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## Ryan Cos. revs up for redevelopment of old Ford Plant

BY JANE McCLURE

A familiar name for local readers, Minneapolis-based Ryan Companies has been chosen by Ford Motor Company to lead the redevelopment of its former 122-acre assembly plant in Highland Park.

The developer of such recent local projects as CHS Field in Lowertown and the Vintage on Selby, Ryan will be tasked with implementing the master plan for the Ford site that was approved last year by the St. Paul City Council. In the process, the company will also have to contend with a neighborhood that remains deeply divided over the high level of housing density proposed in the master plan.

In a statement, Ryan officials said they will “immediately” begin an extensive period of due diligence to better understand the complexities of the Ford site and the long history of the redevelopment planning process as it works with the city on more detailed plans for the site.

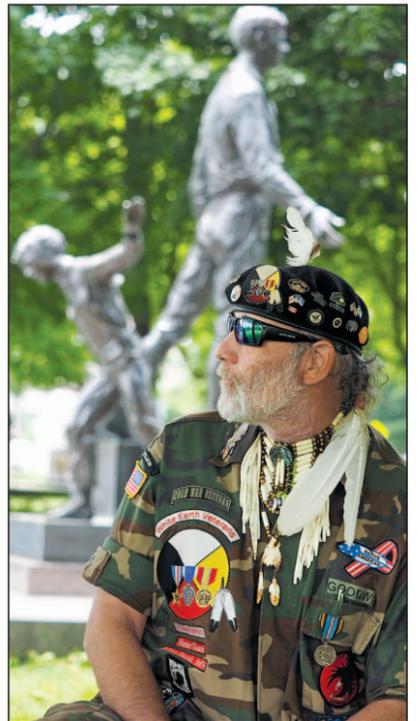
“Ryan is thrilled to be working on the redevelopment of the Ford site,” said Mike Ryan, the market leader of Ryan Companies’ North Region. “This is a complex site with considerable history, and the opportunity to help bring it back to life is something we’re very excited about.”

The city’s ambitious master plan includes six new zoning districts with various height limits for multi-family residential, office, retail and institutional uses. The master plan lays out an extension of the adjacent street grid along with new parks and bike and pedestrian trails. The plan also proposes a stormwater drainage feature that mimics a stream flowing through the property toward Hidden Falls Regional Park on the Mississippi River.

FORD SITE REDEVELOPMENT ▶ 2



**Recalling the fallen.** George and Sandra Sundem find the names of those they knew at the Wall That Heals, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial displayed in front of the state Capitol on June 23. Below, Levi Todd, 3, takes the stick of a Huey helicopter that was part of the exhibit. At right, Native American Everett Goodwin III pays his respects. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



## Candidates for Ward 4 seat lay out their priorities

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Voters in St. Paul’s Ward 4 will not only be narrowing the fields for various federal, state and local offices in the August 14 primary election. They will be choosing a new City Council member in a special election to fill the remaining 16 months in Russ Stark’s unexpired term.

Three candidates are in the race for the Ward 4 seat—Shirley Erstad, the executive director of the Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County; Mitra Jalali Nelson, a pol-

icy aide and outreach director for Fifth District Congressman Keith Ellison; and David Martinez, a project consultant in the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Erstad, 51, the mother of three grown children, is married and lives in Merriam Park. She is a member of the Union Park District Council (UPDC) board of directors and holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and economics from South Dakota State University.

“Having lived and worked in St. Paul for 25 years and raised my family here, I know how decisions made at City Hall affect the daily lives of

citizens,” Erstad said. “I’ve worked closely alongside city government and know how it works.”

According to Erstad, the most pressing problem in Ward 4 and the city as a whole is “development, both of the economic and truly affordable housing varieties. If I’d been involved in the soccer stadium negotiations, I would’ve insisted that as part of the deal the corporate headquarters of Minnesota United locate in the Midway area to bring year-round, full-time, good-paying jobs and anchor other economic development.

WARD 4 RACE ▶ 2

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## 1 ◀ WARD 4 RACE

"I am also proposing a shift in the city's priorities," Erstad said. "Rather than corporate giveaways without asking anything in return, let's fix our potholes, invest in our parks and recreation centers and work with partners to increase workforce training programs. Great schools, great parks and great neighborhoods are what attract employers and workers alike."

According to Erstad, the loss of affordable housing to redevelopment, including upscale apartments and off-campus dorms, "is a problem for Ward 4 and the city. There's a lack of student housing on the University of St. Thomas campus. When Jay Benanav represented Ward 4 on the City Council, a plan was drawn up for a five-year community engagement process to address this. Unfortunately, pressure continues to be exerted on the surrounding neighborhood for student housing."

"I opposed the student apartment building at Marshall Avenue and Moore Street because it went against the spirit of that agreement," Erstad said. "The 16 units will rent for more than \$3,000 a month—not what I consider affordable housing. I believe in inclusive, transparent, open, accountable government and would hold both St. Thomas and the city accountable to their agreements and plans."

"Increased density itself doesn't equal affordable housing," Erstad said, "and it puts increased demands on city services by increasing traffic, noise, pollution, public safety needs, more pressure on green space and public works infrastructure, and increased demands for electricity and drinking water. We need to consider all sides of the density equation."

Nelson, 32, a resident of South St. Anthony Park, is married with no children. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Nelson is running for City Council, she said, "because our city needs capable leaders who reflect our growth, our diversity and our shared commitment to equity. St. Paul is growing rapidly, and we need to make sure that every resident can benefit from that growth."

"In a city that's nearly 50 percent people of color and over 50 percent renters, and in a ward with one of the fastest-growing renter populations in St. Paul, I would bring a perspective that is missing on the City Council as both a woman of color and a renter," Nelson said. "My focus will be on increasing attainable and affordable housing, promoting transit and sustainability, achieving true community-first public safety and building our community wealth."

"There's an affordable housing crisis in our city that's felt most acutely by seniors, people of color, low-income working families and college students," Nelson said. She would ad-



Shirley Erstad



David Martinez



Mitra Jalali Nelson

dress that by promoting more housing, either through the conversion of existing housing into more units or building new housing.

"I support affordable housing that meets people where they're at in a range of living situations and income levels," Nelson said, "but I'm generally supportive of more market-rate apartments and similar projects thoughtfully designed. We can have thoughtful development that helps meet our housing needs and continues to grow this ecosystem."

"One of the issues I hear about most in our ward is affordable senior housing, and the challenges that longtime residents and homeowners face in finding housing nearby once they've sold their homes," Nelson said. "We also have an opportunity, as seniors age, to support younger residents and working

families in having access to affordable homeownership. I'd be interested in working to connect renters and homeowners across generations to help everyone find naturally occurring affordable housing in our ward."

Martinez, 38, a resident of Hamline-Midway, is married with two children. A native of Puerto Rico, he moved to St. Paul with his mother and younger siblings when he was 7. He earned a bachelor's degree in global studies at the University of Minnesota and an MBA at Bethel University.

"I want to ensure that every resident in Ward 4 and the city has an opportunity to achieve a quality of life where their basic needs are met," Martinez said. "I'm running to leverage my experience, education and service on various city boards and commissions



St. Paul's Ward 4 comprises the neighborhoods in the city's northwest corner, including St. Anthony Park, Merriam Park, Hamline-Midway and part of Como and Macalester-Groveland.

to make informed decisions that will benefit my neighbors."

Martinez said he is the best candidate for two reasons: "One, my opponents have demonstrated that they're not capable of fulfilling one of a City Council member's primary tasks to audit each of the city's accounts and departments. Two, I'm the only candidate who doesn't have pet projects that depend on tax dollars for implementation and maintenance."

Martinez cited Nelson's pet projects as support for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, an increase in property taxes to support the public schools and the implementation of organized trash collection across the city. He cited Erstad's support for the \$15 an hour minimum wage and increased funding for parks and recreation centers.

Martinez said the proliferation of "mid scale and upscale condos and apartments for wealthy college students is a problem in Ward 4 and the city. I'll address the issue by ensuring that the character, history and image of Ward 4, and the city at-large, are acknowledged whenever a housing or development decision is presented to the City Council."

Since he moved to Ward 4 in 2005, Martinez said, a "once vibrant and healthy community has deteriorated and so has our commercial corridors, particularly Snelling and University avenues. Poverty rates are up. Crime is up. K-12 educational outcomes are substandard. Buildings are shuttered. Businesses are moving out. And roads, bridges and buildings are crumbling. Meanwhile, our tax rates are through the roof."

"My approach to solving Ward 4's most pressing issues is to examine the problem, ask questions, collect input from stakeholders, and propose solutions that will have the greatest benefit for the greatest number. I'd also address the blatant discrimination and injustices committed by government against the most vulnerable members of our society—the elderly, sick, those with mental health issues, immigrants and children."

Erstad, Nelson and Martinez will take part in a Ward 4 candidates forum scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 18, in Room 100 of the University of St. Thomas' McNeely Hall on the southwest corner of Summit and Cleveland avenues. The forum is cosponsored by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. Free parking will be available in St. Thomas' surface lots and the ramp at Grand and Cretin avenues.

Ranked-choice voting will be used in the Ward 4 special election. Voters will be asked to rank the candidates in their order of preference. If none receives a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate who receives the fewest first-choice votes will be dropped from the race and their votes redistributed to their supporters' second choices.

## 1 ◀ FORD SITE REDEVELOPMENT

The master plan calls for a range of building types increasing in height from west to east, with the tallest buildings reaching 10 stories. Estimates are that the development could include as many as 4,000 new housing units. The plan recommends that 20 percent of the homes be affordable to people earning between 50 and 60 percent of the area's median income.

The master plan was intended to inform prospective developers about the city's expectations for the Ford site. However, developers have the right to seek amendments to the master plan from the St. Paul Planning Commission and City Council.

"We know this will not be a small undertaking," Ryan said. "The city of St. Paul and numerous stakeholders have invested tremendous energy in rethinking the site over the past decade, and this gives us a great basis for our work. We're getting mobilized, but we know we have a lot of research and preparation to do before we have a detailed development plan to present. What's safe to say is that the surrounding neighborhoods, insti-

tutions, retail amenities, parks and access to both downtowns and the airport are exceptional, and adding to them is our overarching priority."

Ford put the former assembly plant property on the market last December with the help of the global real estate firm CBRE. City officials anticipated nationwide interest in the site, though it is not clear how many prospective master developers came forward. The Dearborn, Michigan-based motor company did not respond to requests for comment. However, city officials are pleased with Ford's choice of Ryan.

"I think Ryan Companies will be a great partner," said City Council member Chris Tolbert, whose Ward 3 includes the Ford site. Citing the company's work on other St. Paul projects, Tolbert said, "they understand the need to work closely with the community and to seek the community's input."

Tolbert called the selection of the master developer "another important step in the process of successfully and thoughtfully redeveloping the Ford site."

"Our vision for the Ford site is a connected, livable and sustainable development that

serves the needs of our growing 21st-century global community," St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter said in a statement. "Ryan Companies will be a great partner in realizing this vision."

"We're very excited that Ryan Companies has been chosen as the master developer," said Highland Business Association president Becky Kerkow of Pearle Vision. "They're a very well-respected construction and development company. Ryan is also a longtime member of the Highland Business Association. We'll certainly reach out to the developer to offer our help in any way we can."

Ryan takes over a planning process that has generated many months of debate over the density of the redevelopment and the potential for traffic congestion on the major thoroughfares surrounding the Ford site. Two neighborhood groups, Sustain Ward 3 and Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul, have butted heads over the master plan.

Sustain Ward 3 praised the level of density ultimately approved by city officials. Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul argued that the proposed density was too much and it waged an unsuccessful effort to place a citywide referendum on the master plan on the ballot.

Ford moved its Twin Cities Assembly Plant to Highland Park in 1925. The plant manufactured a wide range of vehicles over the years, from Model T cars at the outset in 1926 to Ranger pickup trucks in the years before the plant closed in December 2011.

It has not been announced when the actual land transaction between Ford and Ryan will take place. A timeline released by the city indicates that development could start as soon as 2020, be carried out over many years, and include other development partners.

Ryan Companies, which got its start in Minneapolis in the 1930s, has extended its reach to developments in 38 states. The Ford project could be its largest to date, but the company has handled other large projects, including the five-block Downtown East Minneapolis project and Marina Heights in Tempe, the largest office development in Arizona history.

The company is also currently working with the O'Gara family on a five-story mixed-use building on the site of O'Gara's Bar and Grill at Selby and Snelling avenues.

# Rezoning recommended for 5-story Selby-Snelling project

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul Planning Commission on June 29 recommended rezoning the O’Gara’s Bar and Grill buildings and parking lot at 164 N. Snelling Ave., as well as the three houses at 1551-1559 Hague Ave., to Traditional Neighborhoods 3 (TN3). The rezoning will be considered by the City Council following a public hearing later this summer. It is intended to pave the way for O’Gara’s and Ryan Companies’ plan to redevelop the site as a five-story, 163-unit apartment building with a new but much smaller O’Gara’s and other commercial space on the first floor.

O’Gara’s is currently zoned for TN2, and the houses are zoned for townhouse use. The TN2 zone allows building heights of up to 35 feet, or more with a conditional use permit. TN3 zoning allows building heights of up to 55 feet, or more with a conditional use permit.

The Planning Commission on June 29 also approved a conditional use permit for the O’Gara’s project to allow a building height of up to 63 feet. The developers said they do not anticipate a height of more than 60 feet but wanted some wiggle room.

Dan O’Gara, whose family has owned and operated O’Gara’s since 1941, and representatives of Ryan Companies met on June 18 with the Land Use Committee of the Union Park District Council (UPDC). The project has the support of the Selby-Snelling Area Business Association, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, other local businesses, and Ed and Sara Conley, who own several commercial properties at the northwest corner of Selby and Snelling.

Neighborhood reaction to the project has been mixed, with some residents supporting it and others saying the proposed building is more massive than they had envisioned. There is also some frustration that traffic



An artist’s rendering of the five-story building proposed for the southeast corner of Selby and Snelling avenues. The structure would replace the buildings and parking lot of O’Gara’s Bar & Grill as well as three homes on the north side of Hague Avenue.

studies tied to the development are being addressed separately and were not expected to be ready for review until July 9.

Some neighbors objected to what they viewed as late notice on the permit request for additional height. They also said that the move from TN2 to TN3 revises a zoning change made just last year as part of the South Snelling Avenue rezoning study.

The UPDC Land Use Committee debated the project at length on June 18 before recommending the approval of the rezoning on a split 12-7-1 vote and the approval of the conditional use permit on a split 12-8 vote. The developers have agreed to meet with the committee again in July to discuss concerns and any possible changes that can be made to building design.

Dean Nelson, who cochairs the Land Use Committee, said he was concerned that the building will be “massive.” He asked if the up-

per floors could be set back from the property line, especially on the sides closest to Hague Avenue homes. Other committee members asked if adding a sixth story would make it possible for the developer to set the upper floors back further from Hague. However, Ryan representatives said the structure as planned could not handle a sixth story.

Pete Clasen, who owns residential property on Hague, said he and other neighbors thought the building would include more setbacks on the Hague side. Plans show a setback on the second floor to accommodate a deck for tenants. Clasen raised concerns about the privacy of adjacent homes, saying that neighbors did not realize until recently that there would be a small swimming pool on the second-story deck facing Hague.

In a letter to the UPDC and Planning Commission, Clasen said there was not adequate time at the June 18 Land Use Committee

meeting to discuss the project and the privacy concerns. According to him, the full drawings were not available until that same day.

Concerns about the neighbors’ privacy were also raised by planning commissioner Kris Fredson, who asked the developers to consider some kind of screening to block views. According to Tony Barranco of Ryan Companies, the developers are not far enough along to consider the details of deck screening. He said that some kind of perimeter fencing and planter beds would be used as screening.

Yet another red flag for neighbors is the relaxed requirement for off-street parking under TN3 zoning. Under TN2 zoning, the project would have required a minimum of 213 spaces, with 181 for the apartments and 32 for the commercial spaces. But with TN3 zoning, those minimum requirements are reduced to 136 parking spaces for the apartments and 32 spaces for the businesses. The current plans for the project call for 32 spaces for the businesses, 158 spaces for apartment tenants and an additional 15 “stacked” spaces for tenants, bringing the total to 205 spaces.

Some neighbors were disappointed to learn that the three Hague Avenue homes will be torn down and not moved, as was requested at a neighborhood meeting earlier this year. When Ryan Companies developed the Vintage on Selby immediately north of O’Gara’s, three houses were moved. However, difficulty in finding developable lots means that the houses cannot be relocated, Ryan representatives said, though materials from the houses will be salvaged.

The plan is to reuse materials from O’Gara’s, including signs, the original bars, tin ceilings and other building features. The new apartments would be market-rate for the most part, though three of the units would be offered at “affordable” rates, though the rental price has not been specified.

# Wellington planning mixed-use building at Snelling and Shields

By JANE MCCLURE

A 175-unit apartment building with first-floor retail space is being planned by Wellington Management for the southwest corner of Snelling and Shields avenues, directly across the street from Allianz Field, the new Major League Soccer stadium now under construction. Wellington is hoping to break ground on the \$35 million project in the spring of 2019, which is when Minnesota United is scheduled to begin play at Allianz Field.

The building, which would be four or five stories tall, would replace the current Bremer Bank at 427 N. Snelling Ave. and possibly a small piece of Minnesota Department of Transportation property south of the bank. The property is zoned for Traditional Neighborhoods 3, which allows buildings of up to five stories in height without a conditional use permit.

Wellington has been discussing the project for several months with Bremer Bank and the

adjacent Central Baptist Church as it continues to work on designs for the new building. Bremer would like to rent space on the first floor of the new development. Another prospective tenant is Walgreens, which vacated its longtime Midway Center location last year.

David Wellington, director of acquisitions and development for Wellington Management, said “the project could have significant neighborhood impacts, and we’re cognizant of those impacts.” Wellington is seeking the neighborhood’s help early in the planning to mitigate those potential impacts, he said.

The new apartments would be market-rate, according to Wellington. “We’ll be marketing to a demographic that wants to live close to transit and really likes to bike,” he said.

Before joining the family firm, Wellington worked in real estate development in Seattle. There, he said, he saw what gentrification can do to a community, citing the “significant and negative” impacts. He said the company would like to avoid that.

Wellington appeared before the Union Park District Council’s Land Use Committee on June 18. Committee members and other neighborhood residents in attendance had mixed reactions to the project. Several people praised the project for its proximity to the light-rail Green Line and the A Line rapid transit bus, but others raised concerns about traffic and spillover parking.

The project would have about 18,000 square feet of retail space on the first floor. That could house up to four tenants, Wellington said, though if Walgreens signs on, it would need about 10,000 square feet for its pharmacy.

Both Bremer and Walgreens have said it is important they have drive-through service at the new building, Wellington said, and that could add a wrinkle to the project. The bank currently has four drive-through lanes, and Wellington said the project may not happen if Walgreens is not a part of it.

Parking is another issue. The building

would have about 180 parking stalls, according to Wellington. Underground parking is likely for the apartment tenants, but surface parking is also being discussed. One idea is to remove two church-owned houses on Roy Street just south of Central Baptist, and to create a parking lot or ramp there that could be shared by the church and the new development.

Central Baptist has been on the southeast corner of Shields and Roy Street for the past 105 years, and has just four off-street parking spaces. Church members have been able to use the Bremer Bank lot for Sunday services.

Wellington Management owns and manages more than 100 properties in the Twin Cities totaling more than 4 million square feet and \$400 million in value. In recent years, the company has developed about 800 new housing units.

“When we build a building, we operate it,” David Wellington said. “We care about what we build.”

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# Council denies appeal of 6-story building at St. Clair-Snelling

By JANE McCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted 5-1 on June 20 to reject an appeal by Neighbors for Responsible Development and allow TJJ Development to move forward with its plan for a six-story, 118-unit apartment building on the southeast corner of Snelling and St. Clair avenues. The appeal had challenged the St. Paul Planning Commission's previous approval of a conditional use permit to allow the building to exceed the maximum height of 55 feet by as much as 13 feet 4 inches.

"We can all agree that we want something to happen at this corner," said City Council member Chris Tolbert, whose Ward 3 includes the development site. The property is currently occupied by a surface parking lot and two vacant retail buildings.

Last year Tolbert led the charge in rejecting a larger six-story building for that same corner that had been proposed by Florida-based LeCesse Development. That building would have extended several parcels to the south, and according to Tolbert, would have been too intrusive on the surrounding neighborhood.

Though TJJ Development is planning six stories on the northern half of the building, the southern half, which is across the alley from single-family homes, is five and four stories tall. TJJ's proposal has the upper floors set back from the property line to reduce the building's mass. It will encourage more street-level activity with 4,100 square feet of retail space and three apartments on the first floor.

Tolbert praised the development team for meeting with neighbors and the Macalester-Groveland Community Council to discuss the project and try to minimize its impact.

City Council member Jane Prince was the sole vote against denying the appeal (council member Dai Thao was absent). Though she agreed the building's design was "ambitious and beautiful," Prince cited the potential impact of the building on local residents.

According to Prince, the City Council's adoption of the South Snelling zoning study last year that placed these and many other parcels on Snelling in the more dense Traditional Neighborhoods (TN) zones was an "implied promise" that development would take place at the size and scale outlined in the new zoning. To have the first project under the new zoning come before the City Council with a request for additional height is problematic, she said.

The development site is zoned for TN3 on the north end, where the building would be 68 feet 4 inches tall. The zoning allows a height of 55 feet without a conditional use permit.

At the south end of the building, a height of 47 feet was being sought, which is from 6 feet to 4 feet 8 inches higher than its TN2 zoning allows without a permit.

The 118 apartments in the new building would be a mix of market-rate efficiency, one- and two-bedroom units. Residents on the second through sixth floors would have balconies or decks that fit in with the building's stepped-back design. Eighty-seven parking spaces would be provided underground and on the first floor.

More than three dozen people attended the City Council's public hearing on the appeal. The project also generated dozens of calls and emails to city officials.

Mike Rowley was among more than half a dozen neighbors who questioned the rush to approve a taller building less than a year after the new zoning classifications were adopted. "We're setting a precedent for the new zoning regime," Rowley said. He and other neighbors said the development is too large and too dense for the neighborhood around it.

Neighbors want to see redevelopment at Snelling and St. Clair, said Michelle Myers Berg, a member of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council, "but not at the expense of their privacy, their peace and their safety."

The neighbors' appeal noted that the proposed building will be twice as tall as some adjacent homes. Tenants in the new building will be able to look into their backyards and windows, neighbors said.

Neighbor Peg Flanagan agreed with the need for redevelopment. "It's been a blighted corner for some time," she said. However, Flanagan and other neighbors said they would like more time to work with the developer to see if a shorter building could be constructed. The neighbors also criticized the plan to separate parking ramp fees from rental fees, contending that will lead tenants to forgo the cost and park on neighborhood streets.

Jim LaValle of TJJ Development asked the City Council to deny the appeal. Though he respects the neighbors' concerns, LaValle said, his development will be an asset to the neighborhood. The additional heights are only for

small areas of the building and not the entire structure, he said. Studies have shown that the extra height will have minimal impacts, he said, with shadows falling on neighboring homes only during the winter months and without affecting the solar panels on top of the building at the northeast corner of Snelling and St. Clair. A separate traffic study showed that there is no need for any changes at Snelling and St. Clair.

Neighborhood residents who supported the project praised the design and LaValle's work to minimize negative impacts. Jeff Christenson of Macalester-Groveland said the new building will fit well in the neighborhood, make it more walkable and be an improvement over the parking lot and rundown commercial buildings it will replace.

"Taller, denser buildings are better for quality of life," said Highland Park resident Rick Varco, who called the appeal "frivolous."

Neighbor Kara Lynum said she would have liked to see an even taller building on the site. She said she is worried about the housing shortage and the low apartment vacancy rate in St. Paul.

One wrinkle remains before TJJ Development can break ground on the new building. A dispute over the parking lot at St. Clair and Snelling is pending before the Minnesota Supreme Court. The owner of Cinema Ballroom, 1560 St. Clair Ave., contends it has ongoing rights to use the parking lot.

LaValle has said that if his plans are blocked by the court case, he will fix up the buildings that housed Sweeney Cleaners and Rosemark Bakery and not develop anything new.

# County Board OKs plan for new Riverview Corridor streetcar line

By JANE McCLURE

The long-awaited and much-debated Riverview Corridor transit project took a big step forward on June 19 when the Ramsey County Board unanimously approved a modern streetcar line as the preferred mode of transit for the corridor extending from downtown St. Paul's Union Depot to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America.

If all goes as planned, construction of the streetcar line could start as early as 2028 and begin operating a few years later. The line has an estimated cost of between \$1.4 billion and \$2 billion. Average daily ridership in 2040 is projected to be 20,400.

The County Board's vote capped a 3½-year preproject development study. Last December a task force recommended a modern streetcar line on a route that largely follows West Seventh Street in St. Paul and Highway 5 over the Mississippi River to Fort Snelling where it

would connect with the light-rail Blue Line to the airport and megamall.

The city of Bloomington, Metropolitan Airports Commission, St. Paul City Council and Hennepin County Board had recommended the transit mode and route as proposed earlier this year. Ramsey County held its public hearing on the project in February but waited on a vote until the other local units of government had voted.

"After years of community conversations, detailed technical study and careful deliberation, we affirm our commitment today to complete the connection of the region's top three economic activity centers with rail transit," said Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega in a statement. "We thank our many partners, businesses and community members for contributing to this process and helping us pass this milestone."

"A robust transit network is essential for the entire Twin Cities region to remain competitive with our national peers," said

Ramsey County Board chair Jim McDonough. "Modern streetcars provide the right balance of capacity and size, high level of service, and long-term growth opportunity to best connect travelers, employees and visitors to businesses, other destinations and travel connections throughout the Riverview Corridor."

With local government approvals in place, Ortega said the next step is to seek state and federal funding. The hope is that the federal government will pay about half of the project's costs through its New Starts Program. The proposed 11.7-mile line must also be included in the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, a requirement for Riverview to be eligible for Federal Transit Administration funding.

The current plan calls for nine transit stations between downtown and Fort Snelling. With the preferred transit mode, route and station locations chosen, Riverview project staff can begin more detailed environmental

review, design and engineering work. New Riverview Corridor technical and policy advisory committees will form, and public engagement will continue. A related study of transit options branching off from the Riverview line to serve Highland Village and the site of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant will also get underway.

Riverview would be the Twin Cities region's first modern streetcar line. It would run on tracks similar to those used for light rail but would share a traffic lane with cars. It could also share tracks with the light-rail Green Line in downtown and with the light-rail Blue Line south and west of Fort Snelling.

It has been a long road. Prior to the June 19 vote, McDonough noted that an early iteration of the Riverview transit project was on a County Board agenda right after he was first elected in 2000. He and other commissioners are confident the project will move forward this time.

# Discussion continues on rerouting Lexington through Riverside site

By JANE McCLURE

Several dozen people attended a public meeting hosted by the Ramsey County Public Works Department on June 19 to discuss plans for rerouting Lexington Parkway through the former Riverside School property at 900 Albion Ave. in Highland Park.

County and city officials said the event at Summit Brewing Company was another chance to gather comments about the project, which would be built in phases. The first phase would involve rerouting Lexington through the school property to connect with West Seventh Street. Work is expected to start next year. The current Lexington would dead-end before Montreal Avenue and would provide space for vehicles to turn around.

The second phase could involve extending the new Lexington across West Seventh to a short stub of Elway Street and continuing south to Montreal Avenue and eventually to

Shepard Road.

The project involves three government entities, since West Seventh and part of Montreal are state highways, Lexington is a county road and Elway is a city street. The cost of the project and its funding sources have not been determined yet.

The opportunity to reroute Lexington arose more than a year ago when the St. Paul Public Schools chose to sell the 5.4-acre Riverside School property. The J.A. Wedum Foundation plans to develop the site as a senior housing campus. A conditional use permit and variance for the first of two buildings for the site were approved by the city's Planning Commission in May. City Council action is still needed on rezoning the property from single-family residential to Traditional Neighborhoods 3.

The Highland District Council saw the property's sale and redevelopment as a way to improve the dangerous West Seventh-Lexing-

ton-Montreal intersection. Work on rerouting Lexington will be timed to coincide with the Wedum development, which is scheduled to start later this year.

Nick Fischer, who is leading the Lexington project for the county, said suggestions from local residents and business owners will be considered as the roadway design moves ahead between now and September. Another meeting will be held this fall, and final design work will be completed by December.

The project will be put out for bid in early 2019, with a final neighborhood review in May and construction that summer.

The preliminary design for Lexington calls for one 11-foot-wide traffic lane in each direction, 12-foot turn lanes, 5- to 7-foot bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides.

One red flag for neighbors has been the current plan to remove the traffic signal at West Seventh and Albion, and install a new signal at the reconfigured Lexington and West Sev-

enth. Several residents said they would have difficulty getting in and out of their neighborhoods if that occurred.

Another idea would restore part of the street grid behind the Highland Nursery at Albion and West Seventh. Albion currently connects with a short stub of Adrian Street that serves a small group of homes.

Sue Hustings of Highland Nursery said that in 1973 the business purchased a 60-foot section of Adrian behind the nursery and the city vacated the street. The new plan for Lexington would extend Adrian through again to connect with the stretch of Elway that would become part of the rerouted Lexington.

Though she said she understands the traffic issues and the reason for restoring the street, Hustings said the nursery is now using the vacated right-of-way as well as land along Elway for loading and unloading. "That would really affect us," she said.

# After 96 years in business, it's lights out for Brinkman Service

BY JANE McCLURE

Brinkman Service Company owner John Brinkman had hoped to shutter his store at 286 S. Snelling Ave. by June 30, but a large inventory of glass and fabric lampshades, finials and other lamp parts mean his closeout sale could extend into July. There's a lot to clear out of the dusty and cluttered shop, which has been in the same location since 1968.

Brinkman is the last stand-alone lamp repair shop in St. Paul. While some specialty lighting and hardware stores repair lamps, Brinkman handled everything from small table lamps to huge ornate chandeliers.

Customers were still coming through the door in late June with broken lamps in hand, only to be turned away as Brinkman hurried to finish his remaining projects. The customers said they will miss his prompt, friendly service and can-do attitude.

Of his decision to retire, Brinkman said, "it's just time." And there's no one in the family interested in taking over the business, which was founded in 1922 by his great uncle, Ray Lulling. Lulling's Fix-It Shop at 444 Selby Ave. did all kinds of repairs, from lamps to appliances to silver plating. The shop moved to the corner of Selby and Avon Street before settling on Snelling 50 years ago.

Harold Brinkman, John's father, ran the shop for many years, and his children grew up working there. John's sister, Marjorie, owned the lamp repair business until John bought it from her almost 30 years ago. His brother, Dale, ran the silver-plating side of the business until he retired. The silver-plating business was then sold to a Brinkman employee, and that firm still operates under the Brinkman name on Randolph Avenue.

As of late June, almost two dozen floor lamps were waiting to be reclaimed by their owners in the Snelling shop. Three huge lightpole fixtures awaited pickup by the city of South St. Paul. New lampshades sat in stacks throughout the store. Beautiful antique glass shades lined shelves coated in dust. A few ornate finials and switch pulls awaited buyers, as did piles of parts and boxes of wiring.

Longtime customers included everyone from interior decorators and antique dealers to local residents who just



John Brinkman (above) has decided to close Brinkman Service, a lamp repair shop that has been on Snelling for 50 years and in the family for 96 years.

wanted to keep a prized lamp operating. Brinkman said he has worked on lamps for the grandchildren of customers he served years ago.

Jacqueline Fortier, who owns and operates Jacqueline Fortier Interior Design on Selby Avenue, called Brinkman's retirement a "tragedy." She has worked with him for almost 15 years, and isn't sure who or what will replace him and all of the work he has done for her and her clients.

Customer James Emerald called Brinkman "one in a million." Emerald had an Italian-made swan halogen desk lamp that kept burning out. Five other repair shops turned down the job before Brinkman took the lamp and not only repaired it, but also explained how it could be repaired in the future. "I was elated," Emerald said.

"We've repaired lamps for just about everybody," said Brinkman. After Governor Jesse Ventura left office in 2003, all of the lamps in the governor's mansion needed attention. "We did the repairs, replaced the shades and did the silver-plating," Brinkman said.

Brinkman Service was also hired to help with the recent restoration of the State Capitol. Another memorable job was the repair of a three-tier, spaghetti-style chandelier that had fallen 20 feet onto the marble floor of a country club in Wayzata. The fixture was more than 6 feet tall and 6 feet wide with many

ornate strands. "They brought the chandelier in on a flatbed," Brinkman said. Once it was repaired, a special crate had to be built to safely transport it back to the country club.

Brinkman recalled the restoration of two tall hand-carved wooden lamps that had graced a Union Pacific railroad depot in North Dakota. He also restored two Tiffany lampshades from Marshall Fields' flagship department store in Chicago for reuse in Target's corporate headquarters in Minneapolis.

"We did the jobs no one else wanted to do," Brinkman said. "We'd weld, rewire, paint, plate and repair." If a part couldn't be found, a new one was made, he said.

For one client, Brinkman went so far as to design and build a rack on which wine bottles hung. After some thought, the task was accomplished using aircraft cables and nickel-plated hangers to grip the bottles.

Home lighting has greatly changed in the 96 years the Brinkman family business has operated. Many people would rather buy a new lamp these days than have an old one repaired or restored. While Brinkman can be critical of the quality of many new lamps, he applauded the changes that have made light bulbs and lighting more energy-efficient. "LED lights save money and energy," he said.

Brinkman worked in the family business throughout his years at St. Columba Grade School, St. Agnes High School, the University of Minnesota and Brown College. His goal had been a career in computer technology, but he wound up working at the shop and he has no regrets. "I always say that whatever you can learn and study, do it," Brinkman said. "If I could give anyone any advice, it's to learn as much as you can."

Brinkman is looking forward to retirement, spending more time with his daughters and their families and getting to know his four grandchildren better. As for the building in which he has worked for the past 30 years, it's more than 100 years old and it too needs to retire, according to Brinkman.

"It's not in good shape," he said. "I assume some developer will want the property. And that's good. I think this block is due for change. It's progress. People should look forward to redevelopment and be happy."



Brinkman Service owner John Brinkman helped Marge Gritzke pick out a new lampshade as he prepared to close his business for good. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

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# News Briefs

## Celebration set for opening of Rondo Commemorative Plaza

The grand opening of the Rondo Commemorative Plaza will be held from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, July 14, on Concordia Avenue between Victoria and Fisk streets. The plaza celebrates the history of the predominantly African-American Rondo neighborhood that was split in half when I-94 was built in the mid-1960s.

The board of directors of Rondo Avenue Inc. will host the daylong event and is inviting neighbors, city and state officials and special guests to visit the plaza, participate in the opening festivities, reminisce about the neighborhood's past and imagine its future.

The festivities will include remarks from 10:30 a.m.-noon by St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Charlie Zelle, educator and "daughter of Rondo" Dr. Mary K. Murray Boyd, City Council member Dai Thao and Marvin Roger Anderson, co-founder of Rondo Avenue Inc., which spearheads the annual Rondo Days festival and now the plaza.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will occur at noon in front of the plaza at Concordia and Fisk and will be followed by performances until 5 p.m. by musical groups, spoken word artists and poets under a tent at Concordia and Victoria.

People will also have a chance to tour the plaza, which features a 6-foot-tall wall of photos and stories shared by residents who experienced the destruction of the Rondo neighborhood. The plaza also includes rain gardens and a 30-foot-tall marker that illuminates the night sky with the word "Rondo."

Concordia will be closed to traffic between Victoria and Fisk throughout the grand opening festivities.

## Centennial Showboat to get new home at Winona museum

Goodbye to a Mississippi riverfront icon. The St. Paul City Council on June 27 authorized the city's Department of Parks and Recreation to transfer ownership of the Minnesota Centennial Showboat to the William A. Thompson Dredge Museum in Winona.

The floating theater was owned and operated for years by the University of Minnesota for its summer stock theater program. Since the 1990s, it had hosted riverfront performances and was part of a Chautauqua series at Raspberry Island.

After the theater program ended, the city acquired the showboat for \$1 from the university in the fall of 2016. A managing partner for the showboat was sought in 2017, but none of the five applicants met the city's criteria.

Parks and Recreation then reviewed the showboat with city inspectors and found that it would be cost-prohibitive to bring it up to code for recreational purposes.

Selling the vessel for scrap would have only brought in about \$40,000. Then two nonprofit groups approached city officials about acquiring it. The Winona museum agreed to raise funds equivalent to the scrap value. Fundraising was completed on June 1 and the \$40,000 turned over to the city.

The showboat, which will be a theater and cultural destination to promote Mississippi River tourism, will be docked at Latch Island in Winona.

## St. Paul imposes license cap to restrict new tobacco shops

The St. Paul City Council adopted an ordinance on June 27 that caps the number of tobacco licenses in the city at 242. The change will take effect in 30 days. After that, any shop wanting a new license to sell tobacco or tobacco-related devices would have to wait until an



Visitors can explore photos and stories of the Rondo neighborhood at the commemorative plaza that will celebrate its grand opening on July 14 at 820 Concordia Ave.

existing license holder goes out of business, leaves the city or otherwise gives up its license.

A youth advocacy group from the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation was the only one to speak in favor of the license cap at a public hearing on June 20. No one spoke against it. The City Council did receive a letter from Thomas Briant, executive director and legal counsel of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets, who said the cap is unnecessary since the city's restrictions on menthol, mint and wintergreen tobacco products that take effect on November 1 will already reduce the number of stores selling tobacco in St. Paul.

The city has taken several steps in recent years to try to reduce youth access to tobacco and restrict the sale of various types of flavored tobacco products to tobacco shops. That restriction raised concerns about a potential proliferation of tobacco shops, but council members said the license cap will prevent that.

## Discussion set on space plans for Snelling, Westgate stations

Changes to the public space plans for the Snelling and Westgate light-rail stations along the Green Line will be heard by the St. Paul Planning Commission at 8:30 a.m. Friday, July 13, at City Hall.

When the light-rail line was being planned a decade ago, the commission led studies of land-use and zoning changes around each station. The Snelling and Westgate station plans were adopted in 2008 to guide public and private investment in the areas around them.

City planner Anton Jerve said new developments are prompting the changes to the station area plans. That includes the Allianz Field soccer stadium going up near the Snelling station and redevelopment of the former Weyerhaeuser lumberyard into senior and workforce housing near Westgate. The stadium plans call for two public green spaces between it and University Avenue, as well as other trail and plaza space as part of a redeveloped Midway Center. The Weyerhaeuser project also involves new trail and park space.

Jerve said that both plans are similar in that they call for breaking up large blocks of green space into smaller, more pedestrian-friendly areas. Both also have park spaces as amenities for new development.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed changes in June and released them for public comment. After the public hearing, comments will be reviewed for possible amendments that would be brought back for

commission and City Council adoption later this year.

## Permit, variance approved for Morning Star Church project

A planned Selby Avenue senior housing complex and church can be up to 45 feet high, the St. Paul Planning Commission decided on June 29. The commission also approved a variance so the Morning Star Baptist Church redevelopment project can use the Selby-Igglehart alley as maneuvering space for a 30-vehicle parking lot.

Morning Star and PDMC Development are working together to redevelop the nearly 1-acre church property at 739 Selby Ave. Plans call for demolishing the current cinderblock church and constructing a four-story, 95-unit senior housing complex and a 6,600-square-foot church in its place. In February, the St. Paul City Council approved a zoning change to allow the project to proceed.

However, during city staff site plan review in May it was found that the building needs a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow for the additional height and a variance to use the alley for the parking lot. City planner Tony Johnson recommended approval of the two requests, indicating that neither will have a negative impact on the public.

The CUP is only needed for a small part of the building as it is being designed with its top stepped back to allow additional height. The church steeple does not require any special approvals.

The development team hopes to start construction soon and have the building open for residents next year. The approximately \$26 million project is being built in cooperation with Mesaba Capital Partners and Premier Development Management.

## Council honors Wietzkes for 36 years of service to St. Paul

The St. Paul City Council passed a resolution on June 27 honoring West End pastor the Reverend Walter Wietzke and his wife Raija for their 36 years of service to the city.

Wietzke has been the pastor at St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, 550 W. Seventh St., since 1982. The council resolution stated that he has provided "religious, spiritual and moral guidance to thousands...as a pastor, mentor, wrestling coach, religious scholar, community organizer, tireless volunteer and...a friend to all."

The resolution also honored his wife for devoting herself faithfully to the life of St. Mark

"with strength and humor, in true partnership with Pastor Walt."

Wietzke preached his last sermon at St. Mark on July 1. He also has served on the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation board for many years.

## After nine years and a ton of pizzas, DiNoko's says goodbye

DiNoko's Pizzeria closed its doors on June 24, vacating the building at East 45th Street and 42nd Avenue South in Minneapolis.

The shop, which specialized in Chicago-style deep dish pizza, ended a two-year run at that site under owner/operator Bill Moore, who said his passion for the business was gone. Moore started DiNoko's after purchasing Joe's Pizza at 5501 34th Ave. S. in 2009. He moved the shop a couple of times before finally settling on the 42nd Avenue location.

To many, the closing was not a surprise, given DiNoko's limited hours. Prior to its closing, the restaurant had been open for only a total of 14 hours from Fridays through Sundays.

Moore said that he had mixed feelings about closing his shop. "Of course, I'm going to miss it," he said, "but I'm not as hungry to do it as I used to be."

He has two other businesses that he said were doing well, though he declined to elaborate. His wife Theresa, who also worked at DiNoko's, did not mask her emotions on the couple's last evening of business.

"I'm very sad," she said. "We've met a lot of great people, but we've been doing this for nine years and it's time."

According to the shop's website, the only thing fancy about the place was the Fancy Brand mozzarella it used from Burnett Dairy in Wisconsin.

DiNoko's space was formerly occupied by Parkway Pizza, which is now located a couple blocks to the west on Minnehaha Avenue. It was not immediately known what would be moving into DiNoko's space in the building, which also includes two second-floor apartments. Building owner Brian Goff did not respond to attempts to contact him.

## Comments sought on study of future use of Mpls. locks

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District is seeking public comments on a study to determine the future of the Mississippi River's locks at Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls and at Lock and Dam No. 1 by the Ford Bridge.

The corps is evaluating whether those sites should continue to operate as is or if they should be de-authorized by Congress and disposed of. As part of the study, the St. Paul District will identify entities that may be interested in owning the properties. It costs taxpayers about \$1.5 million per year for the corps to maintain and operate the three locks.

The study will include public meetings from 6-8 p.m. on Monday, July 16, at the Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St., Minneapolis and on Tuesday, July 17, at Highland Park High School, 1015 S. Snelling Ave.

Comments concerning the study should be submitted to District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, ATTN: Regional Planning and Environment Division North, 180 E. Fifth St., St. Paul, MN 55101-1638.

The scoping period for the study ends on August 20. A draft report will be available for public review next spring. For information, contact Nan Bischoff at 651-290-5426 or Nanette.m.bischoff@usace.army.mil or visit [www.mvp.usace.army.mil/MplsLocksDisposition](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/MplsLocksDisposition).

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure, John Wadell and Bill Wagner.

# Blending into the neighborhood

## Award honors new construction with historic appeal

By Roger Barr

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council is now taking nominations for Blend Awards, a new program that recognizes new construction and major remodeling projects in St. Paul that honor the character of their respective neighborhoods.

This is the first year that the Blend Awards will be given in St. Paul. The program is cosponsored by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council (MGCC) in partnership with the Minneapolis-based Blend organization. It is intended to create an incentive for property owners, architects and contractors to build and remodel homes and commercial buildings that blend into their neighborhoods.

"We've been trying for several years to address what people don't want to see in the neighborhood," said Liz Boyer, MGCC's executive director. "Blend Awards encourage diverse and innovative designs that are also compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. We see this as a way to address the issue from a positive angle rather than solely a restrictive one."

"We're very excited to expand the awards to St. Paul and to work with Mac-Groveland to do so," said Brad Schulz, community outreach coordinator for Blend, which has operated the awards program in Minneapolis for several years. "It's a great way to expand blending to an area that has great architecture, great builders and excellent architects."

Partnering with Blend allowed MGCC to move forward without "reinventing the wheel," according to Michele Myers Berg, who sits on an MGCC Housing and Land Use subcommittee that tracks construction projects that may or may not blend in and offers resources for homeowners considering renovations.

To choose the winners of Blend Awards, MGCC has appointed a panel of judges that includes architects John Albers, Isabel Chavier and Frank Louis and landscape architects Meg Arnosti and Carol Zoff. A separate panel will judge the nominees in Minneapolis.

Blend Awards were started in 2007 as a project of the Fulton Neighborhood Association in the southwest corner of Minneapolis. Fulton has struggled for years with existing homes being torn down and replaced with "McMansions"—much larger houses that dwarf neighboring homes and are deemed out of character with the rest of the neighborhood. Blend has since been spun off as its own organization.

Blend Awards are given for both residential and commercial buildings in the areas of new construction, remodeling or additions, outbuildings, landscaping, building exteriors, and sustainable building and eco-friendly design. The awards do not come with any money. Its value is just the pride in "knowing that you're being a good neighbor," Schulz said.

Pride is what Bob Schmitt felt when he received a Blend Award in 2017 for the remodeling of his home in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood. The house was a 750-square-foot cottage that Schmitt had lived in for 17 years. The remodeling expanded it to 2,400 square feet by adding an art studio and transforming a half basement with an octopus furnace into a finished full basement. One foot was added to the width of the house. The length, which



Among recent Blend Award winners in Minneapolis are the Minnehaha Parkway cottage at top, which grew from 750 to 2,400 square feet without losing its original appeal, and the newly constructed Irving Avenue home above.

had included a screened porch in back, remained unchanged.

The Blend Award was a source of pride for Schmitt's builder, D.T. Carlson Company of Hugo, too. "It's a great award," said Dan Carlson. "I think it urges designers and home builders to take the challenge of utilizing square feet and to focus on design. Blend Awards are good for neighborhoods. We'd love to be involved again."

Blend distributes free guidelines on residential construction and renovation to any interested parties, Schulz said. That neither Schmitt nor Carlson was initially aware of the awards program represents both a challenge and an opportunity for Blend to educate homeowners, architects and contractors.

"We have anecdotal information that customers are coming to architects and builders now and asking for something not like the McMansions they're seeing," Schulz said. "They know what they don't like and are looking for something else."

Schulz noted that there has been an increase in nominations since the awards program was started five years ago—"from a handful to 25 to 30 annually," he said. "The quality of the entries has also increased."

Blend Awards represent the carrot approach to preventing new construction and major remodeling projects that erode the historic character of a neighborhood. Myers Berg compared these projects to the remodeling of Central High School in the 1980s. "Central High was transformed from a stately Clarence Johnston-designed school into what looks like a correctional facility," she said of her alma mater.

Myers Berg lives near a new home that she said is clearly out of character with the rest of the neighborhood. According

to her, the issue is invariably a matter of scale. "Often the developers are hyper-focused on size, and often their homes are not at a human scale where you feel balanced," she said.

If Blend Awards represent the carrot approach, the laws passed by local governments are the sticks. In 2015, the St. Paul City Council passed an ordinance that regulates the height, setback and design of new and remodeled homes in the Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park neighborhoods.

That same year, a group of Macalester-Groveland residents waged a successful battle to stop a homeowner from tearing down a century-old house in good condition and replacing it with a larger structure they deemed out of character with the surrounding Tangletown area. That battle led to an effort to designate Tangletown as a historical conservation district that would further articulate what could and could not be done in residential construction in the neighborhood.

Last July the St. Paul City Council approved a resolution directing the city's Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) to study the conservation district issue and report back with any recommendations. According to PED marketing and public relations manager Hanna Burchill, the department is awaiting the results of a historical survey by Macalester Groveland residents. Though the survey has been completed, it is still under review by the Minnesota Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office.

Nominations for Blend Awards are being accepted until July 31. For more information or to nominate a project, visit [macgrove.org](http://macgrove.org) or [blendaward.org](http://blendaward.org).

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# Viewpoint

## Public was largely shut out of new trash policy

BY TOM GOLDSTEIN

Have you ever wondered how significant policy change occurs in St. Paul? We'd like to believe it comes about only when a clear public mandate has been established for the change; when an objective, thorough analysis of relevant data demonstrates the new policy will provide an overall benefit; and that no vote will be taken by the City Council without robust engagement with citizens, particularly those who may be harmed by the change.

Those who follow politics in St. Paul know that the actual process is often quite different. Take last year's City Council decision to implement organized trash collection. There was no scientific polling data gathered to gauge community preference, no effort to pilot the idea in one neighborhood before extending it citywide, and no attempt to address the negative impact mandated garbage service poses for those who now share a trash container, live on a fixed income or recycle the great majority of their waste.

Instead, the city forged ahead with a plan largely crafted by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council, which developed its recommendations based on the feedback of fewer than 2,000 people, many of whom live in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood.

That's not to diminish the work of those on the district council who pushed the idea. However, as noted in the district council's 2015 report, "Taking Out the Trash," survey respondents were not "demographically representative" of the city and measuring "a preference for or against having an open system was not easy to assess." Unfortunately, those limitations did not keep the same authors from declaring "that a majority of citizens are open to the idea of organized trash collection," a sentiment that quickly became a citywide objective when the report was shared with city officials.

The St. Paul Department of Public Works will undoubtedly claim that the Macalester-Groveland report merely "informed" its thinking, and that it was the city's outreach efforts—and a second survey—that provided the basis for recommending a coordinated trash collection system. Yet the city's survey was equally unscientific, with the 1,896 responses received on the Open Saint Paul website only evaluated for gender and geographic location. Even then, a mere 405 comments were tracked according to residency—with nearly half of the respondents from the more affluent Wards 3 and 4, which include Macalester-Groveland.

Although the community council organized five presentations and the Public Works Department held five Q&As, two panel discussions, a focus group and several other events, the number of online and written survey responses barely totaled 2,000, with no way of assessing whether the respondents were from the same households or if they even lived in St. Paul. There are approximately 112,500 households in St. Paul, so at best the responses represented fewer than 2 percent of those affected by the new policy, with no controls to demonstrate that the survey was statistically significant.

Do any of these shortcomings matter? After all, isn't reducing air and noise pollution and wear and tear on city streets a good thing? Sure, so long as the projected benefits are cost-effective and supported by relevant data. That's where this whole plan falls short, because city officials did not attempt to gather objective data or conduct a cost-benefit analysis—things that should be standard practice for a policy change of this magnitude. Instead, the purpose of public engagement appeared to be nothing more than persuading residents to support a predetermined outcome that, as demonstrated by several articles in past issues of the *Villager*, will lead to many unintended and costly consequences.

What could the city have done differently? For starters, the City Council could have taken no action on citywide trash collection and instead directed Macalester-Groveland to pilot a one-year trial program in that neighborhood. If the pilot program was a success, offer the same program in other neighborhoods that believe too many garbage trucks in the alley is a major concern.

The City Council could have chosen to regulate the days on which trash hauling takes place throughout the city, the same way it coordinates recycling. For example, designate



## Inbox

### A higher minimum wage for all

It is time for management to stop blaming labor for management's inability to run a business. It is also time for business owners to stop expecting the taxpayer and the customer to pick up the tab when they fail to pay a living wage to employees.

In "Beware of false profits of the minimum wage" (*Villager* Viewpoint, June 20), Ed Christie says he is no longer in the business of restaurant management because of "the financial pressure stemming from the continual increase in the minimum wage, especially for tipped employees." He writes about tipped employees being "the highest paid per hour (tips included) in the restaurant business." If his real beef is with tipped employees, then do away with tipping and pay them a living wage. But he would likely come out against this idea because restaurant owners have long depended on customers paying tips to make up what the employer is not paying to their employees.

Mr. Christie cites "eliminating jobs" as one way the restaurant industry might respond to the higher minimum wage. They raised the minimum wage in Seattle to \$15 per hour with many people predicting that restaurants would go out of business or layoff workers, but just the opposite happened. Business increased.

Mr. Christie implies that people with disabilities would lose their jobs with an increase in the minimum wage. In some jurisdictions, the wages of disabled people are subsidized by government programs, so business owners would not be paying the \$15 per hour out of their pocket. Also, disabled people are often paid less than the minimum wage because they cannot perform as independently.

If restaurant owners had increased wages commensurate with menu prices over the years, there would not be the sticker shock over this wage increase. The government would not have to mandate the increase if the owners had done the right thing in the first place.

According to the National Restaurant Industry's own numbers, gross sales in the industry increased by \$212 billion between 2010 and 2017. Where did that increase go? How much money does a restaurant really make? In the meantime, employees of restaurants are working full-time jobs, yet many qualify for government subsidies like food stamps and rent subsidies. Why should taxpayers have to subsidize restaurant owners who are not paying their employees a living wage?

If restaurant owners want to trim their costs, why don't they serve an appropriate amount of food? We have an epidemic of obesity in this country, yet the average restaurant dinner is easily enough to stuff the average person and still

have enough left over for lunch the next day. The restaurant can benefit by stopping food waste and reducing how much they pay for food.

Why not pay a wage of \$15 per hour with no tipping? Customers would be a lot happier and possibly more likely to eat out and even pay more for a meal if they did not have a 15 or 20 percent tip to calculate at the end.

Paul and Nancy Pappas  
Highland Park

### Harm in hiking minimum wage

Data released in February showed that crime in St. Paul had risen 10 percent compared with the year before. Last year, shots fired were up 28 percent from 2016. There were 22 homicides in the city last year, the most in more than a decade. And yet, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter has rejected his police chief's call for 50 more officers. Mayor Carter remains focused instead on his efforts to raise the city's minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

This is despite a report from the Citizens League which shows that most of St. Paul's large employers such as Allina Health, Ecolab, HealthPartners and Securian already pay the majority of their workers at least \$15 per hour. Instead, it is the city's nonprofits, franchise and small-business owners, and small family-run restaurants that will be hit hardest by the higher minimum wage.

It is despite another Citizens League report which shows that the minimum wage hike would cost the city \$1.94 million in higher wages, or \$2.23 million including benefits such as Social Security and Medicare tied to wages, with the vast majority of this—\$1.8 million—coming from the Parks and Recreation Department's budget.

It is despite the balance of academic evidence. In 2008, economists David Neumark and William L. Wascher surveyed two decades of research into the effects of minimum-wage laws. They found that "minimum wages reduce employment opportunities for less-skilled workers... (that) a higher minimum wage tends to reduce rather than to increase the earnings of the lowest-skilled individuals... (that) minimum wages do not, on net, reduce poverty... (and that) minimum wages appear to have adverse longer-run effects on wages and earnings."

Further research corroborates this. In a new paper, Neumark and economist Grace Lordan find that minimum wage hikes lower the share of automatable employment held

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by low-skilled workers. Elsewhere, Neumark and economist Cortnie Shupe show that raising minimum wages has reduced teenage employment and has left those workers less skilled. A new paper from economists Jeffrey Clemens, Lisa B. Kahn and Jonathan Meer finds that as minimum wage rates rise, other elements of worker compensation fall.

Whichever way you look at it, minimum wage hikes are bad public policy. And in this context, they seem to be a distraction for the mayor from dealing with the upswing in violent crime that is causing such concern, especially to residents in areas like Rice Street.

One of the first things we expect from government is to protect us from violence. A government that cannot or will not fulfil that basic function is not worth bothering with. Like any politician, Mayor Carter only has so much political capital. For the good of the city's residents, he should spend less of it on harmful policies like minimum wage hikes and more on making the city safer.

**John Phelan**  
Lowertown

*Editor's note: John Phelan is an economist at the Center of the American Experiment.*

**The sun comes up every morning**

I remember 1968. I remember President Lyndon Johnson declining to run for re-election due to the Vietnam War. I remember active Republicans wearing black armbands when the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. I remember visiting Minnesota Congressman Odin Langen's office in Washington and flying out of D.C. and seeing fires all over the city and machine guns on the steps of the Capitol.

I remember Bobby Kennedy being killed, which led to the nomination of Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic candidate for president. I remember the somber mood at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, when field artillery recruits were being shipped to Vietnam.

I remember Richard Nixon attending a rally at Moorhead State College and calling it Morehouse State College. I remember Vice President Spiro Agnew calling the media the "nattering nabobs of

negativism." I remember Jane Fonda going to Hanoi.

But the thing I remember most is that the sun came up every morning.

**Lyle Nelson**  
West Side

**Let's focus on what unites us**

Our focus this election cycle must be on improving the quality of life in Minnesota. Neighbors can find agreement in this, and our common interests should be the cornerstone of political discourse. Policy solutions to our biggest problems exist, yet they will only be realized when people channel their power away from the toxic political culture of division-stoking parties, brand-obsessed candidates and an imprudent media. We must build community through civil political discussions with our neighbors, demanding more from the institutions we need to uphold democracy. Trust and shared nonpartisan goals are the best tools we have to establish a modern society that can effectively govern and continually improve.

**Robert Beets**  
Macalester-Groveland

**Love thy neighbor**

I am an eight-year resident of Highland Park, and I love the small-town feel that our neighborhood offers. I appreciate the do-good attitude of residents, the community events and the opportunity to know my neighbors. That said, I've been disappointed by a number of letters to the editor written to this newspaper lately that have passive-aggressively criticized fellow citizens for trying to better the community and live well together.

One recent letter detailed the writer's agitation over the expanded use of crosswalks and signage, suggesting that walkers and bicyclists simply use common sense rather than expect drivers to pay closer attention to the road. I couldn't sleep for a few hours that night as I replayed this letter and others in my head.

I'm an eternal optimist, and I believe these letters come from a place of good intention, but they are not productive and only serve

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Mondays as trash day. That in itself might have alleviated a lot of the complaints about the presence of too many trucks in the alleys. Some haulers might have decided to abandon St. Paul entirely rather than be limited to one day per week.

Minneapolis residents may dispose of two large items per week at no additional charge. In St. Paul, residents will be able to dispose of only two or three large items per year. There's no evidence that such an arrangement will do anything to reduce illegal dumping; it's merely what was negotiated by the city with a consortium of haulers. What our city officials could have done is explore with Ramsey County a cost-sharing arrangement for maintaining drop-off locations for large items modeled on the year-round yard waste sites.

Last, the city could have provided a monthly tax credit rewarding those who limit their trash by reducing consumption or increasing recycling or composting. A tax credit of \$20 a month seems reasonable and would just about cover the cost of every-other-week pickup of a small trash cart.

The city of St. Paul apparently has no money to fill potholes or

subsidize affordable housing or upgrade our parks and recreation centers, but when it comes to spending \$4 million to purchase new trash receptacles, no problem. There's no budget for a scientific citywide survey about organized trash collection, yet the city found the money to send out 100,000 or so four-color mailings last month—not once, but twice. At least we now know where our \$25 per year administrative fee to run the new trash program is going.

And finally, why was the city able to negotiate combined trash service for large apartment buildings, but doing so for two-, three- and four-unit buildings—or willing neighbors—was "too cumbersome" to manage? Just whose interests were being served?

People may think last November's mayoral election represented a new day in St. Paul, but seeing how the city negotiated its contract with the consortium of waste haulers and rolled out the new organized trash collection program suggests nothing has changed when it comes to a public process for citizen input.

*Tom Goldstein, a lawyer and former St. Paul School Board member, lives in St. Paul's Hamline-Midway neighborhood. He was a candidate for mayor in 2017.*

VILLAGER

Volume 66, Number 10

Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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myvillager.com  
651-699-1462

The Villager serves the Highland Park, Lexington-Hamline, Macalester-Groveland, Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, Summit Hill, Summit-University and West End neighborhoods of St. Paul, the Longfellow and Nokomis neighborhoods of Minneapolis, Lilydale, Mendota and Mendota Heights.

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**CIRCULATION**  
The Villager is published every two weeks by Villager Communications Inc. The paper has a press run of 60,000, including 50,000 copies delivered to households and businesses and another 10,000 copies distributed via newsstands. Mail subscriptions are available at \$38 per year for those living outside the area.

**Next Issue: July 18**

Visit myvillager.com for deadlines.

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to widen the divide between different types of people. If you are unhappy with something, perhaps come to a district council meeting or other community event to speak with your fellow neighbors face to face. Often, when we talk to one another, we realize our goals are similar—a strong, safe community—and there are opportunities to find common-ground solutions.

*Christina Connelly  
Highland Park*

## Local businesses give back

I want to thank all of the Highland Park and St. Paul area businesses that made it possible for Highland Park Senior High School parents to host a wonderful all-night party for our graduates on June 7. We are so overwhelmed by the level of support from area businesses and even some from the surrounding communities. Whether it was hosting a fundraising night, donating money or a gift card or giving us a deal on items, your generosity does not go unnoticed. I will continue to shop local and encourage others to do so as well. Our St. Paul area businesses give so much to our school. We are eternally grateful.

*Vineeta Sawkar Branby, Chairperson  
Highland Park Senior High All-Night Party*

## Unhappy with direction of city

I called the Republican Party today and said we are desperate for a candidate for St. Paul City Council. Two weeks ago, Mr. Tolbert and the rest of the Democratic City Council approved the six-story apartment building for St. Clair and Snelling avenues—an oversized building that has 118 apartments and only 86 parking places. Guess where the residents are going to park. This is also the City Council that gave us the median on Snelling north of Ford Parkway, and is still supporting streetcars for West Seventh Street. They want more bike lanes and a \$15 per hour minimum wage.

I will be doing everything in my power to oppose Mr. Tolbert's re-election.

*Vernon R. Jorgensen  
Macalester-Groveland*

## A theft by mistake?

To the people who took our new, still-in-the-box cedar swing on James Avenue on the boulevard west of Fairview Avenue between 3 and 6 p.m. on Fathers' Day:

I understand that you may have thought it had been abandoned; it had been on the boulevard for a week. However, that is because we are in our late 60s, arthritic and needed help getting the swing up the bank in front of our yard. I did not expect something so large and heavy to be taken in broad daylight. It was a Fathers' Day gift to my husband. It was clearly brand new and had no sign saying it was "free." Older people cannot always get paid help in a timely manner (it had rained most of that week). Being low-income, we will not be able to replace the swing. I am so disappointed.

If you could find it in your heart to bring back the swing, we would be very grateful, no questions asked.

*Abby Struck  
Macalester-Groveland*

## Alarming trend in Mendota Hts.

Since its founding, the city of Mendota Heights has prospered as a consequence of good governance and a sustained emphasis on careful, prudent development. This good governance is now being compromised.

A good example is the proposed Michael Apartment development on the west side of the city. In past months, residents of the adjacent Furlong Addition, Augusta Shores and Lemay Shores neighborhoods have complained to the Mendota Heights City Council and Planning Commission that they never were adequately informed about the intended density of this development. And while the city issued the required notices to nearby residents, it withheld important traffic information and inferred that the state highway department had approved the project when it had not.

The water quality of Lake Augusta is graded "F" by the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization. The degradation of Lake Augusta, formerly a good swimming and fishing lake, is directly attributable to the inattention of the city to the impact of development around the lake.

In 2017 and 2018, the city budget increased by over 5 percent each year. For 2019, reliable sources suggest the city budget may increase by as much as 8 percent. For these three years, therefore, the projected city budget increase is on the

order of 15 percent or more. For the same three years, the projected U.S. inflation rate is about 6 percent.

The most alarming indicator of a shift in Mendota Heights governance is the undeniable pro development bias of Mayor Garlock and City Council members Paper and Petschel. One example is council approval of the Michael Apartment development, a plan that violates applicable limited density zoning specifications. In addition, there are apparent parallels between the city's proposed 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Thrive 2040 plan of the Metropolitan Council. The latter advocates support of higher density suburban infill and redevelopment efforts. However, the Mendota Heights council was elected to represent the interests of city residents, not those of the Met Council.

At their new site in Eagan, the Minnesota Vikings have announced leasing opportunities for almost 1.5 million square feet and 1,450 units of professional, entertainment, housing, hotel and event uses. In the decades to come, this development will produce an estimated 30,000-40,000 vehicle trips daily, many of which will funnel through Mendota Heights. Given this traffic impact, there is absolutely no compelling reason for the city to support additional density.

My wife and I moved to Mendota Heights 30 years ago, attracted by its special character. We have come to cherish the sustained commitment to responsible governance and prudent development by a succession of city leaders. The abandonment of good governance by current city leaders should be of concern to all city residents.

*Thomas J. Smith  
Mendota Heights*

## Making way for bicyclists

As a resident of Summit Avenue for over 30 years and a resident of St. Paul for 35, I am appalled that this city would even consider additional costs for bicyclists. We already have taken parking away, spending thousands if not millions of dollars creating bikeways.

I travel multiple times each week on Pelham Boulevard, and the bicyclists still ride in the traffic lanes on that street even though the bike lanes are in better shape. We have bicyclists who continue to ride on the sidewalks of Summit. When I garden it is a contact sport with indignation coming from bicyclists that I am in their way. When I am driving and stopped at a stoplight, the bicyclists rarely wait until the green light. If I have to follow traffic laws, so should they. They also should not be texting, have ear buds on, and generally be disrespectful by riding three abreast, which requires them to be out of the bike lane.

There are some courteous and respectful bicyclists, but generally, as the driver of a car, I am treated like I am infringing on *their* road.

*Kathy Voss  
Lexington-Hamline*

## The measure of a median

There's an old saying that the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results. So here we are with the St. Paul Public Works Department installing new medians on Snelling Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Ford Parkway, as though doing so will change a state highway and truck route into a boulevard or parkway. To spend so much money on such nonsense when we have streets and alleys with so many potholes they look like rubble is wasteful in the extreme.

The medians on Snelling between St. Clair and Lincoln avenues have had no traffic-calming effect. Macalester College wanted them to beautify the eastern edge of its campus. Those of us who were most affected by the medians have been told by police that traffic that used to come through at 50 mph now sometimes comes through at 80 mph. If one stands on the corner of St. Clair and watches northbound traffic coming through on a green light, one sees drivers hit the gas for the straightaway all the way to Grand.

With parking no longer allowed on either side of Snelling, many parking spaces have been lost. Those parked cars were more of a deterrent to speeders than the medians have ever been. Not only did drivers have to watch out for movement from those who were parked, but those parked cars provided a buffer between traffic and people tending their boulevards.

The pedestrian crosswalks were zebra-striped in white, which is invisible in snowy months and almost so when there's rain or fog. Day-glow green or orange would've seemed the sensible choice of color. Crosswalk signs might have helped, too. Crossing at the poorly marked crosswalks is such a risky proposition that only two months after the medians were completed, a long-time resident of the area was killed in the crosswalk at Lincoln. And when I've been crossing with traffic stopped in the three lanes closest to me, I've nearly been mowed down by someone in the outside lane not paying attention to what was going on.

Additionally, the medians were initially planted with a poor choice of trees. They did not stand up to straight-line

winds, and broken branches had to be removed after storms. Branches were too outspreading and were knocked off by passing trucks. And trees of four inches in diameter were hit by traffic and were completely broken off. Eventually, so many trees were missing, they had to be replaced with something different. At present, one median looks like an untended lot with weeds and dead trees.

So all of you heading south of Randolph on Snelling, get ready for more of the same, because all of the chickens that neighbors on this end of Snelling were concerned about have come home to roost.

*Kathleen Deming  
Macalester-Groveland*

## Democracy on the wane in city

Mark Miller writes of how life has become a test of endurance (*Villager* Inbox, June 6), telling us in a subtle manner that we who reside in St. Paul are being governed by a dictatorship, not a democracy. It's been clear to me for many years that St. Paul governs by dictatorship.

Dictatorship has forced businesses to close to make room for unaffordable, multi-story housing developments or to vacate the city due to high property taxes making it too costly to lease or own space to operate. Dictatorship has caused homelessness as well, due to skyrocketing property taxes that low-income residents cannot afford as homeowners or renters. St. Paul's dictators refuse to listen to the people because they don't care about our wants, needs or ideas. The city's dictators have their own self-serving agenda, causing financial hardship for the people of St. Paul.

We the people must return our city government back to a democracy. Ward 4 has an open seat on the City Council with a special election coming on August 14. I surely hope voters in Ward 4 will want to elect the candidate who leans toward common sense, will speak up for the financial interests of the people, thinks independently and really cares about St. Paul, its residents and businesses.

*Sue Shetka  
Macalester-Groveland*

## DFL delegates deserve thanks

As chair of the Rules Committee, I must correct the letter of James Hamilton ("Machine politics in action," *Villager* Inbox, June 20). At the District 64A DFL Convention, no candidate was "eliminated" after the first or any ballot for getting less than 10 percent of the vote. That rule did not apply until after the third ballot, and it was never needed. The rule was drafted that way to allow candidates several chances to improve their initial vote if they wanted.

As for Mr. Hamilton's cries—and those of letter writer Don Arnosti in the same issue—that voters have somehow been deprived of democracy, rest easy. The DFL endorsement carries little weight beyond the respect voters freely give to it. Any endorsement can be overturned in a primary election. No one filed in the primary against Kaohly Her because the DFL delegates lived up to that trust and endorsed a great candidate. The delegates deserve our thanks for allowing us to focus on electing more Democrats who can resist the Trump and GOP agenda.

*Rick Varco  
Highland Park*

*Editor's note: The writer is director of the Senate District 64 DFL.*

## Mitra Jalali Nelson for Ward 4

We support Mitra Jalali Nelson for the St. Paul City Council in Ward 4 because she holds outstanding positions on issues that are important to us as proud and progressive longtime residents of St. Paul. First, she understands that our city has returned to healthy growth, and that to welcome everyone who wants to settle here, St. Paul needs more residences, at all price points, all across the city. New homes mean more businesses, more vibrancy and a healthier economy. We're already seeing these effects along the light rail Green Line.

Mitra prioritizes this type of development-driven success. She will strive to increase the minimum wage so that people who work here can afford to live here. She will support our police force in creating a culture of community trust, including emphasizing violence de-escalation. Mitra has an excellent plan to improve our citizen participation processes to include everyone in city decisions. And finally, she'll continue her predecessor's amazing work on building a future-focused transportation system that prioritizes people of all ages over cars.

Mitra impresses the two of us for different reasons, but we agree that her clear commitment to public service, deep grasp of complex issues, winning personality, energy and vision for

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the success of our city for everyone make her the standout candidate in this race. Please join us in supporting Mitra as the next Ward 4 City Council member on August 14.

*James and Mary Marti  
Merriam Park*

**Competence counts**

We have just had a 24 percent property tax increase in St. Paul. The RiverCentre parking ramp needs \$116 million in repairs. Our city's parks have \$57 million in deferred maintenance. The potholes in our streets are not getting filled because, apparently, our city cannot afford to do so. We have, in short, some pressing budget issues.

In the face of all this, the DFL has endorsed for Ward 4 City Council a candidate who has no experience in city government, has never managed a budget bigger than her household's and has never received a St. Paul property tax bill. That candidate, Mitra Jalali Nelson, has lived in St. Paul for two years and works in Minneapolis. What was the DFL thinking?

Nelson's opponent, Shirley Erstad, manages an important nonprofit, Friends of Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County, has battled City Hall time and again in favor of our parks and good government, and has been paying property taxes in Ward 4 for 20 years. She has served on the district council, worked and shopped in our neighborhoods, and sent her children to public schools. Her ties to St. Paul are long-standing and deep.

Our choice could not be clearer: Only one candidate, Shirley Erstad, is prepared today to take on the responsibility of city government. We need demonstrated competence on our City Council.

*P.D. Osborn  
Merriam Park*

**Vote Erstad in Ward 4**

The time is right for Shirley Erstad to take the Ward 4 seat on the St. Paul City Council. We have seen the council make questionable decisions ignoring citizens' concerns and rejecting compromise. Examples are everywhere, including a citywide trash collection scheme, taxpayer subsidies for a soccer stadium and favoring developers over neighborhoods. This is happening while potholes grow ever bigger. Shirley is someone who has the courage to speak out and challenge the city bureaucracy. We need that right now.

I live in Ward 3 and know Shirley. She is a community-builder and champion for transparency and accountability in city government. She is job-ready, having the vision and problem-solving savvy to serve Ward 4 as well as the rest of St. Paul. Vote for Shirley to get things done.

*Kate Hunt  
Highland Park*

**Ward 4 is not for sale**

Ward 4 residents, how do you want your housing density, thoughtfully homegrown or rammed through the St. Paul City Council by backroom Club Carter? Let's elect Shirley Erstad, a long-time DFLer, Ward 4 resident, mom and civic leader who does her research, listens to her constituents and isn't afraid to ruffle a few feathers or step on a few Guccis.

Don't sleep through election day on August 14, folks, or you may wake up in a neighborhood transformed by the fantasies of Mayor Carter and his we-know-what's-best-for-you city planners. Senior St. Paul city planner Kady Dadlez has happily reported that the six-story TJL Development proposed for Snelling and St. Clair avenues "makes the most sense." The site is across the street from a college. So the build-upward planners, cramming in 118 apartments, 98 more

parking spaces and who knows how many people, want to re-imagine a private-sector dorm? With wacky planning like this, do we need a Club Carter rubberstamp in Ward 4 smiling and voting, "You betcha"? No, you'll need Shirley Erstad listening to you, doing her homework and standing up for you in council meetings.

Who are the candidates? Let's follow the money. According to the most recent campaign reporting, Shirley Erstad has raised \$22,551 from St. Paul residents and civic leaders and her family savings. With Mayor Carter's preconvention endorsement, Erstad's opponent's campaign has raised \$26,747, including \$14,000 from outside St. Paul and more than \$3,600 from outside Minnesota. Even Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey is cutting a check for the Club Carter candidate who, until recently, was a resident of Minneapolis. St. Paul Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher dug into her pockets and bet the limit: \$600.

What will these members of the Wannabe Machine want in return from our new Ward 4 council member? Don't even ask. Ward 4 is ours and isn't for sale, even to DFL bullies who have lost their way on the way to democracy. Let's elect Shirley Erstad.

*Jim Hulbert  
Macalester-Groveland*

**A street or parking lot**

When neighbors were given a tour of the new and expanded disc golf course in Highland Park, I expressed concern that there will be even more demand for parking in our neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Department's response was that everyone lives on streets that have public parking.

Our neighborhood streets are not there to provide parking for commercial and recreational use. Circus Juventas, events at the Highland Park pool and pavilion, disc golf and potential commercial development at the old pool house create a burden for residents and their visitors that others don't have on their residential streets.

*Kathie Sirek  
Highland Park*

**A tax cut for whom?**

Your president in Duluth on June 20 said, "They want to take back your tax cuts—which are massive."

I just attended a business tax seminar on the new federal tax act. Owners of larger, privately owned businesses, in particular those involved in—surprise!—commercial real estate with income and expenses in the millions, will get personal income tax cuts in the tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Unless you are in that group, you will get about \$200 a year. Massive.

*Sharon Sudman  
Macalester-Groveland*

**Rising young journalist**

The June 20 *Villager* had a delightful front-page article by Mimi Geller about the Henry Sibley High School Marching Band representing Minnesota in the Independence Day Parade in Washington, D.C. I think readers would love to know that Geller is a high school student who just finished her junior year at St. Paul Academy. Mighty fine journalism from this talented young woman! Kudos to the *Villager* for supporting the growth of our rising journalists.

*Mickey Scott  
Macalester-Groveland*

*Editor's note: Mickey Scott recently retired as an upper school mathematics teacher and coach at St. Paul Academy. She taught Mimi Geller during her freshman year at SPA.*

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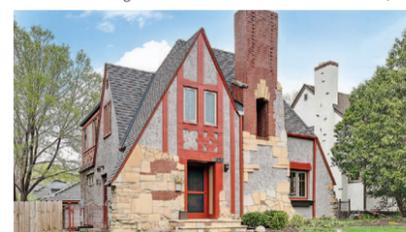
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The Cabbage Rolls Sarma served at the Iron Ranger on Grand Avenue. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

## Transplanted Iron Ranger serves up a taste of the north woods on Grand

To quote the late great Yogi Berra, it was "like déjà vu all over again" when I asked the server at Iron Ranger about the soup of the day.

"We're out of the soup," the server replied. This happened a couple of weeks ago, around 5 p.m. I suddenly had the distinct feeling that I had been there before.

I had. Back in 2013, I was sitting with a few friends at Chez Arnaud's, the French bakery that formerly occupied Iron Ranger's storefront at 1085 Grand Ave. It was about the same time of year, at the same time of day, in the same back room of the restaurant.

"We're out of the soup," the Chez Arnaud server said in reply to my query about the *soupe du jour*. And when I returned the next morning, soon after Chez Arnaud had opened for the day, it was the same story: No soup of the day; they were out.

Back at Iron Ranger, you might understand why I thought the building had a soup curse. I didn't obsess about it, but it seemed to be more than coincidence. Fortunately, when I stopped back at Iron Ranger a couple of days later for lunch, voila! Soup at last.

The restaurateur behind Iron Ranger is Tom Forti, who took over Chez Arnaud's lease 2½ years ago and opened the Sunrise Market and Cafe. Sunrise featured breads and other foods from Hibbing's Sunrise Bakery, which was founded by Forti's family in 1913. An ad for the bakery hangs on a wall just inside the entrance to Iron Ranger.

According to Forti, the market side of the Grand Avenue Sunrise wasn't doing as well as the cafe side, so this spring he "blew it out," he said, replacing the dropped white tile ceiling with a tin ceiling, laying natural wood floors, installing an oak bar custom-made in Hibbing, and renaming the establishment Iron Ranger. The Northern Minnesota vibe extends to the rest of the décor as well. There's a mural of an iron ore loader covering most of one wall with a shovel and pickaxe hanging next to it.

It would be an understatement to say the menu is also inspired by the Iron Range, since some of it comes directly from the family bakery. "We get deliveries every day from Hibbing," said Forti, who now lives in St. Paul.

On my second visit to Iron Ranger one late morning, I settled into the corner counter facing Grand Avenue. The server, who was also from Hibbing and whose uncle had gone to school with Bob Dylan, told me the soup of the day was chili (cup \$4.99, bowl \$7.99).

The chili came with big chunks of tomato and green pepper swimming in a thick sauce with slices of fresh green onion on top. It may have been a bit too mild for some chili aficio-



### Hot Dish

By Morgan Smith

nados, but I enjoyed it to the last drop.

With the chili, I ordered Cabbage Rolls Sarma (\$11.99), something familiar to my Bohunk forebears but described in the menu as a Croatian dish. The two rolls—a combination of beef, ham, pork and rice wrapped in cabbage and topped with sauerkraut and tomato sauce—were beautiful to behold and the portions were generous. But the filling was a little too soggy for my tastes, which had been formed decades earlier at my grandmother's table. And it could have used more paprika.

I didn't see the fine print indicating that the Sarma came with a side of soup or salad. I'm glad I didn't because I would've chosen the soup and missed out on Iron Ranger's wonderful house salad. Much larger, fresher and more varied than the anemic side salads served at many restaurants, this salad came with a liberal serving of spinach, lettuce, tomato, onion, cucumber, croutons and Parmesan cheese. Served with a light but tasty dressing, it's a good deal for \$2.99.

On my first visit to Iron Ranger, I was accompanied by my wife, Mecca, and her sister, La—yes, La, like the note to follow so in *The Sound of Music*. And speaking of movies, I made the mistake of showing Pixar's *Ratatouille* in our home theater the night before. So while Mecca raved about her Pear Gorgonzola Flatbread (\$12.99)—a combination of pear, Gorgonzola cheese, Parmesan sage sauce and walnuts—she kept offering suggestions for improvements *a la* the rat chef Remy. But that didn't keep Mecca from inhaling the football-sized flatbread. It was the most food I'd seen her consume in quite some time.

La ordered the Pesto Melt Sandwich (\$9.99) with fries (\$3). Iron Ranger was out of ciabatta bread, so La had her Pesto Melt served on a French baguette. She declared the pesto, basil, spinach, onion, mozzarella, tomato and balsamic to be "perfect." She also praised the fries.

I can attest to the quality of the fries, since I requested some with my Porketta Cubano (\$11.99). The sandwich was a combination of pork shoulder, ham, Swiss cheese, pickles, Dijon and giardiniera served on a baguette. It was the best Cubano I've had in a long time,

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# MnDOT will pay for the replanting of I-94 berm

By Jane McClure

It has been a noisy and dusty summer for residents of the neighborhood north and east of I-94 and Fairview Avenue. Xcel Energy bulldozed much of the vegetative berm that separates the neighborhood from the freeway, removing more than \$10,000 worth of trees, shrubs and other plants that had served as a buffer for local residents.

More than three dozen neighbors met on June 21 with representatives of Xcel, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the city of St. Paul to discuss the possibility of replanting the berm along St. Anthony Avenue between Fairview and Aldine Street. They reviewed three different landscaping options, with the goal of selecting one by early July. MnDOT has agreed to pay for replacement materials and two years of maintenance of the plantings.

The neighbors are eager to see the plants replaced as quickly as possible, but they also want assurances from Xcel and MnDOT that the plants will not be ripped out again. The vegetation removed by Xcel in May had been planted in July 2016 with a \$10,000 grant from MnDOT's Community Roadside Landscape Partnership Program. Under that program, MnDOT pays for the vegetation if volunteers agree to plant and maintain it. The neighbors applied for the grant after Xcel clear-cut the berm in 2015. They put in hundreds of hours of volunteer labor to replant the berm, and used their own garden hoses and water buckets to keep the plants alive.

The new options for replanting the berm vary by species of trees, shrubs and ground cover. All three options would be planned in a way to avoid future interference with overhead power lines. MnDOT will then work with neighbors on a timeline for carrying out the replanting.

Marcell Walker, a MnDOT ombudsman, apologized for the situation on behalf of the state agency. "We should have done better communication," he said. MnDOT is now working to change its procedures to notify neighborhoods of such work in the future, he said.

Jim Pearson, who works in public relations for Xcel, agreed that more needs to be done in the future to keep people informed. However, other Xcel representatives at the meeting defended the utility, saying the work on the berm was needed to maintain clear zones between power lines and woody vegetation.

It was at Xcel's request that MnDOT approved a permit in May for Wright Tree Service to clear the vegetation that had been planted by volunteers less than two years earlier. Xcel officials said they were concerned that the plants were growing too close to power lines. The neighbors maintain that the plants were not near the power lines and did not have to be chopped down or bulldozed.

"Why does this keep happening and how are you going to fix it?" asked local resident Kathy Flynn. "In four years we've been clear-cut twice."

Neighbors said they miss the flowering trees and lilac bushes and the wildlife habitat the berm had become. The four blocks on the south side of St. Anthony are now pocked with mud, litter and a few small scarred trees and shrubs.

According to local resident Jerry Streigel, prior to the first clear-cutting in 2015, shrubs and trees grew on the berm for years with little attention from Xcel or MnDOT. The growth included some invasive species, he said, and area residents would sometimes have to call to have branches trimmed so that traffic signs would not be obscured.

## 12◀ HOT DISH

and that's saying something since I order Cubanitos frequently. The Cubano was moist yet firm enough for all of the flavors to leap out. Having just come from three meetings where brownies had been served, I was too full to finish my sandwich, but I happily scarfed up the leftovers for lunch the next day.



The Porketta Cubano at Iron Ranger—pork shoulder, ham, Swiss cheese, pickles, Dijon and giardiniera served on a baguette.

Leaving Iron Ranger, I had one regret: Its pizzas had looked darn good, and I didn't try one. But maybe that shouldn't be regarded as a regret but as an opportunity. Yes, from this day forward I'm going to view the glass as half full and Iron Ranger's whole pizzas and pizza by the slice as a mouthwatering delight waiting to happen.



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The west (left) and south (right) elevations of the proposed row house at 617 Laurel Ave.

## Council upholds variances for Laurel-Dale row house project

By JANE McCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted 6-0 on June 27 to deny a neighborhood appeal and let stand plans by Hupp Holdings LLC to construct a six-unit residential building at Laurel Avenue and Dale Street.

Council member Dai Thao, whose Ward 1 includes the building site, said that while he understood residents' concerns, he could not find any errors on which to justify upholding the appeal. He added that some issues raised by neighbors can be addressed in the site plan review.

The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) voted 4-3 in May to approve four variances for the project at 617 Laurel Ave. Neighbors appealed and the City Council held a public hearing on the matter on June 20. Thao asked to lay the discussion over until June 27 so he could review the facts in the case.

Hupp Holdings intends to construct a six-unit row house on the site, which has been vacant for years. The 40-by-170-foot lot is zoned for multifamily housing.

Back in the 1920s the lot was part of a larger property that had three dwellings, a store in front of the corner house, a tin shop and a hardware store. The buildings were razed in 1986 and the corner property has sat vacant since then. The property has been split over the years, most recently in 2002 to build a single-family home.

The BZA approved a 1,796-square-foot variance in order to build six units on the 7,204-square-foot lot; a variance from a city requirement that multifamily buildings of three or more units cannot be built on a lot of less than 9,000 square feet; a 6-foot side-yard setback variance from the 9 feet required; and

an 8-foot setback variance from the 9 feet required for the parking lot.

In appealing the BZAs approvals, neighbors raised issues of a potentially overcrowded site, excessive traffic and parking demand. They contended that the project needed too many variances and flew in the face of zoning regulations.

Neighbor Joe Rittman called the variances "massive." He said the developer had a three-unit row house project approved for the site in early 2017 and that the latest plan doubles the density of the site.

Owner Alan Hupp of Hupp Holdings said the occupancy would be the same. The previous plan was for three, three-bedroom units, and the current plan is for three one-bedroom and three two-bedroom units. The six-unit building would also have the same footprint as the prior proposal.

Dayton Avenue resident Peter Carlsen said the BZA exceeded its authority and that the board's staff acted more as an advocate for the developer and was not impartial. He added that the development does not meet the standards for hardship required for variances.

"This is only unique because the property is too small for what the developer wants to do," he said.

"The site does have challenges," Hupp agreed. "Infill developments are tough."

However, he said his new design allows for the addition of some affordable one-bedroom housing units. Changes were made, he said, to add parking spaces and address other concerns raised by the BZA.

City staff and the Summit-University Planning Council recommended approval of the variances. The Ramsey Hill Association recommended denial.

## Names in the News

**Imani Vann-Jackson** graduated from basic military training as an airman with the U.S. Air Force at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas. She is a 2010 graduate of Central High School and the daughter of Theodora Vann of St. Paul.



**Jessalyn Akerman-Frank** and **Linda Brant-Malm** of Highland Park recently completed Partners in Policymaking's advocacy training for adults with disabilities and parents raising children with developmental disabilities. Akerman-Frank, who is deaf, and Brant-Malm, who has been losing her vision, both applied for the course to benefit themselves and the public. The next round of no-cost training will feature eight, two-day sessions on Fridays and Saturdays from September through May (no session in December) at the Crowne Plaza Aire in Bloomington. The March class will be held on a Sunday and Monday so participants can visit legislators at the Capitol. Child care

and respite allowances are given, and mileage and meals are also covered. Applications are due by July 9. Visit [bit.ly/2EICOQ0](http://bit.ly/2EICOQ0) or contact Brenton Rice at [brenton@togevents.com](mailto:brenton@togevents.com) or 651-242-6589 for information.

**The Honorable John H. Guthmann** of Highland Park was re-elected to serve as chief judge and the **Honorable Jennifer L. Frisch** of Summit Hill was elected to serve as the next assistant chief judge of Minnesota's Second Judicial District in Ramsey County, effective July 1. Guthmann has been a judge since 2008. Before that, he spent nearly 30 years as an attorney at Hansen Dordell in St. Paul, where he was a partner from 1990-2008. Frisch was first appointed to the bench in 2013. Before that, she was senior associate general counsel for the University of Minnesota.

**Jewish Family Service** of St. Paul has hired Molly Kitching as its first marketing coordinator. Kitching brings nearly 15 years of non-profit marketing experience to the position. She will be responsible for public relations, strategy development, brand management, and developing and managing marketing communications.

# Crime Report

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

## Highland Park

**Burglary**—A 36-year-old man was arrested for trying to steal a large amount of copper cable in the tunnels beneath the former Ford plant around 8 a.m. Monday, June 25. Police searched the tunnels and eventually located the suspect who was trying to hide.

**Theft**—A camera bag, camera and lens were stolen from a vehicle on Fairview Avenue and Highland Parkway around 2:10 a.m. Monday, June 11.

—A work bag was stolen from a vehicle on Montreal and Snelling avenues between 6-8:20 p.m. Wednesday, June 13.

—A purse was stolen at the Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy., around 5:15 p.m. Thursday, June 14.

—Stolen vehicles were reported on the 2500 block of West Seventh Street on June 14-15, on the 500 block of Montrose Lane on June 16-17 and on the 2000 block of Yorkshire Avenue on June 17-18.

—A package was stolen from an apartment building on the 1300 block of South Davern Street and recovered at the overlook on Mississippi River Boulevard and Ford Parkway at 10:22 a.m. Friday, June 15.

—A bicycle valued at more than \$1,000 was stolen at Dairy Queen, 1959 Ford Pkwy., on June 15-16.

—More than \$1,000 in merchandise was reported stolen at the AT&T Store, 2132 Ford Pkwy., at 3:54 p.m. Thursday, June 21.

—An iPhone, car key, debit card and cash were reported stolen on the 2000 block of Ford Parkway at 11:46 p.m. Friday, June 22.

**Assault**—A domestic assault by strangulation was reported at an apartment on the 2200 block of West Seventh Street at 3:12 p.m. Saturday, June 23.

## Lexington-Hamline

**Theft**—A male suspect stole two iPhones from a display and ran from Verizon Wireless, 474 N. Hamline Ave., at 4:45 p.m. Wednesday, June 13.

—The ignition column was damaged in an attempted vehicle theft at Skyline Tower, 1247 St. Anthony Ave., on June 15-16.

—A MacBook computer and other items were stolen from a vehicle on the 1100 block of Hague Avenue the evening of June 17-18.

**Weapons**—An off-duty officer heard gunfire behind SuperAmerica, 399 N. Lexington Pkwy., at 12:54 a.m. Sunday, June 17.

## Macalester-Groveland

**Burglary**—A scooter and cash were stolen from a garage that was left open on the 1900 block of Grand Avenue during the evening of June 23-24. The next afternoon, police saw a boy riding the stolen scooter near Sherburne Avenue and Syndicate Street and arrested him for burglary and auto theft.

—A residence was burglarized on the 1300 block of Grand Avenue between 7:28-8:59 p.m. Sunday, June 24.

—A gas-powered pressure washer and seven or eight laptop computers were reported stolen from a garage on the 1200 block of Sargent Avenue around 7:30 a.m. Monday, June 25. A neighbor reportedly saw two males in the garage and got their license plate number.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on the 1700 block of Summit Avenue on June 13-14 and on the 1700 block of Juliet Avenue on June 24.

—Around \$700 in cash was stolen from an apartment on the 1400 block of Grand Avenue during the evening of June 15-16.

—Clothing and a passport were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1600 block of Grand Avenue at 3:03 p.m. Monday, June 18.

**Weapons**—The 24-year-old male driver

of a vehicle was arrested for possession of a stolen firearm and possession by an ineligible individual at 8:34 p.m. Friday, June 15, on the 1700 block of Lincoln Avenue. He and the occupants in the vehicle reportedly were involved in an earlier road rage incident in Minneapolis.

## Mendota Heights

**Sex crime**—Christine Lee Funk, 32, of New Hope was sentenced on June 25 for criminal sexual conduct in the third degree in connection with engaging in sexual relations with a 17-year-old male student on three occasions in February 2017 while she was a music teacher at Henry Sibley High School. She was sentenced to 180 days in jail, 10 years of probation and must register as a predatory offender. The judge stayed the execution of another 36 months of jail time as long as she does not violate her probation.

**Burglary**—A business was burglarized on the 700 block of Main Street at 4:10 a.m. Friday, June 15.

**Theft**—A resident on the 2400 block of Lockwood Drive reported being swindled by phone out of \$9,000 in cash at 8:43 a.m. Friday, June 8.

—A theft was reported from an unlocked vehicle on the 800 block of Mendakota Drive at 11 p.m. Wednesday, June 13.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 600 block of Freeway Road at 5:16 p.m. Friday, June 15.

**Animal calls**—A father reported that two dogs were running loose and his son was bitten by one of them at 6:24 p.m. Saturday, June 16, on the 2000 block of Dodd Road. The owner admitted to letting the dogs run unrestrained and was cited. He was cited again three days later for letting the dogs run loose. Police said one of the dogs was in the process of being deemed potentially dangerous.

**Miscellaneous**—An intoxicated girl was taken to the hospital after she was found unconscious on the 700 block of Woodridge Drive at 8:56 p.m. Friday, June 1.

—Police observed an apparent road rage incident and cited both drivers for careless driving at 6:57 p.m. Tuesday, June 12.

—Officers responded to a residential construction site regarding a suspicious vehicle at 11:31 p.m. Saturday, June 16, on the 1000 block of Evergreen Knoll. They arrested the driver for not having a valid license and a passenger for an outstanding warrant. A search of the vehicle turned up burglary tools, along with a stolen license plate and power saw.

## Merriam Park

**Burglary**—Two male suspects were caught on video stealing a computer tower at 12:49 a.m. Saturday, June 23, at Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave.

**Theft**—A wallet was reported stolen from a vehicle at Tula Yoga, 99 N. Snelling Ave., at 10:13 a.m. Monday, June 18.

—A purse was stolen from an unlocked vehicle on the 300 block of North Wilder Street between 1-10 a.m. Sunday, June 24.

**Assault**—A female was assaulted on the 1500 block of St. Anthony Avenue at 1:58 p.m. Tuesday, June 12.

—Two people were taken to the hospital following an assault on the 1800 block of Marshall Avenue at 1 a.m. Saturday, June 16.

**Miscellaneous**—Three men ages 54-65 were cited for drinking in public on the northwest corner of Snelling and St. Anthony avenues at 6:53 p.m. Friday, June 15. A 58-year-old man also was cited for drinking on the sidewalk there at 6:03 p.m. the next evening.

—A 48-year-old woman was cited for drinking beer on the sidewalk on Snelling and University avenues at 4:53 p.m. Saturday, June 16. Another woman also was cited for drinking in that area at 6:15 p.m. that day.

—Police responded to a report of a loud party and observed several young adults running out of the back of a residence at 10:05 p.m. Friday, June 22, on the 1900 block of Selby Avenue. The 20-year-old female renter of the property was contacted, but there were no remaining guests and no citations were given.

## Snelling-Hamline

**Theft**—An iPhone 7 was stolen from a purse while the owner was shopping at the Midway Walmart at 1 p.m. Thursday, June 14.

—A vehicle was stolen from Crosstown Auto, 1440 Marshall Ave., between June 15-21, but was recovered by the State Highway Patrol.

—A wallet was stolen from the men's locker room at LA Fitness, 1370 University Ave., between 7:20-9 p.m. Monday, June 18.

**Weapons**—A 14-year-old girl was cited for possession of a dangerous weapon after police took a group of juveniles into custody at 4:35 p.m. Friday, June 15, on Albert Street and University Avenue. Police were called after a complainant said someone in the group pulled a knife on her.

—Gunfire and the sound of a vehicle speeding from the area were reported on the 1300 block of Portland Avenue at 11:29 p.m. Monday, June 18.

**Miscellaneous**—A 54-year-old man was cited for drinking on the sidewalk on University Avenue and Pascal Street at 4:06 p.m. Saturday, June 16. Two 53-year-old men also were cited for drinking on the sidewalk there at 3:32 p.m. that day. Police said the area is known for intoxicated panhandlers who block the intersection. Police observed shopping carts and a large amount of trash, including empty beer and liquor bottles.

## Summit Hill

**Robbery**—A man reported being robbed of his keys and vehicle by two males who implied they had a gun at 9:02 p.m. Friday, June 22, on the 800 block of Lincoln Avenue.

**Theft**—A vehicle was stolen on the 700 block of Lincoln Avenue during the evening of June 24-25.

**Assault**—Police were called to Billy's on Grand, 857 Grand Ave., regarding an assault at 1:19 a.m. Friday, June 22.

## Summit-University

**Burglary**—An apartment was burglarized at Dale Street Place, 313 N. Dale St., at 10:26 a.m. Friday, June 15.

**Theft**—A suspect stole \$300 in meat from Mississippi Market, 622 Selby Ave., at 3:28 p.m. Tuesday, June 5. A customer also reportedly stole a worker's cellphone from her desk there at 1:51 p.m. Friday, June 15.

—A 19-year-old man was arrested for stealing a Sony camera from a vehicle at the Red Cow, 393 Selby Ave., at noon Sunday, June 17.

—A purse was stolen from an unlocked vehicle on the 300 block of Dayton Avenue between 9:30-10 a.m. Thursday, June 21.

—A vehicle was stolen on the 600 block of Dayton Avenue during the evening of June 23-24.

**Assault**—A 40-year-old man was arrested for assault and disorderly conduct on the 900 block of Hague Avenue at 12:25 a.m. Saturday, June 23. The suspect was reportedly outside of the residence yelling in the street. When the victim went outside to see what the disturbance was, the suspect accused the victim of talking about him and punched him in the head twice, causing a cut over his eye.

**Sex crime**—A rape was reported at 6 p.m. Sunday, June 17, on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue.

**Weapons**—Police found numerous shell casings after responding to a call of shots fired on Carroll Avenue and Milton Street at 9:08 p.m. Saturday, June 23.

## West End

**Robbery**—A male was stabbed in the buttocks during a robbery at 7:46 p.m. Monday, June 18, on the 600 block of Canton Street. The victim was taken to the hospital with injuries that were not life-threatening.

**Burglary**—A bicycle was stolen from the Victoria Park 2 Apartments, 750 Otto Ave., at 1:32 p.m. Tuesday, June 12.

—A burglary occurred at the Victoria Park Apartments, 740 S. Victoria St., between 12:50-2 p.m. Friday, June 22.

**Theft**—Prescription drugs, two diamond rings and \$700 in cash were stolen from an apartment on the 100 block of South Western Avenue on Wednesday, June 13.

—A purse and iPhone were stolen on the 200 block of West Seventh Street during the evening of June 16-17.

—A utility trailer was stolen on the 200 block of Forbes Avenue on Tuesday, June 19.

—Video was taken of a suspect stealing keys at the Bay Street Grill, 731 Randolph Ave., at 10:41 a.m. Thursday, June 21.

**Assault**—Police responded to a domestic where the suspect used a brick to break the windshield of a vehicle and the window of the rear door of a residence on the 300 block of Goodhue Street at 3:14 a.m. Sunday, June 17.

—A female resident injured her arm from a slamming door while fighting off a non-resident who was trying to follow her into the Schmidt Artist Lofts, 876 W. Seventh St., at 11 p.m. Thursday, June 21.

—A staff member injured his ankle while struggling to escort an unwanted customer out of the patio at McGovern's Pub, 225 W. Seventh St., at 12:47 a.m. Friday, June 22. The customer was arrested for assault.

—A man was stabbed in the back while working security at Tav on the Ave., 825 Jefferson Ave., at 12:30 a.m. Saturday, June 23. The victim said a male patron became upset when asked to show ID to enter the bar and a verbal confrontation ensued. The victim followed the suspect outside and was stabbed by a second male who left with the first suspect in a green van. The victim drove himself to the VA Hospital, but was transported to the Hennepin County Medical Center because his injuries were too serious.

## Fire Calls

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

**Lexington-Hamline**—A 29-year-old female bicyclist was taken to the hospital in critical condition after being hit by a vehicle on Concordia Avenue and Griggs Street at 7:36 p.m. Monday, June 18.

**Summit Hill**—Firefighters received a report of a man on fire at 11:30 a.m. Monday, June 4, at 1040 Grand Ave. They discovered a vehicle in flames behind the address and a male on the ground being attended to by bystanders. The victim was taken to the hospital. The fire reportedly started in the front passenger's seat.

**Summit-University**—A fire was reported in a third-floor apartment around 12:35 a.m. Friday, May 18, at Dale Street Place, 313 N. Dale St. The cause of the fire was possibly due to careless smoking.

—A male pedestrian was taken to the hospital after being struck by a hit-and-run driver at 8:05 p.m. Thursday, June 14, on the 400 block of Selby Avenue.

**West End**—A male bicyclist was taken to the hospital after colliding with a vehicle on Grand Avenue and Ramsey Street at 7:30 a.m. Thursday, June 14. A witness reported that the bicyclist entered traffic without the right of way.

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# The Kiosk

## Wednesday/July 4

**WISH THE U.S.** a happy 242nd birthday at Historic Fort Snelling. Independence Day will be celebrated there from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. as it was celebrated by Americans nearly two centuries ago. Witness cannon and musket salutes and military parades, thrill to the sounds of fife and drum, and visit interactive stations to learn about Americans' struggle for freedom. Admission is \$12, \$10 for seniors and students, \$6 for children ages 5-17. Call 612-726-1171.

**BEAT THE 4TH OF JULY HEAT** with rootbeer floats and lawn games at the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. An ice cream social will be held from 6-8 p.m. on the spacious grounds of the historic mansion. Enjoy hands-on children's activities, find the mushroom cave and lounge on the terrace overlooking downtown and the Mississippi River. In case of rain, a film will be shown inside. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for seniors, college students and for children ages 5-17. Call 651-297-2555.

## Thursday/July 5

**THE AMERICAN RED CROSS** will be accepting blood donations from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Paul, 239 Selby Ave. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are recommended. Call 800-733-2767.

## Friday/July 6

**FARE FOR ALL'S** monthly distribution of fresh produce and frozen meat will take place from 10 a.m.-noon at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St. A variety of food will be available in packages priced from \$10-\$25. Cash, credit or debit cards are accepted. Volunteers are needed to load boxes. Call 651-298-5493.

## Saturday/July 7

**THE ST. LUKE FARMERS' MARKET** is open from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. today and every Saturday in the parking lot of the church at 1807 Field Ave. Fresh produce and baked breads are available. In July the produce expand and beef and bakery items are added. Cash and EBT, debit and credit cards are accepted.

**A HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR** as told through the art and artifacts of the Capitol will be told during 90-minute tours of Minnesota's state house beginning at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Minnesota's role in the Civil War will be highlighted, including the future governors who were involved in pivotal events of the war. The cost is \$10, \$9 for seniors, college students and veterans, \$8 for children ages 5-17.

**A TWO-HOUR WALKING TOUR** of Lowertown that delves into the almost 200-year history of this neighborhood, from its days as a sleazy river port and bustling rail hub to that of industrial center, arts enclave and urban village, will step out at 10 a.m. from the corner of Kellogg Boulevard and Robert Street. Explore the area's architectural gems and learn about the barons, thieves, capitalists and hipsters who made their living here. The tour costs \$14. For reservations, visit [cart.mnhs.org](http://cart.mnhs.org).

## Sunday/July 8

**A FARMERS' MARKET** is available from 9 a.m.-noon every Sunday in the parking lot



### Made in the shade.

Will Ross, 10, took a break from the festival for a peaceful swing in the shade of a large cottonwood during the Fête de la St. Jean-Baptiste held on June 24 at the Sibley Historic Site in Mendota.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, Portland Avenue and Kent Street. Hmong-American farmers from Holy Apostles Parish will be there selling fresh produce, herbs, and flowers. Donations at the market also support the Fields to Families program, which buys fresh produce from the farmers and delivers it to local food shelves.

## Tuesday/July 10

**THE MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S** Residence, 1006 Summit Ave., will be open for guided tours beginning every 10 minutes between 10:30 a.m. and noon today, July 24, August 7 and 21, and between 5 and 7 p.m. July 31. Reservations are encouraged, though walk-ins are welcome if space is available. Admission is free, but visitors are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for Second Harvest Heartland. Email [residence.gov@state.mn.us](mailto:residence.gov@state.mn.us).

**THE ADVANTAGES** of breastfeeding for mother and child overcoming any difficulties will be discussed from 7-8:45 p.m. by La Leche League's Como-Midway group. Pregnant women, mothers and their children are invited to attend. For more information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

## Wednesday/July 11

**THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE** on Mental Illness will hold a free Get to Know NAMI class from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at NAMI Minnesota, 1919 University Ave., Suite 400. Meet the staff and volunteers and hear firsthand how NAMI improves the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families. For reservations, contact Kay King at 651-645-2948 ext. 113 or [kking@namimn.org](mailto:kking@namimn.org).

## Thursday/July 12

**WANT TO IMPROVE** your speaking skills in a light-hearted and supportive atmosphere? Join Midway Toastmasters.

The club meets from 6-8 p.m. every Thursday at Seventh Street Social, 2176 W. Seventh St. No reservations are necessary.

**A FREE SUPPORT GROUP** for persons with anxiety disorders meets from 6:30-8 p.m. today and the second and fourth Thursday of every month in Room 108 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. For more information, call the National Alliance on Mental Illness at 651-645-2948.

## Saturday/July 14

**A NATIVE PLANT GARDEN TOUR** sponsored by Wild Ones Twin Cities will begin at 10:15 a.m. today at 1704 Vicki Lane in Mendota Heights. The tour will feature three fabulous home gardens. Directions to the other two gardens will be provided at the first home.

**MENDOTA DAY** will be celebrated today in Mendota. The parade will step out at noon from St. Peter's Church and head down Sibley Memorial Highway to the VFW, where vendors will set up and the festivities ensue. Arts, crafts, games and refreshments will all be part of the fun. The Sibley Historic Site will feature a nine-hole mini-golf course, silent auction, kids' crafts, and more from noon-4:30 p.m.

## Sunday/July 15

**THE HUNGRY MIND** closed in 2004, but memories of the long-running Grand Avenue bookstore burn brightly. The public is invited to join Hungry Mind booksellers, book buyers, writers and readers from near and far in toasting the old days from noon-4 p.m. at Moon Palace Books, 3032 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis.

**"DISASTERS OF THE RIVERFRONT,"** a 90-minute walking tour of the St. Anthony Falls milling district with commentary on some of the most tragic disasters in Minnesota history, will step out at

1 p.m. from the Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St., Minneapolis. Hear about the Eastman Tunnel Collapse in 1869, the Great Conflagration of 1893, bridge collapses in 1859 and 2007, large fires and massive landscape changes. The cost is \$14. Call 612-341-7555 or visit [cart.mnhs.org](http://cart.mnhs.org).

**THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB** will gather in the parking lot of Dunn Bros. Coffee and Burger Moe's at 242 W. Seventh St. for a five-mile hike through Irvine Park and along the Mississippi River beginning at 2:30 p.m. New members are welcome. Call Charlotte at 651-455-0052.

## Tuesday/July 17

**THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB** will gather at 6:30 p.m. at the Gopher Bar in downtown St. Paul for Coney Islands before embarking on a three-mile hike along the Mississippi River at 7:30 p.m. New members are welcome. Call Charlotte at 651-455-0052.

**A MENTAL HEALTH** support group for adults ages 18-30 meets from 6-7:30 p.m. today and the first and third Tuesday of every month at Macalester Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Ave. The group is facilitated by young adults with a mental illness who are doing well in recovery. It is sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. For information, call Tess at 507-226-3369.

## Wednesday/July 18

**WARD 4 CITY COUNCIL** hopefuls Shirley Erstad, David Martinez and Mitra Jalali Nelson will take part in a candidates forum beginning at 7 p.m. in Room 100 of the University of St. Thomas' McNeely Hall on the southwest corner of Summit and Cleveland avenues. The forum is cosponsored by the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. Free parking is available in St. Thomas' surface lots and the ramp at Grand and Cretin avenues.

# District Council News

## Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

**National Night Out**—Residents are being encouraged to hold a block party during National Night Out on Tuesday, August 7. They can register their parties at [tinyurl.com/ycyxencl](http://tinyurl.com/ycyxencl). Sergeant Fuzz, the St. Paul Police Department's first comfort dog, will be co-hosting three events that day. People may submit an application by July 15 stating in words, verse, video or song why he should join their party. Email submissions to Patty Lammers at [patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us) or mail them to 367 Grove St., St. Paul, MN 55101. The Highland District Council also has more information about National Night Out on its website under "events."

**BrightSide FarmStands**—The BrightSide FarmStands will host a Neighborhood Pod again this year, with food pickups from 7-8:45 p.m. on Thursdays at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. The cost is \$10 a week. Register at [brightsidempls.org/collections/neighborhood-pods](http://brightsidempls.org/collections/neighborhood-pods).

**St. Luke Farmers' Market**—The farmers' market has begun its fourth season at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 1807 Field Ave. The market is open from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. every Saturday through October 6. The market will feature fresh produce and baked breads at first, and then will expand to include other bakery items and beef. The market accepts EBT, debit and credit cards. Watch for updates on its Facebook page.

**Upcoming meetings**—Transportation Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 10; Community Development Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 17; board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, July 19. The meetings will all be held at the Highland Park Community Center. For other meetings, see the website.

## Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

**Native gardens**—Unlike its Alley Garden Awards, the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's annual Native Garden Awards rely exclusively on nominations. The nomination deadline is July 13, and the winners will be determined by the end of August. For information and a nomination form, visit [macgrove.org/what-we-do/nga](http://macgrove.org/what-we-do/nga).

**Mac-Grove Fest**—Exhibitors are now being accepted for Mac-Grove Fest, which will be held from 2-6 p.m. Saturday, September 8, at the Groveland Recreation Center fields on St. Clair and Prior avenues. The day will feature exhibits, music, food and children's activities. The registration deadline is July 13. Visit [macgrove.org/what-we-do/macgrovefest](http://macgrove.org/what-we-do/macgrovefest).

**Mac-Grove garage sale**—Registration is now open for the Great Macalester-Groveland Garage Sale that will take place rain or shine from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday August 25. The fee is \$20 for households and \$30 for businesses, and includes a garage sale sign and inclusion in all advertising. Register online at [macgrove.org/garagesale](http://macgrove.org/garagesale) or pick up a form in the office at the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St.

**Ward 4 candidate forum**—A forum for the three candi-

dates seeking the Ward 4 seat on the St. Paul City Council will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, in McNeely Hall at Summit and Cleveland avenues on the University of St. Thomas campus. Shirley Erstad, Mitra Jalali Nelson and David Martinez are running in the special election, which will take place during the primary election on Tuesday, August 14.

**Battling the borer**—Those who are curious about the city's efforts to combat the emerald ash borer infestation are invited to join the community council's Environment Committee for a discussion at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 24, at the Edgumbe Recreation Center. City staff will be present to answer questions, which can be submitted in advance by emailing [mgcc@macgrove.org](mailto:mgcc@macgrove.org).

**Blend Awards**—Now in St. Paul, the Blend Awards recognize new remodels, newly constructed homes and a multitude of other projects that fit into the fabric of a neighborhood. The award was created in 2007 in Minneapolis to encourage sensitive redevelopment. The deadline for submissions is July 31. Learn more or submit a project at [blendaward.org](http://blendaward.org).

**Get involved**—The community council has an opening on its board for a Grid 3 representative. It also has four standing committees that meet once a month. Those who attend three consecutive committee meetings can become voting members. Visit [macgrove.org/who-we-are/board](http://macgrove.org/who-we-are/board).

**Upcoming meetings**—Community Building Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 9; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 23; Environment Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 24; Housing and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 25, Groveland Recreation Center. The meetings will be held at the Edgumbe Recreation Center unless otherwise noted.

## Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

**Accessory dwelling units**—The Summit Hill Association's Zoning and Land Use Committee will hold a public meeting on Thursday, July 19, regarding the St. Paul Planning Commission's June 1 recommendation to allow homeowners city-wide to add accessory dwellings. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 St. Clair Ave. The SHA was not advised of the proposed citywide expansion until June 6 and has asked the city to allow additional time for residents to learn more about the changes. The City Council's public hearing on the matter was subsequently rescheduled from July 11 to August 15. Senior city planner Jamie Radel will be at the July 19 meeting to present the city's findings and answer questions. Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker will also attend to listen to neighborhood concerns. The SHA committee's recommendation will be voted on by the full SHA board on August 9 before it is sent to the City Council. For information, visit [tinyurl.com/ya32mbzh](http://tinyurl.com/ya32mbzh). Those who are unable to attend the July 19 meeting may call the SHA office or email their comments to [info@summithillassociation.org](mailto:info@summithillassociation.org).

## Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

**O'Gara's redevelopment**—The Union Park District Council's Committee on Land Use and Economic Development will host a discussion about the O'Gara's mixed-use redevelopment project during its next meeting on Monday, July 16. A five-story, 163-unit apartment building is being proposed at 164 N. Snelling Ave., with a smaller O'Gara's and other commercial space on the first floor. The meeting will take place from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Otto Hall at Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave. For more information, email [brandon@unionparkdc.org](mailto:brandon@unionparkdc.org).

**Rethinking I-94**—Throughout the summer, the UPDC will host a series of four events to engage neighbors on topics relating to I-94 with support from the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Transportation. Each event will feature live entertainment, free food and volunteers who will discuss the future of I-94 in Union Park. The first event will take place from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, July 15, at 1585 Marshall Ave. The discussion will be on Ayd Mill Road and a mural on the railroad bridge over Snelling and Marshall avenues. For information, visit [tinyurl.com/ycdhpoo](http://tinyurl.com/ycdhpoo).

**Upcoming meetings**—Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 9, 1821 University Ave., Suite 330; Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 16, Otto Hall at Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave.; Environment and Parks Committee, 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, Merriam Park Recreation Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave.

## West 7th

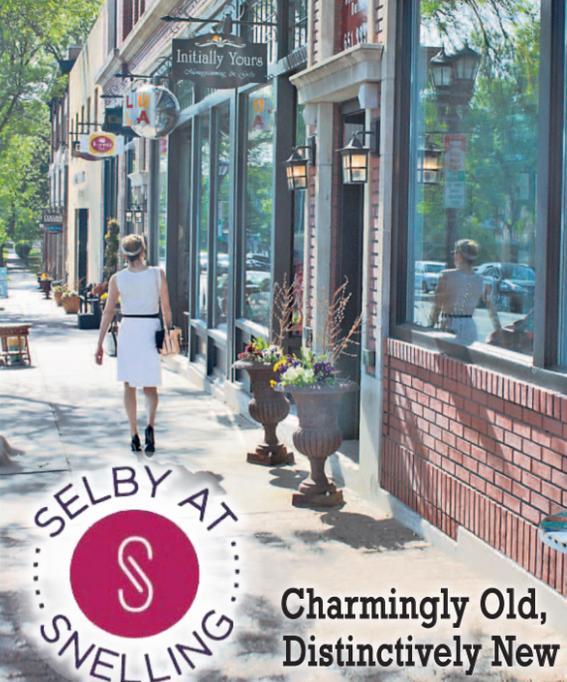
fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

**Board update**—At its June 11 board meeting, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation heard a presentation about a new house to be built at 334 St. Clair Ave. The board voted to support four variances that the property owner is requesting from the city to build on the site. Also during the meeting, representatives of the Day by Day Cafe presented their concerns regarding a request to expand residential permit parking on Goodrich Avenue and Douglas Street south of West Seventh Street. Residents of the area also spoke with the board about their petition and parking concerns. The board took no action. City planner Lucy Thompson presented highlights of the city's draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The board also heard a presentation about early voting in Ramsey County and the need for election judges. For information, visit [rcelections.org](http://rcelections.org).

**Housing survey**—The Fort Road Federation wants to hear from more residents, including renters and owners, on its housing survey. The survey can be taken online in English at [z.umn.edu/West7survey](http://z.umn.edu/West7survey) or in person in English, Spanish, Hmong or Somali at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St.

**Upcoming meeting**—The next board of directors meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, July 9, at 974 W. Seventh St.

[www.SelbyatSnelling.org](http://www.SelbyatSnelling.org)



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# On the Town

## A parable for the present day

### Corporate consultation devolves into conspiracy theories in Gremlin parody

BY FRANK JOSSI

In Gremlin Theatre's new play *Ideation*, a group of seemingly innocuous corporate consultants return from Greece to discuss their research and debate viable solutions to the tremendous challenges faced by their client. As the consultants unwind before a whiteboard, the list of possible solutions becomes increasingly horrifying.

"It's sort of a what happens when a brainstorming session goes wrong," said Gremlin founder and artistic director Peter Christian Hansen, who produces and performs in *Ideation*. "It becomes a thriller and a conspiracy play that's really funny, too."

*Ideation*, which opens on July 6 on Gremlin's new stage at 550 N. Vandalia St., is both a parody of corporate life and a frightening parable for the present day. Written by Aaron Loeb and first performed a few years ago, the drama has been described as a psychological contest that is both amusing and intriguing.

The consultants are given 90 minutes to come up with a plan for their client. "We don't learn the nefarious nature (of the enterprise) until we're a little into the play," said Hansen, a resident of Merriam Park. Meanwhile, the characters in the board room become increasingly paranoid and ultimately turn on one another.

"*Ideation* presents the characters and the audience with a moral dilemma," Hansen said. The consultants are extremely

competitive. They are willing to take any job no matter the risk, and the conspiracy theories they concoct are part and parcel of the current political climate, he added.

The play is ensemble-based with no real starring role. In addition to Hansen, the cast includes Katherine Kupiecki, Nikhil Pandey, Brian P. Joyce and Ben Shaw. Directing the production is Brian Balcom, who has directed three other plays for Gremlin, including *Don't Dress for Dinner*, which inaugurated its 120-seat thrust theater a year ago.

"I think *Ideation* fits the general way our society is going," said Joyce, a veteran thespian from St. Paul's Midway neighborhood, who plays an engineering consultant in the show. "We're not looking forward to a bright future, and that leads to negative thinking and easily believed conspiracy theories. It drives a wedge between people and leads to the divide Americans are in now."

Joyce has acted and directed on Twin Cities stages for three decades, but this is his first performance at Gremlin. He recently directed the Agatha Christie mystery *And Then There Were None* at Theatre in the Round in Minneapolis, and he has performed at Park Square Theatre in St. Paul.

*Ideation* will wrap up the Gremlin's 20th season and its first season in Vandalia Tower, the renovated old mattress factory off of University Avenue and Vandalia Street. The troupe has presented four shows there over the past year, and rented out the space to



Peter Christian Hansen, Nikhil Pandey and Brian P. Joyce play corporate consultants who like a challenge in Gremlin Theatre's new production of *Ideation*. PHOTO BY SARAH BAUER

*"Ideation' fits the general way our society is going. We're not looking forward to a bright future, and that leads to negative thinking and easily believed conspiracy theories. It leads to the divide Americans are in now."*

other organizations in between productions.

"The theater is in use year-round without a break," Hansen said. "We've had quite a good response from the groups using it. They really enjoy the place."

Among those organizations were Frank Theatre, New Native Theatre, the Classical Actors Ensemble, Chameleon Theatre Circle, SOS Theater, Theatre Unbound, TaikoArts Midwest,

Walking Shadow Theatre and a handful of other groups.

Gremlin has a rich history in St. Paul. In the early years it performed at various venues before creating the Loading Dock Theatre in downtown St. Paul in 2002. After six years there, Gremlin moved into a new 100-seat theater at University and Raymond avenues until 2013, when it became itinerant again before settling at Vandalia Tower.

Hansen figures Gremlin has produced more than 60 plays involving hundreds of actors over the years. Generally, it has focused on unfamiliar and unusual dramas that benefit from being performed in an intimate space.

"Part of what we've tried to do is give audiences a chance to sit up near the stage and experience live performance up close," he said. "I like plays that make people think and explore the human condition—more so the personal issues rather than social issues."

Hansen's goal in opening the new space "was to become a neighborhood theater, because there wasn't such a thing where

people who live close could catch a show and see a wide variety of stuff," he said. "The focus has been on theater, but I'm always looking for ways Gremlin can be a resource for the community and for anybody who wants to come here and use the space if there's not a play that night."

Gremlin has benefitted from its convenient location close to I-94, the light-rail Green Line and a popular craft brewery just down the hall where patrons can buy a beer before the show or during intermission and take it back to the theater. "Bertolt Brecht said a theater without beer is just a museum," Hansen said.

*Ideation* will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and at 3 p.m. Sundays through July 29. Tickets are \$28, \$25 for seniors and Minnesota Fringe Festival button holders, half their age for patrons under age 30, and whatever patrons can afford for the additional show at 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 16. For reservations, visit [gremlintheatre.org](http://gremlintheatre.org) or call 1-888-718-4253.

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# On the Town Briefly

## Books

**SubText Books**, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to readings and discussions with authors Gary Evans and his thriller, *Death by Poison*, Friday, July 6; Matt Goldman and his suspense novel, *Broken Ice*, Wednesday, July 11; Kimberly Bell and her thriller, *Three Days Missing*, Thursday, July 12; Archie Bongiovanni and Tristan Jimerson and their *Quick & Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns*, Tuesday, July 17; and Lorin Robinson and his adventure novel, *The 13: Ashi-niswi*, Thursday, July 19. The programs are all free and begin at 7 p.m. Call 651-493-2791.

**Common Good Books**, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will play host to free readings and discussions with poets Stefan Lovasik and Bruce Weigl and their new collections, *Absolution* and *On the Shores of Welcome Home*, respectively, at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 15; and Ottessa Moshfegh and her new novel, *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 17. Call 651-225-8989.

**The Great Books Discussions Group** continues on Wednesday, July 11, with a roundtable on the short story "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin. A civil rights activist, Baldwin wrote with eloquence and force about the African American experience in a predominantly white society. The discussion begins at 5 p.m. at the University Club, 420 Summit Ave. Call 651-285-7550 or email kingmuelken@q.com.

## Exhibits

**Summit Avenue Walking Tours** highlighting the Gilded Age mansions that line the street and the people who built them and owned them, are being offered by the Minnesota Historical Society on weekends through September. The 90-minute tours step out at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. on Saturdays and noon and 2 p.m. Sundays from the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The cost is \$14, \$12 seniors and college students, \$10 for children ages 5-17. Visit mnhs.org/calendar.

**Raymond Avenue Gallery**, 761 Raymond Ave., is exhibiting the pottery of Nick Earl and the paintings of Sandra Peterson through July 20. Earl's wheel-thrown pots are influenced by Korean, Japanese and English folk traditions. Peterson projects human emotions in her renditions of wild animals. Call 651-644-9200.

**"St. Paul ReViewed,"** a look at Minnesota's capital city through the eyes of its artists, is being displayed throughout the summer at Landmark Center. The show includes three installations: "Our St. Paul: Celebrating 125 Years of the St. Paul Camera Club" in the North Gallery; "Explorations," photographs by Michelle Daniels and Brad Daniels, in the second floor gallery and third floor balcony; and "All About St. Paul: A City in Watercolors" by painter Jeanne Kosfeld that opens on July 19 in the North Gallery. Several pieces from Landmark Center's permanent collection are also being shown, including Bill Hosko's oil on canvas "Daybreak in Rice Park," Anna Metcalf's porcelain and iron work "Letters to Landmark," and Norbert Marklin's photo mural "St. Paul Skyline Triptych." Landmark Center will offer Sketching St. Paul, a free workshop on rendering architecture and nature, from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, August 11, and from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, August 19. For workshop reservations, call 651-292-1239.

**Explore St. Paul's** historic downtown or riverfront areas on free, guided walking tours beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays



**"Art at St. Kate's,"** a juried fair featuring the works of 107 artists and craftspeople from the Upper Midwest, will return on Saturday, July 7, to the bucolic grounds of St. Catherine University. Running from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., the show and sale will feature a multitude of media, including painting, photography, printmaking, pottery, sculpture, fiber art, blown and stained glass and mixed media along with jewelry, leather handbags and belts, hand-woven scarves and shawls, quilts, turned wood, handmade paper and original cards. Pictured above (clockwise from the upper left) are the works of Colleen Riley, Joanna Buyert, Kristin Schue and Jan Raven.

through September. The area around Rice Park will be explored on July 11 and the second Wednesday of every month. The Heart of the City Tour will travel down St. Peter Street past some of the city's most famous landmarks and influential buildings on July 18 and the third Wednesday of each month. The Great River Tour will follow the mighty Mississippi on July 25 and the fourth Wednesday of each month, highlighting the role the river played in St. Paul history. For reservations, call 651-292-3063.

**"Everything is Everything Else,"** an exhibit of paintings, collages and photographs by Kerry Pennings and Larry Nelson, is open for viewing from 5:30-6:45 p.m. Thursday, July 5, and from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, July 7, at Vine Arts Center, 2637 27th Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Call 612-728-5745 or visit vineartscenter.org.

**"Courage and Compassion,"** a traveling exhibit of the Japanese-American experience during World War II, is on view through September 3 in the Visitor Center at Historic Fort Snelling. Funded in part by a grant from the National Park Service, "Courage and Compassion" covers the war years, from Pearl Harbor to the incarceration of Japanese Americans in camps to the postwar fight for redress. Fort Snelling was also the site of the U.S. Military Intelligence Service Language School where 6,000-plus Japanese Americans trained as linguists prior to embarking for the Pacific or China-Burma-India theaters of the war. The hours of the exhibit are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10

a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Visit mnhs.org/fortsnelling.

**"Art and Healing: In the Moment,"** 15 paintings, sculptures, videos, posters and textile works by Twin Cities artists created in response to the fatal shooting of Philando Castile in a traffic stop by a Falcon Heights police officer in 2016, are being displayed through July 29 at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2400 3rd Ave. S. Some of the works were given to the Castile family to foster their healing and are being shared by the family for the exhibit. Admission is free. On Fridays during the exhibit's run, workshops and discussions will be held around the issues of injustice and healing. They, too, are free, but reservations are recommended. Call 612-870-3280.

**"Somalis in Minnesota,"** the story of the largest population of Somali immigrants in the United States, is being told in a new exhibit at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Pkwy. The 2,400-square-foot show includes a reconstructed nomadic hut, photos and artifacts augmented by commentary by Somali-American historians, and videos and interactive photo panels that introduce Somali Americans across the state. Admission to the History Center is \$12, \$10 for seniors, students and veterans, \$6 for children ages 5-17. Call 651-259-3000.

**The work of students** in St. Catherine University's 2018 Women's Art Institute Summer Studio Intensive will be displayed from July 14-28 in the Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at St. Catherine. The gallery is open from 1-6

p.m. daily. An opening reception will be held from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, July 14.

**McKnight artist fellowship** and residency recipients Xilam Balam, Mic Stowell, Eva Kwong, Forrest Lesch-Middelton, Anthony Stellacio and Kosmas Ballis will display their ceramics from July 14 through August 26 in the Main Gallery and Emily Galusha Gallery at the Northern Clay Center, 2424 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis. An opening reception will be held from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, July 14, in conjunction with the clay center's annual summer open house. The free event will feature live music, hands-on activities, clay games and refreshments. Call 612-339-8007.

**"Black & White Blues,"** a pop-up exhibit of photographer Marc Norberg's iconic images of blues musicians, will be displayed from July 19-22 at the Show Gallery Lowertown, 346 N. Sibley St. Audio recordings of the musicians will accompany their portraits. An opening party will be held from 6-9 p.m. Thursday, July 19. Admission is free.

## Theater

**The game's afoot** in a hilarious thriller that's anything but elementary. Playwright Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* is playing at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through August 5 on the proscenium stage at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place. Directed by Theo Langason, the comical mystery stars Eric Sumangil, Sara Richardson, Marika Proctor, McKenna Kelly-Eiding and Ricardo Beaird. For ticket information, call 651-291-7005 or visit parksquaretheatre.org.

**Shakespeare & Company** is presenting three plays in repertory on weekends through July 29 in the outdoor theater at Century College, 3300 Century Ave. in White Bear Lake. *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde's satirical walk through the parlors and gardens of Victorian England, plays on July 6, 8, 14, 22 and 27. *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare's take on a power couple for the ages, will be staged on July 7, 15, 20 and 28. *The Comedy of Errors*, gets a circus-world twist with shows on July 13, 21 and 29. Show times are 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and a picnic supper if you like. Tickets are \$20, \$15 for seniors and students, free for children under age 10. Call 651-779-5818.

**Glensheen**, Jeffrey Hatcher and Chan Poling's dark comedy about the 1977 murders of Duluth millionaire Elisabeth Congdon and her nurse Velma Pietila, will return from July 5-29 to the History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. The musical stars Jennifer Maren and Dane Stauffer as chief suspects Marjorie Congdon and Roger Caldwell. Tickets are \$25-\$58. Call 651-292-4323 or visit historytheatre.com.

**The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical State Fair** will be performed by the Rosetown Playhouse on July 6-8 and 13-15 in the Spring Cafe at Como Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy. Show times are 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 1 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for seniors and students age 6 and older, \$10 for children age 5 and under.

**Jeeves in Bloom**, a comedy by playwright Margaret Raether based on the characters of P.G. Wodehouse, will open on July 6 at Theater in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The play tells of the adventures of Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves who pay a visit to the English countryside and Bertie's school chum Gussie. Soon, Bertie is fending off the advances of the fanciful Madeline Basset, reluctantly participating in

a burglary and fleeing from a homicidal French chef. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through July 29. Tickets are \$22 with discounts for seniors and students. Call 612-333-3010 or visit [theatreintheround.org](http://theatreintheround.org).

**The Mill City Summer Opera** will perform Bizet's *Carmen* from July 13-24 in the Ruin Courtyard at Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St., Minneapolis. Set in 19th-century Spain, *Carmen* tells of the love and jealousy of Don José, who is lured away from his military post and beloved Micaela by a cigar factory girl. Fenlon Lamb directs the production, which stars Audrey Babcock, Adam Diegel, Karen Slack and Luis Orozco. The soloists will be accompanied by a live orchestra and a chorus of 24 singers and dancers. Show times are 7:30 p.m. July 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22 and 24. An hour-long family show will be presented at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 18. Tickets are \$50-\$125 for the evening shows, \$200-\$250 for opening night, and \$5 for adults and free for children for the matinee. Call 612-875-5544 or visit [millcitysummeropera.org](http://millcitysummeropera.org).

**Mamma Mia!**, the Tony Award-winning musical set to the hits of the Swedish band Abba, will open a three-week run on July 17 at the Ordway Music Theater. Set on a Greek island, the drama tells of an unforgettable trip down the aisle taken by a mother, a daughter and the daughter's three possible fathers. Directed by Martha Banta, it stars Christine Sherrill, Ann Michels, Erin Schwab, Caroline Innerbichler, Robert O. Berdahl, Dieter Bierbrauer and Aloysius Gigl. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday

and Sunday. Tickets start at \$48. Visit [ordway.org](http://ordway.org) or call 651-224-4222.

## Music

**Como Lakeside Pavilion's Spring Cafe**, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy., will play host to free concerts by the following performers, all at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated: Como Pops at 3 p.m. and Daddy Squeeze at 6 p.m. July 4; Beer Choir, July 5; Stan's Big Bone Band, July 8; Fridley City Band, July 9; North Star Chorus Barbershop Edition, July 10; Minnesota Sinfonia "On the Lighter Side," July 11; Beasley's Big Band, July 15; Celebration Jazz Band, July 16; Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, July 17; and Zacc Harris, 5 p.m. July 18.

**For the Love**, a free hip-hop festival featuring 22 musical acts, dance performances and live art installations, will be held from noon-9 p.m. Saturday, July 7, in Mears Park in downtown St. Paul.

**The Minnesota Orchestra** under the baton of Akiko Fujimoto will perform classical favorites, film scores, Sousa marches and more in a free concert at 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 9, at the Lake Harriet Bandshell in Minneapolis.

**Pianist Don Irwin** will take a seat at the Steinway and perform ragtime, rhapsodies and requests in recital from 2-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 10, in the gallery of the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. Tickets are \$28.50. For reservations, call 651-489-5771.

**Bands on the Boulevard**, the Minnesota History Center's free outdoor concert series, continues from 6:30-9 p.m. on Tuesdays in July at 345

W. Kellogg Blvd. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy an evening of R&B and funk by Soul Tight Committee on July 10 and country tunes by Saddle Sores on July 17. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. The History Center's galleries will be open to the public free of charge from 3-9 p.m. Call 651-259-3000.

**Music in the Cafe**, Landmark Center's free lunchtime concert series, returns at noon Wednesdays in the sky-lit Musser Cortile. Bring a bag lunch or purchase food from Anita's Cafe and enjoy jazz and rock singer Lee Engele on July 11.

**Northrop Auditorium's plaza** is resonating with the live music of Twin Cities bands from noon-1 p.m. on Wednesdays. The schedule includes acoustic guitarists Tim Sparks and Phil Heywood on July 11; and Forever Elvis with Art Kistler and the EP Boulevard Show Band, July 18. Admission is free. In case of rain, the concert will be moved inside Northrop.

**Groovin' in the Garden**, a series of free outdoor concerts by some of the best bands in the Twin Cities, continues from 6-8 p.m. Wednesdays outside of the Conservatory in Como Park. The schedule includes Soul Beautiful on July 11 and Paddy Wagon on July 18. Music lovers are invited to pack a picnic supper, dancing shoes and blanket. And bring the children. A climbing wall, bouncy house and lawn games will be available along with hot dogs, ice cream, beer, wine and soda. In case of rain, the event will be moved inside the Conservatory.

**The history of rock 'n' roll** in Minnesota will be told by music writer Rick Shefchik, author of *Everybody's Heard About the Bird*, from 6-7:30 p.m.

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Friday, July 13, at the Sibley Historic Site, 1357 Sibley Memorial Hwy. in Mendota. From St. Paul's Augie Garcia to Fargo's Bobby Vee, Shefchik traces the roots of rock in the North Star State and the 1960s explosion of such bands as the Trashmen, Gestures, Castaways and Underbeats. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20, and that includes light refreshments and one drink for patrons age 21 and older. Call 651-452-1596.

**Live from Indiana**, the Fort Wayne Children's Choir will present a free concert at 2 p.m. Saturday, July 14, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis. Call 612-827-5919.

## Family

**Highland Park Library**, 1974 Ford Pkwy., will offer the following free programs: baby storytime at 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday; Nature Smart, a trading post in natural history, biology and geology, 4 p.m. Wednesdays; Createch, high-tech fun for teenagers, 3:30 p.m. every Thursday; Yarn Night, 6:15 p.m. Thursday, July 5; children's storytime, 11 a.m. every Saturday and 10:30 a.m. every Monday; GED class, 5:45 p.m. every Tuesday; Amharic storytime, 6 p.m. every Tuesday; Tinker Tuesday, a workshop for adults in relief printing for note cards or art prints, 6 p.m. July 17; Paw Pals, a chance for kids ages 6-12 to read with a dog and its mistress, 4 p.m. Wednesday, July 18. Call 651-695-3700.

**Merriam Park Library**, 1831 Marshall Ave., will offer the following free programs: Paw Pals, a chance for children ages 6-12 to read with a friendly dog and its mistress, 6-7 p.m. Thursday, July 5; family storytime, 10:30-11 a.m. every Friday; Maker Camp, hands-on activities for children ages 7 to 11, 3-5 p.m. Mondays and Fridays beginning July 9; Summer Spark, an introduction to chickens



**To Oz?** Ava Paulson (top), Ella Martin, Dominic Valladares, Marisa Schwab and Davyd Barchuk star in SteppingStone Theatre's *The Wizard of Oz*, playing mornings, afternoons and evenings from July 13-28 on the stage at 55 N. Victoria St. Seventeen performances are scheduled, though nine are sold out. For ticket information, call 651-225-9265.

PHOTO BY DAN NORMAN

featuring live hens, 11 a.m.-noon Tuesday, July 10; Circus Manduhai, the acrobatics of a Mongolian family, 11 a.m.-noon Tuesday, July 24. Call 651-642-0385.

**Red Balloon Bookshop**, 891 Grand Ave., will play host to the following free events: a talk and Q&A with author Richelle Mead and her new book, *The Emerald Sea*, at 6:30 p.m. Friday, July 6; and a launch party

for author Patricia Sutton and her latest book, *Capsized! The Forgotten Story of the SS Eastland Disaster*, at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, July 7. For information, call 651-224-8320.

**Dodge Nature Center**, 1701 Charlton St. and 365 W. Marie Ave. in West St. Paul, will offer the following: Nature After Dinner, an exploration of volcanoes and volcanic rock, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 12 (cost is \$7 per child accompanied by at least one adult); a family campfire with songs, stories and roasted marshmallows followed by a hike, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Monday, July 23 (\$7, \$20 per family); Farm Tour, 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, July 28 (\$7, \$20 per family). To register, call 651-455-4531 or visit [dodgenaturecenter.org](http://dodgenaturecenter.org).

**The Rockin' Tale of Snow White**, a musical version of the Brothers Grimm story that just may have you laughing out loud, will be performed on July 13 and 14 by the St. Mark's Children's Community Theater. The curtain rises on this 27th annual production by the parish's talented young thespians at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday in the gymnasium at St. Mark's School, Prior and Marshall avenues. Admission is \$5, \$3 for children in grades K-8, free for kids under age 5. Cool treats will be available at the concession stand.

**Explore the Minneapolis riverfront** on a family treasure hunt from 10:30-noon Saturday, July 14, beginning at the Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. Make a treasure hunt journal, solve rhymed riddles, search for hidden boxes and uncover some Minneapolis history in the process. The program is designed for ages 6-11. Children must be accompanied by an adult. The cost

is \$14, \$12 for seniors, \$10 for children ages 5-17. Call 612-341-7555.

## Film

**Bring a blanket or lawn chair** and enjoy the following movies under the stars, compliments of the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation: *West Side Story* on July 16 at Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy.; *The Incredibles* (2004), July 19, Groveland Recreation Center, 2021 St. Clair Ave.; and *Moonstruck*, July 20, Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. All screenings are free and begin around dusk.

**The Registry**, a documentary about the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service Language School, which trained thousands of Japanese-American men and women as interrogators, interpreters and linguists during World War II in California, Savage and Fort Snelling, will be shown at 1 p.m. Saturday, July 14, at Historic Fort Snelling. *The Registry* profiles surviving veterans of the Military Intelligence Service. A discussion with filmmaker Steve Ozone will follow the screening. Admission is free.

## Et cetera

**The Bell Museum**, after nearly three years of planning and construction, will hold a grand opening on July 13-15 at its new location at 2088 W. Larpenteur Ave. Established in 1872, the Bell is Minnesota's official natural history museum. It merged with the Minnesota Planetarium Society in 2011, and the new facility includes a 120-seat full-dome planetarium, a Touch & See Lab with all kinds of live creatures, high-tech exhibits in the natural sciences, the renowned wildlife dioramas fully restored, and a variety of outdoor learning experiences.



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# Sports



## The Wright Call By Dave Wright

### Something for Mauer to ponder

Bill Freehan was an imposing presence behind the plate. At 6-foot-3, 205 pounds, the former Michigan linebacker served as the main catcher for the Detroit Tigers from 1961 until he retired at the end of the 1976 season. He caught 1,577 games, was an eight-time All-Star and a five-time Gold Glove winner who had a .262 career batting average with 200 home runs.

Freehan was a hometown hero and key member of the 1968 Detroit team that won the World Series. He was honored with a bobblehead giveaway a few weeks ago as part of that city's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the team. Many people thought that on the day of the giveaway he'd be on hand to throw out the first pitch. Unfortunately, Freehan couldn't be there. Now 76, he's rumored to have such a severe case of Alzheimer's that he doesn't even know his own name.

Freehan's godson Blaise Salter, who was a 24-year-old prospect in the Detroit system, told this to a reporter when he retired from the game earlier this year after suffering a pair of concussions in an eight-month period: "Seeing Bill, the way his health has been, it's definitely been an eye-opener for me. I saw it firsthand how concussions affected his life. Obviously, he had way more than I did, with the lack of equipment back in the day. To see that, I really thought about my own life. I wanted to do anything I could to prevent that from happening to me."

The above narrative may come into play locally soon. St. Paul native Joe Mauer is 35 years old and in the last year of his contract with the Minnesota Twins. While there's much speculation as to whether the Twins will re-sign him or release him to play elsewhere, Mauer may be looking at more than just numbers to make his decision.

Mauer caught 920 games from 2004-13. He has since moved to first base, spending some time as a designated hitter as well. Moving away from the plate has helped, but Mauer spent time on the disabled list earlier this year with the renewal of his concussion-like symptoms. Having earned roughly \$184 million during his current eight-year contract, one presumes he's well-fixed financially. As the parent of twin girls who turn 5 this month, he may well want to simply walk away from the game and spend time watching them grow up.

In Freehan's day, there were only a few pitchers who could throw 90 mph or faster. Now each team has them at their beck and call. At that speed, it doesn't take a lot of foul balls to the head to get woozy. And as Mauer has discovered, even after you step away from behind the plate the symptoms can come back.

Like Mauer, Tim Tschida is a St. Paul native and Cretin-Derham Hall graduate. Tschida spent 27 years as a major league umpire, working more than 4,000 games, including 850 of them behind the plate. He also was vulnerable to foul balls that whistled past the catcher's mitt. In Freehan's day, guys like Tschida, who turned 58 this year, would still be working major league games. But Tschida retired six years ago following his fourth concussion.

"It was a big factor in my decision," Tschida said of the concussions. "The neurologist told me I was one or two head blows away from serious damage."

The effects of a concussion stay with a person long after the fact. "You'll be cutting your lawn and then you suddenly have to sit down," Tschida said. "You'll feel good for a few days and suddenly you're dizzy again."

Now mix in standing like an umpire or a first baseman for three hours a day plus getting on a plane and traveling to and fro and you can start to comprehend the difficulties.

Tschida added another element to the dilemma currently facing catchers and umpires. "The old masks used to be made of steel," he said. "The mask absorbed a lot of the blow. Now

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## On the upswing—Highland program is helping even more girls hone their softball skills

BY BILL WAGNER

The primary goal of the Highland Ball softball program is simple. According to association director Vic Murphy, it's to get and keep younger girls interested in playing fast-pitch softball. Though there are challenges in meeting that objective, including finding enough fields, proponents of the program believe they're offering something special to local youngsters.

"The reality is that softball is kind of a suburban sport," Murphy said, "but we have a unique program here."

The softball program is a division of Highland Ball, which also includes Little League and Hi-Tower baseball teams. According to Murphy, the organization's youth softball program is the largest one of its kind still operating in the city. It serves more than 215 girls ages 8-16. The players come from 26 schools, including 19 public and seven private, and compete on minor, major and traveling teams.

Murphy said the total number of young girls playing in Highland Ball softball is on the rise. "I know our numbers have been getting better," he said, "and I'd like to see us continue to grow."

The cost for a summer of softball ranges from \$185 for minors to \$400 for traveling teams. Murphy said there is some financial help available for those who need it.

The minor (grades 2-4) and major (grades 5-7) leagues are in-house divisions that play other Highland Ball softball teams. There are also traveling softball teams for 12U (girls 12 and under), 14U and 16U players, who compete against squads from Mendota Heights, South St. Paul, Oakdale, Cottage Grove and other suburbs.

The seasons for the minor and major leagues started in late May and run through mid-July, while the traveling teams compete from early May through the third week of July. Murphy stressed the importance of having a solid minors program for girls interested in playing softball later on.

"It's about learning the game," he said about the minors. "The competitive



Anna Zastrow, 14, goes into her windup for Highland Ball softball's 14U Navy traveling team during its June 21 match against Oakdale at Cretin-Derham Hall. Behind her is second baseman Ellen Murphy. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

level isn't that intense."

As much as he is sold on the experience of inner-city softball, Murphy noted that there is always going to be a battle to ensure that there are fields for the girls to play on.

"There just aren't a lot of great ball fields," he said. "We don't have our own softball complex. We don't have a dome. There are a lot of girls who really want to play, but I think our program could grow even more if we had a softball complex."

Local fields being used by Highland Ball softball this summer are at Cretin-Derham Hall, Highland Park High School, Urban Academy on Montreal Avenue and St. Catherine University. Murphy gave a special shout-out to St. Kate's softball coach Colleen Powers for putting on fundamental skills camps on behalf of the association, with the next one scheduled for August 7-9. Murphy said Highland Park High School, in particular, provides key field space for the

program.

Some things, though, are difficult to change. According to Murphy, the key age group for enrollees in Highland Ball softball is 12-14. After that, many players fall by the wayside.

"That's where the numbers start to drop," he said. "They go to club programs, which are far more costly. This year, though, is an exception."

Association members think their group is doing a lot of things right, with several talented players excelling on local high school varsity teams after honing their skills in Highland Ball softball.

One parent who doesn't need to be convinced about the benefits of the program is Luana Ciccarelli, aunt of Bella, who was a junior on Highland Park High Schools' softball team this spring, and mother of Maddie, who plays in Highland Ball softball's 12U league.

"I'm 100 percent behind this," Ciccarelli said about the softball program. "There are girls from several different schools who play on Maddie's team, and those girls have gotten to be a tight group. It's hard work, but it's also fun, and they appreciate what their coaches do for them. They really respect those coaches."

Erin Kiplinger, who has daughters ages 10 and 13 in the program, said there is no chance she would look to the suburbs for softball programs. "Why would I want to look elsewhere?" she said. "It encourages (girls) to stay in Highland Park. It fosters team building and friendship, and that extends to the parents."

Those wishing to enroll their youngsters in the summer softball program should log onto its website next winter to ensure a spot. Fall softball opportunities are also offered from late July through late September.

For more, visit [highlandball.org](http://highlandball.org) or email [highlandballsoftball@gmail.com](mailto:highlandballsoftball@gmail.com).



A batter for the minor-league Mellow Yellow team connects with the ball as a teammate waits on deck at a game at the Urban Academy fields on Montreal.

# Raider, major-leaguer Esch has short-lived stint with Saints

BY BILL WAGNER

If he didn't know it before, Jake Esch recently found out what a seesaw the life of a professional baseball player can be.

The former Cretin-Derham Hall pitching ace went on to forge a career pitching for Georgia Tech and then for several minor-league teams. He also pitched two seasons in the major leagues for the Miami Marlins and San Diego Padres before being signed as a free agent by the St. Paul Saints during the last off-season.

When the Saints picked him up, it was perceived by many as a savvy move to get an experienced player who could help the team win some big games.

However, after a dismal start on June 21 against the Winnipeg Goldeyes in which he allowed eight runs (five earned) and didn't make it through two innings, Esch was released by the Saints. He had a shaky 5.87 ERA going into that start, and had given up 38 hits in 30⅓ innings despite 31 strikeouts. The game on June 21 ended as a 16-5 loss for the Saints, which tied a season record for runs allowed.

Esch, 28, couldn't be reached for comment following his release, but former CDH baseball coach Jim O'Neill was at the June 21 game and said he reached out to offer some encour-



Jake Esch going to bat during his senior year at CDH in 2008. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

agement to his former star.

"I just texted him," O'Neill said the following day. "I told him to keep his head up."

Saints manager George Tsamis, contacted just hours before Esch's final start, had sounded hopeful that the 6-foot-3, 210-pound right-hander could come around.

"He's one of those veteran guys who's been around for a while," Tsamis said. "He's got a big-league background. He has good stuff. He

can get it up there at about 90 mph. He's left some pitches in the middle of the plate, but he's one of those guys who needs to step up and get it done. We brought him in here to be one of our better pitchers."

Esch appeared to have turned the corner about three weeks ago when he put together solid back-to-back wins for the Saints, including one in which he struck out a career-high 10 batters. However, the consistency never arrived. Following those two starts, Esch sounded laid-back and confident, and liked the atmosphere of his new club.

"This is a good clubhouse," he said, "one of the best I've ever been in."

Esch graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in civil engineering, but said he has never had a regular job outside of pitching. "I had Plan A and that was baseball," he said.

Still, even before his final game with the Saints he said he realized that couldn't be the case forever. "I feel well-prepared for (another career)," he said.

O'Neill believes Esch will do just fine in finding a new vocation. "He's a smart kid," he said.

Esch said he enjoyed playing for Tsamis and throwing to Saints catcher Justin O'Conner, who at this writing was still on the disabled list but was expected back shortly. He added that he had a blast on his minor-league jour-

ney that included stops as Jamestown, Jupiter, Mobile, Birmingham, Jacksonville, El Paso and San Antonio.

"A lot of the places I've played have been very hot," Esch said, "but I really enjoyed Mobile. A lot of people don't know that Mobile was a Mardi Gras town before New Orleans was. It's just a smaller city. The stadium and locker room were bad there, though. Birmingham was probably the best minor-league place I've played. It's just like a big city."

Esch also fondly remembered his days at Georgia Tech playing for coach Danny Hall. "It was awesome there," he said. "(Coach) ran it quite a bit like a pro team. He gave you every opportunity to do better, but you had to put in the work."

The passage of time sometimes makes retaining old friends difficult, but Esch said he did his best to keep in touch. He said he has consistently talked with former CDH coaches O'Neill and Tony Cicalello, and recently spoke with former Raider teammate Joe Bonfe.

Esch was a three-sport athlete at CDH, playing basketball and football in addition to baseball. He was the metro player of the year in baseball in 2007, pitching the Raiders to the Class AAA state title. He was named all-state his junior and senior years, and was 16-1 with a 1.50 ERA and 125 strikeouts in 121 innings pitched.

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they're made of titanium. The head takes most of the blow."

All this may come into play later this year. We only get one body and, as older folks are fond of noting, if you've got your health, you've got a lot. Tschida said it took roughly four years before he stopped feeling any effects of the concussions he received.

One could hardly blame Mauer, a bright guy with young kids, for taking that into consideration when his contract expires this fall.

## Change is in the air at Mac, St. Kate's

June and July are normally quiet times for athletics at MIAC schools. Some coaches may offer summer camps for a couple of weeks, but in the offices of the athletic hierarchy it's usually a time to regroup, refresh and get ready to hit the ground running when the fall sports teams start practice in August.

However, this summer may be a little more hectic than usual at Macalester College and St. Catherine University. The Scots had already made some news in April when

Abe Woldesslassie, a 2008 grad, was named the new men's basketball coach. Woldesslassie played his high school ball at St. Thomas Academy and afterward initially enrolled at the University of St. Thomas. His transfer to Mac was a good one for him and the team. Woldesslassie was a two-time all-MIAC choice who had 858 career points and twice led the league in assists.

In early June, Pamela Findlay was announced as the new head women's basketball coach at Mac, replacing Kelly Roysland, who left after four years to become an assistant to Lindsay Whalen at the U of M. Findlay comes to Mac from Lewis & Clark College in Washington, where she had winning seasons in both years at the helm.

When their seasons start, Woldesslassie and Findlay will have a new boss to report to. Kim Chandler, who had been the athletic director for the past nine years, abruptly left Macalester recently. No reason was given and, at press time, no interim AD had been named. The school has three assistant athletic directors: Ron Osterman has been there for two decades, serving as the main manager for home events while overseeing student game-day employment and equipment needs; Bob Dignazio, who is the athletic recruiting coordinator and main liaison with admissions, has

worked with the schools' club sports since arriving in 2015; and Steve Murray, who came in 2017, oversees compliance and internal operations.

The AD, however, is the captain of the ship. There's never a good time to be looking for one, but the Scots have no choice this time.

Over at St. Catherine, the news is cheerier. Lindsay Madryga has been hired as the school's full-time sports information director. Madryga, who worked in the MIAC office this past athletic season, also will take on other duties in St. Kate's athletic department. The last two directors there—Kelsey Whaley and Sara Eisenhauer—did a very good job, but left for higher-paying gigs. Whaley went to St. Cloud State and Eisenhauer to the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference.

Madryga comes to St. Catherine with a background in marketing and promotions, both at her alma mater at Concordia University and at the MIAC. This should be a big help to St. Kate's as it works to find its place in the highly competitive local sports market.

*Dave Wright can be reached at [dwright53@msn.com](mailto:dwright53@msn.com).*

# Sports Shorts

The 2018 Winfield Awards were presented to Jack Branby of Highland Park High School for the boys and K'Lynn Lewis of St. Agnes School for the girls on June 3. The awards are named after Central High School graduate and baseball Hall of Famer Dave Winfield and recognize outstanding St. Paul high school students of color.

Highland Park High School will induct the following into its Athletic Hall of Fame this fall: Kathleen Kramer (class of 1980), volleyball coach; Doug Keys (1981), baseball and hockey; Erica Dombro (2012), soccer, Nordic skiing, and track and field; and the 1973 cross-country team of Mike Mountain, Eric Zilley, Ron Graham, Jim Hannon, Dave Quimby, Jeff Weingarten, Kevin McCarthy and coach Jerry Larson. The induction luncheon will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, September 29, followed by a presentation at halftime of the homecoming football game.

Gus Varland, a junior right-handed pitcher for Concordia University-St. Paul, was chosen by the Oakland Athletics in the 14th round of the 2018 Major League Baseball first-year player draft. As the 413th overall pick, he becomes the highest drafted player in Concordia's history and the 11th player from Division II selected in this year's draft. The 6-foot-1 Varland broke out in a big way this season, compiling a 7-1 record with a pair of complete game shutouts and a 1.04 ERA that set the single-season record at Concordia. He was selected to several all-American teams and was named the Central Region pitcher of the year. During the past three seasons, he has compiled a 16-7 career record with a 2.99 ERA and 203 strikeouts.



Winfield Award winners K'Lynn Lewis and Jack Branby are pictured with St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter (center).

The Minnesota Wild will hold its second annual Leadership Summit from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, July 10, at St. Paul RiverCentre and Xcel Energy Center. The summit is free and open to the first 400 high school and college hockey captains and coaches. FOX Sports North broadcasters Kevin Gorg and Audra Martin will host roundtable discussions during the event. Register at [wild.com/leadership](http://wild.com/leadership).

Heather Coppola has been named the head women's lacrosse coach at Concordia University-St. Paul. She spent the previous season as Concordia's graduate assistant coach and offensive coordinator before being appointed interim head coach in

May when Mo Gaitan stepped down. Prior to accepting the assistant position to pursue a master's degree in management and leadership from Concordia, Coppola spent a year as interim assistant coach for Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh. She played four years on the lacrosse team at Alvernia University in Reading, Pennsylvania.

The Fire SC 98 women's soccer team will play its final game of its inaugural season against the Minnesota TwinStars at 7 p.m. Saturday, July 7, in Seafoam Stadium at Concordia University-St. Paul. The Fire were in second place in the North Conference of the Women's Premier Soccer League as of June 29 with a 4-2-2 record.

The 26th Habitat 500 Bike Ride will travel 500 miles from July 15-21 to benefit Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota. Cyclists will begin in Becker with overnight stops in Royalton, Alexandria, Staples and Pierz before returning to Becker. For more information, visit [habitat500.org](http://habitat500.org).

The 2018 USA Hockey All-American Prospects Game, which features the top 40 American-born prospects eligible for the 2019 NHL Draft, will be hosted by the Minnesota Wild with faceoff at 7 p.m. Wednesday, September 19, at the Xcel Energy Center. The seventh annual contest is being staged in Minnesota for the first time. In total, 23 Minnesota natives have participated in the game, including six who went on to become first-round NHL selections. Admission to the game is \$20. Tickets will be available at the Xcel Energy Center box office, by calling 800-745-3000, or online at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

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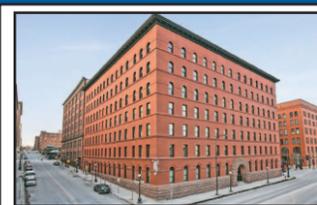
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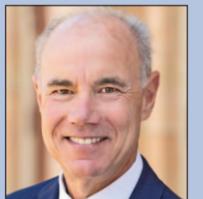
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