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CITY BEAT
St. Paulites unhappy with organized trash give City Council an earful ▶ 7



EDUCATION
The best teacher ▶ 12

HOT DISH
Middle Eastern fare the whole family can enjoy ▶ 18



ON THE TOWN
Lively Twin Citian ▶ 19

SPORTS
Capitals still battling in state Class A men's amateur baseball ▶ 23

VIEWPOINT.....8
DISTRICT COUNCILS..... 10
CRIME REPORT 15
KIOSK..... 17
ARTS CALENDAR..... 20
CLASSIFIEDS 25



Jeffrey Loesch and Jerry Foley tend to a burgeoning squash vine at the 75-year-old Dowling Community Garden in Minneapolis. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

After 75 years, Dowling Garden remains victory for Longfellow

BY MARY MAGUIRE LERMAN

Children who were raised without a family gardening background may figure that vegetables come from the shelves under the mist sprayers in the supermarket. However, get them involved in gardening and they will learn not only where vegetables are cultivated, but how to cultivate a community.

That's what has been happening for the last 75 years at the Dowling Community Garden in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood. The garden, located just west of

Dowling Environmental School at 46th Avenue and 39th Street South, is believed to be one of only two surviving World War II Victory Gardens in the U.S.

The public is invited to join the gardeners in celebrating the Dowling Garden's milestone from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, August 18. The free event will feature tastings of heirloom tomatoes, exhibits of vegetables grown in the garden and a chance to question Master Gardeners. There also will be music, refreshments and tours of the plots.

DOWLING GARDEN ▶ 2

Ryan Cos. to unveil redevelopment plan for Ford Plant site

Developer discusses possible modifications to master plan

BY JANE MCCLURE

Ryan Companies will unveil its plan for redeveloping Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park at a public meeting from 7-9 p.m. Thursday, August 16, in the auditorium of Highland Park Middle School, 975 S. Snelling Ave.

Members of Ryan's Ford redevelopment team discussed the site plans with close to 150 people at a July 31 meeting at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. There, Ryan heard excitement about the possibilities of redevelopment along with concerns about density, traffic and parking congestion and how the new development will fit into the surrounding neighborhood, according to Tony Barranco, Ryan Companies' senior vice president.

Since being chosen by Ford as lead developer for the site in June, Ryan officials have immersed themselves in the city's zoning studies and master plan for the 135-acre site, poring over public comments and the work of the city's Ford Site Planning Task Force.

"We've looked at everything from building design to how we can incorporate pieces of the original Ford Plant into public spaces," Barranco said. "Ford had a long history in Highland, and the weight of that history isn't lost on us. But community feedback is important to us. After all, it's community members who have the day-to-day experiences we can draw from."

Ryan hopes to begin work on new infrastructure on the Ford site a year from now with construction it-

FORD REDEVELOPMENT ▶ 3

Mayor proposes 7.6% increase in spending in '19

\$606M city budget comes with 11.5% tax increase

BY JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter has proposed a \$606 million city budget for 2019 with new or expanded initiatives in the areas of housing, youth programs, immigrant support, street repair and public safety. The proposed 2019 city budget is 7.6 percent higher than the 2018 budget, and it comes with an 11.5 percent increase in the city's portion of the property tax levy.

"We're in a critical moment in our city," Carter said in his budget address on August 9. "We're

growing, and we're changing fast. And as we continue to emerge as a 21st-century global community, we must work together to build a city that truly works for all of us."

Citing the gaping political divide nationally, Carter spoke of local unity and building a city that reflects the local values. The mayor had held a series of budget workshops in the neighborhoods this summer. Out of those sessions, he said, three investment priorities emerged: affordable housing, free recreation center programs and support for small businesses.

Almost 55 percent of St. Paul's annual budget goes to the police and fire departments. Earlier this year, Carter rejected Police Chief Todd Axtell's request for 50 additional police officers, say-

ing the \$5 million additional cost per year would not leave much room for other initiatives. Carter has proposed maintaining the current number of 626 police officers. Their salaries will increase by 11 percent over the next three years as provided in the contract approved in June by the City Council.

Working with Axtell, Carter is supporting the continuation of the \$500,000 being spent annually on a mental health responder program that has social workers and mental health professionals working more closely with police in mental health crises. Carter's budget also provides for the assignment of four more investigators in the

2019 CITY BUDGET ▶ 2

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Carter answers council's call for more spending on housing

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter has proposed investing more than \$71 million over the next three years in the promotion of new housing options citywide. Carter's proposal, which draws on various city, state and federal sources, was applauded by the City Council, which had passed a resolution on July 18 calling for a larger investment in housing.

"This is a bold and much-needed investment," said Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert, who chairs the city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). "More housing, especially affordable housing, is needed in every neighborhood in the city."

Carter proposed the new spending as part of his 2019 city budget address. It includes a one-time infusion of \$10 million plus \$2 million in annual investments to address what has been described as a housing crisis in St. Paul.

The mayor has recommended several strategies to tackle the housing crisis, including the construction of new rental units targeted to households making 30-50 percent of the area media income, down-payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, and pilot programs to reduce housing production costs and increase density. The mayor wants the city to acquire and rehabilitate vacant homes to promote "naturally occurring" affordable housing and work to preserve existing rent- and income-restricted buildings with expiring terms.

The mayor is also pushing for the city to provide property tax incentives for landlords who keep rents affordable. Under the so-called 4d Policy, apartment owners who rent at least 20 percent of their units at an affordable rate may be eligible for property tax reductions through a Minnesota Housing Finance Agency program.

Investments in emergency housing assistance and winter shelter, policies to reduce the impact of credit and criminal background checks on prospective tenants, and a new tool to encourage housing code compliance without displacing tenants or criminalizing property owners are also proposed.

The mayor's proposals were drawn from a series of City Council policy sessions on the housing crisis. St. Paul is dealing with a low, 2.4 percent vacancy rate in rental housing. Rents have been on the rise for several years and so has the incidence of homelessness.

The City Council, in its July 18 resolution, called for the creation of a city advisory committee dedicated to housing stability with its membership drawn from housing experts, landlords, tenants, tenant advocates and homeowners.

The city already has several housing initiatives in place, including tax credits for the building and preservation of low-income housing, emergency housing funding, a zoning study regarding the building of accessory dwellings on single-family lots, an emergency housing plan to support tenants who are displaced from substandard housing, and a

citywide study to consider ways to "upzone" properties for increased density.

The upzoning study, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019, was initially proposed as a citywide study by outgoing Ward 4 City Council member Samantha Henningson, but was scaled back to include only transit corridors and 56 "neighborhood nodes" as designated in the city's draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan as potential locations for higher-density mixed-use development.

City Council member Jane Prince introduced the amendment scaling back the zoning study. Her East Side ward wound up with many more absentee landlords as the result of the housing foreclosure crisis a decade ago, and she was concerned that it would become too easy for absentee landlords to add new units to their rental properties.

Prince asked that the city set a goal for the number of new housing units to be created. She also asked that the city focus on sites that are ready for redevelopment. According to her, there are several sites on the East Side that are primed for new higher-density housing.

The City Council has asked city staff to study other possible housing programs. One is a proposed tenant protection ordinance that would provide for advance notification of the sale of rental property, just-cause eviction, the right to counsel in housing court, and condemnation assessments on landlords.

Another study would bring forward ordinances to reduce barriers for tenants, including a ban-the-box measure to free people

from having to divulge their criminal history, limiting rental application fees and increasing the acceptance of housing choice vouchers. The City Council would also like St. Paul to enact inclusionary zoning to promote some level of affordable housing in new developments.

One potential hot button is a study of how the city defines a family for purposes of housing and an increase from four to five in the number of unrelated adults allowed in a dwelling with more than four bedrooms. While these changes could lead to better use of some of the city's larger single-family homes, they raise red flags in neighborhoods around colleges where students often crowd into off-campus rental houses.

The City Council resolution on July 18 established an ambitious goal of making a third of all new housing units built in St. Paul over the next 10 years affordable to households earning 30-50 percent of the area's median income. The resolution also recommended including Section 8 training in the Landlord 101 course required for all new certificate of occupancy holders.

Additional policy changes recommended in the council resolution will take more time to sort out. One is a proposal to use low-income housing tax credits to provide more senior housing. Another is a proposed requirement that all housing projects receiving funding directly from the city or passed through the city from state and federal sources accept Section 8 vouchers.

1◀ 2019 CITY BUDGET

areas of violent crimes and sexual assaults and two more commanders, one to lead the sex crimes division and another to focus on downtown.

About \$1 million in additional spending is proposed for the Fire Department. Part of that increase would go to expanding non-emergency medical services. Carter noted that about 95 percent of fire calls are for paramedic services, and nearly half of those are for less serious medical assistance. He proposes spending more than \$500,000 to create basic life support response teams at three fire sta-

tions to handle such calls, freeing up firefighters and paramedics for more serious calls.

Citing the recent apprehension of an illegal immigrant by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers at City Hall, Carter is asking the City Council to amend the 2018 city budget to establish a \$100,000 immigration legal defense fund to keep immigrant families safe and together. For 2019 he is proposing the hiring of a full-time immigration support services attorney in the City Attorney's Office to provide outreach, engagement, support and advocacy to immigrants and refugees in the city.

Carter's budget includes \$500,000 for the

interim implementation of the Capital City Bikeway downtown, to fill some gaps in the city's bike network and to beef up the maintenance of bike lanes citywide.

For the Department of Safety and Inspections, Carter has proposed hiring three more inspectors and making technology improvements to address a backlog in permits.

Other budget highlights include \$3 million for the first year of a three-year mill and overlay program for downtown streets, increasing from \$1.25 million to \$2.5 million the expenditure on neighborhood street work, increasing from \$1 million to \$2.5 million the expenditure on addressing the devastation of

the emerald ash borer, and increasing from \$100,000 to \$300,000 the expenditure on free recreation center programs for children.

To help pay for the budget increase, Carter has proposed raising the city's property tax levy from about \$142 million to \$158 million. That would increase the annual property tax on a median-value, \$186,200 home by about \$76. That figure does not include any increases in property taxes levied by Ramsey County and the St. Paul Public Schools.

The City Council will begin its review of the mayor's budget on August 15 with the goal of adopting a final city budget and tax levy for 2019 in December.

1◀ DOWLING GARDEN

A history book on the garden will be available for purchase.

Victory Gardens were first cultivated during World War I in reaction to food shortages in the U.S. and Europe. When "the war to end all wars" did not live up to expectations and World War II broke out, Victory Gardens returned. In fact, less than two weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, gardeners throughout the country organized the American Victory Garden campaign patterned after the World War I version.

The history of the land where the Dowling Garden sits is as rich as the soil. Native Americans protected the land for thousands of years. With the coming of the white man it became part of the Fort Snelling Military Reserve and later changed hands several times.

Minneapolis Mayor William Eustis bought the land in 1923 and donated 21 acres to the Minneapolis Public Schools for a facility to aid "the physical, intellectual and moral well-being of crippled children." He made an additional gift of \$1 million to build Dowling School, which opened there in 1924. He gave a portion of the land to the University of Minnesota to build a hospital for children with special needs. However, the hospital was never built.

That land was still available at the start of World War II and in 1943 the Victory Garden was developed at a time when the war was causing unprecedented shortages of food. Elon and Rose Pearson were the first coordi-



Charlie Rieland, 2, munchies on freshly picked cherry tomatoes near a stand of dahlias on his family's plot at the Dowling Community Garden. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

nators of the garden.

By 1944 about 40 percent of all vegetables in Minnesota were being grown in Victory Gardens. Numerous organizations promoted them, including the *Minneapolis Tribune* via columnist George Luxton.

The Dowling Garden encompassed nearly 20 acres at one point. After the war, it shrank to just the northern portion of today's garden. It slowly expanded beginning in the 1960s and into the 21st century, when it reached its

current 185 plots on roughly 3 acres of land. The site is owned by the school district and leased to the all-volunteer Dowling Garden Committee, which in turn rents the plots to individuals. Teachers at Dowling School also use the garden as a learning space for their students.

No pesticides are allowed at the garden and each gardener must donate four volunteer hours each season. Duties include filling the water drums, cleaning the tool house, main-

taining the special garden plots and delivering extra produce.

Since 2003, two tons of produce from the garden have been donated each season to local food shelves. The garden includes special plots for children, for growing herbs and pollinators, for those in wheelchairs and for those who can no longer bend but enjoy gardening while standing. There are also straw bale gardens and two gardens for local food shelves.

Specialty crops are also grown at the garden. Jerry Foley has grown Beauregard Sweet Potatoes there for many years. He starts the sweet potato vines indoors each March, then transplants them outdoors in mid-May. Other gardeners, mentored by Foley, have added the beta-carotene- and fiber-rich potatoes to their plots.

Changes have improved the garden over the years. Water is now available within 100 feet of all plots, which are now tended by around 300 gardeners. Bird houses, benches and a planned beehive invite even more participants. Each year, gardeners donate extra seeds and plants to other gardens and help maintain the heirloom gardens at the John H. Stevens House in Minnehaha Park.

Participants at Dowling learn gardening as well as community-building skills, such as grant writing, political organizing, and teaching and demonstrating how to grow and preserve food, all while making friends with other gardening enthusiasts.

For more information on the garden and its 75th anniversary celebration, visit dowling-communitygarden.org or call 612-467-9545.

1 ◀ FORD REDEVELOPMENT

self starting in 2020. The company expects the redevelopment to take shape over the course of a decade or longer, and new development partners are likely to be announced in October or November. Barranco said that while Ryan has an impressive record in retail, housing and mixed-use construction, developments such as senior housing will require partners.

The development team hopes to schedule a series of meetings soon to provide regular updates on the project. Also getting underway this year will be a mandatory environmental study, called an Alternative Urban Area-wide Review, to outline the likely impacts of the development, including traffic, parking and noise.

No date has been announced for the transfer of ownership of the land from Ford. Ryan has been in close contact with the Dearborn-based motor company about various issues, including ongoing pollution cleanup on the site and the future of the Ford property that lies between the Mississippi River and Mississippi River Boulevard—acreage that is not part of the master development agreement.

Ryan has also met with officials of Canadian Pacific Railroad, which still owns the former 13-acre railroad yard within the Ford property. That land will also have to be cleaned up.

The Ryan team is well aware of the longstanding dispute over the Ford redevelopment between Sustain Ward 3 and Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul. Sustain Ward 3 members have embraced the city's high-density plan for as many as 4,000 new housing units on the site, while Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul have advocated a scaled-back development that blends into the surrounding neighborhood of largely single-family homes and addresses their concerns about density and traffic congestion.

"We're trying to reframe the narrative," Barranco said. "This is going to be a phenomenal site when it's developed with outstanding public amenities, including parks and a central water feature. Those spaces

will be unbelievable."

The Ford site presents new challenges for the Minneapolis-based construction company. Typically, when Ryan takes on a development project, it comes with a blank slate. "We have a site, we think through a business plan and we bring forward ideas," Barranco said. With the Ford site, the developers are working with a city-approved master plan that includes a street grid, public spaces and six new zoning districts.

People should not expect a lot of changes to the approved master plan, according to Barranco. "We think the master plan is outstanding," he said. "We think the work on the master plan was time well spent, and our goal is to deliver a project based on the vision of the master plan."

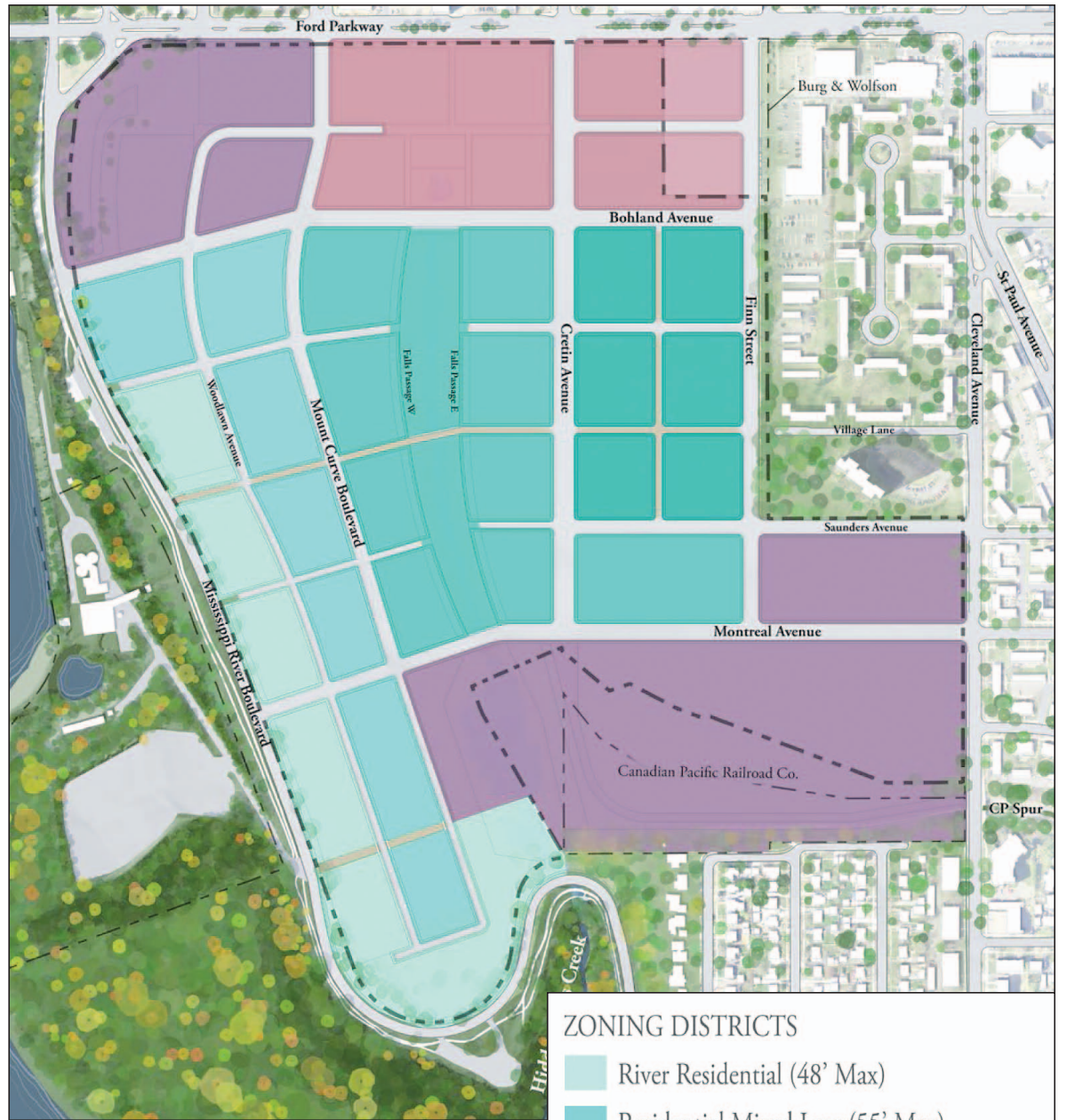
However, some modifications are being considered. A strong preference is being heard for new row-houses or townhouses on the eastern portion of the site as a housing option for young families as well as empty nesters, according to Barranco. "There's a lot of demand for that type of housing, and there are a lot of possibilities here," he said. "We're playing with how that could work."

The desire for more housing options was evident at the July 31 meeting at Gloria Dei. As one woman said, "Everyone who wants to downsize is now ending up in Mendota Heights."

Another issue that is being reviewed are the building heights recommended in the master plan. With setbacks, those heights top out at 10 stories. "Ten-story buildings feel a bit out of scale to us," Barranco said, "and that's something we're looking at."

That is not to say that the redevelopment will not be high-density. The master plan calls for as many as 4,000 new housing units with 20 percent affordable for households earning from 50 to 60 percent of the area's median income.

"Density has been an interesting balancing act," Barranco said. "You need density to provide amenities such as parks and open spaces. Density is also an important driver when you're investing in infrastructure." However, a development that



The city of St. Paul's master plan for redeveloping the 135-acre Ford Site in Highland Park lays out new streets and park spaces along with six zoning districts for various residential and commercial uses. The key at right indicates the zoning districts and the maximum building heights in each of those districts. Higher heights are allowed in some districts with the provision of more park space.

fits into the surrounding neighborhood is another consideration, with architecture that complements existing structures, he said.

"We've heard significant concerns about the development needing to feel like part of the surrounding community and not create a situation where you cross a street and—boom!—there's a big new develop-

ment there," Barranco said.

The development team has also given serious consideration to retaining the Little League fields, the use of which was given over by Ford 65 years ago. Many people have called for the three ballfields to be saved, but how they would be retained and who would own and manage them are open questions.

"It doesn't help that some Major League all-stars played there," Barranco joked.

Another concern is the retail-residential mix. According to Barranco, the intent is to not have too much retail and to maintain a preference for locally owned businesses over national chains.

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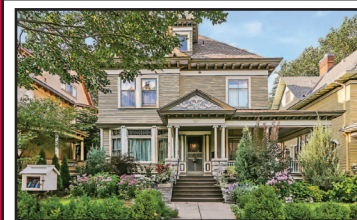
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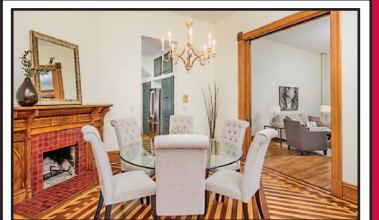
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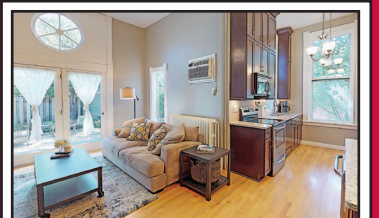
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Hearing set Aug. 15 on allowing accessory dwellings citywide

By JANE MCCLURE

New regulations that would allow an accessory dwelling on single-family properties throughout St. Paul will be reviewed by the City Council in a public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 15, at City Hall. Three more district councils weighed in on the regulations in July—the Highland, Summit Hill and Summit-University councils—and their comments were mixed.

ADUs are being promoted as a way for extended families to live near each other while maintaining some privacy. They are seen as a way of promoting new and denser housing options in the city.

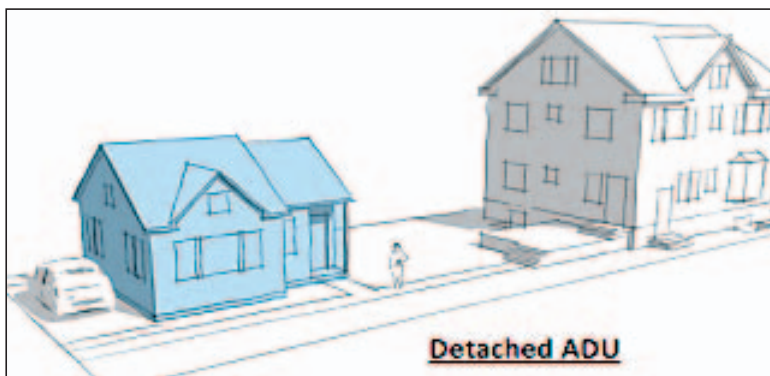
Under the proposed regulations, an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) could be built inside or as an addition to an existing home, above a garage or in a new building in the backyard. The ADU would need to have a separate entrance, separate water and sewer service, and its own kitchen and bathroom. They would only be allowed on lots of 5,000 or more square feet unless they are built within an existing home, in which case there would be no minimum lot size. ADUs that are not within an existing home could be

no larger than 800 square feet and no higher than the existing house. ADUs in the upper story of a house or garage would not be allowed to have exterior staircases in front. The property on which the new units are built must be owner-occupied and have a deed restriction to ensure that the property remains owner-occupied as long as the ADU is maintained.

Several of the city's 17 district councils have voted to support the ADU regulations as proposed, including the Union Park District Council and the Macalester-Groveland Community Council. The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation has not taken a position, nor has the Capitol River Council, which has no single-family zoning in the downtown area it serves.

The Highland District Council (HDC) voted to support the regulations on July 19. That same night, the Summit Hill Association (SHA) Zoning and Land Use Committee voted 3-1 to recommend that ADUs not be allowed in Summit Hill.

About three dozen people attended the SHA committee meeting, and they were evenly divided for and against. SHA committee members said they would like to learn more about the regulations and the



experience of ADUs in other neighborhoods before encouraging them in the neighborhood.

The Summit-University Planning Council (SUPC), which held a neighborhood forum on the issue in July, decided not to make a recommendation on the regulations at its meeting on July 24. "There's a need for much more robust outreach and discussion on this," said SUPC Neighborhood Development Committee chair Mary Morris. "We're only hearing from a very small subset of people."

St. Paul currently allows ADUs on single-family properties within a half-mile of the light-rail Green Line between Lexington Parkway and the western city limits. ADUs are also allowed on properties that have had carriage houses or ser-

vants' quarters in the past.

Minneapolis has allowed ADUs for the past two years and now has close to 100 of them. However, about half of those were existing units that have since been legalized, according to Jamie Radel, a senior city planner for St. Paul.

Although only one ADU has been built in St. Paul since the Green Line district was established in 2016, interest has been high in other neighborhoods. When several district councils asked if their neighborhoods could be included in the ADU area, the St. Paul Planning Commission voted to recommend that ADUs be allowed citywide.

So far, the most contentious discussion on the issue occurred before the SHA committee on July

19. Summit Hill residents who supported the ADU regulations talked of the advantages of having an adult child or an elderly parent living nearby. "I don't think we'll see a lot of these built, but having the option does give people some flexibility," said SHA committee member Sonja Mason.

Others were worried about added density and the congestion ADUs might create. Some residents asked how the city would guarantee that ADUs do not become part of larger rental properties. A few people wondered if the neighborhood would be going back to the days when larger homes were subdivided into small apartments or rooming houses. Parking congestion and the effects on property taxes were other concerns. Radel said the city has not looked at the impact on property taxes.

Lori Brostrom, who chairs the SHA committee, was not convinced of the benefits of ADUs. "These are permanent changes to homes," she said. "We were surprised when the Planning Commission recommended that they be allowed citywide." Brostrom also objected to the lack of a neighborhood notification requirement before an ADU could be added.

Redesign of Starbucks' drive-thru OK'd at Marshall-Snelling

By JANE MCCLURE

Starbucks' drive-through lane has been redesigned yet again in an effort to improve traffic safety around the coffee shop at Marshall and Snelling avenues.

The St. Paul Planning Commission voted 11-2 on August 10 to approve the new design, which increases the capacity of the drive-through lane from nine to 12 vehicles, or enough to eliminate traffic backups on Marshall even at peak periods, according to engineering consultants from the firm Kimley-Horn.

Two customer parking spaces will be removed to make room for the longer drive-through lane, reducing the total to 10. The total cost of the redesign is about \$100,000, which will be covered by Starbucks.

The Planning Commission attached two conditions to its approval of the new design. The coffee shop must employ a traffic control officer during morning rush hours. Starbucks also must install collapsible plastic tubes in the middle of the Marshall right-of-way. Pending the approval of county and state transportation officials, the tubes will act as a median to prevent left turns. They will be removed in the winter to allow for snow removal.

Long lines in Starbucks' drive-through lane have vexed local residents since the coffee shop first opened more than a year ago. During peak periods, the line extends into Marshall, blocking bike and traffic lanes.

The Planning Commission's Zoning Committee held a public hearing on the drive-through's redesign in July, but laid the matter over when it became clear it did not have the

votes to make a recommendation.

Planning Commission chair Betsy Reveal called the design changes "a marginal improvement."

Commissioner Cedrick Baker said that while he does not believe the design changes will address many of the neighborhood's concerns, they are better than doing nothing.

"My attitude is that the city screwed up in granting the (drive-through) permit in the first place," said commissioner Kris Fredson.

Starbucks would like to make other traffic safety improvements, according to its attorney, William Griffiths. In a letter to the Planning Commission, Griffiths stated that Starbucks has been working with Ramsey County on "several proposed improvements to the Marshall right-of-way." These include striping a parking lane next to the curb for about

nine vehicles and moving the bike lane to the left side of the parking lane. However, the plan has raised objections from bicyclists.

In fact, the redesign of the Starbucks drive-through has drawn 43 letters in opposition. The Union Park District Council (UPDC) recommended denial of the redesign. UPDC board members have pushed for the city to revoke the conditional use permit for the Starbucks drive-through, as has the St. Paul Bicycle Coalition.

St. Paul requires conditional use permits for all drive-throughs, whether they are at coffee shops, restaurants, banks or other businesses. Conditions may be attached to the permits to address concerns about traffic flow and excess noise. The public may request that a permit be revoked, Reveal said, but only if the permit conditions are being violated.

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An artist's rendering of the south side of the O'Gara's project looking toward the northwest and showing the second-story deck and pool above Hague Avenue.

Rezoning OK'd for new 5-story building on site of O'Gara's Bar

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council unanimously approved the rezoning of four properties where a new five-story apartment building is planned on the southeast corner of Selby and Snelling avenues. Pending the city's approval of a site plan and traffic management plan for the development, demolition may begin of O'Gara's Bar and Grill and the three adjacent houses on Hague Avenue to make way for the new building.

The O'Gara family has been working with Ryan Companies on the redevelopment project. Construction is expected to begin later this year and take about a year. When completed, the building will house a smaller O'Gara's Bar & Grill and a small co-working space on the first floor and 163 apartments on the first through fifth floors. Parking will be provided underground and on the first level.

A third-generation family business, O'Gara's has been operating at 164 N. Snelling Ave. since 1941. The redevelopment will reduce the bar and restaurant's space from about 20,000 to 4,100 square feet.

The project has the support of the Union Park District Council (UPDC), the Midway Chamber of Commerce and the Selby-Snelling Area Business Association. However, the owners and residents of homes east and south of the site continue to raise concerns about the height and design of the building, which they fear will impinge on their privacy and peace and quiet.

Tony Barranco of Ryan Companies and O'Gara's co-owner Dan O'Gara said they will continue to work with neighbors on building design and traffic issues. "We're committed to staying engaged with the neighborhood," Barranco said.

Hague Avenue residents are concerned

about a patio and pool planned for a second-story deck on the south side of the building. According to Barranco, the building's upper floors will be stepped back from the Hague Avenue property line to reduce the building's mass and the second-story deck will be landscaped to muffle any noise.

"I'm very much in support of the project," said Pete Clasen, who owns a building on Hague across from the proposed deck, "but I feel like we got misinformation." According to Clasen and Hague Avenue resident Sue Rohland, plans for the deck and pool should have been shared with neighbors sooner so they could have their concerns about late-night parties on the deck addressed in advance.

Clasen said the final building plans were not available until just before a UPDC Land Use Committee meeting in June, and he had been told there would not be a pool. "If I'd known about (the deck and pool), I would've hesitated to sign the consent petition," he said.

Rohland is concerned that the new building will add to the neighborhood's parking crunch. "Traffic and parking on Hague are bad now," she said, "and it's going to get so much worse."

The O'Gara's buildings and the three houses at 1551-59 Hague Ave. have been rezoned to Traditional Neighborhoods (TN) 3. O'Gara's property had been zoned for TN2 and the houses had been zoned for townhouses. TN3 zoning further relaxes the off-street parking requirements and allows for heights of up to 55 feet. However, a conditional use permit approved for the project earlier this summer by the St. Paul Planning Commission will allow for a height of up to 63 feet. The developers have indicated that they do not think the building will be taller than 60 feet, but they wanted the flexibility of three additional feet.

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Lander Group to build 37 apartments on site just north of Minnehaha Park

By BILL WAGNER

Greg's Auto Repair, a fixture at 4737 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis for the last 43 years, closed its doors last month. Owner and operator Greg Herdina has decided to hang it up following the signing of a purchase agreement earlier this year with Lander Group, a South Minneapolis developer that specializes in urban infill and mixed-use projects.

The company plans to construct a four-story apartment building on the site with a mix of 37 studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units. The property is located just north of Minnehaha Park and includes the

site of Greg's Auto Repair as well as an adjacent double bungalow. Lander Group representative Tony Kriha did not respond to inquiries to discuss the development.

Herdina, 68, said it was time for him to move on. The former South Minneapolis resident said he would continue to work on vehicles elsewhere but on a part-time basis.

"It's hard to go to work for someone else when you've been working for yourself all these years," he said.

The Lander Group also is currently developing the 38th Street Station, which will include new apartments along with retail and office space on East 38th Street and Hiawatha Avenue South.

Ramsey County proposes 4.3% increase in tax levy for 2019

By JANE MCCLURE

Ramsey County is eyeing a 4.3 percent increase in its property tax levy and a 7.8 percent hike in its regional rail authority levy for next year. The County Board got its first look at the proposed 2019 budget on August 7. The review process will continue until December 11 when the budget and levies will be adopted.

The budget was presented by new county manager Ryan O'Connor, a Snelling-Hamline resident. He described the budget as a "residents-first approach," with a focus on investments that will improve programs and services.

The county is proposing a 3.3 percent total budget increase of \$23.8 million in 2019. The 4.3 percent hike in the property tax levy, or \$13.3 million, is the same percentage as this year's.

The total proposed 2019 budget is \$737.8 million. That is \$1.5 million higher than the amount that received preliminary approval in December 2017 when the county set its 2018-2019 biennial budget. The increase will be covered with grants and budget reserves.

O'Connor said no new or significant changes are proposed in the 2019 budget from what was envisioned a year ago. Property taxes

make up 42 percent or \$312.4 million of the budget's financing. The remaining revenue comes from state and federal funds, charges for services and other sources.

"This proposed budget keeps us on track with the direction established last year in the 2018-2019 budget," O'Connor said. "We continue to balance fiscal restraint with investments in our resident-first priorities to improve and modernize service delivery."

O'Connor described how part of the budget focuses on looking toward the year 2040. He also outlined the challenges the county faces. One is an expectation for responsive, high-quality services delivered quickly. Another is poverty. Of the Twin Cities metropolitan area counties, Ramsey County has the highest share of neighborhoods experiencing poverty. Other challenges include rising inflation and labor costs.

The county recently restructured its departments into broader service teams, and the 2019 budget reflects that approach. Three areas take up most of the budget expenditures. They include health and wellness at 49 percent or \$363 million, safety and justice at 18 percent or \$134.6 million, and economic growth and community investment at 18 percent or \$128.7 million.

The regional rail authority, which was sepa-

rate for many years, was merged into economic growth and capital investment three years ago. It has its own levy authority. Regional rail has levies of \$22.5 million for 2018 and \$24.4 million for 2019.

One key focus of the 2019 budget in the area of community services is to reduce homelessness by moving long-term shelter users into transitional housing. Other needs are to address higher foster care placement costs, and to increase public health services from nurses and family health educators.

In the area of public safety, the budget allows the county to sustain a full staff and to update security at the Adult Detention Center in downtown St. Paul. The Sheriff's Department portable and mobile radios will be replaced and updated, court security and safety will be improved, and the "Start by Believing" criminal sexual assault prevention initiative will be expanded.

Riverview Corridor transit planning is one of the priorities in the county's capital investments. Riverview would extend from the St. Paul's Union Depot through the West End and Highland Park neighborhoods to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and Mall of America. Other transit corridors eyed for planning are the East Side's Gold Line and Rush Line.

Additional capital investments for 2019 include expanded county road and bridge maintenance and construction projects; ice rink improvements for the Aldrich, Shoreview and White Bear Lake arenas; and continued work on facility planning.

The county also wants to enhance resident services in 2019. That includes expanding early voting and election services, improving property appraisal services, and updating county technology systems for property valuation, financial and human resources management, and related staff support.

The County Board will hold budget hearings by department from August 13-28, with a public hearing set for 1 p.m. Tuesday, September 11, at the Courthouse, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd. Commissioners will adopt a maximum property tax levy on September 18.

The Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee will adopt an overall maximum levy for the city, county and school district on September 24. The annual truth-in-taxation notices will be mailed out starting November 10. A second public hearing on the county budget is tentatively set for 6 p.m. Monday, November 26, at the Union Depot, 240 E. Kellogg Blvd.

More details on the county's 2019 budget are available at ramseycounty.us/budget.

Gentlemen, start your...scooters

Council regulates new way to get around St. Paul

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted on August 1 to approve a pilot program for electronic scooters on city streets that will run until November 30 or the first measurable snowfall.

The program sets guidelines for use of the city right-of-way, spells out where scooters may park and sets a maximum number of scooters per company. It also outlines fees, liability insurance and other regulations. The program will be evaluated after the trial period. A permanent process is expected to be rolled out in 2019.

The electronic scooter or e-scooter companies are already rolling into the city. The first legal scooters were placed on city streets on August 7 by Lime, a company that is based in San Mateo, California.

Lisa Hiebert, the spokesperson for the St. Paul Department of Public Works, said the city also anticipates signing a contract with

San Diego-based Bird Rides, which vexed officials earlier this summer when it deposited scooters on sidewalks without prior city approval. St. Paul ordered Bird to pick up its scooters by July 20 or have them confiscated.

Bird and Lime appear to be the main e-scooter vendors, although city officials said they would not be surprised to hear from others. Under the pilot program, each company can provide a maximum of 150 scooters in St. Paul, though that number can be adjusted at the discretion of Public Works director Kathy Lantry.

Mayor Melvin Carter announced the creation of the pilot program after Bird swooped in with about 200 scooters scattered around the Twin Cities. While some residents and business owners were annoyed by the scooters left on random street corners, others said they welcomed the new mode of transportation.

"St. Paul is open for business and a place where innovative companies can start up, grow and thrive," Carter said. "This scooter-share pilot program will provide residents with access to this new way of getting around our city."

St. Paul officials decided this

summer to tie the scooter program in with the upcoming rollout of a shared-use, dockless bicycle system. The city has utilized the Nice Ride bike-sharing program for several years, but the bicycles must be docked at specific locations. Dockless bikes could be placed anywhere.

The agreement with the e-scooter companies defines the vehicles as motorized foot scooters with handlebars, designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator, and powered by a gas engine or electric motor. The scooters can have no more than two 12-inch or smaller wheels and reach a maximum speed of 15 mph on a flat surface.

Vendors must carry insurance and pay the city \$1 per day per scooter, with payments and reports due monthly. They also must reimburse city staff \$35 per scooter that has to be relocated when not left on sidewalks.

The scooters must be kept in good working condition, have front and rear lights, and identification numbers and customer contact information. They cannot be parked in bike racks, along streets, in driveways or outwalks, or in other specified areas. Scooters must be left standing up when the riders are done.



Andrea Smith and Matt Duea tour downtown St. Paul on electronic scooters on a warm Sunday afternoon. PHOTO BY LOU MICHAELS

Anyone can find an available scooter with a smartphone app. Riders typically pay \$1 to unlock a scooter for half an hour and then 15 cents per mile.

Riders must follow the same state laws as bicyclists. They can ride scooters on the right side of the street or in a bike lane, but not on sidewalks.

City requires landlords to inform tenants how to register to vote

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted 5-1 on August 8 to require all landlords in the city to distribute voter registration information to new tenants moving into their buildings. The new ordinance was hailed by some as a way to increase voter turnout at the polls. It was opposed by about a dozen landlords who voiced their displeasure with yet another city mandate.

"What's going to be next?" asked landlord Richard Grogan. He and other landlords said that despite their best efforts to give tenants the information they need, some tenants do not even read their leases.

Tim Harwig, whose family owns a triplex

in Merriam Park, raised the possibility that landlords who are required to distribute voter registration information could use that to influence tenants as to who and what to vote for. "The job of encouraging people to vote is better left to yourselves," Harwig told the City Council.

Harwig and other landlords said they would be happy to hang up posters in their buildings about voter registration, but they would rather not have to distribute that information to their tenants' apartments.

"I treat my tenants as adults," said Alisa Lein, whose family owns properties with more than 180 tenants. "I'm not their mom."

That sentiment was echoed by other landlords, including Brian Kelly, who asked the

City Council in an email, "Really? Should I notify my tenants in writing that they should file their income taxes by April 15, that they should get a dental cleaning every six months, that they should do a free credit check once a year and renew their drivers' license when it expires? These are adults we're dealing with. Landlords are not tenants' parents."

City Council member Jane Prince cast the sole vote against the proposed ordinance (council member Dan Bostrom was absent). While she fully supports efforts to encourage renters to vote, Prince said, there are other ways to do that. She also questioned how the ordinance would be enforced.

According to City Council member Rebecca Noecker, the additional burden on land-

lords is "minimal."

City Council member Amy Brendmoen called it a "small request."

Minneapolis has had a similar requirement since 2015.

The new regulation will affect about 15,000 landlords, who will be notified about the ordinance by mail before it takes effect in early September. Failure to comply will be a petty misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$300.

The mandate has the support of Ramsey County elections manager Joe Mansky. He told the City Council at an August 1 public hearing that "certain parts of the community are chronically underrepresented" at the polls, including young adults and renters.

Citizens unhappy with new organized trash system give City Council an earful

By JANE MCCLURE

As St. Paul prepares for the October roll-out of organized residential trash collection, city officials continue to hear from residents who are disgruntled with the mandated program. Owners of small multi-family properties and zero-waste advocates are also protesting the city's new trash collection system because of the higher costs, the proliferation of trash carts and the inability of homeowners to share carts.

Several people testified against the program at an August 1 public hearing, asking the city to renegotiate its five-year contract with garbage haulers. The public hearing on the city ordinance that outlines the provisions of the new program will continue at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 22. City Council members said that though they understand residents' concerns, the contract has been signed and cannot be changed.

"This was a really frustrating hearing," said Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker on August 1. She and other council members said they are aware of the issues faced by the owners of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes and will continue to monitor the program for possible changes in the future.

Meanwhile, a group called St. Paul Trash has organized a petition drive, seeking 5,000 to 6,000 signatures to put the question of organized trash collection on a future city ballot. Members of another group called St. Paul CARTless (for Community Action to Reduce Trash) were out in local neighborhoods last weekend and on National Night Out also seeking signatures.

The city has already assigned neighborhoods to a specific private hauler and trash collection day and recently mailed out a brochure to residents with information on the new program. Under the program, trash and recycling days will be the same in most neighborhoods, and after the first 90 days residents will be able to change the cart size they selected earlier this year.

Complaints about the new program have been most prevalent among the owners of small rental buildings. "There are more issues here than meet the eye," said Khalid el-

Effendi, a Ramsey Hill resident who shares a three-unit building with two other households. El-Effendi has been a proponent of organized collection, but he objects to the city program. The garbage disposal costs for his building will double, he said. Currently, he and his neighbors fill one small trash cart each week and they lack the space for three new trash carts in addition to their recycling carts. "We're going to have carts all over the place," he said.

Kate Leisses and her family, who own a triplex in Merriam Park, have worked to reduce their trash volume over the years and do not even fill a 64-gallon cart each week. Nevertheless, her trash disposal costs will triple under the new system, she said.

Landlord Alisa Lien showed the City Council photos of the two adjacent four-plexes her family owns on Milton Street. The buildings currently share one dumpster, but soon will have to place eight trash carts alongside their six recycling carts. "Space-wise, it's crazy," Lien said. Her tenants will lose their off-street parking, she said, and her trash disposal costs will increase 317 percent. She plans to increase her tenants' monthly rent by \$20 per unit to help cover the cost increase. "It's just not fair for tenants to have to absorb the costs," Lien said. She urged the city to delay the program until a solution can be found for small rental buildings.

Some property owners have found that their homes have been improperly classified by the city. Jason Worden has owned a home in the Snelling-Hamline neighborhood since 1996. It once was a duplex, but has been a single-family home for more than a decade. Nevertheless, his family is being required by the city to have two trash carts. Unless he can iron that problem out, he stated, his annual trash collection costs will increase from \$344 to \$768—for just two individuals.

"The per-unit assessment of this ordinance needs to be corrected as it penalizes, and is significantly unfair, to many residents," Worden said. "The service should allow for the sharing of trash carts or be assessed on the basis of the number of unrelated families residing on a property."

For information, visit stpaul.gov/garbage.

News Briefs

St. Paul approves variance for relocation of Big Top Liquors

The St. Paul City Council on August 1 granted a variance from liquor store distance requirements to the Applebaum Company doing business as Big Top Liquors. The approval allows the longtime Midway Center business to occupy the former Midway Perkins site at 1544 University Ave.

The council also waived the 45-day waiting period for the liquor license change and approved the move of Big Top's tobacco sales license.

Earlier this year, the City Council amended the distance requirements for off-sale liquor stores. The city requires a half-mile space between liquor stores. Big Top was grandfathered in, but the move to a new location put it out of compliance. Its current building is being torn down to make way for an interim parking lot and ultimately redevelopment adjacent to the new Allianz Field Major League Soccer stadium.

The move also puts the new store within 300 feet of a protected use, so that distance requirement also had to be amended. Schools, places of worship, child care centers and residentially zoned properties are among protected uses in St. Paul. City staff agreed to waive that condition after no objections were raised by immediate neighbors.

The Union Park District Council supported

Big Top's requests. The business owners also were able to obtain 78 percent support from the owners of nearby residential properties.

Pawn America gets license to reopen at University-Fry

The St. Paul City Council decided on August 1 that Pawn America can return to its former Merriam Park location. The pawn shop had operated at 1636 University Ave. since 1997, but closed during bankruptcy and reorganization. Since the shop had been closed for less than a year, city staff said it did not have to seek a new conditional use permit to reinstate its license.

Rixmann Companies, which owns Pawn America, told city officials at a July licensing hearing that the store will have 15-18 employees when it reopens. Although city officials received several letters and emails objecting to the pawn shop, no one appeared at a July legislative hearing to address the license request. The Union Park District Council took no position.

The pawn shop's license was approved with two conditions: that temporary signs not cover more than 30 percent of the window area and block views into the cashier station, and that Pawn America comply with all local, state and federal laws.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

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Viewpoint

St. Paul deprivatized recycling 30 years ago and we've been paying for it ever since

BY KATHLEEN DEMING

St. Paul doesn't need a city-mandated trash collection system. It's not a legitimate function of government. Nor has it anything to do with wear and tear on the alleys. It's all another money grab by the city, and it's going to cost many people higher fees for trash collection.

Take a look at your property tax statement and see what you're paying for weekly recycling pickup. Before the city took it over in the mid- to late 1980s, recycling was largely free, provided citywide by Recycling Unlimited, a private company started by a Merriam Park family. Papa Carroll Nelson was a general contractor. Mama Joann Nelson took care of the business details. And there were two sons, the older of whom, Brant Nelson, was a Boy Scout who needed a project to earn his Eagle Scout award.

The family put out notices that on one Saturday each month they would accept bundled newspapers for recycling. People could drop off the bundles in their alley, and the family would haul them away for sale to paper recyclers. The service became so popular that the newspapers began to be accepted every Saturday and the collection expanded to include steel and aluminum cans and glass bottles and jars.

The Nelson family moved to Macalester-Groveland, and new recycling dropoff sites were established at neighborhood locations, such as the Red Owl (now Kowalski's) supermarket on Grand Avenue. Carroll began working full time in recycling. What had begun as a Scout project became a private nonprofit organization. Trucks were purchased and regular alley pickups began. A processing plant was acquired, and more people were hired as the business continued to expand.

Recycling Unlimited's trucks had 12-foot boxes with bins on the sides. Each truck was staffed by a driver and two men on the back who worked both sides of the alley simultaneously. Many of the organization's employees were entry-level, people who needed the job to learn new skills and develop a solid work ethic.

I followed Recycling Unlimited's expansion for quite some time and would call Joann periodically to see how things were going. In 1982 when I began to appear occasionally as the Home Expert on KSTP-TV's "Good Company," Joann asked me if I'd like to join Recycling Unlimited's board. Absolutely.

At our board meetings we discussed what was going on in St. Paul. We knew that consultants from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance in Washington, D.C., had been hired to advise the city—about what exactly we didn't know. We thought they might have aims as green as ours, though their green appeared to be more about money than the environment.

In the fall of 1982, one of those consultants, David Morris, spoke at Recycling Unlimited's first awards dinner. Afterwards, I drove him back to his Minneapolis hotel and we agreed to get together to talk about recycling and other green ideas. Shortly thereafter, it became apparent that Morris was taking ideas gleaned from other people and feeding them to the city, which was breathing down Joann's neck wanting to know who our outsources were. The city, it seemed, wanted to get in on the action.

Recycling Unlimited board meetings became largely discussions of how hard the city was pushing to get information on the sources of our sales, as millions of dollars were entering the federal pipeline to get cities involved in recycling.

As Recycling Unlimited reached the point of weekly collections in all but one section of the city, things began to happen in rapid succession. The Recycling Unlimited business office was broken into. Only business files were taken, and fortunately we had backups. A brake line was cut on one of the trucks. On another truck, the lug nuts were loosened on a front wheel, which fell off at highway speed.

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER TO VOTE. AND ONCE YOU DO, WILL YOU SIGN THIS PETITION?



Inbox

High cost of organized trash

I just received my information for the new trash collection system. I have a duplex, and I was assigned two medium carts, although I had asked for one small cart for the two homes. My tenant and I are devoted recyclers and composters, so our trash never even fills up one cart. My two medium carts will cost me \$192.18 per quarter or \$768.72 per year, a \$426.56 increase over my previous trash-hauling costs.

How is an increase like this possible? There have been no significant increases in wages recently, nor an increase in gas prices. My trash hauler, as far as I know, was making a profit. I emailed the St. Paul Department of Public Works and was told the city negotiated a five-year contract with the trash haulers. No options or choices are permitted for fixed-income, low-income homeowners such as me. I am retired. I have a duplex but I cannot raise the rent because my tenant is also low-income.

I am just stunned that these negotiations took place apparently without including homeowners and building owners. I agreed that this new system probably makes more sense, although I did not want to lose my very good trash hauler. But I cannot imagine what would cause such an enormous increase in cost and why the community was not brought into the negotiations.

Virginia Martin
Summit-University

Workers and the minimum wage

There have been several letters to the *Villager* Inbox advocating for a minimum wage of \$15 in St. Paul. Supporters believe this is good for the economy and will lift everyone up. The sad truth is, it will lead to more automation and less employment for low-income people.

Jobs most susceptible to automation are physical ones in predictable environments. These include workers who operate machinery, prepare fast food, collect and process data, originate mortgages and do paralegal and accounting work. Automation has begun to accelerate as businesses look to cut labor costs and benefits.

The Globe and Mail reported recently that New England-based Symbotic LLC has made autonomous warehouse robots that fulfill orders far faster and more efficiently than employees, cutting labor costs by 80 percent while filling the same number of orders in a space 25 to 40 percent smaller. Pasadena-based Miso Robotics is rolling out a "robotic kitchen assistant" called Flippy that can flip 2,000 hamburgers

a day for a fast-food restaurant. Hadrian X, a robot named after the second-century Roman emperor who built Hadrian's Wall, may soon be laying bricks far faster and more cheaply than any human can. Once commercially available, this robot will be capable of laying approximately 1,000 bricks per hour. This means that it could build the entire shell of a building in just two days rather than the four to six weeks needed for a human crew to complete the same task.

Jobs safest from the effects of automation involve managing people, high-level expertise and unpredictable environments. These include engineers, scientists, health care providers, educators and IT professionals, as well as gardeners, plumbers and elder care providers. To grow the economy, our society will need to focus on educating workers to manage these more complex jobs. We should focus on developing a partnership between government and industry to make sure the U.S. economy has properly trained workers. We shouldn't be focused on driving up labor costs for dying jobs like trucking, manufacturing, mining and burger flipping.

Jim Piga
Highland Park

Back to the basics in education

Let's put a stop to misbranding adequate nutrition, housing, and physical and mental health services as education. I also have trouble with "wrap-around services," which apparently include nurses, counselors and social workers. And what is this about relationships, timely feedback and differentiated learning experiences? A lot of fancy word fluff. What happened to the idea that the job of the teacher is to teach and the job of the student is to learn?

Yes, teachers are underpaid. Yes, teachers are under stress (I believe primarily because they have been left with no control over students). I know of teachers who have left the St. Paul Public Schools to teach in a private school and a school operated by a church to get away from the stress, though they have taken pay cuts to do so.

Eight years ago Governor Mark Dayton promised a better education system. Look at St. Paul today. We have a whole building full of administrators who are apparently dumbfounded when situations arise requiring study after study by outsiders for handling problems in our schools. Yet the problems, including violence against teachers, continue and real education suffers horribly.

8◀ INBOX

Let's properly fund education as education, and let's properly fund other services separately. Our teachers deserve a break. They should be able to teach without worrying about how they're going to pay for classroom supplies.

I like Erin Murphy. She is the only representative I have who actually responds to my questions. I hope she will consider separating the funding for what I call state responsibilities from education.

*Roger Anderson
Summit Hill*

State of things to come?

I don't have a dog in the fight to be our next governor, but the advertisements by those who want the job are crazy. One says he'll see to it that folks getting welfare benefits actually qualify for them. What a novel idea! Another says he'll "fully fund" the public schools. What do we currently spend per pupil in the Twin Cities? How much will we spend if the schools are fully funded? Another candidate will "fight" the Wall Street banks. Gosh, who doesn't want a governor who'll fight Wall Street banks?

Maybe this dude Dayton isn't as daffy as I believed.

*T.J. Sexton
Highland Park*

Density as destiny in Mendota Hts.

Residents of Minneapolis and St. Paul are convulsed with the question of the density of development in residential neighborhoods. In both cities, city leaders are considering 2040 Comprehensive Plans that call for allowing four-plex units on single-family lots. By state law, 2040 Comprehensive Plans must receive the approval of the Metropolitan Council. It is no secret that this body has consistently advocated support for higher-density development and has overlooked the increased traffic that such density brings.

Should density be destiny in Mendota Heights? The city's preliminary draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan suggests support for this idea. The four regional development policies it sets forth essentially replicate those specified in the Met Council's Thrive 2040 plan. Policy 1 (Orderly and Efficient Land Use) calls for an average residential housing density in Mendota Heights of five units per acre. Existing city zoning specifies 2.9 units per acre for single-family lots. Given that the vast preponderance of residences in the city are single-family, a reasonable estimate is that approval of the city's draft 2040 plan will permit housing density nearly double what is currently allowed.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the advocacy of higher residential density in Mendota Heights' draft 2040 plan is fundamentally incompatible with the long-standing record of responsible development in the city.

I believe that many residents of Mendota Heights choose to live here because they value the special character of the city. The support of higher-density development by current city leaders should be of concern to all.

*Thomas J. Smith
Mendota Heights*

Educating the next generation

Sue Shetka wrote that she doesn't want to pay increased property taxes to fund schools ("No excuse for excess school levy," *Villager* Inbox, July 18). She writes, "The aging population of St. Paul voters are already paying more than their fair share of property taxes to support the school district." What's between the lines here, that people who don't have kids in school shouldn't have to pay?

Supporting schools isn't just for parents. Every person in a community needs an education. That's how a society works. The generation of kids in school now are eventually going to be running this place. They'll be your doctors, bus drivers, construction workers. So wouldn't you rather have an educated mass in charge? Wouldn't you rather have an educated mass of new voters, too?

*Elizabeth Merritt
Macalester-Groveland*

Make your home gun-safe

I ask *Villager* readers to help make homes gun safe. Ask yourself these five questions:

1. Is there a gun in the house?
2. Is it locked safely and the key hidden?
3. Is there ammunition in the house?
4. Is the ammunition also locked and hidden?
5. Have you explained to your children that they should never touch a gun without a parent, and that if they see a gun somewhere they should leave it and tell an adult?

If your children are spending time away from home, at play dates, sleepovers or parties, remind them of the rules. This is all information that we adults need to decide the best ways to keep our children safe.

*Gertrude "Googs" Mingo
Macalester-Groveland*

8◀ DEMING

Fortunately, no one was injured. A fire in the business office, later deemed to be arson, caused much damage. By that time, Recycling Unlimited had an automated processing plant, a large staff and a large fleet of vehicles. We asked the city for a \$10,000 grant to purchase the final piece of equipment we needed to cover 100 percent of St. Paul. The money never came.

Shortly thereafter, Carroll died of a massive heart attack. News was leaked that Joann would never be able to keep the enterprise going. All along she'd been the business guru with the assistance of her son whose Scout project had started the whole enterprise. The city was

hell-bent on putting us out of business, to grab what we'd built plus all of the federal cash, and there wasn't a thing we could do to stop them. Due to a family tragedy, I had to resign from the board in 1984, but I continued to watch as the city muscled in and eventually took over everything that Recycling Unlimited had.

So now St. Paul residents pay for recycling, a service that had been free for many years under a system of private enterprise. There is no end to what the city powers-that-be will do to get their hands deeper into our pockets. Truly, that government functions best which interferes least.

Kathleen Deming is a resident of Macalester-Groveland.

VILLAGER

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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District Council News

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Ford site meeting—Ryan Companies has scheduled the second of four public meetings on its plans for redeveloping the 122 acres of land formerly occupied by the Ford Motor Company's Twin Cities Assembly Plant. The meeting will be held from 7-9 p.m. Thursday, August 16, in the auditorium of Highland Park Middle School, 975 S. Snelling Ave. The meeting will focus on the site's master plan.

Neighborhood cleanup—Highland Park will host a citywide neighborhood cleanup from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, September 29, on Shepard Road between Alton and Davern streets. For information on the items accepted and the costs, check the Highland District Council's website under "events." Volunteers are needed to work three-hour shifts and will receive lunch and a \$20 voucher for disposing of their own items. Those who are interested in volunteering are asked to call the HDC office.

Movies in the Park—The last two local movies of the summer presented by the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation are *Moana* at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 16, at Sibley Manor, and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* at 6 p.m. Friday, August 17, at the Edgumbe Recreation Center. The public is invited to bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy a starlit night of fun with friends and family. All children under age 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Upcoming meetings—Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 21; Community Engagement Committee, 6:45 p.m. Tuesday, August 28; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, September 6. All of the meetings will be held at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. For other upcoming meetings, see the calendar on the HDC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Mac-Grove Fest—The annual Mac-Grove Fest will be held from 2-6 p.m. Saturday, September 8, at Groveland Park on St. Clair and Prior avenues. Those who attend can visit local businesses, organizations and artists at the Mac-Grove Marketplace; savor local fare from food vendors; and enjoy an afternoon of music by local acts. Participants are encouraged to walk, take public transit or bike to the festival, and to bring a blanket. Visit macgrove.org/macgrovefest for more.

Mac-Grove garage sale—The Great Macalester-Groveland Garage Sale will take place from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, August 25. A map and list of all participating sellers will be available online and in the community council's office at the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St., beginning August 21.

Neighborhood cleanup—Volunteers are being sought for St. Paul's next citywide neighborhood cleanup, which is scheduled from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, September 29, on Shepard Road between Alton and Davern streets. Those

who work a three-hour shift will receive lunch and a \$20 voucher for disposing of their own household items. Contact mgcc@macgrove.org to learn more.

Get involved—The community council has openings on its board for Grid 3 and at-large renter representatives. 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.

Upcoming meetings—No committee meetings will be held in August.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

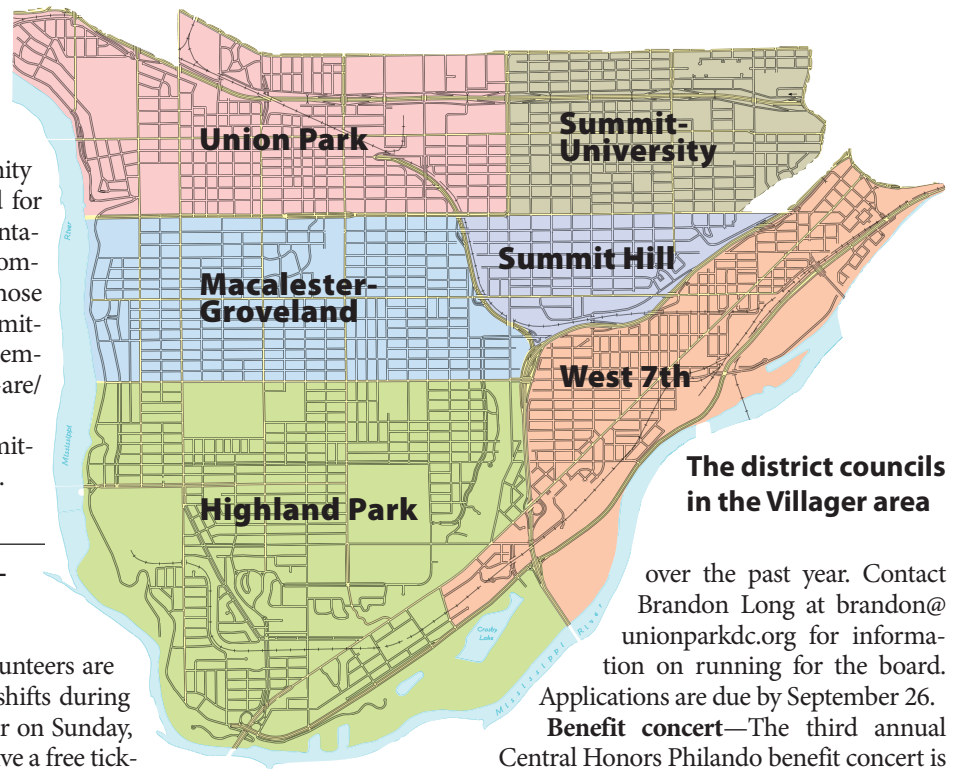
Summit Hill House Tour—Volunteers are being sought to work three-hour shifts during this year's Summit Hill House Tour on Sunday, September 30. Volunteers will receive a free ticket to the tour, as well as a pass that will let them jump to the head of the line before or after their shift, a T-shirt and an invitation to a post-tour party. Volunteers also are needed to serve as house captains, do various jobs as needed, assemble guest packets and help with packet pickup. Register by visiting summithillassociation.org/volunteer-sponsor. The SHA has hosted 22 historic house tours since 1972. The all-volunteer event is a major fundraiser for the nonprofit organization, with proceeds used to support its many neighborhood-based programs and initiatives. Advance tickets start at \$30. Visit the website for more information.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Ice Cream, Peanut Butter and Jam—The Union Park District Council's sixth annual Ice Cream, Peanut Butter and Jam event will be held from noon-4 p.m. Saturday, September 15, at Merriam Park. Neighbors are invited to enjoy free Izzy's ice cream, donate peanut butter to a local food shelf and jam to local music. There also will be activities for children. Business owners, nonprofits and artists are invited to participate as sponsors, exhibitors or vendors. Donations are being sought for a silent auction. For details, visit the UPDC's website.

Annual meeting—The UPDC will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, October 25, in Otto Hall at Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave. The meeting is open to all Union Park residents and business owners. A social hour will start at 6 p.m. with appetizers, followed at 7 p.m. with a presentation about board candidates and the work the UPDC has done



The district councils in the Villager area

over the past year. Contact Brandon Long at brandon@unionparkdc.org for information on running for the board. Applications are due by September 26.

Benefit concert—The third annual Central Honors Philando benefit concert is scheduled from 1-5 p.m. Sunday, August 19, outside the Dunning Recreation Center, 1221 Marshall Ave. There will be live music, family-friendly activities, food and a chance to donate money for scholarships in honor of Philando Castile, a Central grad who was fatally shot by a police officer in July 2016. For information on helping with the event, visit bit.ly/chpsignup.

Rethinking I-94—The UPDC is hosting a series of four summer events to engage neighbors on topics related to I-94, with support from the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Department of Transportation. The third event will take place from 1-4 p.m. Saturday, August 25, at Aldine Park, 1717 Iglehart Ave., on making the Aldine pedestrian bridge more accessible and aesthetically pleasing. There will be free food from Tillie's Farmhouse and interactive musical activities for parents and children of all ages. Visit tinyurl.com/ycdhpxoo.

Japanese beetles—The UPDC is selling Hb Nematodes to help combat the Japanese beetles that are attacking people's trees and shrubs. The cost is \$5 for a packet of 5 million Hb Nematodes by September 10. They will be ready for pickup at the Ice Cream, Peanut Butter and Jam on September 15. For details, check the newsfeed page at unionparkdc.org.

Upcoming meetings—Environment and Parks Committee, 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 15, Merriam Park Recreation Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave.; and Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 20, 1821 University Ave., Suite 330.

Stay in touch—The public is invited to "like" the Union Park District Council on Facebook, follow it on Twitter at @UnionParkDC and subscribe to its e-newsletter, "Neighborhood Matters," by emailing alexa@unionparkdc.org.

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Commission favors plan to turn church into arts venue

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul Planning Commission recommended approval of a historic use variance on August 10 that would allow the former St. Paul's on the Hill Episcopal Church, 1524 Summit Ave., to be used as an "arts and innovation center." The request now goes to the City Council for its consideration.

The commission's Zoning Committee voted 5-1 on August 2 to also support the variance. Commissioner Anne DeJoy, who cast the sole vote against the variance, said she shares concerns about late-night noise and parking were raised by neighbors and wanted to see more specifics on events planned for the venue.

The committee took the unusual step of extending the comment period until August 3 so neighbors could share their concerns with property owner John Rupp. By the time the request gets to the City Council next month, there more specifics may be forthcoming on the types of uses allowed at the site.

If approved, the variance would allow Rupp and his Commonwealth Properties to convert the church into the Summit Center for Arts and Innovation. It would be used for public performances and events, music and arts-related education, and for church-related services and receptions, including weddings and memorial services.

The committee had several technical questions about the variance and its potential impact, with much of the attention focused on parking. Senior city planner Bill Dermody said parking issues would be addressed during the site plan review. The proposed reuse of the church does not require a formal city request for a traffic study.

Commissioner Betsy Reveal asked for a parking study, saying there could be "significant issues" if the City Council approves the reuse variance. She said the Macalester-Groveland Community Council should monitor the situation and provide feedback to the commission. That could result in later modifications of the site plan conditions.

The city's Heritage Preservation Commission recommended approval of the variance in June. The community council's Housing and Land Use Committee supported it in July, despite concerns over parking and the center's hours of operation.

Several neighbors and members of the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association (SARPA) opposed the variance and the building's new use, objecting to potential spillover parking and late-night noise, and to what some saw as a commercial use on Summit Avenue.

The variance is only available to properties that are classified as historic. The 104-year-old building is located in the Summit Avenue West Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was designed by Emmanuel Masqueray, who also designed the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis and the Cathedral of St. Paul.

The Zoning Committee heard from nine neighbors opposed to the variance. The currently proposed hours of operation are from 7 a.m.-midnight, with music ending at 11:30 p.m. indoors and 10 p.m. outdoors. Several neighbors said that is too late.

The property has 12 off-street parking spaces that are shared with the St. Paul Conservatory of Music, which received a conditional use permit this spring to move into the former church's two-story education building.

"Where did people park when the church was operating?" asked commissioner Luis Rangel-Morales. Citing a letter that said the church had 300 members he added, "It seems like that problem was already present."

Rupp said the historic use variance should be granted, citing the building's history and the need to maintain it. He said he had several letters of support from arts groups seeking performance and rehearsal space. "There is a great deal of enthusiasm for our plans," he said.

St. Paul's on the Hill Episcopal Church closed in 2015. The space is already being rented by Cities Church, but the building's main function will be as an arts center. The building has long been known for its outstanding acoustics.

Rupp and property manager Harry Chalmers said they are mindful of the noise and parking issues and are working to lease additional parking. Longer-term, they are planning to serve food and alcoholic beverages at the building.

SARPA members contend that the change would allow a commercial use on Summit that they had not anticipated when they purchased their homes. At the very least, they asked that the event center's operating hours be shortened and that a parking plan be developed before the variance is approved.

"This isn't about a church," said Summit Avenue neighbor Phil Martineau. "It's about a business facility."

"What's being proposed today is beyond reasonable," said SARPA board member Bob Morrison. "This is a full-fledged events center that would be operating seven days a week."

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Education

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Growing number of high school grads are delaying college for the experience gained from a gap year

BY MIMI GELLER

When Meley Akpa graduated from St. Paul Academy in the spring of 2017, she knew she wouldn't be heading that fall to the University of Minnesota where she had been accepted. Instead, she prepared for a year of travel overseas. Akpa was part of a growing trend of high school graduates postponing their postsecondary education for a semester or two.

The opportunities offered by a gap year are limitless. High school grads can travel abroad, take an internship, get a job or pursue other experiences that might help them in their future educational endeavors.

Ethan Knight, founder and executive director of the Portland, Oregon-based Gap Year Association, believes the benefits of a gap year surpass those of any first-year college experience. "Students who take a gap year get better grades in college, are more engaged in campus activities, more likely to graduate on time, more motivated in most aspects of their academic life and more satisfied once they enter their careers," Knight said.

Akpa worked hard to raise the money she needed to pay for her gap year. In the months leading up to her departure in December 2017, she worked 60-plus hours a week at Nordstrom in the Mall of America and Osteria I Nonni in Lilydale. "Ever since I was little I wanted to travel," she said. "I always asked for money for birthday and Christmas presents, and I saved that. Junior year in high school, my mom really encouraged me to take a gap year."

Her mother, Michelle Helly, had taken a gap year in France before enrolling in college, and Helly believes that year abroad played a significant role in her personal development.

"My gap year completely shaped how I went with my career and the rest of my life in terms of the communities I chose to be a part of," Helly said. "It influenced my world view and my values and what I was interested in dedicating my life to. I gained more from that one year than what I would've gotten from

four or five years of college."

Helly graduated from the University of Minnesota and earned a graduate degree at the University of Michigan, then worked for more than 20 years in public health with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

During Akpa's seven months abroad, she worked with the Ghana Scholarship Fund in a small village in Ghana and traveled to India, Japan, the Netherlands, France, Spain and the Ivory Coast. She and fellow SPA grad Mari Knudson also volunteered on an organic coffee farm in Nepal.

Back in the United States, Akpa now feels refreshed and ready to start college. "I'm excited to learn," she said. "Since I took a year off of school, it's exciting to start a new process rather than just going into an old process in a slightly different way."

Knudson, who will enroll this fall in the University of Chicago, spent part of her gap year with Akpa in India and Nepal, but also set out on her own abroad. "I was more of a high-strung student," she said. "It was good for me to take a break after four stressful years of high school before going on to another educational environment."

Knudson left the U.S. for India in January to meet Akpa. Since then, she has been to Nepal, Israel and Greece. In July she was in Italy working on a farm that produces balsamic vinegar. She planned to meet her father in Norway this month before returning to the U.S.

The gap year has been a tradition in the United Kingdom for many years, and it is gaining popularity in the United States, according to the Gap Year Association, with the number of students engaged nearly tripling over the past decade. At SPA, the number of graduates who took or plan to take a gap year has doubled since 2014, according to a story in the high school's student newspaper, *The Rubicon*.

A 2015 study conducted by Temple University, the Gap Year Association and the National Alumni Survey found that 90 percent of students who take a gap year return to col-



Carrying a backpack stuffed with all of her worldly possessions, St. Paul Academy grad Meley Akpa strolls down a street in Pokhara, Nepal, during her seven months abroad.

lege within a year, and 92 percent report gaining valuable experience and personal growth.

Knudson counts herself among that 92 percent. "During high school, I felt that things like grades and social events were magnified," she said. "The gap year broadened my idea of what my life could be. I don't have so much of a notion that I need to graduate from college and maybe go to graduate school and then get a nice, respectable job. I feel like I have more freedom in what I want to do."

J.J. Wertkin, who graduated from SPA in May, has been planning a gap year and is scheduled to leave for Germany this month. "I think it's just because right now our country is in a bit of a hole," he said. "It's stressful. Going to another place, seeing what it's like, it gets rid of that stress."

Leo Bukovsan, a 2017 graduate of SPA, had

planned to travel to Germany after working at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji last autumn. However, when the time came to leave, he decided to stay home, work at a Target store and apply for another job at Concordia Language Villages.

"It (Germany) didn't seem like a right fit anymore," Bukovsan said, "so I came back to Concordia Language Villages. I realized that I was discovering myself the most there. It was where I was in a happy enough position to learn about myself in a way that was productive."

This fall Bukovsan will attend New York University in hopes of pursuing a career in phycology, a subdiscipline of botany. "There's no wrong way to do (the gap year)," Bukovsan said, "as long as you're doing something. I'm glad that what I did worked out for me."

Anna Morawiecki welcomes visitors to an open house for the tiny abode that was built by Central High School students and is currently up for bid.

PHOTO BY
BRAD STAUFFER



Central's tiny house could spell big reward

Auction to support students learning construction trades

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Central High School students have built a trendy "tiny house" through the St. Paul Public schools' construction pathway program and are auctioning it off to the highest bidder this month.

The students began construction on the 226-square-foot house during the final semester of the 2017-2018 school year. Other students with Minnesota Trades Academy (MTA) internships finished the project this summer, ac-

cording to Anna Morawiecki, the school district's career and technical education coordinator.

Bids are being accepted through August 17 for the diminutive domicile, with proceeds going to the construction of another tiny house during the upcoming school year. The house being auctioned is 20 feet long, 8½ feet wide, 15¼ feet high and weighs 9,500 pounds. It can sleep four in a pair of upper lofts, including one that fits a queen-size bed and another with a sleeper sofa.

"Though we set the auction reserve at \$30,000 for this first project, we keep adding things like a deck and stairs, under-sofa storage, etc.," Morawiecki said. "We hope with the sale of this house, we'll be building another tiny house, but this time taking the whole school year.

The exterior of the tiny house up for bid features cedar lap siding, energy efficient windows, a steel roof and a 4-by-8-foot composite deck. The interior has pine walls and trim, laminate hardwood flooring, a projector and an 80-inch screen. The kitchen features a portable cooktop, refrigerator, fryer/toaster oven, butcher block counter, stainless steel sink with wall-mounted drying rack, and drop-down dining table and chairs. The bathroom has a walk-in shower, mini-water tank, toilet and water-conserving sink. The house comes on a custom steel trailer for transporting.

The cost of materials for the construction project was funded by several partners, including the Greater Twin Cities



Hundreds gathered for a ceremonial pillar raising on August 2 in remembrance of the fatal explosion that leveled a portion of Minnehaha Academy's Upper School exactly a year ago. Pictured below, from left, academy board chair David Anderson, president Donna Harris, the Reverend Mark Stromberg and Upper School principal Jason Wenschlag watch the pillar unveiling. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Pillar of strength

Out of tragedy, new Minnehaha Upper School begins to rise

BY ROGER BARR

One year to the day after a deadly gas explosion devastated Minnehaha Academy's Upper School at 3100 W. River Pkwy. in Minneapolis, more than 200 people gathered at the campus on August 2 to mark the tragedy of the past and look toward the future.

Students, faculty, trustees and members of the public stood alongside Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, former Mayor Betsy Hodges and first responders to sing, pray and listen to words of inspiration. They cheered as a crane lifted a plywood cover encasing a pillar that symbolizes a new era in the 105-year-old school's history as it continues to rebuild.

In her welcoming remarks, academy president Donna Harris spoke briefly of the past. On the morning of August 2, 2017, a natural gas explosion destroyed a portion of the Upper School, killing receptionist Ruth Berg and custodian John Carlson, and injuring several others. Investigators said the explosion occurred while contractors were trying to move gas meters from the school's basement.

"We remember our beloved colleagues, Ruth and John," Harris said solemnly, as well as the "heroic deeds of first responders. And we remember how the Minnehaha community came together in unity to lock hands and hearts, to hold one another up and declare that 'Together we rise!'"

Mayor Frey praised Minnehaha's resilience and the steps it has already taken on the road to full recovery. He also praised the city's first responders and cited Hodges for her support and leadership in the hours and days following the explosion.

David Anderson, a 1967 Minnehaha graduate and the school's current board chair, noted that the pillar was "a testament to this community's faith and commitment to bring not just a building, but our school back to life."

In a restrained, emotional tone, Hodges recalled the events of that tragic day a year ago and praised academy members



for "faith in a future they couldn't see."

Danyelle Robinson, who will graduate from Minnehaha in 2020, recalled how she was devastated by the tragedy, yet excited for the future. "We've come so far in 365 days," she said. "I can't imagine where we'll go from here."

The Upper School will be rebuilt in two phases. Construction in phase I, which began June 27, includes rebuilding the portion of the school that was lost in the explosion. The new building will be 72,000 square feet, 17,000 square feet larger than what was lost. The building's height will remain the same.

The academy hopes to finish construction of the Upper School in time for students in grades 9-12 to begin classes there in the fall of 2019. When finished, the pillar will be visible in the building's commons.

In phase 2, which is still being planned, school leaders are considering additional space to move middle school classes in grades 6-8 to the campus. That would allow Minnehaha to accommodate around 745 students there, or nearly twice the size of the current Upper School student body of around 350.

The pillar raising ceremony capped a year of rebuilding work that began immediately after the blast. With the

Upper School unusable, the academy leased the former Sanford-Brown College in Mendota Heights to serve as temporary classrooms for grades 9-12. That delayed the start of last year's Upper School classes by three weeks.

Through the fall, trustees wrestled with the decision of whether the Upper School would remain at the north campus or at a new location. Around the first of the year, the board decided to rebuild rather than relocate and retained Cunningham Group Architecture to work on the design.

Preliminary plans for the rebuilding were submitted to the city of Minneapolis in mid-March. The plans drew sharp criticism from some members of the public, who raised issues about building heights, parking, traffic flow, and the impact of the new construction on the river corridor and bird migration.

Harris insisted that the academy did not deliberately exclude the public from the planning process. "Because of our need to rebuild and return to the campus by the fall of 2019, the engagement phase was compressed," she said. "We had many productive conversations with our neighbors, whom we value. Their comments were incorporated into our exterior cladding choice, foliage choice, building height and bird glass material choice."

The city's Planning Commission approved the academy's plan in April. Two appeals were immediately filed. The appeals were considered and the City Council ultimately approved the plans in May.

The building's design reflects the Scandinavian heritage of the school's founders and features a brick foundation that complements the familiar brick across the campus. Brick will also be incorporated on the upper two stories. A memorial space will be created facing the Mississippi River.

According to the school's website, the project will include planting more than 80 trees and maintaining 85 existing trees on campus. Limited parking space will be provided as will space for more than 100 bicycles.

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PK-8

12◀ CENTRAL'S TINY HOUSE

United Way, the federal Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), St. Paul College, Local 455 of the Steamfitters and Pipefitters Union, Associated General Contractors and McGough Construction.

"The construction pathway at Central started in the 2016-17 school year," Morawiecki said, "but last semester was the first time the capstone course (to build the house) was offered."

Central junior Millenium Amha was part of the first team working on the house during the school year. "I enjoyed working individually and as a team," she said. "It was super-fun coming in every day and having a new set of challenges that we had to overcome."

"After taking this class, I'm more confident about my ability to go into construction," she said. "I know with the right training I can have a fulfilling career in the trades."

The school district's construction pathway has partnered with the MTA, which offers two tracks of courses and paid internships to introduce students to the construction trades. It plans to play a larger role in the next tiny house project at Central. The ultimate goal is to make the construction pathway a self-sustaining effort, Morawiecki said.

Lah Htoo, a recent Como Senior High graduate, was one of the students in the advanced track working on the house. He said he has been inspired to stay on the construction trades path. "The thing I enjoy most about this project is that I get to see the finished product," he said. "It feels satisfying to see what I've accomplished."

Kids at Work, another alliance partner, is a summer experience for students in grades 4-9 combining science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) with activities focused on the construction trades. Kids work individually and in teams to learn about construction concepts and design. They build take-home projects replicating real-world construction materials and processes. The experience includes a combination of guest builders, team competitions, projects and field trips.



Anna Morawiecki lowers a projector screen inside Central's tiny house as Trygve Hansen and his 10-year-old daughter Dalila make themselves at home. At right, Liz Randall checks out the compact bathroom.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Other construction pathway alliance partners include Construct Tomorrow, which provides hands-on educational opportunities for high school students in the building and construction trades, and Building Minnesota, an entry-level, multicraft training program that provides opportunities for women, veterans, minorities and immigrant groups to enter the construction trades, with an emphasis on such crafts as electrical work, pipefitting, plumbing and sheet metal.

For the upcoming auction, a \$50 deposit is required for all bids and the successful bidder must complete the purchase process and remove the house from the school by August 31. State sales



tax and a 7 percent auction fee will be added to the purchase price of the house.

Though several public viewings of the tiny house have ended, interested parties can make an appointment through the project's website at centraltinyhouse.com.

School Notes

Retired Army Colonel Cornelius "Neil" Hetherington has been named the new commandant of cadets at St. Thomas Academy. He succeeds retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Michael DePuglio, who was the academy's longest-serving commandant. Hetherington was most recently a senior army instructor at the General Colin L. Powell Leadership Academy in Minneapolis. Before that, he was assistant director of training for the U.S. Army Reserve at the Pentagon and training director for the U.S. Army Reserve at Fort Snelling.

Alexis Lipstein of Highland Park High School and **Mary Murphy** of Visitation School, both of them juniors and Highland Park residents, were named finalists for the FIRST Robotics Dean's List Award that was announced at the FIRST Championships in Detroit. The two girls represented St. Paul's FRC league on the varsity level at the awards luncheon of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). Both girls are considering careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) after high school.

St. Thomas Academy had two directors honored recently for their career accomplishments. Middle school director Jamie Jurkovich received the 2018 Leadership Award from the Minnesota Independent School Forum for leading the addition of 6th grade to the middle school in 2017-2018. Innovation Center director Mark Westlake was recognized by the Mendota Heights City Council for being named the 2018 Space Educator of the Year by the National Space Club and Foundation.

A Minnehaha Academy student-led research project exploring the growth of copper crystals joined research projects from commercial companies, academic researchers and 24 student groups from around the world last month to make the journey from earth to the International Space Station. The purpose of

the project was to determine if copper crystals, which have applications in medicine and other areas, will grow faster and stronger in space. Local students involved with the project included Daniel Stein, Grace Percich and Mikayla Williams.

Language Arts Academy will open this fall at 1435 Midway Pkwy. for children in grades preK-3. The charter school provides individualized academic support for students learning English, especially those for whom English is not their first language and those who have hearing impairments. The academy plans to add a grade each year until the fall of 2021 when it will have expanded to preK-6. For details, visit LAAnn.org.

AdoptAClassroom.org, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization that raises funds for teachers, was named the 2018 GOLD Halo Award Winner in the education category presented by Engage for Good for its \$1.55 million partnership with Burlington Stores. The Team Up to Support Teachers campaign benefited 3,000 teachers and 75,000 students across the country with funds to purchase classroom supplies.

The University of St. Thomas has received a \$1 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to support science learning for all students. The grant will support the hiring of a full-time staff member over a five-year period.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota, 1919 University Ave., Suite 400, will hold a free class from 10 a.m.-noon Tuesday, August 21. The class is for educators and parents to learn about mental illnesses in students, the impact on a student's success in school and how they can work together as allies to support these students. The class meets the continuing education requirement for teachers. For information or to register, call 651-645-2948 or visit namimn.org.

Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Theft—Copper wire connecting two city streetlights was cut and stolen on Homer Street and Shepard Road between July 29-31.

—Stolen vehicles were reported on Bayard and Cleveland avenues on July 25-30, on the 1200 block of Edgcumbe Road on August 6 and on the 2000 block of Village Lane on August 6-7.

—Purses, cellphones and other items were stolen from at least three vehicles on Edgcumbe Road and Montreal Avenue between 6:30-10:20 p.m. Sunday, August 5.

Sex crime—Police received a report of a possible male prowler taking photos near the Highland Aquatic Center, 1820 Edgcumbe Road, at 1:58 p.m. Wednesday, July 18.

—A rape was reported on the 2100 block of Bayard Avenue at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, July 19.

—A rape was reported on the 1700 block of Ford Parkway at 8 p.m. Friday, July 20.

Assault—An assault occurred on the 1700 block of Ford Parkway at 5:01 p.m. Sunday, August 5.

Miscellaneous—A 46-year-old woman was arrested for drinking in public after police received a report of a disorderly person in the street at the corner of Cretin and Eleanor avenues at 7:08 p.m. Saturday, July 28.

Lexington-Hamline

Theft—A 24-year-old woman was arrested for trying to steal more than \$500 in merchandise from the Midway Target at 11:55 a.m. Saturday, July 14.

Assault—A male suffered a gunshot wound to his left shoulder near Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 3:52 a.m. Friday, August 3. Police were notified after the victim arrived on foot at St. Joseph's Hospital. He was taken to Regions Hospital, where he refused to talk to police.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Several items valued at around \$2,000 were stolen from a garage on the 1900 block of Berkeley Avenue during the evening of August 3-4.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 1400 block of Grand Avenue on July 27-28, and on the 1100 block of Randolph Avenue on August 2.

—A bicycle was stolen from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Berkeley Avenue between July 27-29.

—A 1987 Volkswagen van was stolen on the 1400 block of Randolph Avenue between 12:01-8:30 a.m. Friday, August 3. It was recovered on the 1700 block of Carroll Avenue.

Miscellaneous—An employee who had just been fired caused a disturbance at the French Meadow Bakery & Cafe, 1662 Grand Ave., at 10 p.m. Saturday, July 28.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—An attempted burglary of an occupied house occurred on the 2300 block of Lexington Avenue at 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 25.

—A home burglary was reported on the 2000 block of Lexington Avenue at 10:21 p.m. Tuesday, July 31.

Theft—A motorcycle was reported stolen on the 2300 block of Lexington Avenue at 5 p.m. Thursday, July 19.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 700 block of Highway 110 at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, July 21. Police located the vehicle and arrested a suspect.

—Several items were stolen from vehicles on the 2000 block of Highway 13 and on the 900 block of Caren Road on Sunday, July 22, and on the 1000 block of Summit Lane on

Monday, July 23.

—Surveillance cameras were tampered with and several items were reported stolen from several vehicles on the 2000 block of Lexington Avenue at 6:20 a.m. Sunday, July 29.

Assault—A complainant said a vehicle almost ran him off the road on I-35E on Wednesday, July 25. The driver followed the suspect to his house on the 600 block of Brookside Lane and started a confrontation at 5:50 p.m. The suspect was gone by the time officers arrived.

Miscellaneous—A mattress was found dumped in a city park on the 700 block of Wentworth Avenue at 8 p.m. Sunday, July 22.

—Eight people were cited for underage drinking in the parking lot of a closed business on the 700 block of Highway 110 at 1:12 a.m. Tuesday, July 24.

Merriam Park

Burglary—A home break-in took place on the 400 block of North Roy Street between 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, August 2.

Theft—A laptop computer was stolen from a law firm on the 1500 block of Selby Avenue between July 19-23.

—A backpack and wallet were stolen from a vehicle on North Mississippi River Boulevard and Summit Avenue around 4:30 p.m. Monday, August 6.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 400 block of West Lynnhurst Avenue at 2:18 p.m. Tuesday, July 24.

Weapons—A 34-year-old man was arrested for assault and possession of a stolen firearm at 9:22 a.m. Saturday, August 4, on the 500 block of North Prior Avenue. Police received a disorderly conduct report and learned that the suspect allegedly assaulted a victim and brandished a firearm. They located the suspect and discovered a large magazine for an assault rifle in plain sight inside his vehicle. The rifle, which was in the trunk, had been reported stolen in Minneapolis.

Snelling-Hamline

Robbery—A man was the victim of a strong-arm robbery on Asbury Street and University Avenue at 6:37 p.m. Saturday, July 28. He sustained minor injuries.

Burglary—Police tried to apprehend a male suspect for possession of burglary tools at the Midway Walmart at 2:34 p.m. Saturday, July 28. However, the suspect ran away when he was ordered to stop by police.

Theft—Drills and a tool pouch were stolen from a vehicle on the 1400 block of Concordia Avenue between 2-7 p.m. Sunday, July 29.

—A vehicle was stolen on the 1500 block of Laurel Avenue at noon Sunday, August 5.

—A backpack, three laptop computers and prescription glasses were stolen from a vehicle on the 1500 block of Laurel Avenue between 4:45-5:15 a.m. Sunday, August 5.

—A phone and credit card were reported stolen at T-Mobile, 1460 University Ave., at 4 p.m. Monday, August 6. The company was able to trace the phone to the 600 block of Charles Avenue, where it was recovered. A 36-year-old man was arrested for theft and giving false information to police.

—Four packages of ink toner valued at \$1,454 were stolen from Office Max, 1490 University Ave., at 1:57 p.m. Monday, August 6.

Miscellaneous—A 54-year-old woman and a 40-year-old man were cited for drinking in public at 5:32 p.m. Saturday, July 28, on Snelling and St. Anthony avenues.

—A 59-year-old man was cited for drinking in public near the Midway Walmart at 5:01 p.m. Tuesday, August 7.

Summit Hill

Theft—An electric piano, laptop computer,

iPod, backpack, clothing, paperwork and artwork were reported stolen from an apartment on the 400 block of Grand Avenue at 2:23 p.m. Thursday, July 26.

—Two cellphones were stolen from the Sprint store, 1064 Grand Ave., at 7:02 p.m. Friday, August 3.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on 900 block of Linwood Avenue at 8:03 p.m. Friday, July 21.

Assault—A man said several males followed him from SuperAmerica, 925 Grand Ave., at 1:31 a.m. Tuesday, July 31. They pushed him off his skateboard, took the items he had purchased, smashed them on the ground, and started punching and kicking him. He was able to escape and received help from a nearby resident. The four suspects were described as black males ages 16-20, wearing dark clothing and riding BMX-style bicycles.

Summit-University

Burglary—A home was burglarized and a vehicle was stolen on the 600 block of Carroll Avenue during the evening of July 30-31.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 200 block of North Western Avenue on July 21 and on the 900 block of Carroll Avenue on July 30-31.

—Several items were reported stolen from a purse inside a vehicle on the 300 block of Marshall Avenue at 8:41 a.m. Monday, July 30.

—A wallet was stolen from a vehicle on the 600 block of Selby Avenue between 1-7 a.m. Monday, August 6.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue at 5:49 p.m. Tuesday, July 31.

—A community notification meeting regarding three Level III predatory sex offenders relocating in St. Paul will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, August 15, at the St. Paul Police Department's Western District Station, 389 N. Hamline Ave. One of the offenders is Eugene Paul Glaraton, 49, who has registered to live on the 200 block of Dayton Avenue. Glaraton was released last April after serving time for having sex with a 15-year-old boy. For information, contact 651-266-5871.

Assault—Police received a report of a domestic assault at 7:11 a.m. Thursday, July 26, on the 900 block of Carroll Avenue. A juvenile said her mother had assaulted her. The victim was taken to the hospital for a cut on the head and a puncture wound on her arm. The parents said it was the daughter who attacked the mother for cutting off her Internet access. Police later arrested the daughter for aggravated assault.

Weapons—Three spent shell casings were discovered in an alley on the 500 block of Summit Avenue at 6:46 p.m. Friday, July 27.

—Gunfire was reported at 7:46 p.m. Sunday, August 5, at Carty Park, 705 Iglehart Ave.

—Officers were called to the 700 block of Portland Avenue on a report of gunfire at 12:55 p.m. Monday, August 6. Once on the scene, they encountered a large crowd and a single victim with a gunshot wound to the chest. The victim was taken to the hospital.

Miscellaneous—A woman said her grandson, who she had an order of protection against, snuck into her house overnight and was sleeping in the basement at 7:30 a.m. Monday, July 30, on the 1000 block of Dayton Avenue. The suspect was arrested without incident.

—The windows of two vehicles were smashed on the 600 block of Hague Avenue during the evening of August 5-6.

West End

Burglary—McDonald's, 551 Jefferson Ave., was entered and the store safe was tampered with between 5-6 a.m. Thursday, July 26.

—An occupied home was broken into on

the 900 block of Juno Avenue at 2:51 a.m. Thursday, August 2.

—A home break-in was reported on the 300 block of Duke Street at 10:29 p.m. Saturday, August 4.

Theft—The catalytic converter was stolen from a vehicle on Chatsworth Street and Eleanor Avenue between July 11-13.

—A bike light, dart set, sunglasses, safety glasses and other items were stolen from a vehicle on Spring and Washington streets between 1-1:30 a.m. Friday, July 13.

—A bicycle valued at more than \$1,000 was stolen from a garage at the Victoria Park Apartments, 740 S. Victoria St., between July 13-20.

—Several items were stolen from a vehicle on Otto Avenue and Victoria Street during the evening of July 14-15.

—Copper wire was stolen from nine streetlights on the Pleasant Avenue walkway between Irvine Avenue and Ramsey Street during the evening of July 26-27. The streetlights were also damaged. The loss was estimated at more than \$17,000.

—More than \$1,000 was reported stolen by the misuse of a credit card by an employee at the St. Paul school district offices, 360 Colborne St., on Monday, July 30.

—Vehicles were stolen on Erie and Grace streets on July 31 and on the 900 block of Duchess Street on August 2-3.

—A glass sculpture was stolen from a vehicle on the 1600 block of West Seventh Street during the evening of August 6-7.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 300 block of North Smith Avenue at 9 p.m. Sunday, July 22.

Assault—An assault occurred at Patrick McGovern's Pub, 225 W. Seventh St., at 1:30 a.m. Sunday, August 5.

Miscellaneous—Graffiti that covered the entire side of a metal storage container was reported outside of the entrance to Cossetta Eventi, 221 S. Exchange St., at 1:22 p.m. Sunday, July 29. The vandalism was discovered after an employee saw a male jump the fence and take off.

Fire Calls

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

Highland Park—Two Port-a-Potties were set on fire in the ballfield area of Highland Park High School at 1:13 a.m. Sunday, June 17. Part of a wooden fence also was damaged. The incident was reported on July 21.

Lexington-Hamline—A juvenile bicyclist was struck by an SUV on Lexington Parkway and University Avenue at 2:29 p.m. Friday, August 3. The victim was taken to the hospital for injuries that were not deemed to be life-threatening.

Mendota Heights—A bicyclist went to the hospital after being struck by a garbage truck on Overlook Road and Lexington Avenue at 10:32 a.m. Tuesday, July 24.

—The driver of a moped suffered minor injuries after spinning out while accelerating on Wagon Wheel Trail and Lexington Avenue at 7:27 p.m. Wednesday, August 1. He was treated by medics and released.

Merriam Park—A 17-year-old male was cited for failing to yield after colliding with a female bicyclist in a crosswalk on Finn Street and Marshall Avenue at 11:50 a.m. Saturday, July 28.

Summit-University—Someone poured gasoline on the door of an upper-level unit of a residential building on the 700 block of Selby Avenue at 9:52 a.m. Thursday, July 26. Attempted arson was suspected.

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The Kiosk

Thursday/August 16

FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES and bread will be distributed free of charge from 4-6 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. The bounty is available for anyone, though it is especially intended for the many lower-income families in the area who do not have easy access to fresh produce. A collaboration among the JCC, the Fabulous Friends Club and Second Harvest Heartland, the free produce will be available during those same hours every other Thursday through October 4.

SAFE SUMMER NIGHTS, a barbecue picnic, will be served up by the St. Paul Police from 5-7 p.m. at Oxford Community Center, 270 N. Lexington Pkwy. Get acquainted with the officers in blue who work to protect the peace and maintain the public's safety in the capital city and enjoy a free meal and children's activities in the company of neighbors.

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.

Saturday/August 18

THE REASON IT IS SO DIFFICULT to discuss politics with friends and family on the other side of the aisle will be addressed by Dean King Banaian of St. Cloud State University at a breakfast meeting of the Metro Republican Women at the Pool and Yacht Club in Lilydale. Breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m. and the program will follow at 9 a.m. The cost is \$25 for non-members and \$15 for students. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are encouraged by visiting metrogopwomen.org.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS will be accepting blood donations from 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Walk-ins are welcome, but reservations are recommended. Visit redcrossblood.org or call 800-733-2767.

EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC, DANCE, culture and cuisine of Greece in a summer festival running from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. today and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, August 19, at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 1111 Summit Ave. Dance lessons, children's games and church tours will be featured along with freshly baked moussaka, gyros, lamb, pork and chicken souvlaki dinners, flaming cheese and pastries.

INQUIRY NIGHT, an open question-and-answer session for anyone interested in the Catholic faith, will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, August 18, at O'Gara's Bar & Grill, 164 N. Snelling Ave. Hosted by RCIA Encounter, the event will be conducted by Erika Kidd, director of the Master of Arts in Catholic Studies program at the University of St. Thomas; William Stevenson, associate professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Paul Seminary; and the Reverend Humberto Palomino, pastor of the Church of St. Mark, 2001 Dayton Ave.

Monday/August 20

NEED A BUTTON REPLACED, pants hemmed, hole repaired in a shirt? Mobile Menders will be offering their



The height of summer. Upon reaching the summit, Kenida Jordan, 9, rappelled down the climbing wall at the Wilder Foundation block party on August 11 near the corner of Lexington Parkway and University Avenue. An unidentified youngster got her face painted at the event by Kayla Flynn, while Alijah Smith, 8, swung the big hammer in hopes of ringing the bell. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

free services from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St. For more information, email mobilemenders2017@gmail.com.

Tuesday/August 21

GUIDED TOURS of the governor's residence at 1006 Summit Ave. will step out every 10 minutes between 10:30 a.m. and noon. Admission is free, but visitors are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for Second Harvest Heartland. Reservations are recommended, though walk-ins are welcome if space is available. Email residence.gov@state.mn.us.

HAND DRUMMING FOR BEGINNERS will be taught from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University

Ave. Learn the patterns and rhythms of layered pieces. The cost is \$10, and the West African drums are provided. Visit womensdrumcenter.org.

MERRIAM PARK and Macalester-Groveland residents are invited to NeighborFest presented from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on the campus of the University of St. Thomas. Live music by the Broadfork String Band, children's activities and free beverages and snacks will be featured on Monahan Plaza just south of the football stadium. Inexpensive dinner baskets will be available for purchase. Call 651-962-6123.

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.

AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Jewish Family Service (JFS), 1633 W. Seventh St. Enjoy free ice cream, meet neighbors, make new friends and learn about such JFS programs as grief and dementia caregiver support groups, senior care services, and parent education classes. Prizes will be awarded. For information, contact Charlie Levine at 651-690-8938 or clevine@jfssp.org.

Wednesday/August 22

VETERANS FOR PEACE will hold its International Convention today through Sunday, August 26, at the Intercontinental Riverfront Hotel, 11 E. Kellogg Blvd. Under the theme, "End All Wars and Reclaim Armistice Day," about 300 vets and associates from over 140 chapters worldwide are expected to attend. The public is invited. Visit veteransforpeace.org.

Thursday/August 23

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.

Friday/August 24

MENTAL ILLNESS and the Victorian Mind will be explored in a 75-minute program offered at 7 and 8:30 p.m. at the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. A guided tour of the mansion will feature excerpts from 19th-century newspapers and family letters and journals that show how the Ramsey family handled the mental illnesses of its members. The cost is \$11, \$10 for seniors and college students. Call 651-296-8760 or visit cart.mnhs.org.

Sunday/August 26

A WALK UNDER THE FULL MOON will be taken this evening by the Friends of Coldwater. All are welcome. Gather at 7 p.m. at the entrance to Coldwater Spring park, located on the frontage road southeast of the intersection of Hiawatha Avenue and 54th Street in South Minneapolis. For more specific directions and parking information, call 651-293-8432.

Monday/August 27

A SUPPORT GROUP for the family members and friends of people living with mental illness meets from 6:30-8 p.m. today and the fourth Monday of every month at the Wilder Foundation, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy. The program is sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Contact Jennifer 507-254-5524.

Tuesday/August 28

THE ST. PAUL HIKING CLUB will gather at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Park Pavilion, 1200 Montreal Ave., for a three-mile hike in the neighborhood. New members are welcome. For information, call Charlotte Svobodny at 651-455-0052.

Zait & Za'atar: Middle Eastern fare the whole family can enjoy

As the owner of a local construction company, Arafat Elbakri was doing some work a couple of years ago above a little grocery store on the southeast corner of Selby Avenue and Fry Street. When the building's owner told him the downstairs tenant wasn't going to renew its lease, the Palestinian-born Elbakri had an idea.

He'd parlay his passion for Middle Eastern cuisine by opening a restaurant in the ground-floor space and invite his son, Hassan, to become a partner in the enterprise. The result is Zait & Za'atar, which opened a little over a year ago at 1626 Selby Ave. The name means olive oil and thyme in Palestinian Arabic.

Arafat came to the United States to attend college and that's where he met his wife, Adriana. Hassan was born in Minneapolis, but moved to Dubai with his mother when he was 3 years old. "My father wanted me to grow up in an Arab country," Hassan explained.

While Adriana taught English in Dubai, Arafat remained in Minnesota to run his construction company. The family was reunited in Minnesota in 2004 when Hassan was 11.

Apart from a handful of knickknacks and a dozen photographs that hang on the walls, the



Hot Dish

By Morgan Smith

restaurant is fairly barebones with a counter for ordering, five tables, 20 or so chairs and some stools lined up at a counter facing the window. Much of Zait & Za'atar's business is take-out, so the minimalist décor works. However, Arafat is planning to expand the menu at some point and maybe even offer cooking classes. For now, customers waiting for their orders will often sit outside at one of two tables on the sidewalk.

The carryout traffic is steady, and the food arrives quickly, hot out of the little kitchen that can be seen through a pass-through window. People were ordering Kushari (\$5.99), an Egyptian street food with rice, macaroni, chickpeas, lentils, fried onions and a spicy red sauce, or the more familiar Falafel (five pieces for \$3.49), the balls of fried, spiced chickpeas with tahini sauce.

On my first visit to Zait & Za'atar, my wife Mecca ordered a Mint Lemonade (\$2.99), which had been advertised out front on a sandwich board. "Mmm," she smiled after taking a sip. "I like it because it's not too sweet."

I tried it. "It's not sweet enough for me," I told her.

Along with the lemonade, Mecca ordered the Meat Shawarma sandwich (\$7.49)—grilled spiced beef with salad and tahini sauce wrapped in pita bread. I went with the Chicken Shawarma sandwich (\$6.49)—grilled spiced chicken with French fries (yes, French fries), pickle and garlic mayo wrapped in pita bread.

Impressed with her sandwich, Mecca tried to guess at the spices. Maybe a little nutmeg, maybe a little cinnamon—she couldn't be sure. The only thing we were sure about was that each of the sandwiches had a distinct flavor and they were both pretty darn good.

The secret, according to Hassan, is that everything is fresh, including the spices.

"A cousin back in Lebanon owns a



Zait & Za'atar's Sampler Platter includes generous servings of hummus, falafel, baba ganoush, fatoush, tabouleh and olives, and pita bread. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

mill where he grinds the spices for us," Hassan said. Arafat regularly travels to Lebanon to visit family and he returns with freshly ground spices. The only things that are kept frozen at the restaurant are the French fries, a concession to Hassan's Americanized tastes and one of the favorites of online reviewers of the restaurant.

On my second visit to Zait & Za'atar, I was accompanied by my friends Juan and Dave. This time I selected the Msakhen Chicken (\$8.24 with French fries and a can of soda). I nibbled on the addictive fries as Dave talked...and talked. By the time I opened my foil-wrapped Msakhen Chicken—a piece of pita bread stuffed with chicken that had been marinated in olive oil and sumac then grilled with caramelized onions—it was still piping hot. And it hit the spot. In fact, I enjoyed it even more than the Chicken Shawarma.

Juan was equally pleased with his Meat Shawarma Plate (\$10.24 with a salad and a can of soda). When you order the plate version, the Meat Shawarma comes with turmeric rice in

the pita bread. For his salad, Juan chose the Fatoush, a combination of lettuce, cucumber, onion, tomato and mint sprinkled with sumac and house dressing.

Juan's son lives in the neighborhood, and he has high praise for the restaurant he frequents. As he completed his meal, Juan said he wholeheartedly agreed with his son's assessment. He said he might even visit his son more often now as an excuse to return for the Middle Eastern fare.

Dave enjoyed his Chicken Shawarma sandwich as much as I had on my previous outing. He ate it in record time while describing in great detail a recent road trip he had taken.

Dave's nephew oversees a highly successful mobile app dedicated to vegan restaurants in the Twin Cities. Dave told him about Zait & Za'atar, and his nephew thanked him profusely for the recommendation, reporting that it was "very vegan-friendly."

People say that food has a way of bringing strangers together. In the case of Zait & Za'atar, it has a way of bringing families together, too.



Customers enjoy a summer evening outside of the entrance to Zait & Za'atar.

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On the Town

Lively Twin Citian

Curiosity, hard work elevate Ries to local celebrity status

BY BILL WAGNER

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld used to say that his popular TV sitcom of the 1990s was a “show about nothing.” If that was the case, then Elizabeth Ries could say that her show is about everything.

Ries, 37, who lives in Minneapolis’ Longfellow neighborhood, is a KSTP-TV personality whose relentless work ethic, girl-next-door smile and outgoing personality have combined to elevate her to the status of a local media celebrity.

She can be hard to keep up with, but that’s the way she’s built. The lifestyle stories she brings to “Twin Cities Live,” which she co-hosts with Steve Patterson weekdays at 3 p.m. on Channel 5, are truly about everything, which is just how she likes it.

“I have the creative freedom to go out and do whatever kind of story I want,” she said.

In addition to her work on TCL, Ries has shown a nice touch for television commercials. She has been the local pitch person for a major bedding retailer, a skin lotion company and a credit union.

“Sometimes, there aren’t enough hours in the day,” said Ries, who is

married with two children under age 4. “There are so many more things that I’d like to do. It takes really smart scheduling.”

Ries has paid her dues as an on-air personality and has had a lot of fun along the way. After graduating from Apple Valley High School in 1999, she studied journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Following graduation, she worked as a news anchor and reporter at KDLH in Duluth and WBAY in Green Bay before moving to Channel 5 News.

She is a big Packers fan like her father, Dr. Tom Ries, who grew up in Wisconsin and is now president of Concordia University-St. Paul.

“Sorry, Minnesota,” she said with a laugh about rooting for the green and gold.

Ries joined TCL nine years ago as a substitute host when Rebekah Wood was doing the show, and eventually got the full-time gig. From an initial disappointment, the show has become a hit.

“Elizabeth took over the show and brought it to a different level,” said Mandy Tadych, executive producer of TCL.

Ries, not one to blow her own horn, dishes out generous praise to Patterson, her sometimes zany cohort who came to TCL in 2014.



Elizabeth Ries, right, shows off her chickens on the edge of her Longfellow garden with the help of cookbook author Robin Asbell during a taping of “Twin Cities Live.” PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

“Steve is absolutely fantastic,” she said. “The first time he was ever on the show, we were doing a story on bees. Steve took this big bite out of a honeycomb. It wasn’t scripted, and I laughed and laughed and laughed.”

The format Ries and Patterson use on the show is likely to take most any shape. A recent day’s TCL featured segments ranging from African cooking and how to make the perfect pork chop to an analysis of the lyrics of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and a discussion about

“The Bachelorette” TV dating show.

Although generally a genteel and bubbly co-host, Ries doesn’t hesitate to drop the hammer when she feels it’s appropriate. She blasted Chris, one of the men vying for the heart of Minnesota bachelorette Becca Kufrin, for melting down in a profanity-laced tirade before getting kicked off the show.

“He was a whiny little baby,” snorted Ries.

But she picked right back up after that, moving the show fluidly into a look at local ice cream stands and then the music of Def Leppard. Ries also has interesting guests, which on this particular show included Hannah and Marissa Brandt, the hockey-playing sisters who competed for different teams in the 2018 Winter Olympics.

One of the things that makes Ries’ show effective, she said, is its authenticity. But it’s also her sincerity. She seems genuinely interested in the subject matter she’s researching, with an almost child-like inquisitiveness.

“You have to be the same on the air as you are off it,” Ries said. “Fifteen to 20 years from now, I just want to keep telling stories.”

Ries has had to battle through a couple of trying times during her stint on TCL. She suffered a miscarriage and also lost her beloved West

Highland terrier, Henry.

“It was very difficult,” she said. “I always try to keep perspective, but sometimes there are things that happen when you least expect them.”

Ries recently signed a new contract with Channel 5. Although Tadych declined to reveal details of the agreement, she did say that Ries is going to be “with us for a while.”

Asked if she would consider a better opportunity if it presented itself in another city, Ries answered: “I grew up here and I love what I’m doing here. It would take a lot to get me out of here.”

Her father, who is an ordained Lutheran minister, said his daughter has taken her relatively quick rise to local fame in stride. “We were at Como Zoo the other day,” he said, “and we were meeting people who wanted to stop and get pictures taken with her. She enjoyed it thoroughly. She never gets tired of that.”

Ries raises chickens in her backyard, grows her own vegetables and would like to get into bird-watching. She is into everything. Well, almost everything.

“I don’t golf and I don’t hunt,” she said with a smile.

Well, maybe not, but she could always do stories about golfing and hunting. Why not? She has the show about everything.



Cameraman Seth Holst tapes Elizabeth Ries and cookbook author Robin Asbell in the garden.

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On the Town Briefly

Theater

Hand to God, a comedy that traces the fragile nature of faith and morality through the story of a mild-mannered teenager and his spectacularly foul-mouthed puppet, is playing through August 19 at the Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Christina Baldwin directs the Twin Cities premiere of playwright Robert Askins' raunchy and irreverent drama about a young man whose relationships with the town pastor, the school bully, the girl next door and his mother are thrown into upheaval when his puppet takes on an impertinent and scandalous personality. Riley O'Toole stars. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$37-\$47. Call 612-822-7063 or visit jungletheater.com.

What I Thought I Knew, a stage adaptation of Alice Eve Cohen's memoir about her journey through a high-risk pregnancy and the American health care system, will be performed from August 18-30 on the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company's stage at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Directed by Jennie Ward, the heartfelt drama will be performed at 8 p.m. Saturdays, 1 and 7 p.m. Sundays, 1 or 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays. For ticket information, visit mnjewishtheatre.org or call 651-647-4315.

Books

An open lab for writers to discuss their current projects with other writers or just work on their own is offered from 10:30 a.m.-noon every Thursday at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. Call 651-642-0385.

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to readings and discussions with authors Kimberly J. Brown and her book, *The I-35W Bridge Collapse: A Survivor's Account of America's Crumbling Infrastructure*, on August 16; Jacqueline Bussie and her theological reflection, *Love Without Limits*, August 20; poet and graphic designer Chaun Webster and his book, *GeNtry!fication*, August 23; and Cecilia Konchar Farr and her book on literary criticism, *The Ulysses*



The great escape artist. Sarah Zuber (left), Mark Benzel and Michelle De Joya star in *Houdini*, a new play by Sandbox Theatre about the renowned escape artist of a century ago. Hungarian-born Harry Houdini spent his life in pursuit of escape—on stage in his legendary shows and offstage as he sought to escape poverty, anti-Semitism and death itself. The drama will be performed on August 15-18 outdoors with live music and a 24-foot-high aerial rig. Show times are 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Germanic-American Institute, 301 Summit Ave., and 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 1966 N. Chatsworth St. in Roseville. Audience members are invited to bring blankets or lawn chairs for seating. Tickets, available one hour before curtain, are by donation with \$10 suggested for adults and \$5 for children ages 12 and older. (The show is not recommended for young children.) In case of inclement weather, the show will be canceled. For information, call 612-584-1815. PHOTO BY MATTHEW GLOVER

Delusion, August 30. The programs are free and begin at 7 p.m. Call 651-493-2791 or visit subtextbooks.com.

Iron and Water: My Life Protecting Minnesota's Environment will be discussed by its

author, environmentalist and lawyer Grant Merritt, in a free program from 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, August 23, at the Ramsey County Library, 2180 N. Hamline Ave. Merritt served as commissioner of the Minnesota

Pollution Control Agency from 1971-75 and as a member of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board from 1972-75. He has also served as president and a board member of the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota. Call 651-222-0701.

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Nora Zeale Hurston will be discussed by the Merriam Park Book Club on Monday, August 27. The club meets from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. New members are welcome. Call 651-642-0385.

William Kent Krueger will read from his latest Cork O'Connor detective novel, *Desolation Mountain*, in a free program at 7 p.m. Tuesday, August 28, at Common Good Books, 38 S. Snelling Ave. Call 651-225-8989 or visit commongoodbooks.com.

Family

Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy., will offer the following free programs: baby storytime, 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday; Maker Camp, hands-on activities for children ages 7-11, 2 p.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; Snake Discovery, an up-close look at one of nature's most misunderstood creatures, 6 p.m. Thursday, August 16; 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; and Intro to Watercolor, hands-on instruction in watercolor painting (registration required), 6 p.m. Tuesday, August 21. Call 651-695-3700.

Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., will offer the following free programs: Board at the Library, games of Clue, Apples to Apples Jr., chess, checkers and more, 2-4:30 p.m. on Wednesdays; Family Storytime, 10:30-11 a.m. every Friday; and Maker Camp, hands-on activities for children ages 7 to 11, 3-5 p.m. Fridays and Mondays. Call 651-642-0385.

Red Balloon Bookshop, 891 Grand Ave., will play host to the following free events: Generous Kids storytime with author Caryn Rivadeneira at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, August 18; and Piano Storytime on the patio at

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Gibbs Farm, a museum of pioneer and Dakota Indian life at 2097 W. Larpeur Ave., will be serving old-fashioned ice cream along with the tours of the farm, garden and prairie between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Sunday, August 26. The ice cream will come in special old-fashioned flavors, and it is included in the admission charge of \$8, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for children ages 4-16. Visit rchs.com/gibbs-farm.

Dance

Rhythmically Speaking will present a program of original dance by choreographers of local and regional renown on August 16-18 at the Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Featured will be works by Gabriel Anderson and Laura Selle-Virtucio, Leila Awadallah, Melissa Clark, Brandi Coleman, Karla Grotting, Jolene Konkel and Emma Marlar. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday. A discussion with the artists will follow the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon shows. For tickets, priced at \$20 in advance, \$24 at the door, \$12 for students and seniors, visit rhythmicallyspeakingdance.org.

Film

Dream Big: Engineering Our World is being screened through October 11 in the Omnitheater at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd. A celebration of human ingenuity and the compassion and creativity that drive engineers to create a better world, the film introduces four people who make their living as engineers: Menzer Pehlivan, a geotechnical engineer from Turkey; Angelica Hernandez, a Mexican immigrant whose interest in engineering was sparked by a high school robotics club; Steve Burrows, a structural engineer who takes his inspiration from the marvels of the ancient past; and Avery Bang, a young Midwestern woman who builds footbridges in underdeveloped countries. Admission is \$9.95, \$8.95 for seniors and children ages 4-12. Call 651-221-9444 or visit smm.org.

Silent films from the Walker Art Center's Ruben/Bentson collection will be shown with a live score by electro virtuoso Martin Dosh and the Dosh Quintet in a free program at dusk on Thursday, August 16, in the Walker's Wurtele Upper Garden, Groveland Terrace and Lyndale Avenue in South Minneapolis. Grab a blanket, pack a picnic supper, and head to the hillside for an eclectic evening of new music and century-old avant-garde films, including *Lichtspiel: Opus I, II, III and IV* and *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* by German filmmaker Walter Ruttmann, *Manhatta* by American filmmakers Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, and Winsor McCay's animated documentary, *The Sinking of the Lusitania*.

Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy the following movies under the stars compliments of the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation: *Moana*, August 16, at Sibley Manor, 1300 W. Maynard Drive; *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, August 17, at the Edgcombe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St.; and *Coco*, August 18, at Hampden Park, 993 Hampden Ave. All

of the screenings are free of charge and will begin around dusk.

St. Paul filmmaker Phillip McGraw's *8 Seasons of Art*, a groundbreaking documentary about African-American painters, musicians and poets who use their art to respond to social and economic injustice, racism and violence and as a means of healing, will be shown from 7:30-11 p.m. Thursday, August 30, at the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 451 N. Lexington Pkwy. Tickets are \$12, and light refreshments will be served.

Exhibits

"St. Paul ReViewed," a look at Minnesota's capital city through the eyes of its artists, is being displayed through 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.

McKnight artist fellowship and residency recipients Xilam Balam, Mic Stowell, Eva Kwong, Forrest Lesch-Middelton, Anthony Stellacio and Kosmas Ballis are exhibiting their ceramics through August 26 in the Northern Clay Center's Main and Emily Galusha galleries, 2424 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis. Call 612-339-8007.

"All About St. Paul," watercolor paintings of the capital city by local artist Jeanne Kosfeld, are being displayed through August 31 in the North Gallery at Landmark Center. Kosfeld is a former newspaper illustrator and faculty member at the University of Alaska who led the design department at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts for 18 years. She will offer a free, two-hour sketching workshop in downtown St. Paul at 1 p.m. Sunday, August 19. For workshop reservations, call 651-292-1239 or email jbrooks@landmarkcenter.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.

The paintings of Lorraine Omley are being displayed through August 26 at the AZ Gallery, 308 Prince St. The gallery is open from 5-8 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays and from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Visit theazgallery.org.

"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.

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.

Explore St. Paul's historic downtown or riverfront areas on free, guided walking tours beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays through September. 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 August 15 and September 19. The Great River Tour, highlighting the role the river played in St. Paul history, will follow the mighty Mississippi on August 22 and September 26. The area around Rice Park will be explored on September 12. Reservations are required. Call 651-292-3063 or visit landmarkcenter.org.

"Brush and Pen," a festival of artists and authors, will be held from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday, August 18, at the Blue Harbor Center for the Arts, 559 Humboldt Ave. Twenty-five local authors and artists will take part, introducing their books and artwork. A meet-and-greet will follow from 5:30-7 p.m. Call 651-955-3673.

Music

Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Rod Stewart and special guest Cyndi Lauper will perform in concert at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 15, at Xcel Energy Center. For tickets, call 800-745-3000 or visit xcelenergycenter.com.

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: Minnesota Band, August 15; Kith & Kin Chorus, August 17; Como Pops at 3 p.m. and Moonlight Serenaders at 7 p.m. August 19; Harmonic Relief, August 20; North Star Women's Chorus, August 21; jazz artist Lee Engele, August 23; Good Morning Bedlam, August 24; Panhandlers, August 25; Bavarian Music Meisters, 3 p.m. August 26; Brio Brass, August 27; and the LaVelle Jazz Cats Little Big Band, August 29. Visit stpaul.gov/musicintheparks.

Mill City Live continues from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesdays through August in the courtyard of the Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. The schedule includes singer-songwriter Mary Bue on August 15; the pop rock of Little Fevers, August 22; and Salsa del Soul, August 29. Tickets at \$6 include admission to the museum. Call 612-341-7582 or visit mnhs.org.

Beats in Boyd, a new series of free concerts, will continue from 5-9 p.m. Fridays in Boyd Park, 335 Selby Ave. The schedule includes Ivan Cunningham, the Levi Taple Band and Joe Schad on August 17; Nuelz and Longshot & Lazerbeak, August 24; and Eli Fay and Thomasina, September 7.

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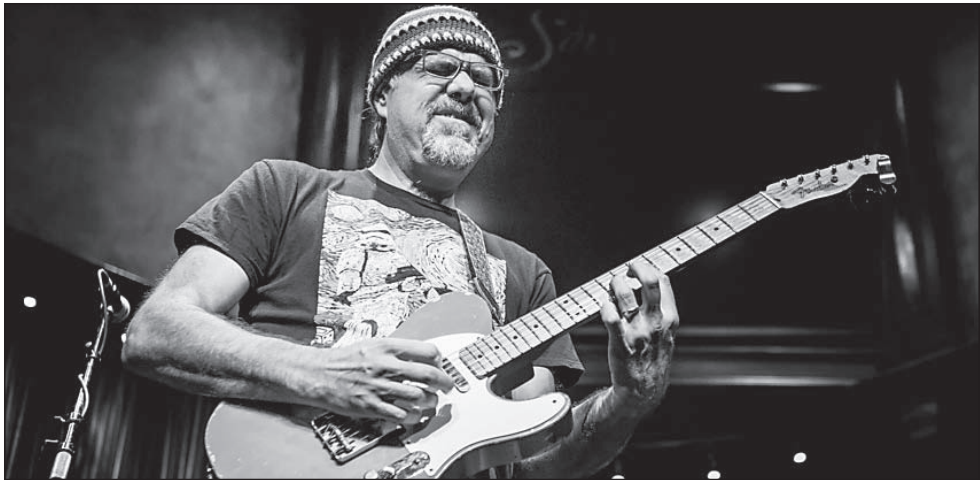
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Guitar heroes. World-class guitarists Iraida Noriega (left), Sunny War (below) and Greg Koch (bottom) will be among those performing at the free Lowertown Guitar Festival, running from 2-9 p.m. Saturday, August 18, in and around Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy. Also appearing on the fest's several stages will be Dan Kase, Thomas Nordlund, Mike Michel, Siama Matuzungidi, Paul Metzger, Duo Onyx and Jake Hanson and James Buckley. Refreshments will be available.



The Smashing Pumpkins, alternative rock pioneers of the 1990s on their first concert tour in nearly 20 years, will perform at 7 p.m. Sunday, August 19, at Xcel Energy Center. Billy Corgan, Jimmy Chamberlin and James Iha, who helped found the band 30 years ago, are playing on the Pumpkins' Shiny and Oh So Bright Tour, which is highlighting music from the group's first 12 years. Longtime Smashing Pumpkins guitarist Jeff Schroeder will also take part as the band moves to a three-guitar lineup. Warming up for the Pumpkins will be indie rockers Metric. Tickets are priced from \$29.50-\$129.50. Visit ticketmaster.com or call 800-745-3000.

Studio Z, 275 E. Fourth St., Suite 200, will host the following: New Ruckus Composer Night featuring new pieces by Seamus Hubbard Flynn, Michael Reid Winikoff, Ilan Blanck and Tyler Jameson Pimm at 7 p.m. Monday, August 20 (admission is free); and the All-Originals Jazz Series featuring the sextet Rhythm's Mama at 8 p.m. Thursday, August 23 (tickets are \$10). For information, call 651-755-1600.

The Chin Whiskers Band will perform in a free backyard concert from 7-10 p.m. Saturday, August 25, at 1406 S. Cleveland Ave. The Northbound Smokehouse food truck will have refreshments for sale from 6-10 p.m.

Rising star of the flamenco guitar, Diego Rowan-Martin will make the strings sing at 7 p.m. Sunday, August 26, at Zorongo Flamenco, 3012 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets for his Una Tarde de Guitarra Flamenca show are \$12.

Et cetera

Singers may audition between now and August 24 for a place in the St. Catherine University Choral Society, a large mixed-voice choir composed of St. Catherine University students, faculty and staff and experienced singers from across the Twin Cities area. Performances are accompanied by a professional orchestra. This fall the Choral Society will perform Vivaldi's Gloria, Mendelssohn's Heilig and Michael Fink's Jubilate Deo. Rehearsals begin September 6. For more information or an audition appointment, contact Patricia Connors at 651-690-6688.

IndiaFest, a celebration of the rich cultural traditions of the Asian country, will be presented by the India Association of Minnesota from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, August 18, on the grounds of the Minnesota Capitol. The free event will feature live performances by the Ananya and Katha dance theaters, live music, exhibits, cultural displays, Indian merchandise, a raffle and the cuisine of eight local Indian restaurants. Among the activities for children and adults will be chess, cricket, kite flying, yoga, meditation and henna and face painting.

Auditions for Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater's October production of *Romeo and Juliet* will be held from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, August 21 and 22, at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22nd St. in Minneapolis. Twenty-five men and women ages 15 to 70 will be selected for roles. Call 612-724-4539 for an appointment.

Sports



The Wright Call By Dave Wright

Football's rise is baseball's demise

It's mid-August and you know what that means: The lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer are quickly becoming just a fading memory. For some people, mid-August means a last trip or two to the lake. For others, it means a trip to the store for school supplies.

But for a lot of other folks, it means it's time to hop on the computer and watch the various networks showing NFL preseason games. In a few cases, they're hardcore fans who want to get a first look at their favorite team and see if things are looking any rosier this fall. In many other cases, they're fans starting to draft their fantasy football teams.

Fantasy football picks start at quarterback and go from there. The questions come fast and furious. Is Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers really healthy? Now that Kirk Cousins has better wide receivers to work with—or so they say—should the Vikings' new QB be an early pick? Detroit usually doesn't win enough games to make the playoffs, but Matthew Stafford usually throws for a lot of yards and touchdowns, so should he be a pick?

The same considerations apply to running backs, wide receivers and, depending on the particular fantasy league's rules, kickers and defensive players. In many locales, gambling on fantasy football is technically illegal, but the fact is this cottage industry is a multimillion-dollar diversion these days.

That wasn't always the case. Until the fantasy football craze took hold, preseason football games were viewed with what was once referred to as "dignified indifference." Tickets for preseason games back then were cheap and easy to come by; now they're full price. Few people paid attention to the stats or to the final score.

Needless to say, all this added attention to preseason football has hurt Major League Baseball. It used to be that even in seasons like this one, when the local team has fallen out of the race, baseball could still command the attention of the sporting public at least until Labor Day.

No more. Unless your team is in the hunt for a playoff spot, baseball falls to the bottom of the sporting totem pole at this time of year. In some areas, the interest is so minimal that you could hardly be blamed for looking for a listing of the national pastime in the obituaries. Unfortunately, this is no surprise. Major League Baseball has been slowly killing itself for a long time now.

It started with the inane idea that baseball had to mimic football's marketing ploys. Instant replays came to football as a way for television, which had handed the team owners gobs of money, to get in on the act. Instant replay started small, but now it has brought about several rule changes to the game and has grown in importance to the point where teams hire former officials as instant replay advisers.

Officials are now hesitant to make calls on the grounds that, if there's a controversy, instant replay can always be counted on to settle the issue. It makes sense in a way because the NFL and the Division I colleges have transformed their football games into television shows that are meant to fit in a time frame of around 3:15.

Baseball was never meant to be run on the clock. However, the marketing gurus couldn't accept that and extended the time between innings to fit in extra commercials. Seeing an opening to feel wanted, these same geniuses found a way to get instant replay into the sport for close calls.

Football had the good sense to send referees under a hood to quietly review a replay with a supervisor before announcing a decision. Baseball has umpires stand on the field with headsets on, but not watching the play in question. They get their cue from someone across the country and then make a hand signal as to whether the call was good or should

WRIGHT CALL ► 24



Tanner Vavra is congratulated by Rick Tossey (12) after knocking in the St. Paul Capitals' first two runs with a first-inning homer in a 12-0 win over Air Freight on August 3 at the Dunning Sports Complex. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Hanging tough Capitals stay alive in state Class A men's baseball

BY BILL WAGNER

The St. Paul Capitals turned in a so-so showing in the state Class A amateur men's baseball tournament at Haddox Field in Bloomington during the weekend of August 11-12.

It began fairly ugly for the Capitals, who won the state title in 2014. They seemed out of sorts in a 10-6 loss to the St. Louis Park Pirates in the first round of state. However, they came back with a vengeance less than 24 hours later with a 10-2 victory over the Minneapolis Cobras to keep their hopes alive in the double-elimination tournament.

The victory means that the Capitals will play the St. Anthony Hogs at 1 p.m. Saturday, August 18, in the next round of state at Haddox. If the Capitals (28-8-1) win their next three contests, they will play in the championship game scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Sunday, August 19.

Just as the Capitals' confidence had been shaken in the 10-6 loss to St. Louis Park, it re-established itself in a solid display of all-around baseball against the Cobras. The opening defeat came about largely because a different Capitals team showed up. It round two, it was the real St. Paul team.

"It was a true team effort," said the Capitals' player-coach Phil McDermott. "We played really well."

Much of it came on the mound, where Ty McDevitt showed just how effective he can be when the season is on the line. McDevitt hurled eight innings, allowing

just four hits and striking out eight in logging the victory. The Capitals' offense also did its share, putting up three runs in the first inning.

The Cobras pulled to within 4-2, but that was all the closer they would get. The Capitals, who have been tough to shut down offensively all season, got good efforts at the plate from all hands. Aaron Pfaff and Tom Petersen led the way with three hits each, while Rick Tossey and Ryan Abrahamson each drove in two runs.

That leaves McDermott with a tough decision to make when the team plays its next game at state. With almost a full week off between games, he was leaning toward giving the ball to Josh Kubitschek to pitch.

"I think so," McDermott said about the hard-throwing right-hander, who was the losing pitcher against St. Louis Park, "but we have a deep staff."

McDermott said Kubitschek didn't pitch that badly in that loss, but was victimized by some uncharacteristically shoddy defense.

The coach also said he wouldn't hesitate to go with Jesse Retzlaff in a bullpen role if needed. He noted that Retzlaff, who played for Minnehaha Academy and is now in his rookie season in men's amateur baseball, has a bright future with the Capitals.

McDermott noted just how close the competition was in this year's state tournament. The Minnetonka Millers, who perennially seem to be the team to beat,

also suffered a loss in the first weekend of play.

"We're still right in there battling away," he said. "It should be interesting."

The loss to St. Louis Park was more than disappointing, but in many ways it wasn't a big surprise. "We expected it to be a tough game and it was," McDermott said.

The Pirates came into the game as a team that makes good contact at the plate and delivers quality at-bats. They did that, hitting several balls solidly and running the bases well. But St. Louis Park also got some breaks from the baseball gods on more than one occasion. McDermott said the Pirates had a few hits that managed to barely bounce through the infield.

St. Louis Park jumped out early, so the Capitals had to battle back. St. Paul got the deficit down to 6-5, but then the victors collected four late insurance runs.

"We didn't help ourselves," McDermott said. "We made some errors that they took advantage of."

St. Paul went into the St. Louis Park game on a high note. The Capitals had made quick work of overmatched Air Freight in 10-0 and 12-0 blowouts in their first two playoff games. Those routs were part of a 12-game Capitals winning streak. During that stretch, St. Paul outscored its opponents by a whopping 101-21 margin.

The Capitals, who won this year's St.

ST. PAUL CAPITALS ► 24

Minnehaha makes decent run in Legion baseball playoffs

BY BILL WAGNER

Minnehaha Academy's American Legion baseball team, representing Giantvalley Post 234, didn't get off to the start it wanted this summer. However, the team regrouped and made a good run through the Division II East Central playoffs before getting knocked out of the postseason with a 5-3 loss on July 28 to Sibley East of Arlington.

Giantvalley had a problem at the outset of the summer; it just didn't have enough hands on deck. Whether it was for family vacations or a player or two needing rest, the team was undermanned, according to coach Tom Konz.

"We haven't played one game in which we've had all our players," he said after going 4-6 during the regular season.

A lot of the absentees were back in uniform by the time Giantvalley started the 16-team, double-elimination playoffs. That gave them every reason to be optimistic going into the sub-state competition that was spread out over the last two weekends in July in Cannon Falls. The team also was confident given that Minnehaha's high school team had won the consolation crown at the Class AA state tournament a month earlier.

A rejuvenated Giantvalley motored into the sub-state Legion tourney needing to win six games to go to state. They opened with a 2-1 loss to Plato, but then reeled off victories over Kenyon Wanamingo 11-6, Rockford 6-2, Providence Academy 2-1 and Holy Family 15-10 before being knocked out of the tournament by Sibley East.

Despite the exit, Konz said it was a pretty good season. "We had some young guys who were able to gain some experience," Konz said. "Those are guys who'll probably play next year and I think we'll be pretty good next year, too."

The loss to Plato in the opener overshadowed a sterling pitching performance by Brett Theissen, who struck out 11 batters. Noah Dehne and Dylan Kiratli each had two hits in that game.

In the win over Kenyon Wanamingo, Giantvalley had its hitting shoes on when it needed them. Theissen, Kiratli and Nick Wang all contributed with two hits. Kiratli started on the mound and got the win, with Bennett Thurow coming in late to seal the victory.

Dehne got Giantvalley off and running in the win over Rockford that first weekend, pounding out two homers.

Konz went into the sub-state tournament saying that Giantvalley could win if it played up to its capabilities. "We easily

could've been 3-0 after the first weekend," he said.

Brock Brumley delivered a masterpiece on the mound to start the second weekend, striking out 10 and allowing only six hits in hurling a complete game against Providence Academy. He also drove in his team's two runs.

Giantvalley's bats really came to life in the win over Holy Family that went nine innings, with several players contributing at the plate. Jake McCabe led the parade with four hits and two RBI. Theissen and Brumley each had three hits, while Kiratli, Connor Johnson and Will Wamre had two hits and two RBI. Bennett Thurow slapped a two-out, two-run single in the victory.

The loss to Sibley East was tough to swallow, Konz said, especially since Giantvalley made three errors and couldn't come through in the clutch.

"They scored all of their runs in one inning," he said. "We just couldn't get that big run-producing hit."

Against Sibley East, Michael DiNardo and Brumley each had two hits, and Kiratli logged a nifty three-inning stint on the mound. Both Giantvalley and Sibley East had nine hits in the game.

Sports Shorts

The Minnesota Vikings, in partnership with the Minnesota State High School League, recently announced that the team's newly opened Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center on I-494 between Dodd Road and Delaware Avenue in Eagan will host five high school football games this coming season. The inaugural game will be on Friday, September 28, when Eagan will play its homecoming game there against Farmington. The second regular-season game is Friday, October 12, when Prior Lake will play host to Lakeville North. On Friday and Saturday, November 9-10, the center will also be the site for three games during the quarterfinal round of the state football tournament. Matchups are to be determined.

The third annual Twin Cities Walk for Water will be held from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, September 15, at St. Paul's Upper Landing Park, 180 Shepard Road. The walk promotes awareness of the global water crisis while raising funds to sustainably provide clean, safe drinking water around the world. Last year the walk raised more than \$130,000. To register for the event, visit twincitieswalkforwater.org.

The Concordia University-St. Paul volleyball team was ranked first in the American Volleyball Coaches Association Division II preseason poll for the third year in a row. Concordia finished 121 points ahead of second-ranked Southwest Minnesota State. The Golden Bears are coming off their second consecutive Division II national championship and their ninth title overall. Concordia will once again face a tough schedule with nine contests against opponents in the top 25. The season opener is on August 23 against Hillsdale in Michigan. Concordia's first home meet is on September 8 vs. Winona State.



Connor Hurley notched 10 strikeouts for the Capitals to get the win over Air Freight in playoff action on August 3.

PHOTO BY
BRAD STAUFFER

23◀ ST. PAUL CAPITALS

Paul League title for the seventh time since the team was established in 2010, have shown that they really have few weaknesses and are capable of dominating a game. The team had some solid pitching depth, with Kubitschek and McDevitt having firmly established themselves as twin aces who can

consistently deliver quality innings. Petersen had made his reputation as a shutdown relief pitcher in addition to his offensive talent.

Offensively, the Caps have what seems to be the proper mix of power and speed. Tanner Vavra was hitting .478 and had an on-base percentage of .500. Also more than capable at the plate are Tossey, who was hitting .375, Abraham-

son at .369 and Petersen at .328.

Power has been supplied by Abrahamson, Vavra, Tossey and Matt Halloran, who all had all banged out four homers. The team is also peppered with several speedsters, including Pfaff with 11 stolen bases, and Halloran and Derek Jacobson with seven each.

23◀ WRIGHT CALL

be reversed. This was supposed to occur in 30 seconds or less, but that hasn't been the case. As a result, baseball games that used to run 2:30 or so now regularly extend to over 3 hours.

To see what happens when instant replays and commercials are not involved, consider this: The MIAC baseball tournament was played at CHS Field last May. The teams all played nine innings and averaged just 2:12 per game. Only one game went over 3 hours and that was offset by a gem that was played in a nifty 1:46.

Seeing that replays were going long, baseball has added elements to speed up play, such as limiting trips to the mound and adding a 20-second clock between pitches. The evidence is still being compiled, but games have been shortened by only a minute or two.

Baseball's marketing on a national scale is, in a word, abysmal. The ESPN Sunday Night game rotates between the Yankees, Red Sox and Cubs. The defending World Series champs from Houston get virtually ignored. Up-and-coming teams such as Atlanta, Philadelphia, Milwaukee and Oakland are likewise hidden from viewers. Yes, ESPN is having some great seasons with young, exciting stars, but its market is shrinking. The same is true for Fox's Saturday game, which often gets handed off to Fox Sports 1, an entity not on everybody's cable or satellite service. MLB even pushed a few games to Facebook—the Twins played one of those—thus limiting the audience even further. And MLB wonders why its ratings are down.



Macalester's newly resurfaced field will be a busy place for football and soccer this fall. PHOTO BY LOU MICHAELS

The Twins have committed their own faux pas this year. Last month, Tampa Bay was in town for a Thursday night game. The weather was threatening and a downpour drenched Target Field about 5:30 p.m. That was out of the team's control, of course, but what happened afterward wasn't. The Twins flashed a message on the scoreboard stating that the first pitch had been pushed back to 7:45 p.m. However, more rain and thunder ensued and it was obvious that start time wouldn't be happening. Nothing appeared on the scoreboard and there was nothing over the public address system until a little after 8:30 p.m. when it was announced

that the game would start around 9 p.m.

On the other hand, some of baseball's marketing moves have worked. The Wild Card games, for example, have been a big hit. Last year, it kept interest up in this part of the country. Players have gotten more generous about flipping baseballs into the stands. The mascot races and other between-inning contests are pleasant diversions. But for a lot of market areas, it isn't enough once the calendar turns to mid-August.

There are no surefire answers to the problem, but pretending it doesn't exist isn't one of them.

New look at Macalester

It's been a busy summer at Macalester College with a pair of new basketball coaches and an interim athletic director now on board. It turns out there are on-field changes as well. Mac's football stadium, built in 1964, had new artificial turf rolled out this summer. It will soon be a busy place, with five football games and 18 soccer games scheduled to be played in a two-month period. Soccer kicks things off with a doubleheader on August 31.

One of the things that has changed at college facilities is having to set aside money for installing new turf on the fields. The artificial stuff has a life expectancy of only around 10 years or so, and the cost of putting it in can be more than \$500,000. Of course, spending on lawnmowers, sod and sprinklers is no longer needed.

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

Classifieds

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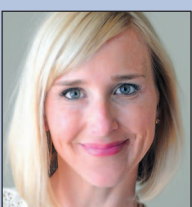
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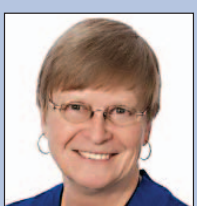
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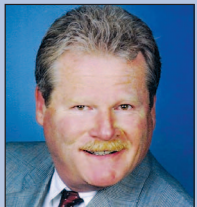
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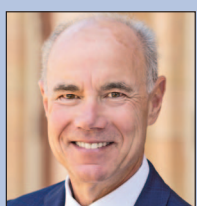
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2189 SARGENT AVENUE
Gracious Kings Maplewood home offers beautiful entertaining spaces! Enjoy generous room sizes throughout and many original architectural details. Updated custom kitchen with a main floor family room and bath. [GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com](http://www.GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com)

SUE JOHNSON CRS, GRI
651-329-1264 • \$564,900



2210 EDGCUMBE ROAD
Classic mid-century modern rambler situated on over a half acre on prestigious Edgcombe Road. This lovely home features expansive main floor living, a large eat-in kitchen and ample entertaining space. [GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com](http://www.GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com)

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PRESTIGIOUS SUMMIT AVENUE!
Sparkling & spacious up/down duplex, 4BR's, 2BA's on each level. A beautiful blend of original character & updated beauty. Refinished hardwood, gas fireplaces. Backyard oasis with deck, patio, Pergola, 3-car. 1920 Summit Ave. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

TOM EDELSTEIN CRS, ABR
651-695-4300 • \$789,999



CHARMING HIGHLAND CLASSIC!
Truly delightful 2BR, 2BA gem is accented with gleaming hrdwd flrs, spacious living/dining room, sun-drenched eat-in kitchen. C/A, patio, 2-car garage, steps to shopping, dining & services. Move-in ready! 1337 Watson Avenue. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

HENRY EDELSTEIN CRS
651-270-1667 • \$199,900



GREAT RIVER VIEW!
1111 Sibley Memorial Highway #1C is a large 1050 square foot 1-bedroom, 1-bath main floor condo with fantastic river views. Clean, with fresh paint make this easy to move in to. Nearby parking space means no steps at all!

RICHARD BERGER
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COMO TOWNHOME!
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MARY KNUDSEN CRS
651-335-6619



ELEGANT AND STATELY HOME!
Historic 9BR, 7BA masterpiece boasts four finished levels of wonderful living. Gracious open floorplan with stained glass accents. Sun-filled eat-in kitchen, formal dining room. Two+ car, gorgeous setting! 966 Summit Avenue. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

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651-270-1667 • \$1,100,000



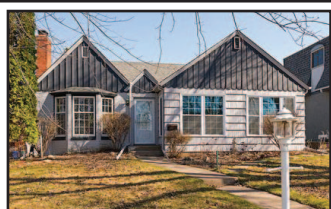
SPARKLING HIGHLAND GEM!
Beautiful remodeled 3BR, 3BA brick beauty boasts lovely hrdwd floors, living room with fireplace, formal dining. Spacious kitchen with stainless steel appliances, cozy breakfast nook. Owner's suite, great location! 1670 Niles Avenue. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

HENRY EDELSTEIN CRS
651-270-1667 • \$425,000



1789 JAMES
Rare 4 bed, 3 bath under 400K in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood. The home has a newer two car garage, central air, updated kitchen and tons of original charm. Great rental potential. Walking distance to St. Kate's!

MIKE & TOM DISTAD
612-275-1343 • \$319,900



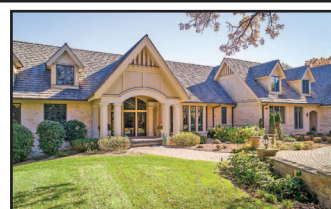
1709 BOHLAND AVENUE
Sun filled home on premiere Highland Park street. Only three owners. Grand piano sized living room with fireplace - large formal dining room. First floor family room opens to kitchen.

KAREN KELJIK
612-414-3245/CALL/TEXT



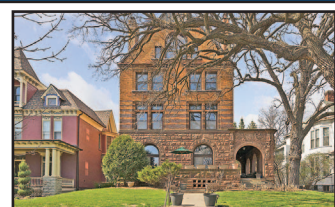
JUST LISTED!!!
4724 Chandler Rd: Immaculate 4BR featuring a stunning open kitchen with granite and stainless, family room with vaulted ceilings and floor to ceiling windows, entertainment sized living and dining rooms, delightful patio and deck, Moundsview Schools.

JIM BURTON
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FABULOUS!!!
295 Salem Church Rd: Spectacular Sunfish Lake home offering 12,447 sq. ft. to be used for your largest entertainment need but designed for comfortable everyday living as well. 5 fireplaces, 9 BA's, and an 8 car heated garage.

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NEW PRICE!
Wonderful, turn-of-the-century home situated on large corner lot in Mendota Heights. Enjoy the charm this home offers with updated amenities such as maintenance free siding, new windows & central air. Entertain family and friends on the patio this summer!

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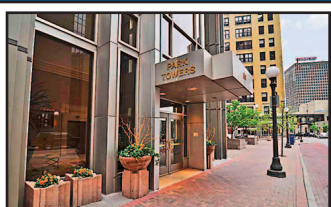
1563 CRAWFORD DRIVE
Sited in a small, quiet development, this one owner 2007 built town home features an open concept main level with half BA, large windows, generous sized BRs, 2nd floor laundry, and convenient location! The upstairs loft is wonderful flex space; great office or play room.

MORAGHAN DeROSIA
952-486-3697 • \$199,900



HISTORIC JAMES J. HILL BUILDING!
This fabulous 2BR/2BA condo is open, airy, sunny and bright. Features include rare barrel ceilings, arched windows, pristine tile & hardwood floors, updated kitchen and baths, a master BR suite, multiple walk-in closets, a gas fireplace and 2/C garage. 300 Wall Street.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$525,000



PARK TOWERS!
This luxurious 23rd floor condo features 2/BR, 3/BA, bright sunny open spaces with deluxe accoutrements, panoramic views and heated parking. Located in the historic Rice Park neighborhood with a short walk to the Ordway and Xcel. 59 4th Street #23E.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$680,000



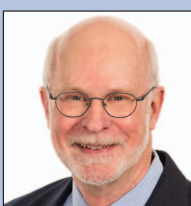
CLASSIC PRAIRIE SCHOOL DESIGN!
Sophisticated and elegant, this architect designed home features bright, open spaces with 5BR/5BA, master BR suite with fireplace, exquisite interiors and quality craftsmanship throughout. An artful blend of maintenance free living and classic design. 777 Linwood Ave.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$1,150,000



HISTORIC ROW HOUSE!
This beautiful brick end unit, built in 1882, has been completely restored. Features include over 3,000 sq. ft., 3/BR, 3/BA, 2 fireplaces, arched and stained glass wndws, high-end appls and great details. Currently a duplex, but could be easily converted to single family. 198 Kent St.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$725,000



DANIEL BUCHEN
651-431-8833



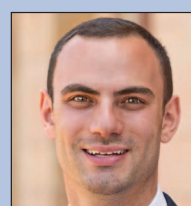
JIM BURTON
651-690-8556



MORAGHAN DeROSIA
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JENNIFER DEUTSCH
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HENRY EDELSTEIN
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