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Sixth Chamber Used Books owner James Williams redistributes some of his merchandise as he prepares for the March closing of his Grand Avenue store. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Grand Ave.'s retail landscape is changing

Several longtime merchants are squeezed out by rising costs, new market pressures

BY CRAIG LEE

Grand Avenue has been one of the Twin Cities' premier business districts for decades. Several new restaurants and mixed-use commercial and residential buildings have opened along its three-plus miles in just the past year. However, a closer look at the storefronts suggests a changing business climate. Several longtime Grand Avenue businesses have closed in the recent past or are planning to close in the

next few months. They include Baby Grand, Traditions Classic Home Furnishings, Bibelot Shop, Sixth Chamber Used Books, Wild Onion, Grand Shanghai Express and Axel's Bonfire.

Their reasons for closing are many, from higher rents to retirement to a new generation of buyers and the growing competition of on-line retailers. Some business owners cited the large property tax increases of recent years and the higher costs brought about by city mandates for paid time off and a \$15 minimum wage.

Late last fall St. Paul increased the minimum wage for nearly all employees in the city to \$15 per hour. It also adopted a 10.5 percent increase in its property tax levy that, together with a 4.3 percent

GRAND BUSINESS CLIMATE ▶ 7

City seeks large increase in local government aid from state in '19

Criminal justice reform, housing assistance also sought from Legislature

BY JANE MCCLURE

Criminal justice reform, an increase in local government aid, more assistance for affordable housing and for immigrants, and the legalization of marijuana top the city of St. Paul's legislative agenda for 2019. The City Council adopted the 10-page agenda in December in anticipation of the January 8 opening of the Minnesota Legislature's new session.

St. Paul's allocation of local government aid (LGA) from the state peaked at about \$75 million in 2003. Since then, it has remained flat or been cut to help balance the state's budget. Currently, St. Paul is receiving \$65.2 million in LGA per year, or a little over half of the LGA it received in 2003 when adjusted for inflation, according to the city's Office of Financial Services.

Using a complex formula involving tax capacity, tax rates, population and city needs, St. Paul should be receiving about \$106 million in LGA in 2019, according to city staff.

St. Paul is not alone in feeling the pinch from LGA, city officials said. "The Minnesota Department of Revenue calculated that the statewide unmet need in the LGA formula for

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VINE PARK BREWING ▶ 3

Vine Park gives Hmong a taste of craft beer scene

BY FRANK JOSSI

A fixture on the Twin Cities' home-brewing scene for over two decades, Vine Park Brewing on West Seventh Street has become what is believed to be the first Hmong-owned brewery in the country. Four Hmong businessmen were brewing at Vine Park early last year when they jokingly suggested that they buy the brewery from longtime owner Andy Grage. Not long after, the two parties got serious, and they closed the deal over the summer.

"We enjoy craft beer, and we wanted to introduce craft beer to the Hmong people," said

Nhiasing Moua. He and fellow Vine Park owners Tou Thao, Touyer Moua and Fang Jai Thor had been brewing their own beer at home for over four years and were working on perfecting 651 Tyga Bite (aka *Tsov Tom* in Hmong), a premium ale that had attracted a following among friends and family.

A friend suggested the group could brew larger batches at Vine Park and they began making sojourns to the brewery and working with Grage on ways to improve 651 Tyga Bite. When they suggested buying Vine Park, Grage said he was willing to sell and had a price in mind. The Hmong men came back with five pages of ques-

tions, which he answered, and a deal was made.

"It's a good fit and it feels right," Grage said. "I grew up in Duluth, and I didn't know any Hmong people or anything about their food or culture. They've made it easy by treating me as family and by giving me an opportunity to experience their culture and food. It's been a great relationship."

Vine Park was a pioneer in the home-brewing movement in the Twin Cities. Founded in 1995 by David and Scott Thompson at 242 W. Seventh St., Vine Park started out as a place where people



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County lobbies state for more assistance

More stable recycling market, more money for transit studies are also sought from Legislature

By JANE McCLURE

The Ramsey County Board unanimously adopted a 17-page legislative agenda in December supporting efforts to improve the health, safety and well-being of residents and to provide new investments in low-income neighborhoods.

Jennifer O'Rourke, Ramsey County's director of intergovernmental relations, will be leading the lobbying effort during the Minnesota Legislature's 2019 session, which began on January 8.

The county agenda addresses a wide range of issues in the areas of health and human services, public safety, criminal justice and corrections, parks, voting, mass transit, libraries and public works.

Many of the requests are technical amendments to existing state laws. Others are pleas for changes at the federal and state level to ease county budgetary

constraints. Still others are for an extension of state funding for various health and human services, corrections, public health and transit programs.

Among the requests are new child care options for low-income working families, more funds for people with disabilities and increased protections for seniors and vulnerable adults.

The county is calling for more housing for veterans, low-income or homeless people, and people with mental illnesses or disabilities. The county is working with the Association of Minnesota Counties to seek more money for veterans' services offices statewide.

The county will also be lobbying for the statewide coordination of markets for recyclable materials. "Domestic and international markets for recycled materials have been volatile, making it difficult for counties to reliably move what they collect to manufacturers," the

county agenda states. It is also calling for a new public-private partnership to promote the local use of recyclable materials.

Though a bonding bill is not a major focus of the 2019 legislative session, Ramsey County is requesting funding this year for several capital projects.

The county is seeking \$2 million for continued engineering and environmental studies of the Riverview Corridor transit project, a proposed streetcar line linking downtown St. Paul to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington. The county is offering to match the state's \$2 million with \$2 million of its own funds.

The county would also like \$2 million for continued studies of the 14-mile Rush Line, a bus rapid transit project linking St. Paul's Union Depot to the city's northeastern suburbs.

The county is also seeking \$2.13 million to finance new snow-making equipment in Battle Creek Park on the city's East Side.



Although a new two-year budget is the focus of the Minnesota Legislature's 2019 session, St. Paul will be lobbying for \$58 million in bonding to replace the RiverCentre parking ramp (above) and the adjacent Kellogg Boulevard bridge.

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1 ◀ LEGISLATIVE WISH LIST

2019 is \$814.6 million," the city's legislative agenda stated. "However, that funding is now capped at \$534.4 million."

Increasing the state's allotment of LGA has been a city priority for many years. That aid is used to fund city services and to hold down property taxes. At \$65.2 million, LGA makes up about 23 percent of St. Paul's general fund budget. Local property taxes account for about \$156 million of that budget in 2019.

City lobbyists will also be seeking legislative support for other city revenues, including a continuation of the Twin Cities area's fiscal disparities tax base sharing program and a 1 percent increase in the city lodging tax. The lodging tax pays for the tourism promotions of the St. Paul Convention & Visitors Bureau. It has been in place since 1970 and was last revised in 2004. The tax is 3 percent on hotels and motels with 50 or fewer rooms and 6 percent on hotels and motels with more than 50 rooms.

ThaoMee Xiong, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter's director of intergovernmental relations, described the legislative agenda as a "values document" for St. Paul and an extension of the priorities in the mayor's proposed 2019 city budget. The agenda includes many longstanding requests, such as additional money for streets, bicycle facilities and parks. It also reiterates the city's opposition to any attempts by the Legislature to reduce local governmental control over such issues as the minimum wage and employee benefits such as paid time off.

St. Paul officials created a \$10 million affordable housing trust fund with the city's 2019 budget. They hope to invest a total of \$71 million in affordable housing over the next three years. At the Capitol, the city will be seeking matching

state funds for local housing trust funds, support for senior housing and housing to combat long-term homelessness, and support for the rehabilitation of existing housing in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The city will be lobbying for several public safety initiatives, including background checks on all gun sales, more protections for the victims of gun violence, and greater efforts to combat sex trafficking.

Noting that nearly 20 percent of St. Paul residents are foreign-born, the city's legislative agenda supports increased help for immigrants, including more assistance in obtaining drivers' licenses, more interpreters at the polls, and more help for immigrants who have been convicted of a crime in finding employment and housing.

In the area of criminal justice, the city is seeking a reduction in the consequences for people who cannot pay their fines for low-level driving offenses, offering them alternative dispositions such as restitution or treatment. The city is requesting a faster process for restoring felons' voting rights and additional resources for first-responders who deal with people in mental health crises. The city is also calling for the legalization of marijuana for recreational use along with the expungement of nonviolent marijuana-related drug offenses.

The City Council voted 6-1 in December to include the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in the legislative agenda. Ward 1 City Council member Dai Thao introduced the resolution. According to him, "the legalization of recreational marijuana would reduce racial disparities, support economic growth and improve health solutions."

The Minnesota chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has reported

that the state spent as much as \$69 million enforcing marijuana laws in 2010, Thao stated. Legalizing its use for more than just medical reasons would further evidence-based health research, open new avenues for entrepreneurship and expand the tax base, he added.

Outgoing City Council member Dan Bostrom voted against the measure. A retired police sergeant, he said he is concerned about the impacts marijuana use would have on impaired driving.

Though a bonding bill is not a major focus of the Legislature's 2019 session, the city is requesting funding this year for several capital projects. The city is seeking \$48 million to replace the Third Street/Kellogg Boulevard Bridge between downtown St. Paul and Dayton's Bluff. The bridge, which dates from 1982, has weight limits in place because of its deteriorated condition.

The city is seeking \$58 million to replace the RiverCentre parking ramp and the adjacent Kellogg Boulevard bridge, according to Xiong. St. Paul spent more than \$2 million in 2018 to repair the eight-level, 1,600-space parking ramp after a chunk of ceiling concrete fell on a vehicle. The parking ramp was closed for several months while netting was installed throughout to prevent concrete from falling.

The city is seeking \$3 million for a new environmental learning center at Watergate Marina on the Mississippi River in Highland Park and \$600,000 to complete the Trout Brook/Gateway recreational trail through St. Paul's North End and East Side into downtown.

The city is also supporting bonding requests for a new YMCA at the former Ecolab/360 Osborne building on Wabasha Street and \$3 million for the renovation of the old Victoria Theatre on University Avenue and Victoria Street.

Design unveiled for new Dale Street bridge over I-94

By Jane McClure

Ramsey County Department of Public Works officials unveiled a new design on January 9 for the Dale Street bridge over I-94 that features 16-foot-wide pedestrian plazas on either side and public art commemorating the old Rondo neighborhood that flourished in the area prior to the building of I-94.

More than 100 people turned out for the unveiling at Rondo Library to learn about the design of the bridge and the rebuilding of Dale Street between University and Iglehart avenues. The project will take place in 2020—or three years after the original start date. The delay gave the county more time to engage people in the design process, and they were visibly pleased with the results.

The existing Dale Street bridge was built in 1961 along with the rest of I-94 and renovated in 1983. It will be demolished in two stages beginning in January 2020. The plan is to keep one lane of traffic open in either direction throughout. The entire project is scheduled to be largely completed by the fall of 2020. Ramsey County has received \$6 million in federal funds for the project and provided a \$5 million local match.

Bridge design is about 30 percent complete. The current bridge has two lanes of traffic in each direction, limited left-turn space and five-foot sidewalks. The new bridge will have 16-foot-wide pedestrian plazas on either side, four-foot shoulders that will be available for



The Dale Street bridge over I-94 (seen from the southwest) will be reconstructed in 2020 with two 16-foot-wide pedestrian plazas and more room for bicycles and cars.

bicycles, two 11-foot traffic lanes in either direction, and 12-foot left-turn lanes.

Dale Street will have medians separating the lanes of traffic between Carroll and Concordia avenues and between St. Anthony and Fuller avenues. Corner bumpouts will be added on some of the streets that intersect with Dale Street to improve pedestrian safety. The northeast corner of Dale and St. Anthony Avenue will have both a straight sidewalk and a winding sidewalk to the north to ease the way for pedestrians who may struggle with the steep slope. New traffic signals will be installed with audible instructions for pedestrians with visual disabilities and “walk” signs that give pedestrians a head start in getting across the street.

Storm sewers will be upgraded to resolve

longstanding problems of water ponding in the area. Sidewalks and streetlights north and south of the bridge will be improved. Abutting property owners will not be assessed for the street work, but they will help pay for the above-standard street lighting at a rate of about 86 cents per frontage foot.

The final bridge plans will be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Transportation late this summer with a decision anticipated in September. The contract for construction will be awarded in November.

People attending the meeting on January 9 generally liked what they saw, especially the pedestrian improvements and the public art. The art will have a “We Are Rondo” theme. It will be created by the team of Mica Anders, Hawana Sullivan Janzen and G.E. Patterson,

all of whom have worked under acclaimed St. Paul artist Seitu Jones.

Panels below the bridge will show stylized maps of Rondo as it looked prior to the building of I-94. The map design will also be used on the bridge’s sidewalk expansion joints. Panels in the bridge railing will honor the Rondo neighborhood, as will two large metal trees, one on each side of the bridge.

The dance steps for the Lindy hop will be re-created in a leaf pattern on the sidewalk approach panels. A poem will be embedded in the sidewalks so that it can be read both backwards and forward. The words “We Are Rondo” will appear on the bridge kneewalls in multiple languages, and the bridge piers will have embedded concrete designs reflecting area homes.

Questions were raised at the meeting about hiring for the project, especially the hiring of people of color and women. Ramsey County recently adopted a workforce equity plan, which will be used in the hiring for the bridge project, according to county workforce specialist John O’Phelan.

Ramsey County will be working with such local agencies as Ujamaa Place and the YWCA to get more people into building trades apprenticeship and training programs, O’Phelan said. These people could be hired for the reconstruction of Dale Street and other future projects, he added. Hiring goals will be announced this summer, but they are expected to be approximately 30 percent for people of color and 20 percent for women.

1 ◀ VINE PARK BREWING

could bring in their own recipes and produce larger batches of their favorite brew. Grage bought Vine Park in 2003, moved it to 1254 W. Seventh St. and continued the home-brewing business while adding wine making facilities and the sale of 64-ounce growlers of beer to go.

Today, brewers at Vine Park can choose from among 60 different recipes for making a minimum of six cases (72 bottles) of beer. Putting the ingredients together takes less than two hours. After fermentation, the brewers return two weeks later to bottle their creations.

“When they return, it’s cold, carbonated and ready to drink,” Grage said.

The recipe for 651 Tyga Bite is one of Vine Park’s most popular. Based on a slang term in Hmong that can be positive or negative, depending on the situation, Tyga Bite has become a mainstay of celebrations in the Twin Cities Hmong community, which now numbers more than 68,000.

“A light cream ale brewed with rice, Tyga Bite serves as an introduction for many Hmong to the craft beer scene,” Moua said.

After some experimentation, Moua and his

partners believed they had succeeded in improving the beer. They unveiled it at last year’s Hmong Freedom Festival in Como Park, and received an overwhelmingly positive response. In fact, they ran out.

Without a marketing campaign of any sort, 651 Tyga Bite can now be found in about 20 liquor stores across the Twin Cities. The beer and the brewery have generated interest far beyond Minnesota’s borders, Moua said, with inquiries from Wisconsin, Texas, Oklahoma, North Carolina and other states with significant Hmong populations.

Locally, the beer has become a staple of Hmong weddings and funerals, both of which last several days and involve plenty of food and drink. Hmong tend to like lighter beers, according to Moua, and not the hoppy IPAs that dominate many craft pubs in the Twin Cities.

Tyga Bite “is a clean, crisp, refreshing beer that’s low in alcohol,” Moua said, and it has served as a pleasing introduction to Vine Park’s other craft beers, with more than a few customers asking to taste the brewery’s walnut brown ale and other beers available in growlers.

A simple name change worked wonders for one of those growler lines. Vine Park’s blond

“For 14 years this was a mom-and-pop operation and I was happy,” Grage said. “Now I’m working harder than I have in years and I’m having more fun than I’ve had in a long time.”



Vine Park Brewing owners Fang Jai Thor, Nhiasing Moua and Tou Thao pour their signature 651 Tyga Bite beer. Co-owner Touyer Moua is not pictured.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

ale had not been selling well until Grage suggested the owners give it a Hmong name. It became Poj Laib Blond Ale, taken from the term for “bad girl” in Hmong.

Only one of the new owners, Thor, works at the brewery full time along with Grage. Thor is a former owner of Sushi Sushi in downtown St. Paul. The other three partners are aerospace engineers. “We have three engineers and one artist (Thor),” Moua said. “(Thor) is 28 and moved to the country just six years

ago, and now he’s an owner of a brewery.” Thor and Grage brew together daily. It is Grage’s way of passing on his expertise from one generation to the next and from one culture to another.

“For 14 years this was a mom-and-pop operation and I was happy,” Grage said. “Now I’ve sold Vine Park to these guys and they’re unique in the brewing world. Now I’m working harder than I have in years and I’m having more fun than I’ve had in a long time.”

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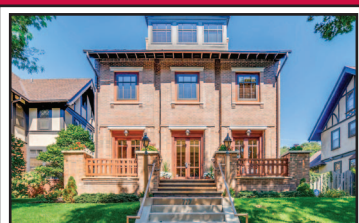
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Higher Ground shelters more homeless

By JANE McCLURE

Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis can add temporary floor mats to shelter the homeless this winter and more bunk beds in the future at its Higher Ground facility at 435 Dorothy Day Place.

The city's Planning Commission modified the facility's conditional use permit on December 28 to expand its overnight shelter capacity from 320 to 356. The expansion allows 24 additional floor mats this winter for an interim capacity of 344. The full capacity of 356 beds is to be used in 2019-20.

Area agencies were struggling to find more shelter for the homeless. Higher Ground was so full this winter that some people had started camping in its courtyard.

This is the second addition of overnight beds at Higher Ground, a five-story facility that opened in early 2017 to replace the old Dorothy Day Center. It was originally permitted for 278 overnight beds to replace the 270 at Dorothy Day, but that number was increased to 320 in December 2017.

Higher Ground also provides permanent housing for homeless adults, including 193 single-occupancy rooms. That number is not changing.

No one appeared at a Zoning Committee hearing on December 20 to speak against the request for more overnight beds.

The addition of shelter space is the latest in a series of actions centered on helping the city's homeless. An encampment of homeless people at the base of Cathedral Hill was cleared by state and city staff in mid-November. The hope was to relocate more than 30 campers to shelters, but some reportedly said they would simply set up camp elsewhere.

St. Paul and Ramsey County officials opened a shelter in early November in the county's Government Center East building

at 160 E. Kellogg Blvd. The shelter, which can house up to 64 people a night, will remain open through the end of April. It offers longer hours each day to help the homeless find housing and other resources.

County officials said the shelter served about 700 people last winter. Catholic Charities is staffing the shelter. The \$400,000 cost will be covered by the city, county and philanthropic partners.

In early December, the daytime drop-in shelter Listening House of St. Paul settled a lawsuit against the city. The nonprofit, which is located at 464 Maria Ave. in the basement of First Lutheran Church, had filed suit last April objecting to a limit of 20 guests it can serve each day as part of its conditional use permit. Listening House typically serves about 100 people a day, providing food, clean clothing and a place to nap, socialize and wash up.

First Lutheran Church also sued the city in federal court last year, basing that case on rights under the First Amendment and the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. A judge last July blocked city officials from enforcing restrictions limiting the number of daily visitors and requiring the posting of a "no trespassing" sign.

The settlement agreed on by Listening House and the city limits the number of visitors to what is allowed under building occupancy and fire codes. Listening House has agreed to several other conditions, including encouraging guests to leave the area after closing and providing bus fare as needed, prohibiting use of alcohol and controlled substances, having staff on hand before and after closing, and calling emergency services when a guest poses a threat of bodily harm.

Listening House was forced to move after its longtime Mary Hall home near the old Dorothy Day Center was displaced by Higher Ground.

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St. Paul is falling behind in effort to eradicate ash borer

In 10th year, infestation is spreading faster than city chainsaws can keep up

By JANE McCLURE

St. Paul's battle against the emerald ash borer resumes this month with the release of a new schedule for the removal and replacement of ash trees on city property in 2019. This year's city budget includes \$2.54 million for removing and replacing about 588 ash trees in city parks and 1,565 ash trees on city boulevards. However, it won't be enough to keep up with the city's seven-year plan for eliminating the pesky insects. They are spreading fast, and the city crews and city funding cannot keep up.

St. Paul's Department of Parks and Recreation has sent out postcards to property owners who will be losing boulevard ash trees in front of their homes this year, according to department spokeswoman Clare Cloyd. The trees are scheduled to begin coming down on January 22. More than 1,000 trees have been targeted in what the city describes as the initial removal period. However, more could be coming down as needed.

Highland Park, Summit-University and the West End are among the St. Paul neighborhoods where trees will be removed this month. "We just got the postcards, and all of our trees are going to be cut down," said local resident Peg Corneille, referring to Hartford Avenue between Davern Street and Snelling Avenue. Corneille and her neighbors had hoped to pay for the chemical treatment of their boulevard ash trees themselves, she said, but now fear they are too late.

Corneille asked the Highland District Council on January 3 to see whether any of



St. Paul city forester Rachel Coyle holds a vial of emerald ash borer larvae above the limb of an ash tree scarred by the critters as they tunneled under its bark. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

the boulevard ash trees could be saved. HDC members and staff said they would ask city staff if anything can be done.

Boulevard ash trees are also slated for removal along Ford and Highland parkways, Bohland and Scheffer avenues, Maynard Drive and Edgumbe Road in Highland Park. Other city blocks that will be losing ash trees this year are in the areas of Fisk Street and Iglehart and Carroll avenues in Summit-University and Palace Avenue in the West End.

Emerald ash borer larvae kill ash trees by tunneling under their bark and feeding on their circulatory system. According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the insects have been found in 35 states around the country and in 17 Minnesota counties. Minnesota is highly susceptible to the pests,

according to state officials. It has about 1 billion ash trees, the most of any state in the nation.

Chemical treatments and even stingless wasps have been tried to slow the emerald ash borers' spread in St. Paul since 2009 when the first emerald ash borers in Minnesota were discovered in South St. Anthony Park. The city has lost close to 11,000 boulevard ash trees and 1,600 parks ash trees since then, leaving almost 15,600 ash trees on city boulevards and more than 8,400 ash trees in city parks.

St. Paul officials have had mixed results in seeking the state's help in fighting the infestation, and the rising cost of removing and replacing diseased ash trees has become a growing concern.

Forestry experts have learned from experience that the spread of the ash borer tends to accelerate about 10 years after it is first discovered in an area. And as the emerald ash borer spreads across Minnesota, competition for state funding is expected to increase. Minneapolis recently instituted a special property tax levy for its ash tree removal and replanting program.

St. Paul officials are hoping to eradicate the ash borer by 2024, but that will require a great increase in city funding or more money from outside sources. During this year's legislative session, city lobbyists will be asking state lawmakers for ongoing funding to identify, treat, remove and replace infested ash trees, according to ThaoMee Xiong, St. Paul's director of intergovernmental relations.

The city's 2018 budget included more than \$1 million in city funds and \$1.5 million in state funds for the removal and replacement of ash trees. The state money came from the 2017 bonding bill. However, that state grant was not renewed for 2019, so this year the city is going it alone with \$1.343 million in ongoing funding and \$1.196 million in one-time funding to remove and replace 2,153 ash trees—far short of what is needed to keep pace with the plan to eradicate the pests by 2024.

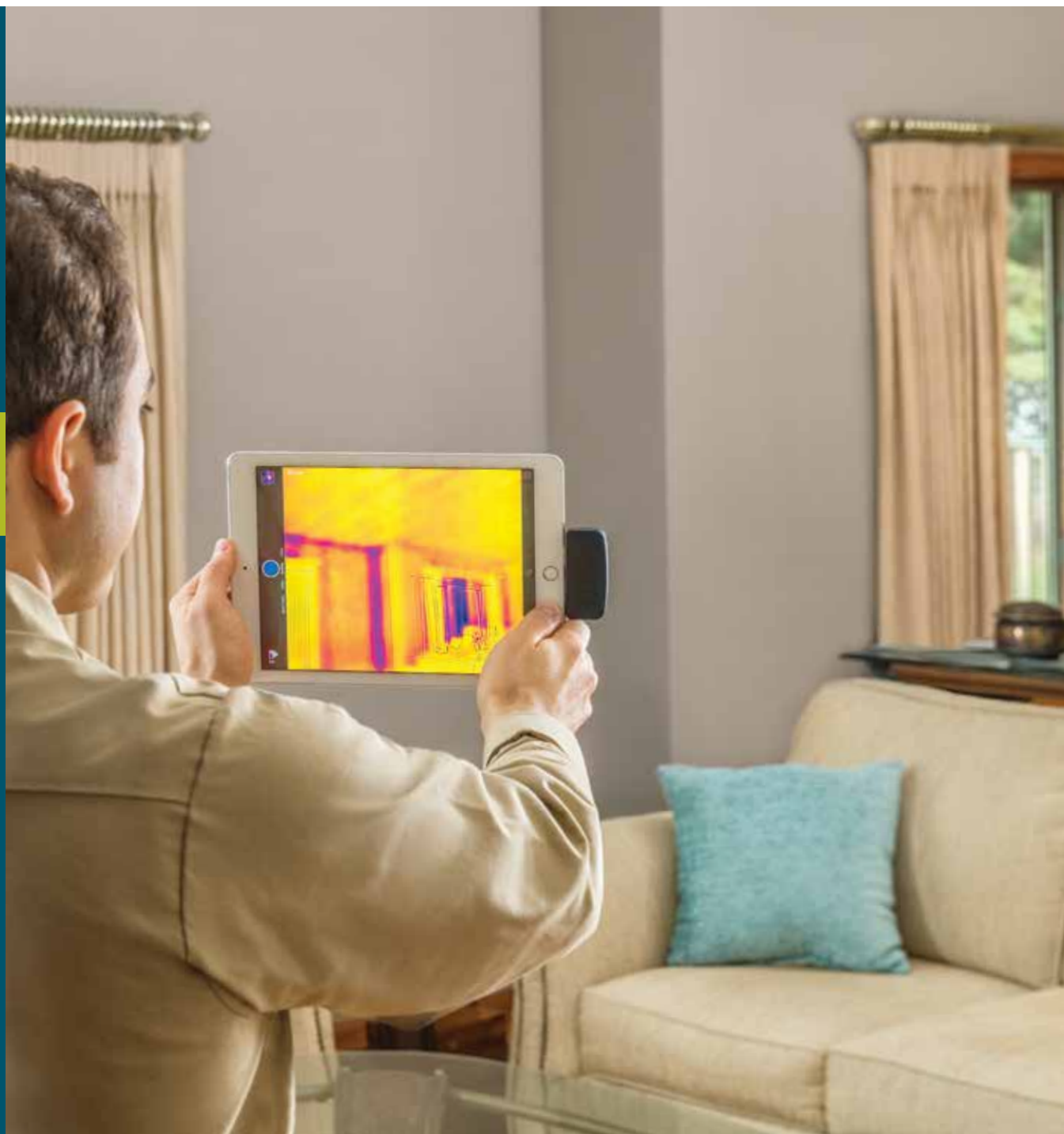
According to its plan for eradicating the ash borer by 2024, St. Paul would need to spend more than \$4.4 million to remove and replace 3,548 boulevard ash trees in 2019 and more than \$3 million per year thereafter to remove and replace the remaining 12,044 boulevard ash trees over the next five years. To remove the 8,416 ash trees remaining in the city's parks, the city would need to spend \$1.72 million in 2019 to remove and replace 1,908 trees and an average of \$1.16 million per year thereafter to remove and replace the remaining 6,508 trees over the next five years.

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St. Paul grants its 17 district councils a raise of 23 percent

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's 17 district planning councils will get a welcome boost in their annual allocation from the city in 2019. After more than a decade of mostly flat funding, the councils will share in an additional \$250,000. The overall 23 percent increase in city funding—from \$1,088,000 to \$1,330,000—will be divided among the councils according to a decade-old formula based on population, poverty and employment levels and the number of non-English speakers in each district.

The new funds may not be enough to add paid staff or major programs on their own, but coupled with the councils' efforts to raise money from outside sources, they could go a long way in addressing some of the challenges the district councils face.

"We value any increase from the city," said Highland District Council (HDC) president Kevin Gallatin. "We can maybe fund initiatives that we've had our eye on for a while. It allows us to loosen up the purse strings a little bit."

Macalester-Groveland Community Council president Mike Sonn said the funds will be welcome as that council searches for a new executive director to replace Liz Boyer, who left earlier this month to take a job at Macalester College.

In 2018 the city's 17 district councils each received between \$51,873 and \$109,475 of the total \$1,088,000 allocated by the city. Just how much each district council will receive of the additional \$250,000 has not been determined.

The HDC is expected to receive an additional \$14,000 to \$15,000 since it is one of the city's six largest planning districts by population. Sonn said any increase in city funding is appreciated. "It will allow us to have a small surplus without seeking outside grant funding," he said.

City Council members agreed that the increase was long overdue. "Given what we ask the district councils to do, it's past time they get an increase," said Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert.

The district councils are charged with gathering local comments on city planning and zoning issues, proposed developments, and applications for zoning variances and business licenses. Each council drafts a new district plan every decade to guide local development. Council staff and volunteers are involved in neighborhood crime prevention activities. Many councils also operate their own programs ranging from alley beautifica-

tion to rental tenant organizations.

Over the past two years, the City Council reviewed two reports on the district councils. The 2017 report looked at the district council system, comparing it to citizen participation programs in other cities. The 2018 report looked at the challenges the councils face in such areas as staff turnover, community outreach and a shortage of funding.

St. Paul launched its district council system in 1975 as a way of promoting citizen participation. For many years, each planning district got the same amount of funding. After years of debate, most of the city's district councils agreed in 2004 to a funding formula with a base amount that was the same for each council.

By 2006, the district councils were sharing in a total \$1.2 million allocation from the city. According to the 2018 district council report, if that amount were adjusted for inflation, the district councils would be receiving a total of \$1.5 million from the city.

For most of the district councils, the city funds are not enough to cover the costs of full-time staff, an office and additional programs, so they typically hold fundraisers and seek outside grants from foundations, businesses, colleges and universities. The city awards additional Innovation Grants for new programs as well as Civic Organization Partnership Program grants for special projects.

The 2018 report reviewed by the City Council suggested many ways that the 17 district councils, their staffs and 500-plus volunteers can work more collaboratively. It made many operational, funding and cost-sharing recommendations. One idea is to pay district councils to carry out city studies rather than outside consultants. Another was to allow council access to city and county data, such as rental property contacts, property ownership information and licensing.

The biggest challenge cited in the 2018 district council report was funding. The report attributed a lack of funding to the high rate of district council staff turnover. Overall, the 17 councils had to deal with 70 percent staff turnover over the past three years.

"This is not sustainable," the report stated. "A high-achieving system requires a commitment to fair compensation. In addition, most district council staff lack such vital benefits as health insurance and retirement funds." The report recommended that the city help the district councils explore ways to provide more benefits for paid staff.

City Council members agreed that the increase was long overdue. "Given what we ask the district councils to do, it's past time they get an increase," said Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert.

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Ryan discusses plan for Ford site

By JANE MCCLURE

A public meeting on Ryan Companies' plans for redeveloping the site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park will be held from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at Central Baptist Church, 420 N. Roy St. It is the master developer's fifth and final neighborhood meeting before its plans go to the St. Paul Planning Commission.

The City Council approved a master plan for the 122-acre property in late 2017 and Ford announced Ryan as its master developer last June. Ryan has since proposed amendments to the master plan. They include making some zoning changes, building row house and single-family homes,

adding parking and making a change to the proposed street layout in the northeastern part of the site.

The amendments were supported last month by the Highland District Council, but have met pushback from some Planning Commission members. Criticisms have included the lack of citywide input and a reduction in housing density. The commission also criticized the developer for only holding its meetings in Highland, so a more central location was chosen instead.

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the amendments at 8:30 p.m. Friday, January 25, at City Hall. Its recommendation is expected to be forwarded to the City Council in February or March.

City ups fees for construction projects and business licenses

By Jane McClure

When it comes to what St. Paulites pay for city services and operations, property taxes are just part of the picture. While property owners share in an overall 10.5 percent increase in the tax levy in 2019, city fees and other charges are also on the rise for building permits and inspections, site plan reviews and business licenses.

St. Paul is holding the line on most of the fees and charges assessed to property owners, according to city budget manager John McCarthy. However, the street maintenance fee for the median-value \$186,200 home will be increasing from \$92 in 2018 to \$97 in 2019.

Sanitary sewer fees will increase from \$287 to \$296 and storm sewer charges from \$95 to \$98 due to a 3.5 percent increase in volume fees. Water charges, which are based on water usage and the size of the water meter, will increase from \$296 to \$301 for the typical home.

The city's annual recycling fee will remain at \$58. However, the owners of single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes will be charged a new \$25.40 fee per unit for the administration of the city's organized trash collection program.

The City Council voted on January 9 to approve a 3 percent across-the-board increase in all building permit, site plan review and sign fees. These fees are charged according to the

cost of the work. For example, the building permit for a \$25,000 home remodel will have a \$528.87 city fee in 2019.

The City Council also approved an increase in the annual fees for about a half dozen business licenses—the licenses that involve the most enforcement costs for the city, according to Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) director Ricardo Cervantes. Cigarette sales licenses will increase from \$453 to \$478. Dance or rental hall licenses will increase from \$187 to \$287. Gas station licenses will increase from \$76 to \$100. Off-sale liquor licenses will increase from \$1,142 to \$1,350.

DSI's fee increases will help cover the costs of two new building inspectors and one new

site plan review inspector as the city addresses a backlog in construction permits. Cervantes told the City Council during budget review that almost 59,000 building projects that received city permits over the past decade have not gotten a final inspection even though the vast majority of the projects have been completed. The lack of inspections is a safety issue, he said.

DSI had asked for an additional \$530,551 in 2019 to hire four new inspectors. The city's 2019 budget includes \$367,000 for the two additional building inspectors, the additional site plan review inspector and a part-time inspector for regional Sewer Availability Charge (SAC) fees.

1 ◀ GRAND BUSINESS CLIMATE

increase in Ramsey County's property tax levy and a 16 percent increase in the St. Paul school district's tax levy, will bring about large, double-digit tax increases for businesses and homeowners alike.

"It's not fun to do business in St. Paul anymore," said Mike Schumann, co-owner of Traditions Classic Home Furnishings, 1039 Grand Ave. "And when it's not fun, there's no reason to keep doing business here."

Traditions, which Mike and wife Suzanne Schumann started in St. Paul 32 years ago, will be consolidating its operations in St. Louis Park later this year. "We've been trying to work with the city, but we don't think we're being heard anymore," Schumann said.

Schumann has been a vocal opponent of recent city mandates on businesses, including the right-of-way maintenance assessments that penalize businesses like his that occupy corner lots. The Grand Avenue "parking meter debacle," the recent jump in property taxes and the \$15 minimum wage finally convinced him to relocate, he said.

These city mandates, Schumann said, "are made by people who don't understand business and have never owned businesses themselves."

Baby Grand owner Greg Roedler opted to consolidate his operations in St. Louis Park in October after 33 years of doing business on Grand. Roedler was not happy about leaving the avenue that gave his baby products store its name, but thought he had little choice with his commercial property taxes increasing from about \$16,000 to \$18,000 per year.

According to Roedler's son, Joe Roedler,

who has since taken over the business, the higher property taxes and the city's new business mandates were the major reasons for Baby Grand's move.

"We'd been having the conversation for two, three, four years," Joe said. "There wasn't really a timetable for when (the move) was going to happen. What sped it up were some of the changes in St. Paul and on Grand Avenue. Between 2017 and 2018, our property taxes increased 30 percent. We can't sustain those kinds of increases."

Sweeping changes in the booksellers' market and how people read convinced Sixth Chamber Used Books owner James Williams to close his store at 1332 Grand Ave. this coming March after 24 years on Grand.

"The writing has been on the wall regarding the changing world of bookstores and small retail stores in general," he wrote in an email to customers in December. "Every year it has been a little more difficult to compete with online retailers and digital books. The past year has been very difficult, and so we have come to the conclusion that our Grand store is no longer sustainable."

Williams will continue to operate Fox Den Books in River Falls, Wisconsin. "We've seen the trend (toward online retailers and digital books) for some time, and it's really hit us bad in St. Paul," he said in an interview. "We've got events out there in River Falls, and they're heavily attended. We try to do the same on Grand, but with difficult attendance. When we opened in 1995 there were seven bookstores on Grand, and of those it's just us and the Red Balloon who are left."

Some Grand business owners cited personal reasons for closing their stores. Roxana



Seen on the front door of Sixth Chamber Used Books was this pink slip—a sign of the times for many longtime businesses on Grand Avenue. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Freese, for example, who started her Bibelot gift shop on Como Avenue in 1966 and has been doing business at 1082 Grand Ave. since 1987, is retiring and will close all four of her Bibelot stores in early 2019.

Some local shops have been able to adapt to the changing business climate. Iron Ranger, the former Sunrise Market & Cafe at 1085 Grand Ave., morphed from a business that was 50 percent retail to a full service bar and restaurant last year.

"It was either rebrand and make the necessary changes or continue to struggle," said owner Tom Forti. "Business climate change is inevitable, whether it's Grand Avenue or Hibbing," he added, referring to the Iron Range city where his family has owned and operated a bakery for 105 years.

"We're sad to see longstanding businesses

go," said Jason Koenig, president of the Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) and co-owner of the Odd Couple Team of Keller Williams Integrity Realty, 1460 Grand Ave. "But we're really excited about the new businesses coming to the avenue."

GABA and the Summit Hill Association (SHA) are forming a new task force to educate businesses and residents about the changes on Grand Avenue and to encourage entrepreneurs to move into the area. The task force is intended "to promote meaningful growth on Grand," according to SHA president Hayden Howland.

"Realistically, we need a healthy mix of businesses on Grand," Koenig said. "Chains like Kowalski's and Red Rabbit are great for bringing people in, and once those people are here they start to recognize the local businesses."

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter's administration is eager to help new and existing businesses through the city's Open for Business initiative. That agency guides local businesses through the city's licensing and permitting processes and serves as a hub of information on how to succeed in St. Paul.

The St. Paul Port Authority is cosponsoring the Midway Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Meeting from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, January 22, at the Midpointe Event Center, 415 N. Pascal St. Open to all, the meeting will address the business climate in St. Paul and what businesses and governments can do to improve it.

"Change is scary," Koenig said, "but I'm excited where Grand Avenue is going in 2019. We all need to work together for thoughtful development."



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Viewpoint

St. Paul officials bend the rules at the risk of losing the public trust

By JOHN MANNILLO, LAURA GOODMAN AND SHIRLEY ERSTAD

St. Paul STRONG is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving accessible and representative government in St. Paul. We do not take positions on issues, but support inclusive, transparent and accountable public processes. Public trust is the key to a stronger St. Paul. Only when everyone in the city is treated equally and public officials are held accountable for their decisions can trust in our city government be assured.

Recent stories in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and *Star Tribune* expose our city's uneven and unequal rules enforcement. The story about the St. Paul Conservatory for the Performing Arts' legal challenge of Gray Duck Tavern's liquor license highlights the city's disregard for the longstanding legal process for granting liquor licenses. Current city code specifies that liquor establishments must not be within 300 feet of a school, and the downtown school maintains that the Gray Duck Tavern is in violation of this code.

This issue is only the latest in a series of questionable decisions by city officials that seem to disregard codes, ordinances and rules. The decisions appear to be based on fuzzy or previously unknown criteria for granting variances. For example, weeks ago a new skyway was installed over Main Street between buildings in the Higher Ground project that ignored the longstanding St. Paul Skyway Design Guidelines that were adopted in 1980. The city ignored the legally binding Comprehensive Plan adopted on February 24, 2010, and its own resolution approved on May 27, 2015, which called for a public park on the former Pedro Luggage site, and instead allowed a private developer to purchase and renovate the former Public Safety Annex and in effect thwart the plan for the long-promised Pedro Park.

These are a few examples in downtown, but the problem extends throughout the city. Consider the change in measuring the required distance between liquor stores when Target wanted to expand in the Midway area, or changes in the city's longstanding practice in determining allowable signage or the ongoing dispute over right-of-way assessments.

St. Paul STRONG questions the wisdom of changing the rules depending on who is asking for the favor. While it may seem expedient in the short term, it becomes a major problem in the long term with a growing lack of trust in city processes.

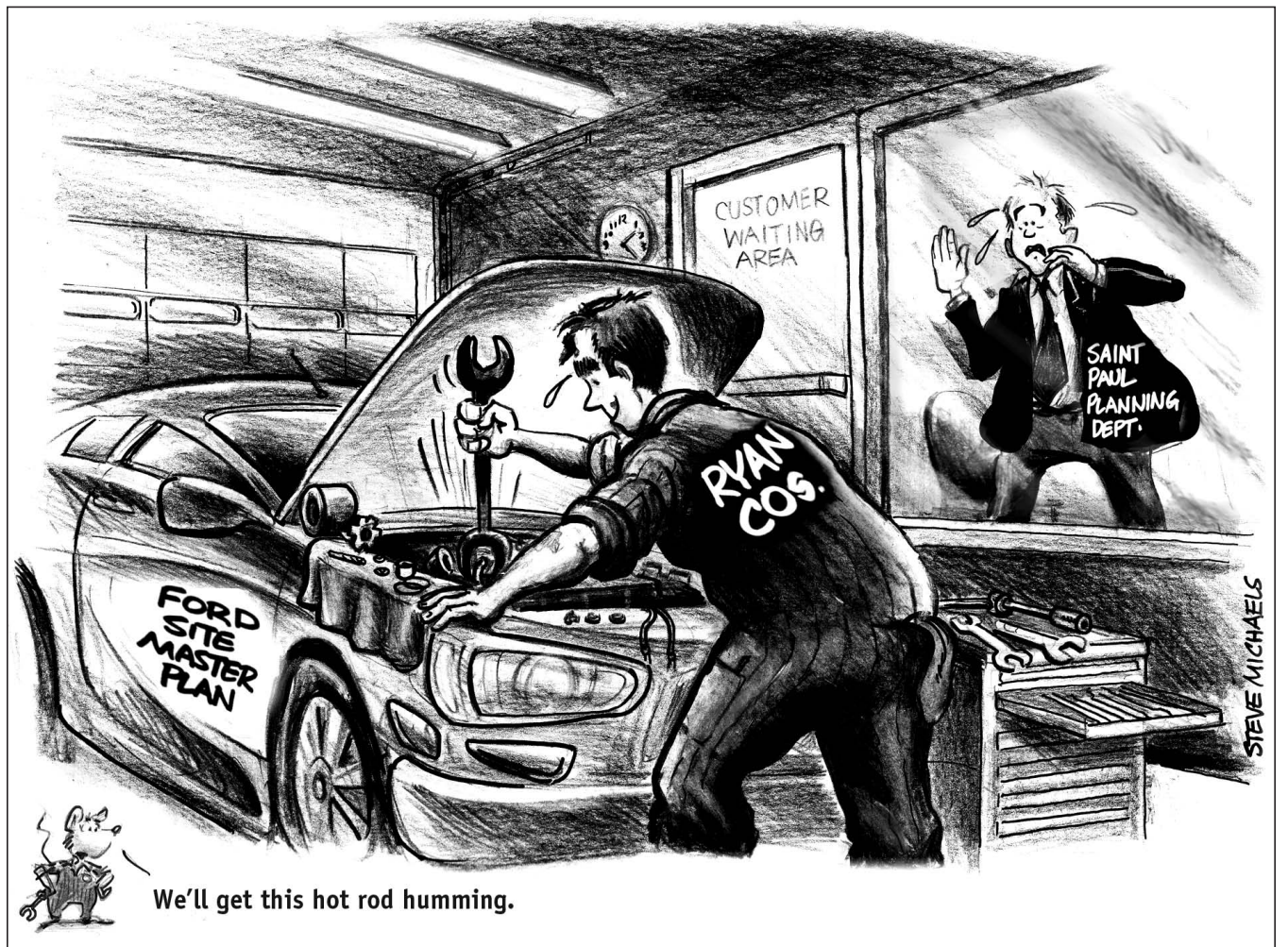
Our city's codes, ordinances and guidelines are established processes that are meant to ensure fair and equitable government decision-making. Untold hours of staff time are devoted to planning documents and policy enforcement, and yet this financial investment by taxpayers seems to be overruled at the whim of our city's administration without transparency or accountability.

In the Gray Duck Tavern case, if the city now changes the rules to fit the needs of this particular restaurant, what message does that send to businesses that were denied licenses in the past? What message does it send to businesses seeking licenses in the future? What are the criteria that businesses can work toward to ensure a fair process?

The city of St. Paul needs to ensure that rules are reasonable and consistent. Contrary to what some city leaders report, rules do not scare businesses away. It is the absence of standards or inconsistency in the rules that discourages new enterprise.

Only when city officials recognize the problems that are borne through a lack of transparency, fairness and good governance will they be able to address the resulting inequality and unfairness and earn the trust and respect of citizens. One need look no further than the recent petition to put organized trash on the ballot to realize the level of unease the citizens have with their local government.

This guest editorial was signed by John Mannillo, Laura Goodman, Shirley Erstad and the 11 other members of the steering committee of St. Paul STRONG.



Ryan Cos.' Ford site plan merits city's support

By KEVIN GALLATIN

After more than a decade of study, speculation and debate, the redevelopment of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park is now transitioning from vision to reality. The future of this site has long stirred strong opinions in the community. As a nonprofit organization dedicated to community engagement, the Highland District Council (HDC) has played a vital role in connecting community members and local government to the Ford planning work and has advocated for people and businesses in the neighborhood.

In 2017 the HDC endorsed the ambitious vision of the Ford site master plan. St. Paul city leaders passed the zoning into law, and ultimately Ryan Companies entered into an agreement with Ford to purchase the land. The Minneapolis-based developer has spent the better part of a year using its significant expertise to design a quality community that will be successful and meet the neighborhood's needs and desires. The presentation of its plan for the Ford site was met with applause at the last two public meetings.

While Ryan's plan for the Ford site closely aligns to the city's master plan, the company is asking to make some adjustments to the zoning. The company asked the HDC to weigh in on four amendments to the master plan that it deemed critical to moving ahead with the project. The first amendment allows single-family homes along Mississippi River Boulevard. The second change provides an option for rowhouses on the west side of the proposed water feature. Third, Ryan wants to reorient a short street segment from east-west to north-south. Finally, Ryan has asked the city to allow more structured parking for commercial uses than specified in the master plan.

After reviewing the comments of city staff and hearing from Ryan, the HDC's Community Development Committee passed a unanimous resolution in November to support the amendments proposed by Ryan. The HDC's board of directors affirmed its support for the proposed changes on December 6.

Community members have consistently expressed strong support for single-family homes and rowhouses on the Ford site. These dwellings would make up a small portion of the total housing on the site, and allowing them would not prohibit other types of housing from being built on these parcels. The

amendment also would not reduce the proposed number of housing units on the Ford site, which remains at 95 percent of the maximum allowed by the city's master plan, including 745 affordable housing units for working families.

The master plan's proposed Hillcrest Avenue extension was set to run east-west through the current shopping center anchored by Lunds & Byerlys. Since that property is occupied by popular businesses with long-term leases, it makes sense to change the proposed street alignment to north-south along the west side of the shopping center.

Ryan is proposing to construct half as much commercial space as the master plan allows, but to dedicate twice as much structured parking near Ford Parkway to support the commercial uses. On the other hand, the company also proposes to build about half of the maximum allowable residential parking, meaning there will be around 45 percent fewer parking spaces on the site than permitted.

The HDC has been deeply involved in Ford site planning since the Ford Plant's closure was announced more than a decade ago. We have held innumerable meetings on the site, and our members have had thousands of conversations with neighbors. The HDC has heard passionate arguments both for and against the development. We have heard a wide variety of opinions, which is reflected in the split votes taken by the HDC, the Ford Site Planning Task Force and the St. Paul Planning Commission and City Council.

It is clear that Ryan Companies has embraced the vision of the city's Ford site master plan, listened to stakeholders and proposed relatively modest changes with the goal of building a successful community. Its plan is a good plan that has been shaped by broad community input.

Ryan does not yet own the Ford site, and company officials have stated that these proposed changes to the master plan are essential to its vision. We encourage the Planning Commission to join the HDC in approving the requested amendments.

Community members are welcome to share their thoughts on the Ford site master plan amendments with the Planning Commission by emailing FordSitePlanning@ci.stpaul.mn.us. Comments must include the community member's street address to be included as part of the public record.

Kevin Gallatin is president of the Highland District Council.

Inbox

The illogic of legal marijuana

Would someone please explain to me the logic of the St. Paul City Council? Last year it voted to ban the sale of menthol cigarettes in convenience stores to protect the youths of our city. Last month these very same council members voted 6-1 to approve a city of St. Paul legislative agenda item calling for the legalization of the recreational use of marijuana.

What is the logic behind this decision? If it's revenue the council wants, why not also legalize cocaine and meth?

*Ed Dion
Macalester-Groveland*

Going to bat for Ryan Cos.

Highland Ball wishes to voice its support for Ryan Companies' vision for the Ford site redevelopment in advance of the St. Paul Planning Commission's January 25 public hearing on Ryan's proposed amendments to the city of St. Paul's Ford site zoning and public realm master plan.

Ryan Companies' inclusion of two baseball and softball fields in its vision for the Ford site is an act of generosity that will serve generations of baseball and softball players in the Highland community for years to come. Its recognition of Highland Ball's legacy and contribution is inspiring.

We appreciate Ryan Companies' community engagement and commitment to redevelop the entire site in a way that benefits the whole community.

*Drew Hodson, President
Patrick Martin, Vice President
Steve Penz, Vice President
Highland Ball*

Sidewalk ice is not MN nice

As a resident of Macalester-Groveland for almost 20 years, I can say that this year is about the worst I've seen for dangerous winter sidewalks. Even where sidewalks are passable, the streets are treacherous because cars aren't tagged and towed during snow emergencies, leaving a build-up of ice and snow that narrows the street to one cleared lane, causing motorists to weave in and out of icy areas. In addition, snow emergencies aren't deemed necessary for rain and ice storms like we've had recently, so the streets turn into skating rinks. I feel for anyone who finds it necessary to walk to the bus for work or school or needs to walk the dog.

What will it take for residents to clear their sidewalks? Why doesn't the city of St. Paul enforce this law as well as the tagging and towing of cars parked illegally during snow emergencies? Or is enforcement counter to being Minnesota nice? Perhaps more vigilant enforcement would increase revenue through fines that could fund more frequent plowing and provide aid to those who aren't able to clear the sidewalk themselves.

As it is, St. Paul is not a walkable city in the winter. And this is neither neighborly nor Minnesota nice.

*Deborah Erickson
Macalester-Groveland*

Only solution for our streets

The problem with many stretches of St. Paul's roads is not so much the potholes. They eventually get filled, although after a few freezes and thaws they become potholes again. The problem is, the roads have been repaired so many times they can still be a rough ride. Although all of the potholes may be filled, it is still bad for your car's suspension. Riding on such streets on a motorcycle or a bicycle is even worse. I believe the only solution is to completely repave the bad roads. It would cost a lot of money, but there is no way around it.

*Gregory J. Mullaly
Highland Park*

Who does Tolbert represent?

I encourage St. Paul City Council member Chris Tolbert to hit pause and reflect on the ward he represents. Does he represent the small businesses in Ward 3? Does he represent conscientious Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland residents who pay their public library fines? How about the families in Ward 3 who pay their full taxes plus send their children to Nativity, Holy Spirit, Highland-Catholic, Sunny Hollow and other private and parochial schools? Or does he represent his future political interests?

I want to support Tolbert, but his voting record is making me question his authenticity. Is he representing Ward 3 or himself?

*Amy Murphy
Highland Park*

Our hero the plow captain

The guest editorial by Neal Bernards was on point (Be kind to your alley-plow captain," *Villager Viewpoint*, January 2). What a thankless job. Necessary, but sometimes not appreciated.

Our alley-plow captain for many years has been Missy McDonald. What a champ! She's so organized and pleasant. She sends out kind reminders early and then follows up. She has the four corner families share one plow fee since we don't exit on the alley. There have been years when, just like with Neal, families refuse to pay. Unbelievable. But Missy handles it with a smile.

Thanks, Missy, and all plow captains! We appreciate you.

*Cynthia Eicher
Merriam Park*

The wall might work

It is critical that the Democrats hold fast to their refusal to approve The Wall. Foreigners have been moving into this country illegally in droves for at least 50 years. That is a good thing. And the problems with The Wall are many. It will be expensive. It may be a bit of an eyesore. It will require maintenance and repair.

The big problem, though, is that it might work: It might be effective in stanching the flow. The question is, do we want the flow stopped? Shall we direct our government to stop the flow?

*T.J. Sexton
Macalester-Groveland*

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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Editors

Dale Mischke
John Wadell

news@myvillager.com

Letters to the Editor

letters@myvillager.com

Display Advertising Sales

Tim Carroll
Bob Stjern

displayads@myvillager.com

Classified Ads

Jennifer Gordon
wantads@myvillager.com

Graphic Designers

Craig Schuster
Jennifer Gordon

Administrative Assistant

Mary Helen Pates
mpates@myvillager.com

Publisher

Michael Mischke
mmischke@myvillager.com

Subscriptions

subscriptions@myvillager.com

CONTRIBUTORS: Roger Barr, Scott Beedy, Matthew Davis, Kevin Driscoll, Larry Englund, Mimi Geller, Janet Lunder Hanafin, Anne Hauth, Lisa Heinrich, Brian Johnson, Frank Jossi, Craig Lee, Jane McClure, Lou Michaels, Steve Michaels, Anne Murphy, Dave Page, Melenie Soucheray, Morgan Smith, Brad Stauffer, Jennifer Stewart, Bill Wagner, Leslie Walters, Dave Wright.

CIRCULATION

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Education

A fluency in int'l relations

Minnesota's language teacher of year leads Central's French Dept. to new level of immersion

BY ANNE MURPHY

Listen to the voice-mail message of Maureen Elwell Peltier, and you will know why she is a member of Central High School's World Language Department. Her opening "bonjour" and the greeting that follows speak to her love of French and teaching. Converse with Peltier and you will know why she has been named World Language Teacher of the Year by the Minnesota Council of the Teaching of Languages and Cultures.

Peltier will represent Minnesota in March at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Columbus, Ohio. There she will be in the running for Regional Teacher of the Year, an honor that comes with a responsibility to attend conferences throughout the 14-state area and convince the general public of the importance of foreign language classes.

"Maureen is a tireless advocate for the French and French immersion programs at Central," said Dr. Kate Wilcox-Harris, chief academic officer for the St. Paul Public Schools. "She's responsible for the expansion of the program and works continuously to encourage Central students to continue in their study of French."

The study of foreign languages is thriving in the St. Paul Public Schools, according to Liz Hathaway Castelan, manager of the school district's Dual Language/Immersion Program and the one who nominated Peltier for teacher of the year. "This segment of the curriculum is growing constantly," Castelan said.

Immersion programs in which all of a student's subjects are taught in a foreign language have been offered in the St. Paul school district for 32 years. The Spanish immersion program started in 1986 and French immersion in 1996. In the district's elementary schools, Spanish immersion is offered at Adams, French



Central High School teacher Maureen Elwell Peltier enlivens the lesson for French Immersion students John Ofstedal and Carmen Crutchfield in a recent class. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

immersion at L'Etoile du Nord and Mandarin immersion at Jie Ming Academy. Dual language Spanish immersion is offered at Wellstone and Riverview.

The school district's Spanish immersion program continues at Highland Park Middle and High Schools. Its French immersion program continues at Ramsey Middle School and Central. Central offers language immersion programs for students who attend two charter schools—Twin Cities German Immersion in St. Paul and Yinghua

Academy Mandarin Immersion in Minneapolis. Central also offers general courses in the French, Spanish, Mandarin, Russian and Latin languages, according to Castelan.

Peltier has taught school for the past 35 years, including 16 years in the St. Paul district and 13 years at Central. Her credentials include a master's degree in the Teaching of Languages and Cultures, a Fulbright teacher exchange in Belgium and summer study at the Université Laval in Québec City. She had been hoping for a job in school admin-

istration when she was offered the teaching position at Central.

"I hadn't taught high school French for four years," Peltier recalled. "But after two years of teaching at Central, I knew that this is what I was supposed to be doing. And from the beginning, I wanted to make the immersion program stronger."

"Language learning leads to a command of not only the language being studied, but also one's native

MAUREEN PELTIER ► 12

School Board adopts new operating system in strategic plan

Superintendent's plan is a blueprint for improved achievement on all levels

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

With a renewed mission to "inspire students to think critically, pursue their dreams and change the world," Superintendent Joe Gothard unveiled his new strategic plan for the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) at a meeting of the St. Paul School Board on December 18.

The plan was developed over the course of the past year through school district research and surveys and many community meetings. Entitled SPPS Achieves, it is built around five

main outcomes—to decrease disparities in student achievement based on race, ethnicity, culture and identity; to increase the achievement of English Language Learners and students receiving special education services; to improve kindergarten readiness; to foster student growth in reading and math; and to better prepare students for college, careers and life after graduation.

Reaching those outcomes will require the promotion of a positive culture at the school and district level through a shared sense of community and growing trust and collaboration, Gothard said. This will involve implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at every school; integrating social-emotional learning supports; ensuring that every school and district office is

The new strategic plan "is less hardware and more software—an operating system that allows for flexibility, innovation and creativity."

welcoming; seeking and using the input of students, staff and families; improving the process for employee talent development; and recruiting and retaining employees "who look like our students," Gothard said.

The strategic plan calls for the promotion

of effective and culturally relevant instruction for students by identifying and reforming systems that reinforce academic disparities among student groups, implementing a system for assessing program effectiveness, determining a districtwide middle school model and allocating resources more strategically.

The plan calls for evaluating the effectiveness of current programs and making informed adjustments and investments, exposing middle and high school students to more college and career opportunities, and ensuring that families can navigate the school system and access the wealth of programs it offers.

The plan would open more college and

STRATEGIC PLAN ► 12

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10◀ MAUREEN PELTIER

language," Peltier wrote in the essay she submitted with her World Language Teacher of the Year nomination. "Language classrooms offer a crucial fundamental academic preparation. The news suggests that our nation has become culturally divided; hatred and intolerance appear to be overriding acceptance and understanding. Our job as educators is to gently guide our students to think critically and to realize what our world could be if knowledge replaced ignorance and harmony replaced hostility."

The French program at Central has always been strong, Castelán said, but when the French immersion program arrived there in 2008, Peltier led the way in expanding the offerings to challenge French immersion students. She developed such courses as Francophone Cinema, France During World War II, La Francophonie (a study of the French-speaking world), French History and advanced courses in French speaking and writing.

"(Peltier) worked hard to find ways

"The more we explore cultures in language study in schools, the more we prepare tolerant, understanding young adults who are able to function at a more compassionate level in a multicultural and global society."

for traditional language learners to enroll in immersion courses when they're able to tackle the challenging academic work that she and her team designed," Castelán said in her nomination statement. "And when not developing curriculum, she plans, fund-raises and recruits and leads Central students on trips to France. She has also developed a relationship with a sister-school in France for Central students to learn about the French culture and language directly from French peers."

Last year, "the French students at Cen-

tral outdid themselves," Castelán continued, "which is a tribute to (Peltier's) leadership, her teaching and that of her colleagues." Twenty Central students passed the tests to receive diplomas from the French Ministry of Education certifying their competency in the French language, according to Castelán. "And in the American Association of Teachers of French National French Contest, 42 Central students took high honors and ranked in the top 15 spots in the state and nation," she added. "Two students had perfect scores. Two others received \$1,000 scholarships to travel."

"The more we explore cultures in language study in schools, the more we prepare tolerant, understanding young adults who are able to function at a more compassionate level in a multicultural and global society," Peltier wrote in her essay. "My hope is that my students remember the important role they have in forming a future where linguistic and cultural differences are not criticized, scorned or defamed but rather accepted and celebrated."

10◀ STRATEGIC PLAN

career opportunities for students by expanding high-quality instruction in targeted career areas and reviewing, revising and strengthening the relationships secondary schools have with outside organizations that provide college credit, industry certifications and job experience to students.

The plan calls for the "renewal of schools as hubs that bring together educators, families and community" and the creation of family and community programs that support students at key points in their personal and academic development," Gothard said.

"Culture is really important," said School Board member Mary Vanderwert. "The strategic plan will allow students to experience real-world situations. While classes such as chemistry are important, other important skills are communication, collaboration, critical thinking and working with others."

"The questions will be ongoing as this plan is implemented," said School Board member Jon Schumacher. "However,



Superintendent Joe Gothard

this is exactly what (the School Board) asked for, what we hired Superintendent Gothard to do. What I like about the plan is that it spurs ideas in different areas about how these structures will

produce outcomes heard from the community and also ones the School Board feels strongly about. It is less hardware and more software—an operating system that allows for flexibility, innovation and creativity."

"For the first time in three years, I'm feeling like there is a structure for this district that I can feel confident in" said School Board member Steve Marchese. "It integrates the components heard in different spaces and specifics on how to achieve goals while keeping its focus on long-term outcomes. It is designed to reach objectives that were discussed in the community and to address opportunity gaps and increase achievement for all students, especially English Language Learners and those with specialized services."

With this plan, Marchese added, "we will be able to focus on our kindergartens to be effective and to create culturally relevant classrooms. These were all points of discussion in the community, and there is a place and a space for them in the strategic plan."

Adam Levy has led the MN based rock combo The Honeydogs for over 20 years. He's a guitarist and singer-songwriter who loves cooking, boxing & reading history almost as much as "making noise" in his roughly half-dozen musical projects. He's a social activist, educator and proud parent of two daughters. He freely admits to having a clothes, music gear and eyewear fetish.

We freely admit to feeding his eyewear fetish.




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District Council News

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Ford site update—Ryan Companies will hold its fifth public meeting on its plans to redevelop the Ford site from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at Central Baptist Church, 420 N. Roy St. For information, visit tinyurl.com/ydemk5tq.

Honor Roll—The honorees from Highland for inclusion on the city's Neighborhood Honor Roll are Frameworks, Nicole Malone Arne and Hanna Cooper.

Home Improvement Fair—Sponsor and exhibitor registration is open through January 25 for the Macalester-Groveland & Highland Park Home Improvement Fair on March 16. Visit tinyurl.com/ya7tczq9 for information.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Frost Fest—The 11th annual Frost Fest will be held from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at Groveland Park. The celebration will feature free hot chocolate, ice skating, games, treats and more. Free skate rental will be provided by the Groveland Recreation Center.

Deadline approaching—Registration is open through January 25 for participating in the 27th annual Macalester-Groveland & Highland Park Home Improvement Fair on March 16 at Cretin-Derham Hall. Visit macgrove.org/hif2019 for a registration form.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Watershed moment—The Summit Hill Association has been named the recipient of the Watershed Outreach Program of the Year

Honor Roll celebration set

Inductees to St. Paul's Neighborhood Honor Roll from district councils across the city will be honored at a celebration from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, January 25, in the Anderson Student Center at the University of St. Thomas. Tickets are \$15. Visit brownpapertickets.com/event/4025003.

Award from the Capitol Region Watershed District. The association was honored for its joint collaboration with Linwood Monroe and local artist Anne Hejny through a grant awarded by the watershed district in 2018.

Neighborhood Honor Roll—The honorees from Summit Hill for inclusion on the city's Neighborhood Honor Roll are Dixie's on Grand, St. Thomas More Catholic Community and Laura Wallace.

Summit-University

summit-university.org • 651-228-1855

Board members sought—The Summit-University Planning Council is looking for neighbors to join its board of directors. Call the office or email executive director Jens Werner at jens@summit-university.org.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Honor Roll—The honorees from Union Park for inclusion on the city's Neighborhood Honor Roll are Central Honors Philando, Chuck Sorlie and Barb Thoman.

Calling all renters—The Union Park District Council will host a happy hour for renters from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, January 24, at Lake Monster Brewery, 550 Vandalia St., Suite 160. Visit unionparkdc.org/renters.



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In Bloom: A flowering of Boemer's fondness for what fire can do for meat

Patience," my mother would say, "good things come to those who wait." If I doubted it then, I don't anymore, not since dining at In Bloom. Owners Nick Rancone and Thomas Boemer signed an agreement to anchor the new Keg & Case Market in August 2016, but it wasn't until last September that the restaurant finally opened in the old Schmidt Brewery warehouse at 928 W. Seventh St. The opening was a good thing for diners and for Boemer and Rancone, who can add Star Tribune 2018 Restaurant of the Year to their list of accomplishments.

Born in Minneapolis, chef Boemer grew up in North Carolina and Missouri where he fell in love with what fire could do to meat. With partners Nick and Chenny Rancone, he opened Corner Table on Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis. Diners were so enamored with Boemer's fried chicken that when Corner Table moved to larger digs, the space became Revival and featured



Hot Dish By Morgan Smith

Boemer's southern-inspired menu.

Not resting on his chicken laurels, Boemer and his team took top honors at several pork cookoffs before he was named a semifinalist for the James Beard Award in 2017. Meanwhile, St. Paul got its first taste of Boemer's southern-inspired cuisine in December 2016 when Revival St. Paul premiered at 525 Selby Ave.

The centerpiece at In Bloom is a 20-foot wood-fired hearth. No gas or electricity is used to prepare any of its food. The sides of the hearth are framed by neat piles of wood, and it is crowned with an amazing stone mosaic. Designed by Studio M Architects of Minneapolis, the two-story dining area at In Bloom

provides customers with pleasing views of the magical flames.

The restaurant's seating radiates out from the kitchen like the rings of Saturn, with a semicircular counter nearest the action, followed by an arc of tables, a row of comfortable

banquettes and the bar. In Bloom has a bit of a Mediterranean vibe with textured spackled walls made to look old, a hexagonal tile floor and booth seats covered in fabric that looks like marble. A waterfall of calla lily light bulbs that change color cascades from the ceiling.

My wife Mecca and I stopped by for lunch on a recent Sunday afternoon with our friends Dave and Berdette. With a menu that cries out for sharing, the four of us decided on the Duck Hearts (\$10), American Wagyu (\$32), Roasted Things (\$12), Grilled Trout (\$22) and a wonderful potato rosemary bread (\$5).

Dave, who is back on a vegetarian kick, also ordered the vegetarian French Onion Soup (\$12). Meanwhile, Mecca took the advice of our server and tried a glass of the Vegas Atlas (\$9), a 2016 Spanish wine that she deemed to be "very good." Given her record of restaurant wines recently, she was especially pleased.

Our server got us started with the Duck Hearts and the Roasted Things, which was a plate of cooked figs, grapes, olives, caper berries and almonds. Dave raved about the almonds. Mecca convinced him to try a fig, while Berdette and I nibbled at the grapes and olives, all the time eyeing the Duck Hearts.

The half dozen surprisingly large bird organs looked more boiled than braised. They were covered in a green mash of butter, garlic and chervil. It must have been the butter that made them so slippery. On my first foray into the dish, my fork came back with a bare heart. I popped it into my mouth and was



In Bloom's Grilled Trout with melted leeks, potato puree and pearl onion *à la grenobloise*. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

not as enchanted as I expected to be. But with a second try, I got some of the chervil to stick to the heart and was more pleased.

The American Wagyu and Grilled Trout arrived shortly thereafter. Wagyu is the American version of Japanese Kobe beef. The eight fingerlings were red on the inside and almost black on the outside and accompanied with chestnut, cipollini onion and bacon. Salty and smoky, the beef was exquisite and as tender as the ranchers who raise it claim it to be. All I could think about was how not to look like a pig by taking the largest portion.

Mecca and Berdette were as enthusiastic about the Wagyu as I was. The three of us also agreed that the Grilled Trout with leeks, potato puree and pearl onions was almost as good as the beef.

Poor Dave was still nibbling on

an almond when I finally asked the server about his French Onion Soup. The server went into a huddle with the manager, then came back with the news that there was no soup. However, he brought out a dish of Grilled Lettuce Hearts (\$10) that was on the house and later comped us with a Chocolate Cremeux and a Hickory Nut and Apple Tart (both \$12).

As we left In Bloom, convinced that they truly care about their patrons, we noticed somebody at the bar biting into a Venison Portadella Sandwich (\$14) served with white cheddar, a fried egg, pistachio and Dijon sauce on a brioche bun. The sandwich looked outstanding and reminded me of how In Bloom prides itself on its venison dishes. If they're even half as good as the fish and beef dishes, they are well worth a return visit.



Hot out of the wood-fired hearth at In Bloom are Roasted Things, a plate of figs, grapes, olives, caper berries and almonds.

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Wednesday/January 16

ARCHAEOLOGIST JEREMY NIENOW will discuss the results of recent excavations at Historic Fort Snelling in a free program beginning at noon at Landmark Center. Call 651-292-3225.

ST. MARK'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, 1983 Dayton Ave., will hold an open house for prospective kindergartners and preschoolers and their parents beginning at 6 p.m. The kindergarten presentation will begin at 6:30. For information, call the PreK-8 school at 651-644-3380 or visit markerspride.com.

"HOUSING AS WE AGE: Aging in Place and Other Options" will be discussed from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 900 Summit Ave. Catherine Engstrom, a social worker and caregiver consultant at Wilder Foundation, will facilitate the meeting, which is free and open to all. Call 651-224-5809.

Sunday/January 20

REFUGEES and global migration will be addressed in a free Great Decisions film presentation and discussion beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Waters of Highland Park, 678 S. Snelling Ave. Call 651-363-3040.

DARIN ZEIDAN of the Palestine Association for Children's Encouragement of Sports will discuss the challenges of development in that region of the Middle East at 2:30 p.m. on the lower level of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. The public is invited. A reception with refreshments will open the program at 2 p.m. Call 612-374-5961.

STROLL BENEATH A FULL MOON, one that will be in total eclipse this evening at Coldwater Springs. The Friends of Coldwater will lead the way beginning at 7 p.m. at the park entrance, located a half mile southeast of the intersection of Highway 55 and 54th Street in South Minneapolis.

Monday/January 21

WOMEN OF COLOR working in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics will be celebrated from 10 a.m.-noon at the Ordway Music Theater. Mae C. Jemison, the first African American woman astronaut to travel to space, will deliver the keynote address. Sponsored by the Governor's Council on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, the free event will also feature live music by Chadwick "Niles" Phillips, the Minnesota Orchestra, Indigenous Roots and Ray Covington.

BEEZ KNEEZ BEEKEEPER Kristy Lynn Allen will tell all about her sustainable beekeeping practices and bicycle-powered



Greg Schmotzer, the one-man Treasure Island Casino team, used a chainsaw on his creation during last year's Winter Carnival ice carving contest.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Carnival plans cool time on Kellogg

The 133rd St. Paul Winter Carnival will take place January 24-February 3, with Kellogg Mall Park off of Kellogg Boulevard and Robert Street acting as center stage this year due to renovations at Rice Park. Here are some of the highlights:

Thursday, January 24—Moon Glow Pedestrian Parade from 5:15-8 p.m. from Landmark Center to Kellogg Mall Park; multiblock ice carving competition on January 24-26 at Kellogg Mall.

Friday, January 25—Minnesota State Snow Sculpting Competition on January 25-27 at State Fairgrounds; Giant Snow Slide on January 25-February 3 at Fairgrounds; Royal Coronation at 8 p.m. at St. Paul RiverCentre (\$15 with button), followed by free reception.

Saturday, January 26—Amateur snow-sculpting contest from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Fairgrounds; Sainly City Cat Show from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, January 26-27, at RiverCentre (\$3-\$4); Orchid Show from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, January 26-27, at Como Conservatory (\$2-\$5); King Boreas Grande Day Parade from 2-4 p.m. from the High Bridge to Kellogg Mall, featuring recently

retired Minnesota Twin Joe Mauer as the grand marshal.

Sunday, January 27—Vulcan Fun Day from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Fairgrounds; Polar Plunges from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 6:30-8 p.m. at Fairgrounds; individual block ice carving artisan division from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Kellogg Mall.

Tuesday, January 29—Frozen Family Fun Night from 5-8 p.m. at Landmark Center.

Saturday, February 2—Doggie Depot from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Union Depot; Torchlight Parade at 5:30 p.m. from Fifth and Wall streets to the Central Library, followed by the overthrow of Boreas at 7 p.m., fireworks at 7:30 p.m. and the Vulcan Victory Dance from 7:30-11:30 p.m. at the Inter-Continental Hotel.

Sunday, February 3—Individual block ice carving professional division from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Kellogg Mall; Hops & Hounds from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Kellogg Mall.

St. Paul Winter Carnival buttons are available for \$5 each or \$19 for a collector's pack of four at Cub Foods, Speedway and other local retailers. For a full list of carnival activities, visit wintercarnival.com.



honey production and delivery operations at a meeting of the Garden Club of Ramsey County from 7:25-8:25 p.m. at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 1807 Field Ave. The program is free and open to all.

Tuesday/January 22

PREVENTING FALLS will be discussed by physical therapist Julia Weisbecker in a Lunch, Learn and Laugh program from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Seabury Senior Housing, 1830 University Ave. Lunch includes chicken wrap, green salad, fresh fruit, coffee and water. The cost is \$8 cash

or check. For reservations, call 651-379-5102 by January 18.

PAX CONVERSATIONAL SALON returns with a discussion about military spending and the prospects of eliminating hunger and poverty worldwide from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Mississippi Market, 1500 W. Seventh St. Admission is free, though donations are welcome. Call 651-227-3228.

Wednesday/January 23

THE CARD CLUB will meet for games of bridge, 500 and cribbage beginning at 8:30

a.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. New members are welcome to join in the competition every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. An optional lunch is served at noon for \$10 per person.

Friday/January 25

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS will be accepting blood donations from noon to 6 p.m. at the Waters of Highland Park, 678 S. Snelling Ave. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are recommended. Visit redcrossblood.org or call 800-733-2767.

Saturday/January 26

A **ST. PAUL CHARTER SCHOOL Fair** will be held from 9 a.m.-noon at the Wilder Foundation, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy., giving students and families the chance to meet school administrators and teachers, ask questions, and learn more about the programs offered at the city's more than 35 public charter schools. Admission is free. Visit stpaulcharterschoolfair.org.

THE MOMS CLUB of St. Paul/Summit Hill will hold its annual Preschool Fair from 10 a.m.-noon at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. Many St. Paul area preschools will be on hand to share information about their programs. The free, kid-friendly event will also feature crafts and music.

WINTER FESTIVAL, a free show and sale by more than 60 artists and craftspeople, small businesses and other vendors from the Upper Midwest, will be held from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. in St. Paul RiverCentre's Ballroom.

Sunday/January 27

CROSSRIVER KOSHERFEST, a progressive supper featuring the offerings of 20 vendors from near and far, will be served from 7-9 p.m. at Keg and Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St. Sponsored by the Temple of Aaron, the kosher feast costs \$26.95. For tickets, visit tinyurl.com/y7yu6ldj.

Monday/January 28

MOBILE MENDERS volunteers will offer their free sewing services from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St. Lost buttons, ripped seams, holes in clothing, they fix it all, up to three clean items per person free of charge.

THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE on Mental Illness offers a support group for families and friends of people living with mental illness from 6:30-8 p.m. today and the fourth Monday of every month at Wilder Foundation, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy. Call Jennifer at 507-254-5524.

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Tuesday, February 5, 6-7pm @ JLCC

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Crime Report

The following crime incidents were compiled from St. Paul and Mendota Heights police department reports and other sources.

Highland Park

Burglary—Tools were reported stolen from a work site at St. Paul Academy, 1712 Randolph Ave., around 2:30 a.m. Monday, December 31.

—Two cash boxes and an iPod were reported stolen at Alchemy, 747 S. Cleveland Ave., around 5 p.m. Tuesday, January 1.

Theft—Two laptop computers were stolen from a vehicle on the 2200 block of Ford Parkway at 9:48 p.m. Friday, December 21.

—Two vehicles were stolen on the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive on January 2-4.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—A suspect was arrested for cutting security alarms off electronic items at the Midway Target at 3:19 p.m. Monday, December 31. Another suspect also was arrested for trying to cut off security tags at the store at 3:20 p.m. Tuesday, January 8.

Theft—A female suspect was arrested for trying to steal more than \$1,000 in items from the Midway Target between 4-5:30 p.m. Thursday, December 27. A 24-year-old man also was arrested for trying to steal more than \$500 in items from the store at 11:31 a.m. Monday, December 31.

Miscellaneous—Juveniles were arrested for disorderly conduct and criminal damage to property after police received a call of fighting at Central High School around 8:15 a.m. Tuesday, January 8.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—A television and other items were stolen from a residence on the 1500 block of Osceola Avenue between 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, January 4.

Theft—A backpack with a laptop computer was stolen from a vehicle on the 400 block of South Snelling Avenue at 11:19 p.m. Friday, December 21.

Miscellaneous—Two large rocks were used to break the front and rear windows of an apartment on the 1900 block of Grand Avenue during the evening of January 3-4.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A garage burglary was reported on the 700 block of Second Avenue at 8:50

a.m. Saturday, December 29. Entry was made by stealing the garage door opener out of a car in the driveway.

—A garage door opener and cash were stolen from a vehicle, and a garage was burglarized on the 2300 block of Cooperfield Drive, as reported at noon Saturday, December 29.

—Two bicycles were reported stolen from a condominium on the 1000 block of Riverside Lane at 9:48 a.m. Thursday, January 3.

Theft—Wallets were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 2400 block of Pilot Knob Road at 11:36 a.m. Tuesday, January 1.

Miscellaneous—Houses were egged on the 600 block of Cheyenne Lane, the 800 block of Wagon Wheel Trail and the 2200 block of Apache Street on December 28-30.

Merriam Park

Burglary—The Naughty Greek, 181 N. Snelling Ave., was broken into around 3:35 a.m. Thursday, December 27.

Theft—A catalytic converter was stolen from a vehicle on the 2000 block of Gilbert Avenue the evening of December 26-27.

—A vehicle was stolen on the 1600 block of Ashland Avenue during the evening of December 27-28.

—Several laptop computers were stolen from a commercial building at 209 N. Snelling Ave. between 4-6 p.m. Tuesday, January 8.

—A 24-year-old man was arrested for attempted auto theft and criminal damage to property at 12:43 p.m. Wednesday, January 9, at Signal Garage, 1592 Marshall Ave.

Snelling-Hamline

Robbery—Police received a call of a man with a gun and arrested a 26-year-old man for felony aggravated robbery and threats of violence at the Midway Cub Foods at 8:29 p.m. Sunday, January 6.

Theft—Plumbing parts were stolen from a vehicle on the 1500 block of Iglehart Avenue during the evening of December 20-21.

—A wallet was reportedly stolen from a man while he was at a register at the Midway Cub Foods at 5 p.m. Friday, December 21.

—The catalytic converter was stolen from a vehicle on Albert Street and Marshall Avenue between December 26-31.

—Vehicles were reported stolen at the Midway Cub Foods on December 26 and at the Midway LA Fitness on January 1.

—Multiple items were reported stolen from tenants of a home, along with \$100 in tools

from the owner, on the 1500 block of Hague Avenue at 4:33 p.m. Tuesday, January 1.

—The catalytic converter was stolen from a vehicle at LA Fitness, 1370 University Ave., between 11:10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, January 8.

Summit Hill

Robbery—Two suspects with handguns reportedly stole cellphones, marijuana and cash from a residence on the 900 block of St. Clair Avenue at 1:59 p.m. Saturday, December 29. One of the cellphones was recovered nearby after the suspects fled.

—A Cannondale bike was reported stolen from a garage on the 500 block of St. Clair Avenue at 10:18 a.m. Monday, December 31.

Burglary—Multiple items were stolen from a vehicle inside a garage on the 800 block of Goodrich Avenue the evening of January 3-4.

Theft—More than \$4,000 in tools were stolen from a vehicle on the 600 block of Lincoln Avenue at 4:16 p.m. Saturday, December 22.

—A vehicle was stolen on St. Albans Street south of Summit Avenue during the evening of January 3-4.

—Some \$700 in tools were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 100 block of South Lexington Parkway at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 5.

—More than \$500 in eyewear was reported stolen from InVision, 867 Grand Ave., around 2:50 p.m. Sunday, January 6.

Summit-University

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on Dayton Avenue and Oxford Street at 9:30 p.m. Sunday, December 30.

Burglary—Someone reportedly tried to break into a house on the 900 block of Carroll Avenue between 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, January 3. Police said the front porch screens were damaged, the garage door was kicked in and the outside cellar door was damaged.

Theft—A 31-year-old homeless man was arrested for theft around 1:30 p.m. Thursday, December 27, at St. Paul College. The man was caught on video taking a credit card left in an ATM and using it to make \$1,157 in transactions.

—A MacBook Pro computer was stolen from a vehicle at the Happy Gnome, 498 Selby Ave., during the evening of December 27-28.

—A wallet was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 400 block of Marshall Avenue around 5:04 p.m. Friday, December 28.

—A vehicle was stolen on the 900 block of Dayton Avenue between 8:50-10:10 a.m.

Tuesday, January 8.

West End

Theft—A wallet was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 200 block of South Western Avenue around 8:52 p.m. Thursday, December 27.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 800 block of Randolph Avenue on December 28-29 and on the 1500 block of Randolph Avenue on December 31.

—A wallet was stolen from Tom Reid's Hockey City, 258 W. Seventh St., between 3-5:15 p.m. Sunday, January 6.

—A purse was stolen from a vehicle at the High Bridge dog park on Spring and Washington streets between 2-2:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 8.

Assault—A victim was hospitalized following an assault on the 200 block of West Seventh Street at 2 a.m. Sunday, December 30.

—Two men ages 27-28 were arrested for assaulting another man on the 200 block of West Seventh Street around 1:55 a.m. Tuesday, January 1.

—A man was hospitalized following an assault at Patrick McGovern's Pub, 225 W. Seventh St., around 2:15 a.m. Tuesday, January 1.

—An assault was reported at the Eagle Street Grill, 174 W. Seventh St., around 3:03 a.m. Tuesday, January 1.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported near Armstrong Avenue and View Street around 6:20 p.m. Friday, January 4.

Fire Calls

The following local calls were gathered from recent reports by the St. Paul Fire Department and other sources.

Lexington-Hamline—A pedestrian was injured when struck by a vehicle around 10:44 p.m. Saturday, December 15, on Concordia Avenue and Griggs Street. A 38-year-old man was cited in connection with the accident.

Merriam Park—A pedestrian suffered minor injuries from being struck by a vehicle on Snelling and University avenues at 8:30 p.m. Thursday, December 27. The 42-year-old female driver was cited for failing to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

West End—A pedestrian was injured by a vehicle on the 900 block of West Seventh Street around 9:20 p.m. Friday, December 21.

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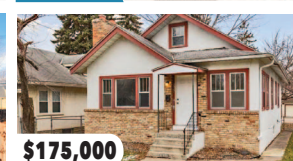
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On the Town

Art in the open

Plein air painter honors memory of his father in new gallery exhibit

BY ANNE MURPHY

Circling Back,” the forthcoming exhibit of landscapes by Macalester-Groveland artist Joshua Cunningham, is a retrospective of sorts. It displays a collection of oil paintings Cunningham completed since the 2017 death of his father, whom he describes as his greatest inspiration.

“This has been a very intuitive time,” Cunningham said, one that he has spent looking back at favorite places, looking deeply at the people he encountered and looking inward.

Cunningham, 44, will be on hand to discuss the reflections and introspection represented in “Circling Back” at the exhibit’s opening from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, January 26, at the Groveland Gallery, 25 Groveland Terrace in Minneapolis.

“Circling Back” marks Cunningham’s first major exhibit at Groveland since joining the gallery as a featured artist in 2017. That new association speaks to his growing reputation as an artist. His works are now included in private collections across the United States.

“When we first began to work with Joshua, we were impressed not only with his paintings, but also the enthusiasm with which he approaches his career and his art,” said Sally Johnson, director of the Groveland Gallery.

“Groveland Gallery specializes in regional art and contemporary landscape paintings, running the gamut from photorealism to abstract landscape,” Johnson said. “Joshua was a natural fit, representing the more traditional approach. His paintings contain a sense of immediacy, capturing the ephemeral atmospheres of dusk, dawn, rain, snow, fog and sunshine. The viewer is left with the impression that the artist was fully absorbed while creating the image. The paintings allow viewers to place themselves in the same moment.”

The Groveland show will include between 20 and 30 of Cunningham’s works displayed in two rooms. Many of the paintings are of places that Cunningham first visited with his father. In the revisiting he found new components in the landscape to highlight. There are also works linked to people who entered the artist’s life unexpectedly during the last year and gave him a new appreciation for the color or light or mood of a location.

Cunningham largely paints outdoors, in the “plein air,” in St. Paul and in the rural areas of southeastern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa, though he sometimes finishes the paintings in his studio in the home he shares

with his wife and two children in Macalester-Groveland. He traces his appreciation for familiar places to the farm in rural Isanti County where he grew up as the third of five brothers.

His father, a St. Louis Park police officer, inspired Cunningham’s love of painting through a book about American artist Andrew Wyeth. The book was kept on a table in their home, and though he does not paint like Wyeth, Cunningham said he was fascinated by the book.

Cunningham had in fact settled on a career in law enforcement when his youngest brother was killed in a car accident. That tragic event “ignited a clarity in me—that you only go around once and what you do with your time is important,” Cunningham said. “I decided I wanted to spend my life as an artist.”

Cunningham enrolled in classes in abstract art at St. Cloud State and St. John’s universities. Then he found himself in a summer apprenticeship with Merriam Park fresco painter Mark Balma. “My story as an artist is a lot shorter without (Balma),” he said. “He took me on as an apprentice and student in 1998 and ’99.”

“Joshua is a very talented and dedicated painter that I had the privilege to know and instruct in his early training,” Balma said. “He has proven his dedication to the plein air approach to painting by capturing the physical and spiritual verities of St. Paul, Minneapolis and the surrounding countryside.”



Clutching a brush in his mittened hand, plein air painter Joshua Cunningham works the palette before applying another stroke to a landscape of Crosby Lake in Highland Park.



From the wooded shoreline, landscape painter Joshua Cunningham renders a landscape of Crosby Lake in the frigid and crystal clear air of early January. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Following that apprenticeship, Cunningham enrolled in The Atelier in Minneapolis where he focused on drawing figures and portraits. After two years there, he spent the next four years studying under Highland Park painter Joseph Paquet, whom he credits with inspiring him to become a landscape painter.

Cunningham’s “zest for life, work ethic and true joy of study has taken him far,” Paquet said. “It has been wonderful to watch the trajectory of his art.”

“My dad took a few classes with Joe also,” Cunningham said.

To pay tribute to his father, Cunningham lugged his easel, canvases and paints to the places they had visited together. Along the

way, he painted other landscapes that gave him pause and a new appreciation for the life and love he had with his family and on the farm. Among these encounters were chance meetings with a man who was taking photos of an orange sunset on the river in St. Paul for his wife who was dying of cancer and with a woman who was knitting while her husband fished nearby.

The latter encounter is rendered in “Knitting and Fishing.” Other paintings on view in “Circling Back” include “Spring Alley,” a rendering of “a little slip of an alley between James and Palace” avenues; and “Melting Into March,” of the trestle that crosses Water Street in Lilydale.

Early this month, Cunningham was still working on several paintings drawn from his “Circling Back” excursions. Some of his paintings take four to six hours to complete, others take a year and a half—“or 15 years,” he added with a smile.

Cunningham said he loves how St. Paul has “grown up along the river and the railroad. The rhythms of the neighborhoods flow out from and with the railroad, the bluffs, the river bottoms and gorge. The prairie, too, will enter into my work. Like the plants that make it up, the prairie has taken deep roots in my artistic imagination, and I’m sure to be painting more of it.

“Ideas, opportunities and suggestions come. I write them down, I follow them up, and I listen, but in the end all I know is that regardless of where I am, I will be painting my best answer to what the place asked of me.”

“Circling Back” will remain on view through March 2. For more information, call the Groveland Gallery at 612-377-7800 or visit grovelandgallery.com.

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On the Town Briefly

Books

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to free readings and discussions with novelist David Housewright and *First, Kill the Lawyers*, the latest installment in his Holland Taylor series, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 16; and authors Michael Brodkorb and Allison Mann and *The Girls are Gone*, their book about the 2013 disappearance of sisters Samantha and Gianna Rucki, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 30. Call 651-493-2791 or visit subtextbooks.com.

"Surviving TB in Minnesota," a history forum led by Mary Krugerud, author of *The Girl in Building C: The True Story of a Teenage Tuberculosis Patient*, will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 22, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Admission is free. Call 651-259-3000.

Author Rhonda Gilliland will discuss her book, *Cooked to Death: Tales of Crime and Cookery*, during a free reading at 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 23, at Common Good Books, 38 S. Snelling Ave. Call 651-225-8989 or visit commongoodbooks.com.

Minnesota Treasures: Stories Behind the State's Historic Places author Denis Gardner will discuss the creation of the National Register of Historic Places and what makes an eligible property in a free program at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 24, at the Roseville Library, 2180 N. Hamline Ave. An historian in the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Gardner will also highlight properties in the area that are on the National Register.

The early Sherlock Holmes fan clubs that sprang up in response to the mysteries of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will be discussed in a two-hour Happy Hour program beginning at 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. Thursday, January 31, at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. Tickets are \$26 (age 21 and older) and include two drinks and snacks. Call 651-296-8760 or visit cart.mnhs.org.

Dance

CAAM Chinese Dance Theater will mark the Lunar New Year with the world premiere performance of "Once Upon a Lake" from 7-9 p.m. Saturday and 2-4 p.m. Sunday, January 26 and 27, in the O'Shaughnessy at



Live from Ljubljana. Slovenian classical guitarist Karmen Stendler will make her North American debut performing compositions from the 1500s to the present in a Minnesota Guitar Society concert at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 26, in Sundin Musical Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. A graduate of the University of Music in Weimar and the Academy of Music in Ljubljana, Stendler is fluent in Slovenian, English, German, Serbian and Spanish and has a black belt in karate. Concert tickets are \$10-\$25. Visit mnguitar.org.

PHOTO BY MIRJAM CANCER

St. Catherine University. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Visit oshag.stkate.edu or call 651-690-6700.

Exhibits

"Yes, and the Body Has Memory," works by artists Leah Edelman-Brier, Lorena Molina, Carla Alexandra Rodriguez and Rikki Wright that touch on home and its many meanings, are on view through January 26 in the Law Warschaw Gallery in the Fine Arts Center at Macalester College. A discussion of their art will be held in the gallery at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 23. Admission is free. For gallery hours, call 651-696-6416.

The Bell Museum of Natural History, 2088 Larpenteur Ave., will kick off a year-long commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing with special events from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, January 19-20. "Space Fest: Cleared for Launch" will feature talks by scientists who specialize in micrometeorites, infrared astronomy, aerospace engineering and astrophotography. Lunar displays and demonstrations, hands-on activities and planetarium

shows will also be part of the fun. A Star Party to observe the total lunar eclipse and the stars with high-powered telescopes will be held from 8:30 p.m.-midnight Sunday, January 20. Admission is \$12, \$10 for seniors, \$9 for youths ages 3-21. For more information or to register for the Star Party, call 612-626-9660 or visit bellmuseum.umn.edu.

The art and artists of the state Capitol will be highlighted in 90-minute guided tours of the state house beginning at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, January 19. See the murals, sculptures and lavish decorations of the Capitol and learn about the multimillion-dollar effort to restore the art's original appearance. The cost is \$10, \$9 for seniors, college students and veterans, \$8 for children ages 5-17.

"Ruth Crane: A Collector's Journey," close to 100 works from Crane's collection of ceramics representing a wide array of experimentation and technique in the areas of texture, color and surface design, will open with a public reception from 6-8 p.m. Friday, January 25, in Gallery 241 of the Goldstein Museum of Design, located in McNeal Hall on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus at 1985 Buford Ave. The ceramics

will remain on view through May 19. Admission is free. Visit goldstein.design.umn.edu or call 612-624-7801.

"ISIS Is Not," a show by Merriam Park artist Shiloh Clamons, will open on Saturday, January 26, at the East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier St. Clamons is a humanitarian worker who employs art therapy with children and refugees who have experienced trauma. Her art, which will remain on view through February 13, draws on the stories told to her by the refugees she has worked with in France, Belgium, Greece and Italy. An opening reception will run from 6-8 p.m. on January 26. Clamons will offer a workshop for children from 3-5 p.m. that afternoon. Admission is free. Call 651-230-3294.

"Winter on the Hill," an exhibit on the history of the St. Paul Winter Carnival and the Hill family's involvement in the festival in its early years, will be featured during tours from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday, January 26 and 27, at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Visitors will be invited to play old games and put together old jigsaw puzzles. Admission is \$6-\$10. Visit cart.mnhs.org or call 651-297-2555.

Family

Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., will offer the following free programs: Creative Nonfiction, a writing workshop conducted by Margie O'Loughlin from 1-3:30 p.m. on six Wednesdays (registration required); Board at the Library featuring games of Clue, Apples to Apples, checkers, chess and more, 2-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays; Family Storytime, 10:30 a.m. Fridays; and You Can Make It, hands-on activities for children ages 7-11, 3-5 p.m. Mondays. Call 651-642-0385.

Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy., will host Yarn Night, fiber therapy for all ages, at 6:15 p.m. Thursday, January 17; Read Brave Storytime with St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and the picture book *Shelter* by Celine Claire at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 26; a Care Brave activity with families putting together hygiene kits and sock bundles for the needy at 1 p.m. Sunday, January 27; Baby Storytime at 10:15 and 11:15 a.m. Wednesdays; Nature Smart, a trading post in natural science and history, 4 p.m. Wednesdays; Createch, high-tech fun for teenagers, 3:30 p.m. Thursdays;



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Celebrate the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and reflect on his legacy and the lasting impact of the events of 1968 with family-friendly art activities, service projects and live music and poetry from noon-3 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Monday, January 19-21, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. The weekend also marks the close of the "1968" exhibit. Admission is \$6-\$12. Call 651-259-3000.

See vintage model trains chugging through a winter wonderland in Night Trains from 6-9 p.m. Saturdays, now through February 23, at the Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum, 668 Transfer Road. The museum's overhead lights are turned down and its miniature street, train and building lights are turned up, giving a warm glow to the landscape. Admission is \$10, free for children ages 4 and under. Visit tcmrm.org.

Film

Five of the year's best giant-screen films are being shown through February 28 in the Science Museum of Minnesota's Omnitheater, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd. Omnitheater 2019 features *Ring of Fire*, on the volcanoes that circle the Pacific Ocean; *Journey to Space*, a sweeping overview of humankind's achievements in outer space; *The Greatest Places*, a tour of seven of the world's most dynamic landscapes; *National Parks Adventure*; and *Tornado Alley* with storm chaser Sean Casey. Tickets are \$9.95, \$8.95 for seniors and children ages 4-12. Visit smm.org or call 651-221-9444.

Actor Dennis Hopper's unrivaled intensity portraying lost souls and remorseless creeps is celebrated in January at Trylon Cinema, 2820 E. 33rd St. in Minneapolis. The series continues with *The American Friend* (1977), directed by Wim Wenders and starring Hopper and Bruno Ganz, at 7 p.m. January 20, and 7 and 9:30 p.m. January 21 and 22; *Blue Velvet* (1986), directed by David Lynch and starring Hopper, Kyle MacLachlan and Isabella Rossellini, 5 p.m. January 27, 7 p.m. January 28 and 9:30 p.m. January 29; *True Romance* (1993) starring Hopper, Christian Slater, Patricia Arquette and Christopher Walken, 7:30 p.m. January 27, 9:30 p.m. January 28, and 7 p.m. January 29. Tickets are \$8. Call 612-424-5468 or visit trylon.org.

Rondo: Beyond the Pavement, a documentary about the predominately African

American neighborhood of St. Paul told by those who lived in the area decimated by the construction of I-94 in the 1950s and '60s, will be shown at 6 p.m. Monday, January 21, at SteppingStone Theatre, 55 N. Victoria St. The 30-minute film was made by local youths with help from film and audio specialists Bianca Rhodes and Katharine DeCelle. A question-and-answer session will follow with the youths and elders from the Rondo neighborhood. Free tickets may be reserved at saintpaulmanac.org.

Music

Together We Sing, an afternoon of singing and building community spirit led by the VocalEssence Singers of This Age, G. Phillip Shoultz III, Mila Vocal Ensemble and the Cameroon Choir, will be held from 1:30-5 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Eastern European and West African songs of protest and progress, African American spirituals and American Civil Rights anthems will be featured in the program, which closes with a service project benefiting Ujamaa Place, a St. Paul nonprofit that helps young African American men transform their lives. Admission is free. No singing experience is required. To register, arrive early or visit vocalessence.org.

The 38th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert will be held from 3-4:30 p.m. Sunday, January 20, in the Ted Mann Concert Hall, 2128 Fourth St. S. in Minneapolis. The free program mingles the words of the Reverend King with musical performances by Ginger Commodore, Chadwick Niles Phillips, Harry Waters Jr., the VocalEssence Singers of This Age, Jacob Dodd, Brian A. Grandison, Madalyn McCurdy, Karla Nweje, Atosha Rypa and the University of Minnesota brass ensemble.

"City Life," a program on the vibrancy of urban living with works by Copland and others, will be presented by the Seward Concert Band at 7:30 p.m. Friday, January 25, in the auditorium of Sanford Middle School, 3524 42nd Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Admission is by donation with \$6 suggested for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$4 for students and children.

"Fire and Ice," Latin music that is guaranteed to warm your tapping toes, will be performed at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, January 24, at the MacPhail Center for Music, 501 Second St. S. in Minneapolis. Taking the stage will be guitarist Mark Bussey, soprano Patricia Kent,

pianist David Viscoli and duo pianists Lacey West and Rebecca Heyn. Admission is \$15, \$6 for students. A 10 a.m. reception with complimentary coffee and doughnuts will precede the show. Call 612-333-0313 or visit thursdaymusical.org.

The St. Paul Civic Symphony will perform "Hot & Cool Classics" in a free concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, January 27, at Landmark Center.

Award-winning organist Monica Czausz will present an eclectic program in recital at 4 p.m. Sunday, January 27, on the 55-rank Schlicker organ at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Admission is free, though donations will be taken to support Mount Olive's Music and Fine Arts program. A reception will follow in the church's Chapel Lounge. Call 612-827-5919.

Theater

Florian Zeller's *The Father*, winner of the Moliere Award as the best French play in 2014, is playing through January 27 at Gremlin Theatre, 550 N. Vandalia St. Craig Johnson and Miriam Schwarz star as a man with dementia and the daughter who cares for him. Told entirely from Dad's point of view, the play addresses the cruelties of love and the limits of patience while questioning reality and the meaning of truth. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$28, \$25 for seniors and Fringe button holders, and half your age for those under 30. Call 888-718-4253 or visit gremlintheatre.org.

The Children, a haunting drama by Lucy Kirkwood that challenges contemporary notions about morality and generational obligation, is being staged through February 10 at the Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Named Best Play by the U.K. Writers' Guild, *The Children* tells of two retired nuclear scientists who reside in a quiet cabin on the British coast while the outside world erupts in chaos. Directed by Casey Stangl, it stars Laila Robins, Linda Kelsey and Stephen Yoakam. The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$35-\$50. Call 612-822-7063 or visit jungletheater.com.

South Minneapolis comedienne Lorna Landvik's improvisational tour de force, *Party in the Rec Room* has returned at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through January 26 at the Bryant-Lake Bowl, 810 W. Lake St. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$18 in advance, \$20

on the day of show. Visit brownpapertickets.com or call 612-825-8949.

A Squid Has Three Hearts, a workshop presentation of a new play about how climate change can affect communities on a personal level, will be performed by the Umbrella Collective at 7:30 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, January 28 and 29, at SpringBOX, 262 University Ave. The drama tells of an expectant parent who is forced to examine the environmental consequences of bringing a child into the world. Filled with music and physicality, the piece swims between fairy tale and hard reality, helplessness and hope. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale from \$5-\$20. Visit umbrellaco.org.

Et cetera

Stand-up comedians of national renown, a family workshop and gallery exhibition are all on tap this month in the Twin Cities Jewish Humor Festival, held at both the Sabes Jewish Community Center in St. Louis Park and the St. Paul JCC at 1375 St. Paul Ave. The schedule includes comedian Ophira Eisenberg and special guest Elise Cole at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 19, at the St. Paul JCC (tickets are \$18 in advance, \$20 day of show); "The Simpsons & Other Jewish Families," an evening with longtime "The Simpsons" writer Mike Reiss, 7:30 p.m. Monday, January 21, at the St. Paul JCC (\$12 in advance, \$15 day of show); comedian Scott Blakeman and special guest Mike Vogel, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, January 24, at the Sabes JCC (\$12 in advance, \$15 day of show); comedian Julie Goldman and special guest Riley Silverman, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, January 26, at the Sabes JCC (\$18 in advance, \$20 day of show); a workshop for families in creating comic superhero self-portraits, 1-3 p.m. Sunday, January 27, at both JCCs (\$5 for ages 5 and older, includes supplies); and an exhibit of vibrant paintings by Frank and Pamela Gaard that explore humor in subtle and obvious ways, now through January 27 at both JCCs (free). For tickets, call 1-800-838-3006 or visit sabesjcc.org.

Auditions for Lex-Ham Community Theater's production of *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza will be held from 1-2:30 p.m. Saturday, January 26, and from 7-9:30 p.m., Monday, January 28, in Room 150 of the Music and Fine Arts Building at Concordia University, 310 N. Hamline Ave. Rehearsals will begin on March 25. Performances are May 10-18. For more information or an audition appointment, visit lexhamarts.org.

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Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Vikings' success is never guaranteed

What a difference a year makes. About 11 months ago, Viking fans were chortling. The team had snagged the young coaching guru who helped the Philadelphia Eagles maul the locals in the NFC title game. Then the team signed quarterback Kirk Cousins away from Washington. It had been generally agreed that Cousins was the premier free agent signal-caller available and that he would be a better fit than the plodding Case Keenum.

The price was steep at three years, \$28 million a year for Cousins, but the results would be worth it, right?

There was, however, a couple of small snags. Turns out the \$84 million man can throw the ball a mile, but had difficulty running 10 yards before he would be submerged by defenders. This proved to be a problem because the offensive line, which had a few issues the year before, was suspect. Keenum didn't have a great arm, but was elusive. Cousins had a great arm and was not.

There was one other item Viking fans had forgotten. A lucky bounce had kept the team afloat when it appeared they were going to be beaten at home in a playoff game against New Orleans in 2017. Also, the Chicago Bears, who had shown signs of life in 2017, were suddenly a lot better than expected. Add in a few bad bounces, a field goal fiasco in a tie against a Green Bay team that turned out not to be very good and the fact that what worked for the new boy genius in Philadelphia didn't work here.

The boy genius was fired late in the season and, when push came to shove in the final game of the season, the Bears whacked the locals to keep them out of the playoffs.

There may have been some comfort in local quarters because the hated Packers fell apart as well, costing their head coach his job. It should have been small comfort.

Peyton Manning, who knew a thing or two about winning football games, once said, "Time changes. Circumstances change and that's the reality of playing in the NFL."

The reality of 2018 for the Vikings was they simply weren't good enough to win. The job between now and when training camp convenes in August is to figure out why and do something about it.

Vannelli brothers to leave STA hockey

St. Thomas Academy never had poor hockey teams, but always seemed to be lingering in the background until co-head coaches Tom and Greg Vannelli arrived on the scene in 2003. Tom had been a superb player at St. Paul Academy and the University of Minnesota, and started out coaching at Cretin-Derham Hall. Brother Greg played for STA and collegiately at St. Thomas before starting his coaching career at SPA.

When they decided to join forces at STA, suddenly the Cadets were a team on the move, running roughshod over Class A foes. STA won five state titles in seven seasons. There was considerable yelping by their victims and the Cadets agreed to move up to Class AA. The result: three more trips to state all resulting in consolation trophies.

There's room for one more trophy in the case. Greg, 65 and Tom, 64, announced the other day that this will be their last season of coaching hockey at STA. It came a day after the Cadets upended rival CDH 3-0 to improve to 10-3-1 overall.

Greg will stay with the program to aid with the transition and will continue coaching the STA golf team in the spring.

STA athletic director Bob Slater, a 1977 graduate of the school, said in a press release that the job will be posted soon and he hopes to have a new coach on board by the end of the school year.

That person will have difficult skates to fill.

Dave Wright is at dwright53@msn.com.

Pound drums up fans with rockin' workouts

BY MIMI GELLER

If you sing along you will burn more calories," hollers Jenni Bolton to start her fitness class. Bolton is the founder and owner of Key Fitness in Mendota Heights. The studio is connected to Boltz's Family Martial Arts Academy where her husband, Master Greg Boltz Bolton, teaches.

When Bolton hollers, it is most likely because she is teaching a Pound fitness class. Pound was introduced in 2011 by a pair of former female college athletes and recreational drummers from Los Angeles. The full-body workout is one of the first to combine cardio fitness with drumming. The class uses bright green Ripstix, which are twice the weight of normal drumsticks. An average 45-minute class is believed to burn between 400-900 calories.

Besides the body burnout, it is the music that is the staple of Pound. While holding isometric and plyometric poses, Pound lets anyone rock out while they work out. Two- to four-minute songs are calculated to match extended fat-burning sequences and high interval squats and lunges. The movements draw inspiration from yoga, pilates, cardio and strength training.

Key Fitness has offered Pound classes for the past couple of years. "It's a party more than it's a fitness class, but you get the same sweat, the same muscle burnout, the same high-intensity intervals," she said. "At the end of class, you don't even realize you did a workout. That's what I love about it, because it makes it so accessible."

A mother of six kids and a survivor of domestic abuse, Bolton embarked on her fitness journey in 2010 as a means for relief. She started as a cardio kickboxing instructor, which led to meeting her new husband and starting their combined fitness studio.

"It was exciting to introduce fitness to people who had never incorporated exercise in their routine," Bolton said. "A lot of them were coming from the same place I had come from, where I looked at fitness as a gym class or jogging. Because I didn't like either of those



Jenni Bolton makes some noise while leading a Pound workout class at Key Fitness in Mendota Heights. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

things, I thought I didn't like exercising. Once I started cardio kickboxing, it became my mission to help people find their fit."

Bolton attributes much of the success of the Pound class at Key Fitness to Kim Cooper, who is known as the "Pound mama" of Minnesota. Cooper has taught Pound and other fitness classes at Key Fitness as well as the YMCA in Southdale, The Studio Eagan and in corporate fitness classes at Best Buy, Target and Ameriprise Financial.

"I honestly think that she's the driving force behind why Pound is getting so popular in Minnesota right now," said Lynnea Dalieden, a Pound teacher at Main Studio in Lonsdale.

"She's been a huge force in Pound in Minnesota," Bolton said. "She really pours into that Pound community. When we launch new classes at Key Fitness, she's the one who gets all of the people in the community there."

Cooper runs the Pound Posse MN Facebook group, where instructors and

participants post events and upcoming schedules. She started her Pound journey in 2015 by driving throughout Minnesota to find as many studios that offered the class as she could.

"I went to a Pound class and I fell in love with it because it was just so crazy and outside the box," Cooper said. "This community grew and has kept growing. Maybe because I always refer to the Pound community as a family they call me a mother."

Besides the incredible calorie burn, Pound's accessibility is what draws many of its members. Mistakes in class are called drum solos. In class, there are no judgments and no strives for perfection. It was built to create fun.

Bolton, who believes that there is a kind of fitness format for every person, praises Pound for its creative energy:

"It really is a come-as-you-are format," she said. "There's no right or wrong. It's just moving and having a good time and remembering that movement can be fun."

CDH has gem of a hockey player in Gleason

BY BILL WAGNER

Cretin-Derham Hall junior captain Matt Gleason really only has one flaw, if you can call it that, but it hasn't prevented him from becoming one of the best high school hockey players in the state.

"His weakness is his height," said first-year Raiders coach Matt Funk. "He's a generous 5-foot-8."

Gleason has a low center of gravity that makes him tough to knock off the puck. Combine that with his natural speed and lightness on his skates, and you have a well-polished forward who has already drawn plenty of attention from colleges.

"What sets him apart is his competitiveness," Funk said. "He can score from anywhere and he's a great ambassador for our program."

Gleason is so valuable for the Raiders that he's out on the ice nearly 65 percent of the time. He mostly plays center, which capitalizes on his quickness on faceoffs and his natural vision of the ice and playmaking skills. However, on power plays the left-handed shooter is employed as a wing, where he can maneuver to unleash a blistering shot.

College talent scouts usually look for how well a player performs without the puck, and Gleason qualifies superbly on that score.

"He plays the game at both ends of the rink," said Funk, who also employs Gleason as a penalty killer. That drives opponents to distraction, since they can't concentrate on finding the net if they have to make sure Gleason doesn't steal the puck and score.

Before this season is over, his offensive numbers will undoubtedly rank among

the top in the state. He started out with four goals and three assists after the first three games. He followed that up with three goals and three assists in a 11-9 win over Forest Lake.

Gleason was probably every bit as good two days later, even though it was a 5-0 loss to Wayzata and he was held off the score sheet. The Trojans outshot the Raiders 37-15 and were in control from start to finish, but Gleason was easily the best player on the ice. He twice exhibited his skating speed on breakaways and got off shots that were only thwarted on great saves by Wayzata's Danny Fraga.

Gleason also was a going concern on the penalty kill, and set up a nice two-on-one break in the third period while the Raiders were shorthanded. Throughout the game, he skated the puck out of his

Talented Sibley senior Tori Nelson is no longer flying under the radar

BY BILL WAGNER

Tori Nelson, a 6-foot-2 senior forward for the Henry Sibley girls' basketball team, is rightly being recognized as one of the best players in the state and has set an ambitious goal for her final prep season.

"I've never won a section (playoff) game," said Nelson, who has earned a full scholarship at South Dakota State next season. "I really want to get a win there. We know that we have that potential as a team. We want to go deep into the playoffs."

Nelson has the skills to make that a reality. Through January 7, she was averaging 21 points, nine rebounds, two steals and two blocks per game. Earlier this season, she surpassed 2,000 career points and was closing in on 1,000 rebounds for the Warriors, who were 6-6 overall and 1-0 in the Metro East Conference.

"She's the complete package when it comes to basketball talent," said Sibley coach Harry Jenness Jr. "She can play any position on the floor, and she's as humble as they come."

Nelson knows when to shoot and when to pass. She's capable of hitting from the outside, including three-pointers. And when those shots aren't there, she drives for a close shot or gets fouled. Still, she is less concerned about her own offensive numbers and more about shutting down opponents.

"Defense is my favorite part of basketball," Nelson said. "I've always liked the thought of having to stop the girl I'm guarding. When you play defense, you have to give it everything you have. You have to always be moving your feet. If one player breaks down on defense, your whole team breaks down."

There isn't much that Nelson doesn't do for the Warriors. She scored between 17 and 31 points during the team's first five games this season. Sibley suffered a one-sided defeat against Roseville on December 8, but Nelson still hit for a team-high 25.

As the word has traveled about Nelson, who seems to play a lot taller than the tape measure says, opponents have tried to double and even triple-team her. Some players may become angry and be turned off their game when the defensive pressure increases, but Nelson think it's a compliment.

"It can get frustrating," she admitted, "but it presents a chance to get the rest of the team



Tori Nelson continues to rack up points and rebounds for Sibley. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

involved. You just can't let it get you down and I'll do anything to help the team win."

When Nelson puts the ball on the floor and drives the lane, she's very difficult to stop. She can also step back and drain the three. This is something that Jenness is quite comfortable with. In fact, he's usually pretty at ease whenever the ball is in her hands.

"He likes it when I get open for three-pointers," Nelson said. "He has the confidence that I'll make the shot, and I can also step down into the post."

Nelson started playing basketball as a first-grader growing up in Mendota Heights. Both of her parents played prep basketball in Morris, Minnesota. Nelson's older brother, Noah, played hockey and baseball for Sibley. It's an athletic family for sure, but now it's Nelson's turn to shine.

She said she doesn't know how quickly she will fit into South Dakota State's plans when she arrives there next season. "They haven't really said yet," she said, "but I'll just take it as it comes."

Nelson said her biggest challenge is the length of the basketball season. "It's a long season, but you just have to keep a good attitude," she said. "You just have to remember the rewards you get from the hard work."

And if that translates into an even longer season by making a strong playoff run, she won't mind a bit.

20◀ CDH'S GLEASON

zone like a rocket.

He has likely already earned himself a spot in Division I college ranks because of his play. Though it has yet to be confirmed with a letter of intent, he is expected to play for Colorado College and according to Funk would do well there both athletically and academically. "He has about a 3.8 GPA," he said.

Gleason likes all the minutes Funk gives him on the ice for CDH, which was 7-4-1 overall and 5-1 in the Suburban East Conference through January 5. Through 12 games, Gleason had 14 goals and 12 assists, including a hat trick in an 8-2 win over Roseville.

"For me, it's always been about keeping in the best shape possible," Gleason said. "If you're one of the leaders of the team, you always have to be ready to be out there. I've always had that leadership trait. I've always tried to do what's best for the team."

Gleason grew up playing center, but said he also likes the way he's deployed as a wing on the power play. "I learned how to be a playmaker," he said. "I'm always thinking pass first. I have to tell myself to shoot more."

While some forwards may view penalty killing duties as drudgery, Gleason has no such sentiments. "I love it," he said. "I take a lot of pride on my faceoffs."

Funk knows just how valuable Gleason is when he takes the draws, and wants him on



Matt Gleason doing one of the things he does well—win faceoffs. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

the ice for as many as possible. Gleason figures that he wins the draw about 60 percent of the time and compiles a scouting list of face-off opponents with the help of CDH coaches.

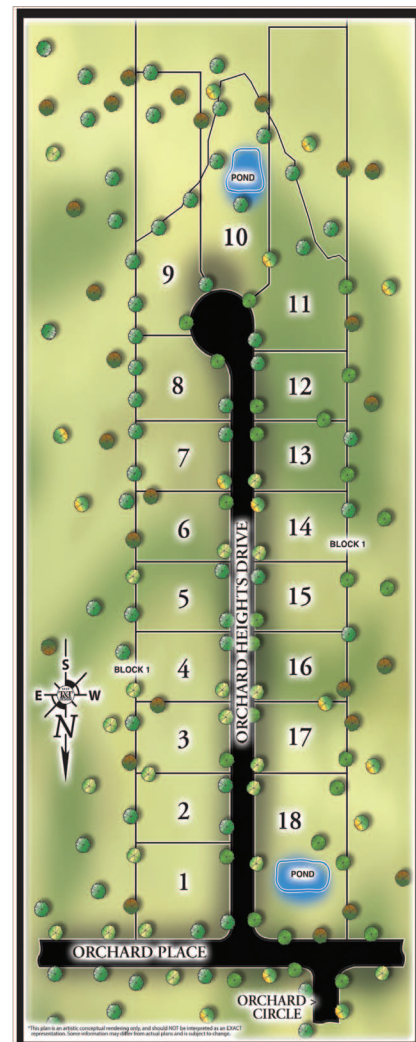
"I just try to be quicker than the other guy," he said.

Many college teams want their recruits to play a year of junior hockey first or, in some cases, play juniors while still in high school, but Gleason said leaving early will not happen with him.

"I love CDH," he said. "I love playing on this team. I'd like to win a state tournament before I'm through."



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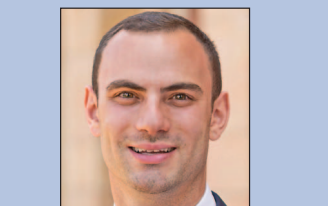
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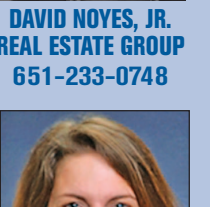
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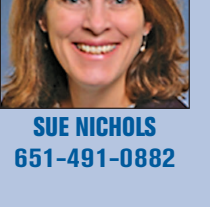
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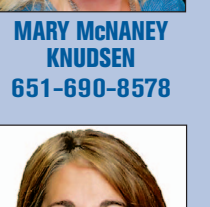
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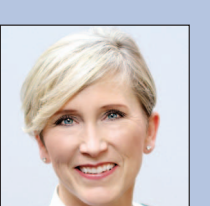
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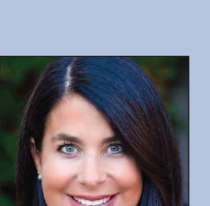
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