay for the whole time, which was four hours."

The COVID outbreak canceled the classes planned for the spring of 2020. In 2021, Terlecki taught his first virtual class in pysanky. "It actually went much better than I thought," he said. "Many of the people who registered had several people participate with them. I had people from Minnesota, Michigan, South Carolina and Youngstown."

"Pysanky represents a visual language handed down from generation to generation," Terlecki said. "The word pysanky is related to the word for 'write.' Each egg contains very specific meanings depicted by the design motifs. A few examples are ladders that represent prayer, dots and small circles that represent the stars and constellations, pine needles that represent long life, and ribbons that represent the endless line of eternity."



Justin Terlecki demonstrates the Ukrainian folk art of pysanky, applying heated beeswax to an egg shell before dipping the shell in a colored dye and making what are known as Ukrainian Easter Eggs.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Terlecki wants the participants in his classes to enjoy the decorating process and not feel they have to strive for perfection. "I want it to be relaxing and magical as it is for me," he said.

The process involves making a small hole at the top of a raw egg with a special tool that pulls the insides out. Then beeswax that has been melted with a candle is applied to the egg in lines that form a design. The egg is then dipped in a colored liquid with the wax serving as a resistance to the color. More wax is applied, and the egg is dipped again in color. That process is repeated until the egg is finished. The beeswax is then melted away to reveal the final design.

Terlecki's class on April 9 will run from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. To register for the Zoom link and to obtain information on the necessary supplies and advance preparation, individuals and groups may visit info.wetpaintart.com/event/pysanky-for-beginners-taught-by-justin-terlecki-2.

Jie Ming Academy in line for \$31M expansion this summer

By JANE McCLURE

The popular Jie Ming Mandarin Immersion Academy, 1845 Sheridan Ave., will be remodeled and expanded beginning this summer and continuing through summer 2023. The Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee reviewed plans for the work on March 15 with Saint Paul Public School project managers Rosemary Dolata and Michael Christen.

On the drawing board are the addition of five new classrooms, a new cafeteria and kitchen, inclusive restrooms, a fire lane and service entrance at the rear of the building, a storm shelter, mechanical updates, new gym floor, and a redesigned student drop-off and pickup area.

The expansion will be to the north on the site of the current school courtyard, and a new courtyard will be created. The old gym will become an oversized science classroom, with access to the outdoors. The school district is working with Cuningham Architects and Knutson Construction on the project.

HDC committee members praised the plans, with most questions centered on security and vehicular access at the front and rear of the building. Field Avenue, which currently dead-ends at the school's property line, will be extended into the site to create the service entrance.

One big change involves updating security by requiring visitors to check in at the



The southwest aerial view of the addition planned for Jie Ming Mandarin Immersion Academy.

office before gaining access to the rest of the building. The service entrance area will also have a restricted entry.

The addition of a cafeteria with kitchen will be especially welcomed, Dolata said, as the building does not currently have a fully functioning kitchen. "We bring in hot lunches now," she said.

The new cafeteria will be accessible for people with disabilities, something that is not the case now. "The cafeteria we're losing is not a space we're going to miss," Dolata said.

Other features are meant to meet changing building codes and personal preferences. One part of the project calls for inclusive

restrooms that offer privacy while not being gender-specific. The storm shelter is a requirement to meet code changes.

Design work continues along Sheridan Avenue, where buses and parent vehicles will enter and exit. Committee members urged more communication on vehicular access plans, saying that while safety is needed they do not want to see green space reduced.

The committee also questioned whether supply chain issues could slow the project. School district officials have tried to anticipate that kind of a delay. One move was to change the truss system design. Another was to put out bids early for roof supplies

and insulation, as those materials can face delays of several months to a year.

Jie Ming currently enrolls about 400 students in grades K-5. The expansion will allow enrollment to grow to 500-550.

The project will be the latest change for the old Homcroft School building, which opened in 1921 and was designed by Cap Wigington, the nation's first Black municipal architect. An addition was built in 1954. The Homcroft Recreation Center opened in 1980, sharing space with the school. The center was closed in 2008.

Homcroft was the school district's first consolidated bilingual program, starting in 1996. In 2003 it had the district's first Hmong principal, Choua Lee. However, Homcroft struggled to attract students and reach federal testing levels, and closed at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, after which special education and Early Childhood Family Education programs moved in.

The first phase of building updates to accommodate Jie Ming's move from Hamline Elementary School to Homcroft was in 2018. Those included the "moon gate" entrance inside the school.

It has been a bit of a wait for the second phase of improvements. In the spring of 2021, the Saint Paul School Board agreed to move ahead with work at Jie Ming and Ramsey Middle School after a review of their facilities. Work was estimated to cost \$498 million at Ramsey and \$31 million at Jie Ming.

14 RETHINKING I-94

borhood of Summit-University. The freeway devalued urban neighborhoods in favor of suburban development, Burns said. Twin Cities Boulevard would make up for that displacement and other harm caused by freeway construction, he added.

Our Streets Minneapolis believes there is capacity on local thoroughfares and other freeways to handle the traffic that would be displaced by the removal of I-94 between the two downtowns.

I-94 extends for 259 miles through Minnesota between Fargo and Hudson. Most of its construction took place in the 1960s. The Twin Cities segment was completed in 1968. Despite frequent mill and overlay projects, that stretch of the freeway is nearing the end of its useful life, according to Burns, and now is the time to imagine how those 284 acres could be repurposed.

Rethinking I-94 has been on the drawing boards for several years. Initial public engagement took place between 2013 and 2018. Detailed environmental studies are expected to be completed in 2023. A preferred alternative could be selected in 2023 or 2024 with construction to follow in 2026 at the earliest.

Just what will emerge from the ongoing state studies is unclear. "We're following the federal environmental impact state-



An artist's rendering of how the proposed Twin Cities Boulevard might transform a section of the Interstate 94 right-of-way between the downtowns of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

ment process to revise the goals, purpose, needs and criteria we use to evaluate what the project should include," said Christine Krueger, MnDOT's metro communications director. "MnDOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration, engaging the expertise of technical committees, working groups and an advisory committee of policymakers to inform that process. We will have those revised documents by the end of this summer."

Krueger described Rethinking I-94 as a long-term effort to engage with communities along the I-94 corridor. "Our work the last few years has focused on understanding the communities in these

neighborhoods, especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) communities," she said. "We want to understand the needs and hopes of people who live, work and play along that road so that our work sustains and builds healthy, equitable communities. We recognize the actions 60 years ago devastated communities, and those impacts are still felt today. MnDOT and our partners are prioritizing the well-being of people."

One proposal for I-94 that has already sought state and federal support is Reconnect Rondo, a land bridge over the freeway that would link two sides of the former Rondo neighborhood and restore some of

the property that was lost when I-94 was constructed. Burns pointed out that the land bridge would address some but not all of the negative impacts of I-94.

Freeway removal has worked in other U.S. cities, according to Burns, including San Francisco, where an earthquake in 1989 caused sections of the elevated Embarcadero Freeway to collapse. That freeway was replaced with a new business district, tourist area and parks. Similar projects are planned in Detroit and in Syracuse, New York, according to Our Streets Minneapolis' website at twincitiesboulevard.org.

Our Streets Minneapolis staff and volunteers have been door-knocking through neighborhoods on both sides of I-94. "What has become clear is that people understand the harm of the freeway," Burns said. Local residents are unable to open their windows due to the noise and air pollution that I-94 generates, and they suffer from higher rates of asthma, he said.

Our Streets Minneapolis is also gathering signatures online on a petition in support of its proposal. The Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition has already signed on in support. Lisa Nelson, cochair of the UPDC's transportation committee, said her group will review the proposal on April 11 before deciding whether to lend its support.

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Grant will assist with repairs of iconic Cochran Park sculpture

The Saint Paul City Council voted last month to accept a \$136,167 Minnesota Historical Society Legacy Grant for the restoration of the Cochran Park sculpture and ceramic tile pool on Summit and Western avenues.

The state grant will be matched with \$25,000 from the Ramsey Hill Association, which began raising funds last year for improvements to the park. The centerpiece of the park's fountain is noted Saint Paul artist Paul Manship's 1926 sculpture "Indian Hunter and His Dog," which is surrounded by four bronze geese.

The grant was recommended for approval earlier this year by the city's Capital Improvement Budget Committee. Committee members asked that the improvements include some security measures. One of the geese was stolen from the park last December. It was recovered the following day when someone brought it to a metal recycling center.

The Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation will provide construction management services for the project.

Highland Ethiopian restaurant fined \$1K for license violation

RAS Ethiopian Restaurant & Lounge, 2516 W. Seventh St., was ordered by the Saint Paul City Council on March 8 to pay a \$1,000 fine as a result of its second license violation in the past two years regarding the use of an unapproved part of its parking lot. The business did not contest the fine.

The city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) recommended the penalty. RAS has had license conditions tied to its site plan since 2013 that call for maintenance of its parking lot. There is property



Kristin Chérons used a torch and ladder before applying wax during a 2003 restoration of Paul Manship's "Indian Hunter and His Dog" sculpture in Cochran Park. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

behind the building that is not covered by the conditions, and that restaurant patrons and staff are not supposed to use. The area is to be barricaded with chains and concrete.

In April 2021, RAS paid a \$500 fine due to a 2020 violation of license conditions related to that property's use. A stiffer penalty was imposed this time because a similar violation was found. In September 2021, a DSI inspector found 10 vehicles parked in the unapproved area. No chains or concrete were present to prohibit parking.

NEWS BRIEFS

West End produce business to receive \$275,000 in state funds

The Saint Paul City Council accepted \$275,000 in state investment funds last month for Kalera Inc. to acquire and rehab a former Schmidt Brewery warehouse at 543 James Ave.

Kalera in March 2021 announced it would be purchasing the facility, which most recently was being used for a hydroponic venture. Kalera is one of the fastest-growing vertical farming companies in the world for producing high-quality produce in controlled environments. The company intends to provide about 70 jobs and be a source for fresh lettuce and greens for restaurants, retailers and others.

Kalera currently operates two growing facilities in Orlando and last week started operating its newest and largest facility to date in Atlanta. It also is building facilities in Houston, Denver, Columbus and Seattle.

Local city facilities part of \$2.8M in capital maintenance upgrades

The Saint Paul City Council on March 16 approved 26 projects, including several local ones, to share \$2.8 million for improvements through the city's 2022-2023 capital maintenance program.

Three projects are slated for the Highland National Golf Course clubhouse, 1403 Montreal Ave. The allocations include \$84,600 for exterior block and masonry repairs, \$132,400 for lower-level window replacement, and \$160,300 to replace the boiler. The window and boiler replacement are planned for this year, and exterior work in 2023.

The Merriam Park Library, 1831 Mar-

shall Ave., will receive \$105,432 for exterior repairs this year. The Dunning Sports Complex, 1221 Marshall Ave., will receive \$85,000 for an irrigation system beneath two of its ballfields. The Linwood Recreation Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave., will have its roof replaced at a cost of \$276,201. Fire Station No. 5, 890 Ashland Ave., will receive \$15,337 to replace a driveway.

The projects were reviewed by city staff and recommended for approval by a subcommittee of the city's Capital Improvement Budget Committee. Saint Paul typically funds fewer than half of the capital maintenance requests submitted by city departments.

Met Council grant will help turn Mary Hall into supportive housing

Mary Hall, a former Saint Joseph's Hospital nurses' dormitory that in the past has sheltered homeless people, will be redeveloped with \$1.2 million from the Metropolitan Council. The nonprofit group Aeon plans to turn the historic building at 438 Dorothy Day Place in downtown Saint Paul into permanent supportive housing for very low-income residents.

The award was part of \$8 million in grants given to 10 affordable housing developments. The grants are expected to help create 557 new affordable homes and preserve another 113 affordable housing units as part of the Met Council's Livable Communities program.

"Eight million dollars is the most the Met Council has ever awarded from the Livable Communities housing fund in one year," said Lisa Barajas, director of community development for the Met Council. "The grants will leverage almost \$88 million in private investments and more than \$122 million in public investment."

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.



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Make way for JK

Johnny Allen's organization takes over the operations at Jimmy Lee

By JANE McCLURE

JK Movement, a nonprofit organization for youths, will now be managing operations and providing some of the programming at the Jimmy Lee Recreation Center under an agreement approved on March 16 by the Saint Paul City Council at the recommendation of the city's Parks and Recreation Commission.

Jimmy Lee is part of the larger Oxford Community Center, 1036 Iglehart Ave., which also includes the Great River Water Park. JK Movement will be replacing the programs and activities of the defunct Loft/Summit-University Teen Center. It will also take responsibility for that program's space, which it has used for the past few years.

"Jimmy Lee is a staple in our community," said JK Movement director Johnny Allen Jr. "We feel blessed to be able to better serve our community."

JK Movement was founded in 2011 by Allen. The Saint Paul native is a graduate of Highland Park High School and the University of Saint Thomas, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business. His organization's mission is to "empower and inspire effective change in the minds, bodies and spirits of young people." It offers programs in life skills, career development, healthy living and sports team leadership, as well as mentors to improve the behavior and academic achievement of youths.

JK Movement will continue to offer programs at several other locations across the Twin Cities, including Highland Park High School. The nonprofit has eight staff members, and it currently serves about 80 youths in middle and high school. Allen would like to expand the program to a few hundred participants and in a greater range of ages.

Andy Rodriguez, the city's recreation services manager, said the intent is to enlist JK Movement as the day-to-day service provider at Jimmy Lee. The Parks and Recreation Department will not be losing any staff positions as a result of the agreement, and building hours will not change. Meeting rooms and gym space will still be available to the public, and sports teams will continue to play under the Jimmy Lee name.

With the agreement, "we gain a great service partner to best meet the needs of the immediate community," Rodriguez said. "We're adding more programs and services with a reputable service provider."

JK Movement's lease extends through December 31, 2026, and can be renewed after that date. The change is not expected to have a major impact on Parks and Rec's operating budget, but it should result in some capital improvements, Rodriguez added. JK Movement has agreed to raise about \$100,000 over the next five years to make physical improvements to the facility.

Under the agreement, JK Movement will



JK Movement founder and director Johnny Allen Jr. (left) and his program lead, coach Antonio Richardson, pose in the remodeled annex at Jimmy Lee Recreation Center with Creative Arts students (left to right) Tori Sellner, Tokyo Obunike, Paris Obunike, Ari Neal, Ka'Jon Woods and Jamal Williams.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

pay monthly rent of \$4,500 to cover utility costs. It will be responsible for interior maintenance, housekeeping and minor repairs. The city will continue to maintain the park and fields outside of the building as well as the parking lot and sidewalks. The pool and water park will continue to be maintained and staffed by Parks and Rec. The Jimmy Lee Booster Club will continue to oversee the rec center's storage room.

Allen said his staff is already prepared to get to work on renovating the rec center's concessions area and original gym. "We have a lot of work to do," he said.

Allen grew up in the Summit-University neighborhood and took part in sports and other activities at Jimmy Lee and the Loft/Summit-University Teen Center. "It's good to be able to give back and come back to the

community," he said.

The Loft was founded in 1968 above a car wash in the Summit-University neighborhood. It operated out of various locations over the years before settling in at Jimmy Lee, where it remained throughout the building's renovation and expansion in 2006-08.

The Loft was a drop-in center where young people could enjoy games, a lounge and refreshments. The Teen Center offered classes, activities, service projects and a library with a place to do homework. The two programs were overseen for many years by Jim Robinson, who became the Teen Center leader in 1967. He died in 2020 at the age of 88.

"I knew Jim Robinson," Allen said. "It's a blessing to be able to follow in his footsteps."



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VIEWPOINT

River promenade: Another dubious effort to revive downtown

BY JAMES M. HAMILTON

I have spent the majority of my 70 years here in Saint Paul, beginning at the long-since vanished Miller Hospital. I have watched the city grow and shrink over the decades, fighting against forces beyond its control, largely driven by an urge to protect commercial interests downtown. Successes are hard to find.

The closure of Seventh Street through downtown drove vehicle traffic to the outskirts in order to accommodate the World Trade Center, a parking facility and a courtyard/mall connecting it to Dayton's department store. All are gone today. The World Trade Center is now Wells Fargo Place. Dayton's is a multi-use building whose major tenant appears to be a hockey team.

Directly east of these was Town Square, another failed attempt to create an inner-city mall complete with indoor park. A few blocks further east is the facility once known as Galtier Plaza, in which the city and private interests invested and lost millions. Today it is known as Cray Plaza, named for a company that left town in 2016 after buying the naming rights in 2009. Today, Cray Plaza is occupied by a private preparatory academy, various technology companies, an event facility (carved out of the old movie theaters), a restaurant and a food court.

Despite the millions invested and lost on these projects, city and county leaders are moving ahead with perhaps their most massive undertaking ever—the \$800 million “River’s Edge” project by the county and a city-driven “river balcony” that has yet to be assigned a cost.

Saint Paul is and always has been a mid-tier American city. It is currently ranked the 63rd largest city in the nation. Its population suffered a sharp decline after 1960 when the number of residents peaked at 313,411. As of the 2020 U.S. Census, we are still about 3,000 residents short of that number despite decades of effort.

Does Saint Paul really need a “river promenade” that may cost us well over \$1 billion if not \$2 billion? I think not. I also think the numbers used to justify the promenade make no sense.

As reported in the March 9 *MyVillager*, some “2.9 million people are expected to visit the river balcony each year.” But those visitors are not unique individuals. “Most of its users will be residents of downtown and the West Side,” *MyVillager* reports, and the 2.9 million is the number of times they will visit it. About 7,500 people live downtown, according to my sources. Roughly 15,000 people live on Saint Paul's West Side. Each of these 22,500 people would have to visit 65 times in order to generate half of the projected 2.9 million visits.

Some may argue that visitors to Xcel Energy Center and various other Saint Paul attractions will use the river balcony. How many of them would not come to see a game or an exhibit without this investment in the river balcony? Others may argue that the funds largely will come from elsewhere. So what? Even if someone were to give the city and county every nickel needed to construct the promenade, it would still require daily and annual maintenance costs and likely create a large demand on law enforcement resources, assuming it can be made safe after dark in a downtown already severely challenged in that regard.

One last point to consider: The New York City Highline designed by James Corner Field Operations, a consultant on the Saint Paul project, reportedly attracts about 8 million visitors per year. The Highline is in the heart of Manhattan, which has a population of 1.6 million—more than five times the population of Saint Paul. Yet our city expects that its promenade will draw more than one-third of those who visit the Highline.

Saint Paul has far more pressing needs than a tourist attraction intended to revive a downtown that is no longer relevant to most of the city's residents. Let's devote our energies to those residents.

James M. Hamilton lives in Macalester-Groveland.

INBOX

Our place in the sun

I read with interest your article about plans for a solar array atop Area C at the former Ford Plant (*MyVillager*, March 9). Hopefully, the array would not inhibit the necessary cleanup of the toxic and heavy metal waste buried below the site. I'm all for the solar installation, but I question why Xcel Energy needs \$3 million to possibly move the array. Typically, solar photovoltaic (PV) investments are amortized over 20 years, since the efficiency of solar cell installations decreases over time.

New construction is the perfect opportunity for buildings and homes to integrate passive solar designs and active PV arrays so that they don't look like unplanned add-ons. With LEED building standards and solar and geothermal energy systems, the entire Highland Bridge development could have a carbon-neutral footprint or even net gains of green energy. To deal with our urgent and continuing climate crisis, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by changing our conventional building and energy practices. We need to seize the best opportunities for sustainable development.

*Terry Brueck
Merriam Park*

Becoming Minneapolis

I was shocked to read the Crime Report in the February 23 issue of *MyVillager*. It was the longest one I remember reading. The spooky thing about it is, it all happened in the winter when crime is usually lower. I hate to think what is going to happen with crime in the city when it starts to warm up. I think Saint Paul has been fully transformed into a rainbow and unicorn city. We have become like Minneapolis.

*Greg Mulally
Highland Park*

Taxing UST

If the University of Saint Thomas can offer \$61.4 million to purchase the Town and Country Club golf course for the sake of its NCAA Division I athletics program, couldn't it pony up a few million dollars towards the city of Saint Paul's and Ramsey County's enormous needs? After all, UST is pulling in \$62,476 per student for tuition, room and board, books and supplies. Its staff and students all benefit from plowed and swept streets, boulevard lighting, tree maintenance, hundreds of free parking spaces scattered about the neighborhood, police protection, a fire department, on-call ambulance services and a myriad of other city and county benefits. I think it could afford to pay some property taxes and should start tomorrow.

*Bob Brereton
Macalester-Groveland*

School Board is off the rails

After weeks of delay, the Saint Paul School Board finally addressed its mask requirement on March 22, voting 3-2 to continue to require masks. Public comment at the meeting was nearly unanimous in support of dropping the requirement. The Saint Paul Public Schools remains one of the few places anywhere that require masks.

Of the seven School Board members, only Jessica Kopp and Jim Vue voted to follow public health recommendations and drop the requirement. Chauntyll Allen, Halla Henderson and Uriah Ward voted in favor of the outdated rule. At recent board meetings, these three have spent more time discussing the pros and cons of hiring union workers for construction jobs and “divesting” from fossil-fuel companies than issues that actually affect students.

Board member Zuki Ellis has found time to run for a state Senate seat, but could not make it to the meeting. Neither could Jeanelle Foster, who also recently waffled on whether she even wanted to be on the board, missing the deadline to file for reelection but nonetheless winning a two-year term.

Saint Paul is stuck. Last fall's School Board election lacked a candidate who would even hint that some part of the year of COVID school closures could have been a mistake. Our children are being held hostage by uninformed board members who refuse to follow public

health recommendations. What can a parent do except withdraw from the system and keep it on its downward spiral?

*Shari Albrecht
Merriam Park*

Good and bad of Hwy. 5 plan

We are huge fans of public transit and take bus rapid transit and light rail transit to the airport all the time. Fixing the currently awful bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Highway 5 bridge is a wonderful idea (*MyVillager*, March 9). But the idea of having Riverview Corridor streetcars running in mixed traffic on Highway 5 with motor vehicles having to stop to let the streetcars pass should be abandoned. Surely, this would be a huge inconvenience and likely result in increased accidents with high-speed traffic having to stop while every streetcar passes.

*Bruce Jacobs
Highland Park*

The rest of the story

In an editor's note in the Inbox of the February 23 issue, *MyVillager* reported that according to the state Department of Health, more than half of the Minnesotans who tested positive for COVID-19 in December had been vaccinated and about a third of those who were hospitalized or died of COVID-19 during that month had been vaccinated. However, by not reporting the total number of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in Minnesota, your numbers were misleading. They seem to suggest that vaccination does not provide significant protection.

What you did not report was that there are more than twice as many fully vaccinated than unvaccinated people in Minnesota. Assuming the numbers you reported are correct, this means that unvaccinated people are seven times more likely than vaccinated people to be hospitalized or die. That sends a very different message.

*Mark Davis
Macalester-Groveland*

A whole other neighborhood

At the Highland Library, a branch of the Saint Paul Public Library, a woman approached me and asked for help. Afterward she said, “Thanks. I just moved here. I'm not from here.”

“Oh? Where are you from?” I asked, thinking she would say maybe, “Ohio.”

“The Midway,” she said.

*Elizabeth Ellis
Summit-University*

Hormonal imbalance

I tucked the January 26 issue of *MyVillager* in an out of the way part of the car, and only just got around to reading it in March. I do appreciate the journalism. I also agree with most everything written about the state of motoring around the metro area by Ms. Nelson in her letter to the editor, “The mania of some motorists,” except for the characterization that it is a “testosterone-fueled competition.” A lot if not most of the aggressiveness that I am witnessing on the roads is not done by individuals with a “Y” chromosome, so I am not sure it can be attributed to testosterone. This characterization is not accurate by any stretch of the imagination.

*Mark Destache
Summit Hill*

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 55105-1208, email it to letters@myvillager.com or submit it via our website at myvillager.com/editorial. The views expressed are not the views of MyVillager.

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Sanitary tunnel repairs—Repairs of a sanitary tunnel shaft at Ford Parkway and Woodlawn Avenue began on March 28. The work is expected to take four weeks and will reduce westbound Ford to one traffic lane between Woodlawn and Mount Curve Boulevard.

Blue Line/Riverview study—Ramsey County is undertaking an 18-month study on plans to connect the proposed Riverview Corridor streetcar line to the light-rail Blue Line. A virtual open house will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 31. Register at bit.ly/331openhouse.

Board candidates—The Highland District Council will hold online board elections from April 7-12. Up for election will be one representative for each of the even-numbered grids, along with two at-large positions. Call the HDC office or email Kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org to request a mail-in ballot. Learn more, meet the candidates and vote at bit.ly/HDCElection22.

Annual meeting—The HDC's annual meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 7, at Lumen Christi, 2055 Bohland Ave. A virtual option will be available in addition to the in-person event and posted at bit.ly/HDCElection22. Send questions for a presentation on crime prevention to info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org by April 5.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Board elections—Applications to run for the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's board of directors will be accepted through April 14. Apply online at macgrove.org/boardelections or pick up a form at 320 S. Griggs St. Board elections will take place April 21-28. An informational session on becoming a board member will be held at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, via Zoom. Register at macgrove.org/event/board-interest-session.

Annual meeting—The community council will host its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21, via Zoom. Participants will learn about the city's new Office of Neighborhood Safety from director Brooke Blakey and meet Saint Paul district council coordinator Cat Beltmann. Register at macgrove.org/event/annualmeeting2022.

Egg hunt—Join the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation and the Macalester-Groveland Community Council for an egg hunt, petting zoo and other activities from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at Mattocks Park. Admission is free. Visit macgrove.org/events for information.

Safety in the city—The University of Saint Thomas will hold a conversation about crime trends and public safety from 10:30 a.m.-noon Saturday, April 2, in Room 100 at McNeely Hall, 2060 Summit Ave. The discussion will include Brooke Blakey of the city's Office of Neighborhood Safety, Saint Paul crime prevention coordinator Patty Lammers and UST public safety director Dan Meuwissen. Register at 651-962-6123 or age@stthomas.edu.

Upcoming meetings—Community Building Team at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 11, via Zoom. For log-in details, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Spring plant sale—Orders for the Summit Hill Association's spring plant sale are due by April 7. The plants will be ready for pickup at the Linwood Recreation Center on April 29. Visit SummitHillAssociation.org/donate.

Adopt a drain—The SHA is encouraging residents to keep the Mississippi River water clean by clearing debris in streetside storm drains. Sign up at adopt-a-drain.org.

Summit Master Plan—The city of Saint Paul continues to collect opinions on the future of Summit Avenue. Visit the Engage Saint Paul website at engagestpaul.org/summit to comment and take a brief survey. A virtual drop-in session will be held from 12:30-1 p.m. Wednesday, April 13. Visit tinyurl.com/4csfhwm.

Upcoming meetings—Neighborhood Plan Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 5; Communications Committee, 7 p.m. Thursday, April 7; and Zoning and Land Use Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 12. For Zoom log-in information, visit SummitHillAssociation.org/calendar.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Committees combined—The UPDC has merged its Environment and Parks Committee and its Neighborhood Involvement Committee. The joint meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month.

Upcoming meetings—Joint Transportation Committee, 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 6; board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 6; and Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 11. See unionparkdc.org/calendar for the Zoom links.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Board notes—At its March 14 meeting, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation board voted to send a letter to the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority supporting the acquisition and development of the CP Railway spur. Work continues on the Equitable Development Scorecard at the Transportation and Land Use Committee level.

Annual meeting—The Fort Road Federation's annual meeting will take place at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 26, at the Summit Ratskeller, 910 Montreal Circle. The keynote speaker will be Brooke Blakey, director of Saint Paul's new Office of Neighborhood Safety. Six new board members also will be elected at the meeting.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, via Zoom. For meeting details, visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

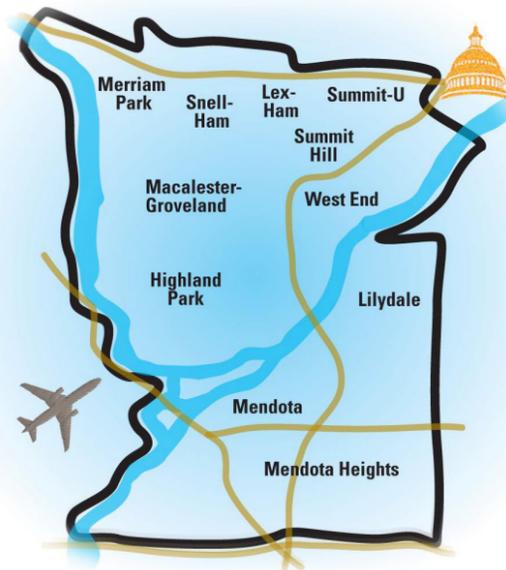
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Royal Shade & Awning hits 100-year milestone

By FRANK JOSSI

Royal Shade & Awning, which is currently celebrating a century of covering the windows of Twin Cities homes, was a one-person operation for many years under owner Steve Matovitz. The shop, which has been located on Fairview and Saint Clair avenues since the 1970s, eventually came into the hands of employee Fred Dreier, who turned it into a family-run business spanning three generations.

Dreier died in 2015, just shy of his 86th birthday. His daughter, Sue Kortum, remembers her father saying he began working for Royal Shade as a teenager. He would ride his bike to deliver or pick up blinds from customers who needed them fixed or cleaned. "They did a lot of window shade cleaning back then," she said.

Kortum said the store had no grand plans for a 100th-anniversary celebration, though she had considered something along the lines of getting commemorative pens. She recounted the family's history with Royal Shade and the involvement of her husband and son, both named Mike, for many years.

The shop operated out of a few different locations before moving to its current spot at 244 S. Fairview Ave. more than a half-century ago. Her father had maintained

"It's traditional," said son Mike Kortum Jr. "Every day is different and it's a throwback to how things were."

the store on Selby Avenue near Chatsworth Street for many years before Saint Paul police suggested he move out of the then-dangerous neighborhood. The building had been the victim of arson and robberies. Miscreants also broke the store's windows, leading Dreier to board them up.

Royal Shade moved to University Avenue near Highway 280 before coming to its current home in Macalester-Groveland in 1971. Kortum began working full time with her dad in 1973, her husband and son joining her later. While sitting in the charmingly disheveled showroom, Kortum said much of today's business involves installing new blinds, although repairs also keep the staff busy. At least three people dropped by within 30 minutes on a recent day.

"If customers are just getting a window shade or two fixed, they'll come in here," Kortum said. "But otherwise, we usually go to the house to measure for in-



Mike Kortum Jr. shows off some of the offerings found at Royal Shade & Awning in Macalester-Groveland. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

terior window projects and exterior awning jobs."

Roller shade styles come and go, only to return in popularity once again. Kortum said that window coverings with scalloped semicircular edges at the bottom have made a comeback. Window coverings with trim have a strong customer base among people who own historic homes. "Especially around here, those shades look good in many houses," she said.

The top seller continues to be honeycomb shades because they offer flexibility. The shades can be pulled down from the top or up from the bottom, which Kortum said is an option most conventional shades do not offer.

Pulling the top down allows homeowners "to get more light, but still have privacy," she said. Honeycombs do not have a

pull cord on the side like many shades. Instead, a handle at the bottom provides the mechanism for pulling them down. Some homeowners complain that the interior cords are exposed when honeycombs open at the top, but the shades would not function without them.

Another popular style are sheer shades that cover a window, yet still allow light in. "During the day, they're nice because you don't feel so enclosed in the room that you're in," Kortum said.

The other style many homeowners seek are stylish 2-inch wooden blinds that look a cut above the standard ones.

Mike Kortum married into the shade business and still loves it after decades of serving customers. "I like meeting different people every day and seeing their houses," he said. "Everybody is

proud of their homes. It seems like the owners of every house I go into will walk me through and show me the addition they put on or the special fireplace they put in or the new bathroom. Everyone has something special."

Royal Shade also stores awnings for customers. Leaving awnings on in the winter leaves homes too dark and sometimes damages the awnings, Mike Kortum said. He said before reinstalling awnings in the spring, the company checks to see if they require any repairs.

Son Mike Jr., 38, comes from a generation less likely to buy one of the historic roller shades or awnings of the kind the store sells. Nevertheless, he likes the business because, he said, "it's traditional. Every day is different and it's a throwback to how things were."

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Saint Paul to invest \$14.5M to help property owners get the lead out

By JANE McCLURE

Assistance is flowing in to help Saint Paul property owners remove hazardous lead water pipes. The Saint Paul City Council on March 23 approved using \$4 million in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to help pay for replacing the lead water lines. Later, the city announced that number was expanding to \$14.5 million.

The council's action follows approval by the Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) Board of Water Commissioners of a 10-year plan to replace the roughly 26,600 remaining lead water service lines in the city.

Water utility officials are also keeping an eye on funding at the state Capitol, where lawmakers are considering a \$300 million, 10-year plan to replace lead water pipes statewide. If approved, the state funds could be added to an expected federal allocation of \$43.1 million per year for the next five years.

The water board has been working on its lead pipe replacement plan for several months. Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert, who also serves on the board, said replacing lead water service lines is not only an important public health measure, but can create good-paying jobs. Lead can leach into water from pipes and cause health hazards, especially for pregnant women, infants and young children.

The water utility is facing changing federal regulations that require speeding up lead pipe replacement. The 14 cities served by the water utility have more than 35,000 lead water service lines. Most of the lines in need of replacement are in Saint Paul and average 100 years old.

Water utility staff estimate it will cost more than \$82 million to replace lead water service lines in the public right-of-way, and \$159.3 million on private property. Without the stepped-up, 10-year program, it is estimated that it would take until 2054 to replace all of the public lead water lines at the current rate of about 260 lines a year.

The water line replacement plan approved by the SPRWS divides its service area into 100 zones. The number of zones to be worked on would be based on available funding each year. Priority would be given to zones with vulnerable popula-

Water utility approves 10-year plan to replace the roughly 26,600 remaining lead water service lines in the city.

tions most affected by lead exposure, to multifamily buildings, and to areas where pipe removal could be coordinated with street repairs.

Private lead water service replacement will be offered within the zones at no expense to the property owners, and participation would be voluntary. Customers outside of designated zones for that year could apply for a grant of up to \$2,500 to help cover the expense of private line replacement.

The water utility is assuming to spend \$12.5 million per year, in a combination of grants and loans, during the first half of the 10-year program.

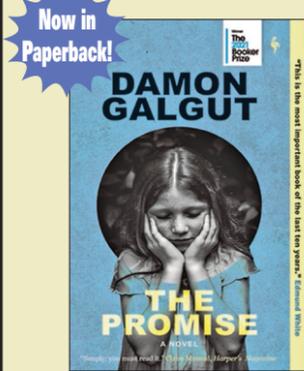
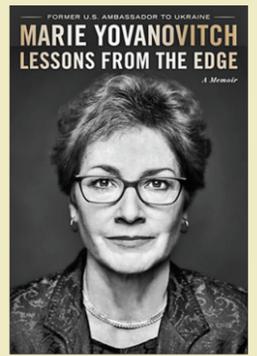
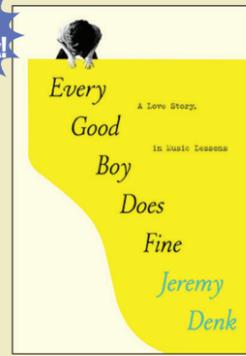
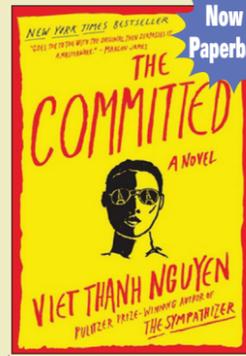
The next steps include identifying the 100 zones, creating an outreach and communications plan, and seeking more funding. The water utility is also looking at developing a work plan, which could include in-house and private crews, and creating a jobs program.

Also on March 8, the water board approved an application for a \$250,000 forgivable loan from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority. The loan would be matched with other revenue sources for a total of \$500,000 to be used for private water line replacement.

One of the challenges discussed by a House committee earlier this year is that of mapping out where lead pipes are located statewide. The federal Environmental Protection Agency is mandating that all public water utilities have lead service pipes inventoried by October 2024. Governor Tim Walz has recommend allocating \$7.5 million over two years to assist in mapping costs alone.

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

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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Robbery—Carjackings at gunpoint were reported on Otto and Alaska avenues and on the 1700 block of Graham Avenue on March 17.

Burglary—A home break-in was reported on the 700 block of Mount Curve Boulevard on March 13.

Theft—A 36-year-old man was arrested after police responded to a theft reported at R.F. Moeller Jeweler, 2065 Ford Pkwy., at 5:31 p.m. on March 13.

Assault—A 24-year-old man was arrested for assault with a knife in the Sibley Plaza parking lot at 7:23 p.m. on March 11. The victim was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported among multiple vehicles on Ford Parkway and Fairview Avenue at 4:55 p.m. March 18.

Miscellaneous—A 42-year-old man was arrested for felony DWI after he crashed through a fence and into pallets of construction material at Cretin Avenue and Ford Parkway at 3:30 p.m. on March 13.

Lexington-Hamline

Assault—A woman was assaulted in the parking lot of Aldi, 1134 University Ave., at 6:10 p.m. on March 10.

—A man was reportedly assaulted by another man after getting into an argument while playing basketball at LA Fitness, 1370 University Ave., at 6:03 p.m. on March 20.

Miscellaneous—A traffic accident involving a pedestrian was reported on Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 3:07 p.m. Thursday, March 17.

Macalester-Groveland

Teen shot—A 19-year-old man was shot in the leg at Plums Neighborhood Grill & Bar, 480 S. Snelling Ave., at 12:30 a.m. on March 11. The man was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Robbery—Three male victims were assaulted by two unknown male suspects during a strong-arm robbery at the Seminaries of Saint Paul, 2260 Summit Ave., at 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 21.

Burglary—An attempted burglary was

Two teens charged in MH auto theft, chase

Two teenage boys were charged with multiple felonies in Dakota County Juvenile Court on March 23 in connection with a car theft and high-speed chase in Mendota Heights. Three other boys involved in the incident were released to their parents. All five are residents of Ramsey County.

Officers were dispatched to a residence on the 1800 block of South Lane at 3 p.m. March 21 in response to a burglary in progress that included the theft of a Tesla Model X. The suspects abandoned the Tesla nearby and were traveling in a blue Hyundai, which had been reported stolen in Saint Paul.

Officers tried to pull over the Hyundai, but the occupants did not stop and were clocked at speeds up to 85 mph. The Hyundai drove off the road at one point before continuing northbound on I-35E toward Highway 62.

The occupants were seen throwing objects out the window of the vehicle, including a purse that belonged to the owner of the Tesla.

The Hyundai began emitting smoke and drove into the Holiday Station on Highway 13 in Lilydale. Five juveniles exited the Hyundai, which had caught on fire, and fled on foot, but were eventually tracked down.

reported at Lucky's Station, 1351 Randolph Ave., on March 21.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—An office was broken into and several packages were stolen from the mailroom of a building on the 700 block of South Plaza Way at 8:56 a.m. on March 14.

Theft—A victim parked at the trail head on the 1600 block of Lilydale Road and returned to find one window damaged, another shattered and a backpack missing at 1:09 p.m. on March 16.

Merriam Park

Theft—The furniture was reported stolen from a porch on the 400 block of Herschel Street around 3:47 p.m. Sunday, March 20.

Sex crime—A 40-year-old man was arrested for indecent exposure after police received a report of a male masturbating in front of Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave., at 5:44 p.m. on March 18.

Weapons—Shell casings were recovered after gunfire was reported on Saint Anthony Avenue and Herschel Street at 11:01 p.m. Thursday, March 10.

Miscellaneous—A 59-year-old man was arrested for DWI after he struck a parked car and pushed it into two other parked cars on the 1800 block of Saint Anthony Avenue at 10:28 p.m. March 20. He fled on foot and was found on the side of I-94.

Snelling-Hamline

Assault—A woman reported being assaulted at the Midway Cub Foods at 11:52 p.m. on March 12.

Miscellaneous—A 45-year-old man was arrested after police received a report of a male trying to break into a residence on the 1500 block of Laurel Avenue at 2:55 a.m. on March 19.

Summit Hill

Grand fight—A male was arrested following a fight at Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., that resulted in multiple police squads responding at 11:43 p.m. on March 18. Ten police officers reportedly met with county deputies who were working off-duty at Billy's and had called for backup.

Theft—A man said he lost his keys in the laundry room of an apartment building on the 700 block of Grand Avenue on March 13 and found his vehicle missing when he left for work the next morning.

—A woman said a suspect in the booth behind her reached around and stole her wallet at 1:19 p.m. on March 19 at the India House, 758 Grand Ave.

Sex crime—A 51-year-old man was arrested for felony criminal sexual conduct on the 700 block of Grand Avenue at 9:19 a.m. on March 9.

Assault—A woman reported being assaulted at Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., at 5:18 p.m. on March 13.

Summit-University

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 600 block of Carroll Avenue at 6 p.m. on March 9.

—A 22-year-old woman was arrested for burglary of Seven Hills Senior Living, 733

Selby Ave., on March 16.

Arson—A fire was reported at Catholic Charities' Saint Christopher Place, 286 Marshall Ave., at 9:40 p.m. on March 18.

Assault—A man was shot in the chest during an assault in an apartment on the 700 block of Marshall Avenue at 12:44 a.m. on March 20. He was taken to the hospital.

Weapons—Officers collected 20 spent shell casings after gunfire was reported on Iglehart Avenue and Milton Street at 1:07 a.m. on March 12.

—Callers reported hearing up to 10 gunshots in the area of Holly Avenue and Avon Street at 11:11 p.m. Saturday, March 19.

—Several shell casings were found in the street following a report of gunfire near the intersection of Concordia Avenue and Grotto Street at 11:07 p.m. on March 22.

Miscellaneous—A 34-year-old man was arrested for DWI after he was driving without his headlights on and struck a police car on Dale Street and Carroll Avenue at 12:53 a.m. on March 12. The squad car had its emergency lights on and was blocking the street due to a serious car crash just to the north. Both officers in the squad were taken to the hospital.

West End

Burglary—An estimated \$15,000 in tools were reported stolen during a burglary of Down and Dirty Automotive, 236 Grand Ave., at 12:36 p.m. on March 7.

—A break-in was reported at Warner's Outdoor Solutions, 590 Randolph Ave., at 10:21 p.m. on March 10.

Arson—A suspicious vehicle fire was reported on the 200 block of Walnut Street at 1:21 a.m. on March 15.

Assault—A 26-year-old man was arrested for felony threats of violence after he flashed a gun at security personnel and then took off running from McGovern's Pub, 225 W. Seventh St., at 7:41 p.m. on March 12.

—A 27-year-old man was arrested for aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon and possession of a gun by an ineligible person after police responded to a call that a man had punched a woman in the face and pointed a gun at her on Sherman and West Seventh streets at 1:25 a.m. Saturday, March 19.

—Three emergency room staff were reportedly assaulted at United Hospital at 10 p.m. on March 19.

Holy Week 2022

Palm/Passion Sunday | April 10
10 a.m. | Sanctuary

Maudy Thursday | April 14
12 p.m. | Elizabeth Chapel
7 p.m. | Sanctuary

Good Friday | April 15
12 p.m. | Elizabeth Chapel
7 p.m. Good Friday Vespers | Sanctuary*
*Childcare available.

Easter Sunday | April 17
7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service | Elizabeth Chapel
9 and 11 a.m. | Sanctuary

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Women, be strong

Author's latest heroine is embroiled in 12th century battle for Holy Land

BY ANNE MURPHY

For S.J. Schwaidelson, putting a new book in the hands of readers is like sending your child off to kindergarten. "You hope the other kids like her, too," she said.

That is especially true of the Mendota Heights author's latest novel. *The Pomegranate* (Wp Press, 2021, 566 pp.) tells the story of Batsheva, the daughter of a Jewish merchant in 12th century Spain who is kidnapped on her journey to be married and in captivity becomes the unwilling concubine of a sheikh. The sheikh joins the battle to defeat the Christian Crusaders of Western Europe who have occupied Jerusalem and the region around it, and Batsheva is drawn into the struggle.

Batsheva is named after Schwaidelson's maternal grandmother. "She was an amazing woman," Schwaidelson said. "Widowed with three children ages 13, 14 and 16, she was left to starve by her husband's brother and business partner, so she went into business for herself. She was the most unassuming woman, but made of steel.

"My genre is strong women in uncommon circumstances," Schwaidelson said. "And Batsheva is everything every woman in a sense aspires to be. She is stronger than she thinks. She thinks like a chess player, always seeing a dozen moves ahead, yet she retains an innate kindness and compassion. She is forthright but skilled at manipulating those who need moving. I think every woman has those qualities and skills. Otherwise, the human race would've died out eons ago."

Batsheva's ability to survive and thrive in captivity is foretold when she is still at home in Spain. Sitting under a pomegranate tree, her mother tells her that "just like a pomegranate, you are full

of seeds of knowledge. You already know what to do and how to do it."

"In every story, there is a kernel of truth," Schwaidelson said. "In this one, there was a girl who was abducted en route to her wedding. It was believed she was given to a local leader as tribute. I made up the rest."

As a backdrop for Batsheva's story, Schwaidelson incorporates the historical conflicts among people of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. "The Crusades are usually presented from the Christian viewpoint," she said. "This is a story about non-Christians dealing with an invasion into their own country."

The novel takes readers from Spain to North Africa to the Middle East where Batsheva is severely wounded in battle and captured by a Crusader who takes her back across the Mediterranean to his home in the north of England. The book includes a map of those continents, a cast of historical characters and a glossary of words and phrases in Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, French and Greek.

Schwaidelson's research for the book included a couple of trips to Israel where she walked the routes that Batsheva followed. "Being there gave me an increased sense of place," she said. "To put my hand on stones laid in the 12th century was just incredible."

Schwaidelson also studied the biographies of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the former queen of France who became queen of England and regent while her son, King Richard the Lionheart, was away on Crusade. "Strong women have always existed," Schwaidelson said. "Eleanor is a prime example, which is why she and Batsheva get along so well."

Schwaidelson strives to make her characters three-dimensional. "You want them to jump off the page," she said, "to be compelling. I've had characters come



Author Susan Schwaidelson at home in Mendota Heights. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

to me in the car and say, 'You know, I wouldn't say that.' When I get home, I'll sit down with that section and decide what has to be said, what is the message and why is that character sitting on my shoulder in the car telling me, 'I wouldn't say that' or 'I wouldn't do that.'"

Schwaidelson, who is originally from New York, moved to the Twin Cities to pursue a master's degree in theater at the University of Minnesota. After meeting her late husband Ziggy, and while raising their two sons, she wrote and directed children's plays.

Her two previous novels and the two novels she is currently working on all present strong women in uncommon circumstances. *Dream Dancer* (2017) tells about a doctoral candidate who travels to Peru to explore a dying culture only to discover a community full of life. In *Lingua Galactica* (2018), a Navy lieutenant and government linguist is stalked by a visiting diplomat and uses her training, strength and intelligence to master her fate.

"Both of the books I'm working on are set in Saint Paul," Schwaidelson said. "Both are contemporary. One is about an arts lawyer, the second is about a woman who designs wedding dresses. Both

characters are strong women, but they're in very different places in their lives and their lives are radically different from each other.

"I have a folder full of first chapters, ideas and character sketches, so I'm never without something to think about if I get bogged down," Schwaidelson said. "I tend not to say 'writer's block' because I can always write, but sometimes the characters are less forthcoming than I'd like, so I put them in novel jail for a bit. Sometimes distancing myself from a character or situation helps me to unravel whatever knot is bugging me."

Schwaidelson's husband once wrote a very successful blog. After his death, she began her own blog in 2010. She titled it, "The Wifely Person Speaks," and has maintained it ever since, focusing on current affairs. "At first I thought I was going to write a widow's blog," she said, "but I was boring myself. Now my blog is read globally. I've had 608 entries since 2010," and as of the second week of March she had totaled 433,465 hits.

"When I'm wearing the 'Wifely Person' hat, it's a different set of brain muscles," Schwaidelson said. "She is my alter ego, and I love her, too."

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Dance

“Firebird,” a preview of a ballet that ventures deep into an enchanted forest where virtuous and malicious forces await, will be presented by Ballet Co.Laboratory in a free program at noon Tuesday, April 12, at Landmark Center. Call 651-292-3063.

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

Music

Virtuoso violinist Grace Park will join the Minnesota Sinfonia in free concerts on April 1 and 2. The program includes Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor by Max Bruch, Petite Suite de Concert by Samuel Coleridge Taylor, L'Arlesienne by Georges Bizet, and “Braving the Unknown” and “Contemplation” by Sinfonia director Jay Fishman. The music begins at 7 p.m. Friday in the Main Auditorium of Metropolitan State University, 700 E. Seventh St., and at 2 p.m. Saturday in the Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis. Children are welcome. Visit mnsinfonia.org or call 612-871-1701.

Works by Minnesota composers will be featured in the BandWidth Music Festival on Sunday, April 3, at Landmark Center. The Northeast Community Band will strike up the music at 12:15 p.m., followed by the Lex-Ham Community Band from 1:30-3 p.m. Admission is free.

Samuel Torjman Thomas and his ensemble ASEFA will perform a mix of Hebraic and Islamic music from North Africa and the Middle East at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 3, in the Chapel of Saint Thomas Aquinas at the University of Saint Thomas. New York violinist Jeremy Brown and Twin Cities percussionist Mick LaBriola will also perform. Admission is free. Masks are required.

The Capital City Brass Quintet and Hopewell Flute Choir will share the stage in a free concert at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 3, at Olivet Congregational Church, 1850 Iglehart Ave. The program will include compositions by Mozart, Faure, Zequinha de Abreu, Nicole Chamberlain, Mark Ballora and others. Masks and social distancing will be required.

Djembe Joy, a class in hand drumming for beginners, will be offered from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. The cost is \$10. Drums are provided. Masks are required. Visit womensdrumcenter.org.

“Le Chemin de la Croix (The Way of the Cross),” Marcel Dupré's musical meditation on the 14 stations of the Passion of Jesus Christ, will be presented at 7 p.m. Friday, April 8, in the Cathedral of Saint Paul. Stephen Hamilton will perform on the Cathedral's pipe organ. Michael Barone will narrate. Admission is free. Donations will be accepted.

Snelling-Hamline guitarist Brandon Henry and his roots rock band Art Vandelay will celebrate the release of their album “Champagne and Chandeliers” in concert



Music for flute, voice and four guitars. The Minneapolis Guitar Quartet will be joined by mezzo-soprano Clara Osowski and flutist Linda Chatterton at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 3, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The concert will include newly commissioned works for guitar quartet and flute by Brazilian composer Clarice Assad and American composer Aaron Travers, new arrangements of songs by Schubert and Joaquin Rodrigo, and compositions by Jeffrey Lambert, Frederic Hand and Alberto Ginastera. Tickets are \$20, \$10 for students. Visit tinyurl.com/MGQ2022.

from 9-11 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at the Aster Cafe, 125 Main St. SE in Minneapolis. Sharing the stage will be j. bell and the Lazy Susan Band. Cover charge is \$15. Call 612-379-3138.

Singer-songwriter Peter Mayer will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 9, at Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 N. Snelling Ave. Tickets are \$25. Call 651-645-2647 or visit ginkgocoffee.com.

Books

Highland Park author Andrew DeYoung will discuss his new novel, *The Temps*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 31, at Black Hart, 1415 University Ave. Reservations are required for this free program sponsored by SubText Books. Visit subtextbooks.com or call 651-493-2791.

A Cracked Walnut Poetry Workshop will be offered from 10 a.m.-noon on Saturday, April 2, in the first floor meeting room of the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy. Admission is free. Participants should bring eight or nine copies of an original poem to share for some constructive criticism. For information or reservations, email the moderator at trinityfritzlawrence@gmail.com.

The Literary Bridges series continues on Sunday, April 3, with a reading of poetry and prose by five writers. Jeanne Lutz, Sherry Quan Lee, Chris Stark, Keno Evol and Emilio DeGrazia will read from their works. The free program begins at 2 p.m. at Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. For information, call 651-225-8989 or visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

Macalester-Groveland author Elliott Foster will discuss and read from his latest novel, *Reckoning Waves*, in a free program at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 3, at Lake Monster Brewing, 550 N. Vandalia St.

Whiteness in Plain View, a new history of racial exclusion in Minnesota, will be discussed by author Chad Montrie at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 6, at East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier St. A history professor at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, Montrie examines the ways white people in Minnesota acted to intimidate, control, keep out and remove Blacks and how that legacy is woven into the culture today. Admission

is free, but registration is required to attend in-person or virtually. Visit eastsidefreedomlibrary.org/events.

Carolyn Holbrook, editor of the anthology *We Are Meant to Rise: Voices for Justice from Minneapolis to the World*, will join contributors Sun Yung Shin, Erin Sharkey and Kevin Yang in a virtual discussion at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 6. Visit facebook.com/events/496354411857743/?ref=newsfeed.

Exhibits

“Mestizaje: Intermix-Remix,” the art of eight Latino artists, is on view through June 12 in the sidewalk and skyway galleries of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, 350 N. Robert St. Marcela Rodríguez Aguilar, María José Castillo, Luis Fitch, Bobby Marines, Dougie Padilla, Maria Cristina Tavera, Xavier Tavera and Vlocke Negro explore what it means to identify as mixed-race. An opening program featuring Padilla and Xavier and Maria Cristina Tavera will be held via Zoom from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, March 31. Visit mmaa.org or call 651-797-2571.

“Documenting a Reckoning: The Murder of George Floyd” is being displayed till June 5 at the Mill City Museum, 704 Second St. S. in Minneapolis. Through 54 images taken by professional and amateur photographers, the exhibit illustrates 11 long months in Twin Cities history, from the murder of Floyd in May 2020 through the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in April 2021. An opening reception will be held from 6-8 p.m. Friday, April 1. It will include a panel discussion with *New York Times* photo editor Brent Lewis, photographers Octavio Jones and Gene Garvin and others whose work is featured. Admission is free. Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available.

The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at Saint Catherine University will display two new exhibits from April 9 through May 22. “Rooted Forward” features the art of St. Kate's students Liz Connors, Mathis “Blue” J. Edwards, Cora Dean-Wyatt, Ellie Leonard, Carolina Lopez, Megan Riley and Theo von Weiss. “Not Here” presents the drawings, prints, collages, illustrated notebooks and cabinets of curiosities of Minneapolis artist Jody Williams. An

opening reception will be held from 5-7 p.m. Saturday, April 9. The students will discuss their art from 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Thursday, May 5. Admission is free. Visit gallery.stkate.edu or call 651-690-6644.

“What Moves Between,” the work of seven artists about to complete their MFA degrees at the University of Minnesota, will be displayed from April 5-23 in the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, 405 21st Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Included are paintings, ceramics, photography, sculpture, video, installation and other works by Prerna, Cody Hilleboe, Taylor Johnson, Stephanie A. Lindquist, Julia Maiuri, Lela Pierce and Hayden Teachout. An opening reception will be held Friday, April 9. Call 612-624-7530 or visit nash.umn.edu.

Theater

Parks, the story of acclaimed black photographer Gordon Parks who at 14 moved to Saint Paul following the death of his mother in 1926, is being staged through April 10 at History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Inspired by Parks' book *A Choice of Weapons*, playwright Harrison David Rivers has crafted a drama about a young man who used a camera to fight back against hatred and discrimination. Kevin Brown stars as Gordon Parks and James A. Williams plays Pigeon Man. Tickets are \$30-\$53. Call 651-292-4323 or visit historytheatre.com.

Thurgood, a one-man show about the first Black justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, is being staged through April 10 at Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St. Lester Purry stars as Thurgood Marshall, renowned jurist, storyteller and architect of the case that desegregated American public schools. Lou Bellamy directs. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 4 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$15-\$40 reserved. Visit penumbra theatre.org or call 651-224-3180.

Jelly's Last Jam will be performed by Theatre Latté Da from March 30 through May 8 at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE in Minneapolis. The Tony Award-winning musical tells the story of Jelly Roll Morton, the classically trained pianist who spread the sounds of ragtime, blues and jazz from the back alleys of New Orleans to the dance halls and clubs of Chicago and New York. Reese Britts stars as Morton and Andre Shoals plays the Chimney Man. Kelli Foster Warder directs. Tickets start at \$35. For reservations, call 612-339-3003 or visit latteda.org.

Benjamin Britten's opera, The Rape of Lucretia, will be performed by An Opera Theatre on April 1-3 at the Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. A woman's body becomes a tool for political ambition and power in this production, which is based on an Ancient Roman tragedy set amidst a war between the Greeks and Romans circa 510 B.C. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. For tickets or information, visit anoperatheatre.org.

The Little Prince, an adaptation of the beloved French novella, will open on April 8 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Engaging for young and old, the classic story of love, loss, hope and what it means to have an open heart tells of a world-weary aviator and the mysterious child he meets while stranded in the desert. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through May 1. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for students. Visit theatreintheround.org or call 612-333-3010.

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

El-Amin revives STA basketball

The Saint Thomas Academy basketball season ended on March 12 with an 89-77 loss to South Saint Paul in the Section 3AAA semifinals. However, that did little to dim one of the most remarkable turnarounds in local high school sports in a long time.

Khalid El-Amin took the reins of a program that had won just five games over the previous two winters. By the end of this season, the Cadets had racked up 16 wins, leaving El-Amin fired up and looking forward to next season.

"The players got better as the season went on," El-Amin said. "The guys caught on quickly. We were able to get them to have the confidence to compete on the court."

Coming from Minneapolis North to STA would seem like a huge culture change. Instead of playing with guys who'd been successful and a part of each other's lives for years, El-Amin dealt with the conundrum that faces all private school teams—getting players from different programs on the same page.

Complicating matters was the fact he had a young team with just one senior and his first two games were against perennial private school powers Cretin-Derham Hall and DeLaSalle—both of whom played in the state boys' basketball tournament last week. The Cadets hung in there against the Raiders in a 63-54 loss, but got squashed by the Islanders 82-50 in their home opener.

El-Amin was unfazed. "I knew we had good athletes," he said. "The guys who weren't playing a fall sport had spent time together in the summer, and the fall sports guys caught up in a hurry."

The evidence of that showed when STA won nine of 11 games from mid-December to late January. One of those was a 63-55 victory in the Capital City Classic over Mound Westonka, a team that also made the state tournament.

STA's lone senior, 6-foot-8 forward Nathan Johnson, averaged 16.4 points per game this season. Junior guards Michael Kirchner and Jack Chamberlain averaged 15.1 and 11.7. What made El-Amin even prouder, however, was how his team improved without the ball. "We put in some defensive rules," he said. "It wasn't easy, but it all came together."

One of the bigger adjustments for El-Amin was a personal one. His son, Isa, made the varsity squad as a freshman guard and appeared in 17 games. "He could've played AAU this year, but he didn't," his father said. "He learned how hard you have to compete to play at the varsity level."

So did the rest of the Cadets, who finished fifth in the Metro East Conference with a 9-7 record, including a 72-70 win over second-place Mahtomedi in early January. "Winning gives you validation and shows you're on the right track," El-Amin said.

WRIGHT CALL ►16



Minnehaha junior Anyiah Reuben wedges her way past two defenders in the Redhawks' 82-29 win over Lake Crystal/Wellcome in state Class AA quarterfinal action on March 16. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

State boys' basketball

Raiders finish third, Redhawks win consolation

BY BILL WAGNER

Cretin-Derham Hall completed its run through the state Class AAAA boys' basketball tournament by beating Eastview 103-95 in a grueling double-overtime win on March 26 to take home the third-place trophy. Not bad for a team that started the season with a 2-5 record.

In the first round of state, the unseeded Raiders (21-11) knocked off No. 2 Owatonna 52-51 on junior forward Adam Tauer's three-pointer as time ran down. CDH then saw its hopes for a Cinderella season dashed with a 59-48 loss to No. 3 Wayzata in the semifinals. Still, given the overall results, coach Jerry Kline Jr. only had good things to say about his squad.

"This was fun to be a part of, and I'm really proud of our kids," he said.

Kline was especially pleased with the way his squad responded against Eastview after suffering the painful defeat to Wayzata in a game in which the Raiders led by four points with less than seven minutes to play.

"That's what happens when you have eight seniors and they just don't want it to end," Kline said.

Senior guard Tre Holloman, a Michigan State commit, ended with 42 points against Eastview, and senior teammate Donavhan Cain added 39.

Kline was quick to give credit to both Holloman and Cain, but also saluted all of those whose play led to the team's success. "Our practice players—our scout team—pushed our starters this season," he said.

Against Wayzata, which defeated the Raiders in last year's state final, Holloman did all he could to try to knock off the Trojans with 21 points, 10 rebounds and six assists.

"Give credit to Wayzata," Kline said, "it had more depth. We had some chances, but we didn't convert. We had some bad shots, but you learn from those games."

The victory over Owatonna came down to the big three-pointer by Tauer with his team trailing by two as the clock ticked down to the final seconds. The game followed an anticipated pattern for Kline.

"We figured that the first team to 50 points would win," he said.

The Raiders went into the tourna-



CDH senior Tre Holloman puts up a shot against a pair of Wayzata defenders in the Class AAAA semifinals on March 24. The Raiders fought hard, but fell 59-48. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

ment on a roll, defeating Tartan and then East Ridge for their third straight Section 4AAAA title. The two wins were by a total of four points.

Redhawks take AA consolation

Minnehaha Academy, in its first year of not having either Jalen Suggs or Chet Holmgren helping them to four straight state titles, had a much harder path to return to the tournament this season. However, with 6-foot-7 senior forward Prince Aligbe leading the way, the Redhawks (19-11) managed a more than creditable finish in their first season back in Class AA.

Fourth-seeded Minnehaha led off with a 71-67 loss to Morris Area/Chokio-Alberta on March 22. The Redhawks bounced back to beat Glencoe-Silver Lake 77-67 and then Pequot Lakes 79-56 to take home the consolation crown.

All in all, it was a very good season for Minnehaha, which started off 1-4 but kept improving.

"I was super-proud of our team," said coach Lance Johnson. "After a rough start to the season, we ended up getting better and better."

The Redhawks got 10 different

players onto the scoresheet in the consolation title game, which was over almost before it started. Their defense held Pequot Lakes to a mere 35 percent on field goal tries.

Minnehaha, meanwhile, shot 55 percent from the field and was nine for 15 on three-pointers. Aligbe, a Boston College commit, had 32 points and six rebounds. Junior guard Leroy Barnes added 11 points, and junior Rolyns Aligbe had eight.

Against Glencoe-Silver Lake, the Redhawks trailed 39-31 at the half. However, they came out strong in the second period. Aligbe again led the way with 29 points. Sophomore forward Mateo Cortes Weiss added 20, Rolyns Aligbe had 11 and junior guard Savion Caine had eight. The Redhawks led for only 3:53 of the entire game, but managed to pull ahead when it mattered most.

Johnson gave a special shoutout to Aligbe, who finished his prep career with a 30-point average.

"Prince had as good a year as any Minnehaha player has ever had," Johnson said.

And considering who some of the players were who came before Prince, that's saying something.

Minnehaha girls rebound to take third

BY BILL WAGNER

Minnehaha Academy's hopes for yet another state girls' basketball title were dashed on March 18 when it got bounced 69-57 in the Class AA semifinals by a Fergus Falls team that was playing in its first-ever tournament. The loss was sandwiched between the Redhawks' 82-29 blowout over Lake Crystal/Wellcome in the opener and nail-biting 53-52 win over Albany to take the third-place trophy.

The loss to second-seeded Fergus Falls came as third-seeded Minnehaha's shots failed to fall the way they had all season. The Redhawks' superb freshman guard Addi Mack had 25 points in the game, though most of those came in the second half after the team finally rebounded from a miserable start. Sophomore Aliyah Al-Hameed finished with 10 points and senior Telia Graham added eight for Minnehaha.

The Otters jumped out to a 17-3 lead that swelled to 35-15 by the half. Min-

nehaha reduced the deficit to seven points late in the second half. However, whenever the Redhawks put on a run, the Otters matched it with a streak of their own.

Minnehaha coach Matt Pryor gave a lot of credit to Fergus Falls, but had a rather grim assessment of the performance of his own club, which had been averaging nearly 80 points a game.

"All season long, we'd been a good

MINNEHaha GIRLS' HOOPS ►16

15◀ WRIGHT CALL

As for what may lie ahead, El-Amin said he's already busy working on next year's schedule. Future non-conference opponents could include such perennial powers as Hopkins and El-Amin's prep alma mater, Minneapolis North. "To be the best, you have to play the best," he said. "We'll be ready."

Scott helped put Saints on baseball map

After nearly 30 years, the Saint Paul Saints are an integral part of the local sports scene. Although they won the Northern League championship in their initial season, the reality was that several folks in attendance viewed the baseball being played at Midway Stadium as simply one part—and not necessarily the main part—of an evening's outing.

That all changed in 1995 when Marty Scott was named the team's manager. Scott had an impressive pedigree from his nearly two-decade stint as a minor league player and manager, and later director of player development for the Texas Rangers. Scott played a key role in the development of such MLB players as Pudge Rodriguez, Juan Gonzalez and Ruben Sierra.

As often happens, a change of ownership brought a change in the baseball hierarchy and Scott found himself out of work. The Rangers' loss was the Saints' gain. Scott understood that there was more than baseball going on at Midway, but he had a knack for getting players to adapt to and ignore what went on between innings. The game between the lines began to interest people more and more during his time running the show.

Scott showed his humanitarian and baseball instincts early in his first season. Doug Dascenzo, who had spent six years in the majors with the Cubs and Rangers, found himself without a job in 1995. At age 31, he came to the Saints' training camp feeling a bit sorry for himself. Scott pulled Dascenzo aside and told him to work hard and a major league taker would be found. Nine games into the season, Dascenzo was off to the Padres' system. He made it back to the bigs a year later. Scott then convinced Dan Peltier and Darryl Morley, both of whom had considerable major league experience, to lead the way on the field. They did and the Saints won their second Northern League championship.

The next year brought a bigger challenge. There were a series of ex-big leaguers on the 1996 Saints. Darryl Strawberry resurrected his career in 40 games and was off to the Yankees. Jack Morris didn't get the offer he wanted and quit after half a season, but he helped a talented 20-year-old southpaw pitcher named Scott Stewart to get his head on straight. Four years later, Stewart was in the majors. As the season went on, other former major leaguers came aboard and – presto! – the team won another Northern League title.

In 1997, left-handed pitcher Ila Borders joined the team in spring training. Scott Leius, who had been with the Twins and White Sox, was in the same camp. In an early intrasquad game, Leius ripped a Borders pitch for a double. The next time Leius was up, Borders snapped off a curveball for a swinging strike. Scott murmured, "She's smart. She remembered what he hit the last time."

Borders made the team, but her regular-season debut was rough when she hit a batter and gave up three earned runs. The next night, Scott ran her back out there and

she struck out the side. A month later, he did Ila a bigger favor. He traded her to Duluth for the simplest of reasons: The Saints had too many southpaws and she wasn't getting enough time on the mound.

That same year, Scott took on J.D. Drew, a terrific hitter who needed to learn how to play the outfield on a daily basis. Drew did so and went on to a solid big league career.

But Scott wasn't all business. One night, he was ejected from a game and found solace underneath the stands from Fargo manager Doug Simunic, who had also been excused by an ump for the evening. The two came up with an idea. Between innings, they came out in sumo wrestling suits, banged into each other and fell down. The crowd went wild. So did league umpire-in-chief Butch Fisher and commissioner Miles Wolff. Both managers got fined \$500, but Wolff, a southern gentleman, made a special request: He asked for the TV tape as a keepsake.

George Tsamis replaced Scott and continued the fine line of playing good baseball and entertaining fans between innings. That has evolved into the current status of the Saints as the Twins' top farm club.

But none of that could've happened if it hadn't been for Scott, the man with the gruff exterior who also had a heart of gold.

Sorry about that, Leo

Correction from the last column. Saint Thomas Academy senior Leo Bluhm took fourth in the 285-pound category at the recent state Class AAA wrestling meet, not 185. Fat fingers strike again.

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

15◀ MINNEHAHA GIRLS' HOOPS

shooting team," Pryor said, "but against Fergus Falls we couldn't hit water if we fell out of a boat."

The Otters out-rebounded the Redhawks 38-22 and had a 20-4 edge in second-chance points. Minnehaha also made only seven of 24 three-point attempts—all of which combined to make it very difficult to win a basketball game.

"We didn't play our best basketball, but

Fergus Falls had a lot to do with that, for sure," Pryor said.

The Redhawks regrouped nicely in the win over Albany the next day at Concordia University. Minnehaha was trailing by 15 before the game was even 10 minutes old. However, it soon got its moxie back. Seventh-grader Ava Cupito became the hero when she hit the winning field goal with just four seconds to play.

"We seemed to have that hangover from the previous game," Pryor said, "but we

started to get it back as the game went on. It was nice to see us come back the way we did."

Mack led Minnehaha against Albany with 15 points, while Angel Hill had 14 and Cupito added 10.

The Redhawks (26-6) went into the playoffs with high hopes and there was little in that first-round game against Lake Crystal/Wellcome to make anyone think they looked vulnerable in any way.

Mack and senior Charita Lewis each

had 14 points to pace the win. Hill had 13, Al-Hameed and Cupito both added 11, and junior Aniyah Reuben contributed 10. Graham had 10 rebounds.

Guards Mack and Lewis both were named to the all-tournament team.

Minnehaha was competing in its 13th state tournament in 15 years. The Redhawks will graduate three seniors this season who contributed major minutes, but Pryor said expectations are running high with the returning players.



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PART-TIME. Seeking enthusiastic and organized customer service phone sales rep to engage with customers at a local flower shop. Rep will work 2-3 days per week and one Saturday per month. Flexible schedule with ability to work FT prior to floral holidays. Intermediate-advanced computer skills are required. Apply in person to: Ann at A. Johnson & Sons Florist, 1738 Grand Ave., St. Paul, 651-695-3225.

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The Timothy A. Sexton Revocable 2021 Trust, Timothy A. Sexton as trustee, both of Randalia, Iowa; the Thomas J. Sexton Revocable Trust, Thomas J. Sexton as trustee, both of St. Paul, Minnesota; the Mark J. Sexton Grantor Trust, Mark J. Sexton as trustee, both of St. Paul, Minnesota; the Jennifer S. Walther Grantor Trust, Jennifer S. Walther as trustee, both of St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Andrew G. Sexton Grantor Trust, St. Paul, Minnesota, Andrew G. Sexton as trustee, Cedar Falls, Iowa, intend to apply for permission to become members of the Sexton Family Control Group, a group acting in concert, to retain voting shares of Britt Bancshares, Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota, and thereby indirectly retain voting shares of First State Bank, Britt, Iowa. The Federal Reserve considers a number of factors in deciding whether to approve the application/notice including the record of performance of banks in helping to meet local credit needs. You are invited to submit comments in writing on this application/notice to Colette A. Fried, Assistant Vice President Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60604. The comment period will not end before April 19, 2022, and may be somewhat longer. The Board's procedures for processing applications/notices may be found at 12 C.F.R. Part 262. Procedures for processing protested applications/notices may be found at 12 C.F.R. 262.25. To obtain a copy of the Federal Reserve Board's procedures, or if you need more information about how to submit your comments on the application/notice, contact Jeremiah Boyle, Assistant Vice President for Community and Economic Development at (312) 322-6023; to request a copy of an application, contact Colette A. Fried at (312) 322-6846. The Federal Reserve will consider your comments and any request for a public meeting or formal hearing on the application/notice if they are received in writing by the Reserve Bank on or before the last day of the comment period.

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