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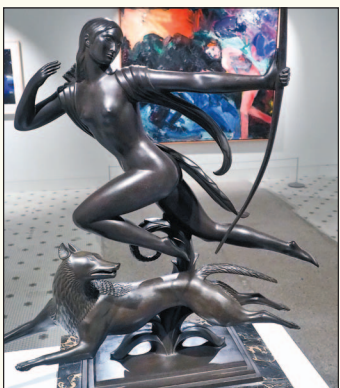


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St. Paul presents new concepts for Highland 9-Hole

By Jane McClure

More than 100 people attended a meeting on November 19 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to review conceptual plans for repurposing the Highland 9-Hole Golf Course. Space for multiuse fields, cross-country skiing, tennis, pickleball, skate parks and sepak takraw (Asian kick volleyball) were among the recreational uses proposed. Two concepts included dog parks and one allowed a smaller golf course to remain.

Brett Hussong, project manager for the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation, emphasized that the presentation was part of a “visioning” process only. The city has no funding to make any changes to the golf course and no timeline for the project. There also has not been any analysis of what the changes could cost to operate and maintain.

“This is just a spatial look at the site and what could possibly be put on it,” Hussong said.

Four concepts were presented during the meeting. The first would leave the site as is. The second would provide a smaller nine-hole, par 3 course that also could be used for cross-country skiing. Under that scenario, there would be room for three multiuse fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse or football, along with a skate park and courts for pickleball and sepak takraw.

The third concept would eliminate golf and add a dog

HIGHLAND 9-HOLE ►3



In the frosty air

John and Vanessa Cannon warmed up outside Brasa Premium Rotisserie with samples of a roasted poblano soup during the 46th annual Grand Meander on December 1. At right, John Rongitsch and Robin Rooney-Rongitsch celebrated their 39th wedding anniversary by meandering along Grand Avenue.

PHOTOS BY
BRAD STAUFFER



Developer proposes four new towers on city’s riverfront

Bold design includes land bridge from bluff to river

By Jane McClure

Ramsey County officials are hoping the third time is the charm for redeveloping the site of the county’s former adult detention center and government center on Kellogg Boulevard in downtown St. Paul. The County Board voted on November 20 to negotiate with Los Angeles-based AECOM on its plan to construct four buildings of between 12 and 36 stories on the site, with a mix of apartments, condominiums, a hotel, and retail and office spaces.

What made AECOM’s plan especially intriguing to county commissioners was an 80-foot-long land bridge from the edge of the bluff over the railroad tracks and Shepard Road to the

river’s edge, thereby expanding the development from 5.75 to 12 acres and offering a public walkway from the bluff to the banks of the Mississippi.

The plan calls for extending Market Street from Kellogg Boulevard to Shepard Road and providing between 1,500 and 1,800 parking spaces below the bluff. The project would be carried out in three phases over seven years. Its total cost has been estimated at between \$620 million and \$900 million.

AECOM’s plan is the third redevelopment proposed for the property. However, “this is the first time I got a good sense that the developer realizes the potential of this site,” said County Board chair Jim McDonough.

“This is truly an iconic site,” said county Commissioner Rafael Ortega. “We need to have a development that will stand out.”

A preliminary development agreement will

be presented to the Ramsey County Board for a vote in the next 30 to 60 days. Over the next six months, county staff will meet with AECOM to discuss details of the project. If that discussion is fruitful, AECOM and the county will negotiate a purchase price for the property and a formal development agreement.

One of the issues to be negotiated is the level of public subsidy. That subsidy could include site-related infrastructure. What it will not include is tax increment financing, according to Ortega.

AECOM managing principals Jim Thomson and Brian Dusek touted the project as a significant addition to downtown that will not only offer spectacular views of the river valley but a pedestrian connection from downtown to the riverside, providing opportunities for year-round recreation.

RIVERFRONT TOWERS ►2

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An artist's rendering of what St. Paul's downtown riverfront might look like with a redevelopment now under consideration by Ramsey County.

1◀ RIVERFRONT TOWERS

County commissioners were impressed with the bold design and the land bridge. However, they questioned the economics. As Commissioner Blake Huffman noted, the developer's presentation included references to aspects of the project that were contingent on market demand.

AECOM representatives said they are confident the mix of residential and commercial uses would withstand any shifts in the real estate market. According to Dusek, housing demand is so strong in downtown St. Paul that ground could be broken for the new condos and apartments fairly quickly, and that Phase 1 of the project could be completed within 12 to 18 months of its start.

Downtown residential development has been strong over the past eight years, according to Maxfield Research, with the downtown population increasing from 4,862 to 8,943 between 2010 and August 2017.

Josh Olson, who is leading redevelopment efforts for Ramsey County, said the County Board has sought a bold vision for the site with the goal of expanding jobs, the property tax base and housing options. "A site like this calls for something different, something robust," Olson said. "This is the last developable property on the downtown waterfront,

and it's ready for development."

Ramsey County has occupied the entire six-acre site since 1992, when West Publishing vacated its former headquarters adjacent to the county jail and moved to Eagan. The county later moved the jail and recently spent \$17 million demolishing the seven buildings on the property and stabilizing the bluff to get it ready for development.

The county's latest request for proposals drew 10 different developers, which were then narrowed to four finalists. AECOM officials said they are up to the challenge and will draw on the company's years of experience developing large, complex sites.

The first phase of the project would include 250 to 350 apartments, 80 to 150 condominiums, a hotel with as many as 250 rooms, restaurants, retail stores, a 1,500- to 1,800-space parking ramp and an amphitheater beside the river. The parking ramp would be constructed below the blufftop, and it would be concealed by the four towers and the land bridge. It could be pressed into service when the replacement of the RiverCentre and Xcel Energy Center parking ramp gets underway.

An office tower with as many as 20 floors would be built in the project's second phase. The third and most ambitious phase would be a 36-story office tower and the extension of Market Street

to Shepard Road.

According to county and AECOM officials, the project would fill a void in downtown St. Paul's Class A office space. However, the future of downtown's office market is anything but certain. A recent report from the Greater St. Paul Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) stated that close to one in every five downtown offices are vacant. Downtown's office vacancy rate was even worse in 2017, topping 20 percent, though it was 16 percent in 2016, according to BOMA.

AECOM must carefully consider adding as much as a million square feet of office space downtown, according to commercial real estate veteran Jim Miller, a Highland Park resident who has worked in downtown for decades. "The developers will have to look very hard at the economics of such an ambitious project," Miller said. While the river views and prime location will be assets, he said, AECOM will have to contend with Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area regulations and height restrictions related to the Downtown St. Paul Airport.

Dusek is confident there will be strong demand for such prime office space. However, he added, the office towers will not be built until anchor tenants are found for 35 to 50 percent of the new space.

Highland disc golf course expands to 18 holes

By JANE MCCLURE

Once controversial plan to expand and improve the disc golf course in Highland Park is due to become a reality in 2019. The Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee reviewed the latest plans with staff from the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation on November 13. Only a handful of people attended the presentation, a far cry from the dozens of neighbors who packed HDC meetings earlier this year to oppose the project.

Disc golfers contend that the long-standing nine-hole course in Highland Park—the only disc golf course in the city—is badly in need of improvements. However, park neighbors objected to the proposed 18-hole layout, saying it would conflict with other uses of Highland Park, intrude on their private properties and exacerbate the petty crime they associated with users of the disc golf course.

The city decided to test a temporary 18-hole layout last summer. According to Paul Prior, program manager for the Parks and Recreation Department's Special Services division, that layout with some tweaks will be installed permanently in 2019. The 18-hole course will have new baskets and concrete tee pads, additional landscaping and improved signs. The course is designed to keep errant discs away from surrounding homes, streets, sidewalks and a play-

ground.

About 150 people responded to a city survey on the temporary disc golf course. Close to 80 percent of the respondents gave the temporary course a "very positive" or "positive" rating.

According to Prior, the city has worked closely with park neighbors and disc golfers on plans for the \$4,000-\$5,000 expansion. "We want to promote people using underutilized areas of the park," he said. According to Prior, the area that will be required for the expanded course has been used in the past as a homeless encampment because it is somewhat secluded.

Disc golfers praised the city's plans. Some said last summer's temporary 18-hole layout attracted many new golfers to the course.

The "holes" in disc golf are actually metal baskets that are sided with chains and suspended from poles. The old 9-hole disc golf course, which dated from the 1980s, was in poor condition, Prior said. The baskets were old and did not work for some of today's discs. The course also lacked signs, adequate tee pads, benches and such amenities as vending machines for disc golf equipment and refreshments.

The new 18-hole course was designed with the help of Highland Park resident Cale Leviska, a professional disc golfer and the owner of Airborn Disc Golf Emporium. Another neighbor donated new benches for the course.

Parks and Recreation staff members

are hoping to offer refreshments beyond the small vending machines. However, additional snack and drink options may have to wait until the former 1930s-era bathhouse in the park is renovated. That building once served as the changing and shower space for the old Highland Park swimming pool, which was replaced years ago with a larger facility across Montreal Avenue.

Prior said the city is also considering installing a disc golf supplies "lending library" in the clubhouse at the nearby Highland National Golf Course.

Forty new trees were recently planted in Highland Park to replace the 27 ash trees that were infested by emerald ash borers and other trees that came down in a July 2018 storm. Eleven more infested ash trees in the park will be removed and replaced in 2019, along with invasive buckthorn. The Capitol Region Watershed District is also doing a soil stabilization and planting project in a ravine by the expanded disc golf course.

The HDC has asked city parks staff to track any crime associated with users of the park. Though crime does not appear to be a problem there, according to city statistics, the area has had and will continue to have a stepped-up police and park security presence, Prior said.

Disc golfer Richard Raich was among those who said that an expanded and improved disc golf course would actually make for a safer park. "I've never seen a park that had more usage and became less safe," he said.

Stadium neighbors discuss use of community benefits fund

By JANE McCLURE

More than 70 people turned out for a November 28 meeting with St. Paul City Council members Mitra Nelson and Dai Thao to discuss the potential uses of a new community benefits fund. The fund was proposed two years ago when the city reached an agreement with Minnesota United and Midway Center owner RK Midway on the development of a Major League Soccer stadium at Snelling and St. Anthony avenues.

The City Council passed a resolution in 2016 establishing a community benefits agreement and fund in conjunction with the new stadium. Some of the benefits outlined in that agreement have already been realized, including the hiring of women and minorities

during the stadium's construction. Other elements of the agreement call for making Allianz Field available for community events and hiring local vendors and workers when the stadium opens early next year.

"We want to make sure that the team and the city are committed to a benefits agreement that works for the entire community," Thao said.

"If we proactively define our vision (for the agreement), the stronger it will be over time," added Nelson.

The 2016 council resolution called for the appointment of a task force to help develop a community benefits fund and determine who contributes to the fund and how it is governed and spent. The task force began meeting last summer with representatives of the Union

Park District Council, Hamline-Midway Coalition, Minnesota United, RK Midway, city officials and other stakeholders.

While the task force has focused primarily on using the fund to mitigate neighborhood problems related to the stadium, such as traffic, parking and pedestrian safety, other ideas have been brought forward to promote construction projects around the stadium and to develop new community leaders.

Support for small businesses and immigrant-owned businesses and mitigation of the displacement of businesses and residents around the stadium also emerged as key issues. Some speakers raised fears about gentrification and the need to help mom-and-pop businesses relocate when they can no longer afford to remain in the area. Another idea was

to find ways to promote local businesses at Allianz Field events.

Several people asked that the stadium and its adjacent open spaces have year-round programming for festivals, farmers' markets and community sporting events. Others suggested that the community benefits fund be used to support youth employment, youth activities and local recreation center programs.

The task force hopes to complete its report on the community benefits fund in January, according to Hamline-Midway Coalition board member Mike Reynolds.

To participate in the city's online survey on the community benefits fund, visit bit.ly/MidwayBenefits.

BZA grants parking variances for Firebox Deli in Merriam Park

By JANE McCLURE

A former floral shop could become home to Firebox Deli's second location. The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) unanimously approved three parking variances on November 19 to expand the former Garden of Eva building at 1585 Marshall Ave.

One variance allows four parking spaces instead of the minimum five required by virtue of the building's gross floor area. Another allows parking in front of the building, which is not permitted under the site's traditional neighborhoods zoning. A third allows a 2-foot side-yard setback for parking instead of the required 4 feet.

The BZA's approval came with the condition that a hedge be planted to separate parking from the Marshall Avenue sidewalk.

Firebox Deli offers an extensive menu of smoked meats for eating in and taking out. It opened its first location in North Minneapolis about four years ago.

Deli owners Bao and Wong Vang and their landlord Joe Hughes want to expand the one-story building, which housed Garden of Eva for almost 20 years. A community garden has also been at that corner for years, predating the floral shop.

City staff recommended approval of the variances, citing the small, irregular lot and the difficulty in providing any additional parking.

Hughes said the building's size and configuration have made it difficult to reuse. "We've looked for the right partner," he said, adding that he believes the deli is a good fit for the neighborhood. If all goes as planned, Firebox will open there by next summer.

The Union Park District Council's executive board recommended approval of the variances. The council's Committee on Land Use and Economic Development met with project representatives on November 19 after the BZA vote to discuss issues that included parking and traffic. The property is located just west of the Starbucks on Snelling and Marshall avenues that has caused significant traffic tie-ups in the area.

Amy Gage, who co-chairs the land use

committee, said that while it is good to see the vacant building repurposed, there are concerns. "But we're really enthusiastic about this addition to the neighborhood," she said.

The former floral shop is 1,859 square feet and is flush against a retaining wall and a structure for Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks. A 510-square-foot addition is planned at the southeast corner of the building, which would take away what has been parking and open space.

The one-story building will be extensively renovated, with a kitchen, meat smokers, dining space and restrooms added. With a small bar area, plans submitted to the city show a building occupancy maximum of 71.

1 ◀ HIGHLAND 9-HOLE

park and bike park, along with a 2.5K cross-country ski area. It would also have a skate park, two sepak takraw courts, two pickleball/tennis courts, four multiuse fields and a stormwater feature.

The fourth concept would also eliminate the golf course and add six multiuse fields, two tennis/pickleball courts, two sepak takraw courts and a skate park. It preserves some green space as a "bike skills" area and dog park.

All of the revamped sites would include parking lots, pathways, retaining walls and a restroom/concession building. The ballfields would have artificial turf and be fenced. A 60-foot buffer would be maintained from park neighbors. Efforts would be made to preserve as many trees as possible and to work with nearby Highland Park High School and Middle School on field and facility planning.

More than a dozen neighbors spoke at the meeting, raising questions about everything from how to manage traffic and increased recreational uses to the desire to save the golf course. One suggestion was to see if various field improvements could be phased in over time. Some neighbors asked why the fields could not be left open for free play

instead of being fenced in.

Bill Driver, president of the Highland-Groveland Recreation Association, spoke about the need for more field space. He said the HGRA serves more than 1,600 young athletes and has pretty much maxed out local fields for soccer and baseball. Driver is also the vice president of the St. Paul Soccer Association, which is urging more field space as well.

Golf advocates asked for the course to remain, especially for older players and children just learning the game. "I need the nine-hole," said Mendota Heights resident Carol Butchert. "I can't golf Highland National."

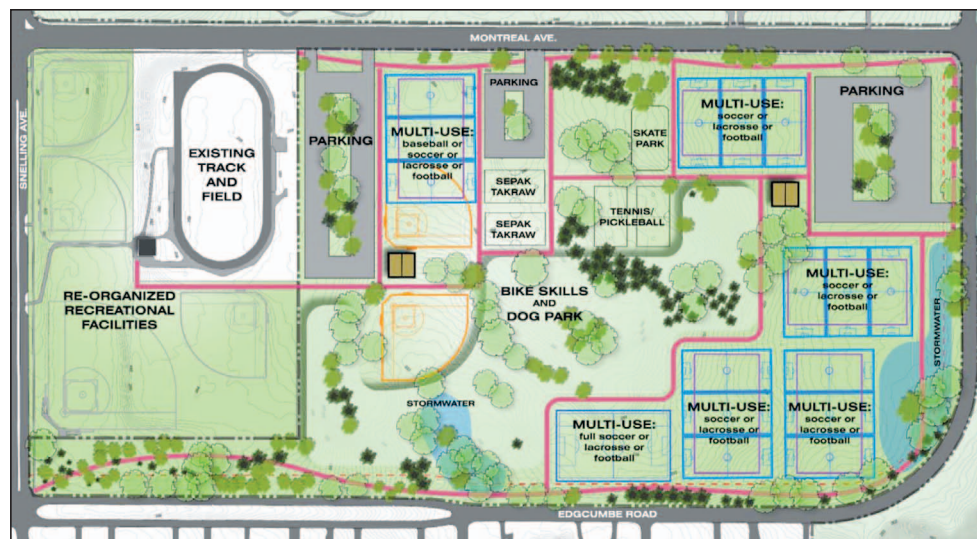
Other neighbors said the city has to make sure that shared uses are compatible. "You can't ski through a dog park," said Highland resident Sara Abel.

Highland National was suggested by some as a place to host cross-country skiing, but Hussong said it would destroy the grass.

Some neighbors said the area has parking and traffic issues already, especially when shows are being presented under the nearby Circus Juventas big top.

"The traffic can be unbelievable and now you want to throw in this," said neighbor Kathy Sirek.

Hussong said the additional parking lots



This concept for repurposing the Highland 9-Hole would add six multiuse fields, along with a dog/bike skills park, skate park, sepak takraw courts and tennis/pickleball courts.

planned for the golf course property could be shared with the circus school.

The 55-acre nine-hole property was once used for ballfields and an archery range. It became a golf course in 1971.

Hussong said Highland needs more multiuse fields, while golf is on the decline, both locally and nationally. The Highland 9-Hole has dropped from about 32,000 rounds played

in 2005 to 18,342 in 2017, while Highland National has dropped from about 48,000 rounds played to 30,396 during that same time. The figures for 2018 were not available.

Comments on the conceptual plans can be emailed to Brett.Hussong@ci.stpaul.mn.us until December 21. More information about the visioning process can be found at stpaul.gov/highland9.

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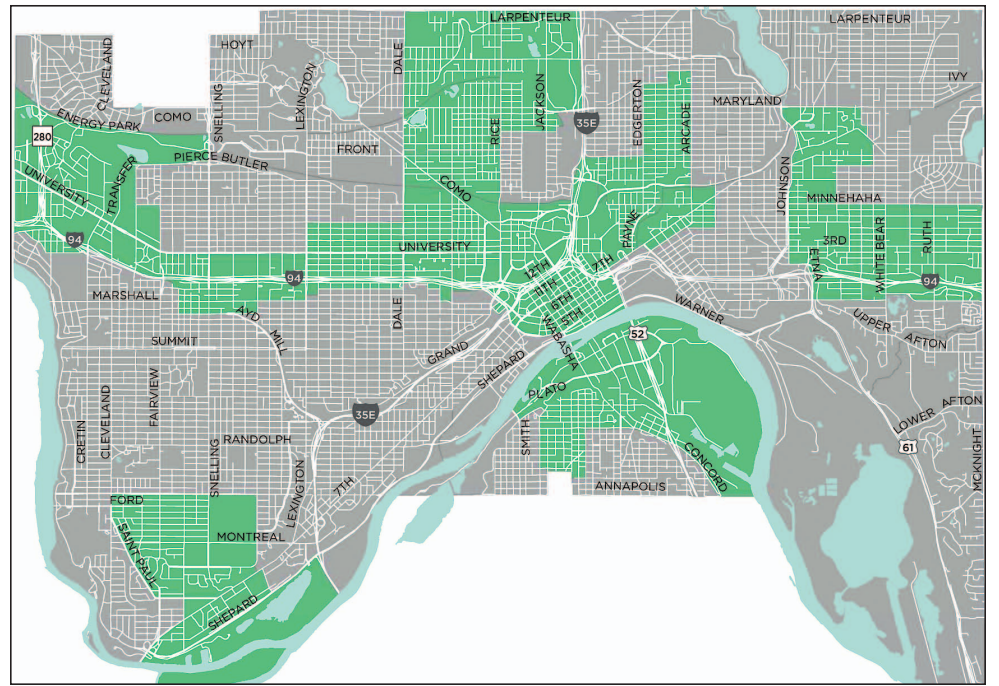


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The proposed St. Paul Pedestrian Plan highlights in green those areas of the city most in need of investment in improvements for pedestrians.

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Proposed pedestrian plan aims to make St. Paul even more walkable

By JANE MCCLURE

A concerted effort to improve conditions for pedestrians across the city is the focus of the first St. Paul Pedestrian Plan. The proposed 91-page plan will be released by the St. Paul Planning Commission on December 14, marking the start of a 30-day public comment period. A public hearing on the plan will be held before the Planning Commission on January 25. The plan will then be forwarded to the City Council for final approval following another public hearing.

The pedestrian plan has been in the works for more than a year. A 26-member steering committee was involved in drafting the plan, and so far more than 4,000 citizens have offered their suggestions at public meetings and open houses, according to the Planning Commission's Transportation Committee.

The plan addresses safer street crossings, new sidewalks where there are none now, and new education and enforcement programs to promote safe walking. The plan recommends short- and long-term strategies for improving pedestrian safety, including a consistent review process for pedestrian crossings, new ways for funding sidewalks, and a study of how to address problems with snowy and icy sidewalks.

The intent of the plan is to highlight the need for new pedestrian infrastructure in the city and to guide city spending on that infrastructure. City officials hope the plan will start conversations about pedestrian safety and serve to change the culture to promote walkability, according to Fay Simer, pedestrian safety coordinator in the city's Department of Public Works.

Mayor Melvin Carter's proposed city budget for 2019 includes \$1 million for sidewalks, which is close to double what the city has spent in recent years on sidewalks.

Funding has been a big challenge for the city as it strives to install and repair sidewalks, Simer said. In the past, those improvements have been funded with a combination of city revenue, outside grants and assessments on the owners of abutting properties.

St. Paul has 1,080 miles of sidewalks. The city has only been able to replace from six to eight miles of sidewalks each year, a trend that has left many sidewalks in poor condition. But what is even more concerning to city officials are the many streets that still have no sidewalks. According to Simer, the city has about 330 miles of right-of-way with no sidewalks, including 62 miles along busy arterial streets that can be dangerous to walk along.

For the past two years, the city has required the installation of new sidewalks whenever a street is repaved. Before then, local residents could opt out of sidewalk improvements even

if they did not have sidewalks along their street.

A map showing high-priority areas for pedestrian investments is included in the plan. Parts of Highland Park, Merriam Park, Snelting-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline, Summit-University and downtown St. Paul are among the areas highlighted. Those areas were chosen using several criteria, including a lack of sidewalks, the number of residents who rely on walking, the busyness of streets, access to mass transit, and the number of residents and employees in the area.

The Planning Commission's Transportation Committee recommended approval of the pedestrian plan on November 19. Committee members were pleased with the draft, although several suggestions were made for improving it. Some members recommended a provision for ongoing funding for sidewalk and crosswalk maintenance and improvements. Others recommended provisions for better street lighting and better snow and ice removal. Several said they would like to see more information about how the Pedestrian Plan relates to the city's street design policy.

The plan highlights four pedestrian safety programs in which the city is already involved: Stop for Me, an effort to promote safe street crossings and enforce pedestrian right-of-way laws; Paint the Pavement, a neighborhood effort to calm traffic with eye-catching pavement designs; regular pedestrian and bicycle counts to provide baseline data for funding requests; and Safe Routes to Schools, a neighborhood effort to make it safer for children to walk to and from school. Transportation Committee member Christopher Ochs said he would like to see a Safe Routes to Schools effort around Central High School.

Transportation Committee member Wendy Underwood supported the plan, but said she would like to see a greater emphasis on safe street crossings, particularly along West Seventh Street near the new Keg & Case Market in the former Schmidt Brewery. "It's really hard to cross there," she said.

Safer crosswalks are needed, Simer acknowledged, especially on streets that are wide and carry lots of traffic. "Motor vehicle speeds and crossing distances are the biggest threats to pedestrian safety," she said. "We don't want there to be streets in St. Paul that people can't get across."

Snowy and icy sidewalks are another big concern. Many St. Paul property owners do not clear their sidewalks within 24 hours of a snowfall as required by city ordinance. While 80 percent of property owners who receive a warning from the city do clear their sidewalks, that requires filing a complaint and several days to resolve the problem.

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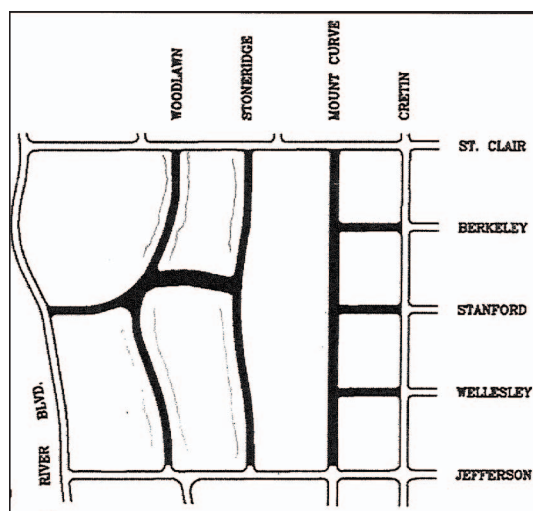


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The streets that appear in bold at left are scheduled to be repaved in 2019, but not without side-walks.

Mac-Grove neighbors want to nix new walks

By JANE MCCLURE

Homeowners along Stonebridge Boulevard, Woodlawn Avenue and Stanford Court in the Macalester-Grove-land neighborhood do not want the city to install a public sidewalk in front of their homes, and they are willing to opt out of a \$6 million street reconstruction project in their area rather than lose the lawns and trees that now occupy the right-of-way.

The streets in the area bounded by Mississippi River Boulevard, St. Clair, Cretin and Jefferson avenues are slated to be repaved in 2019 as Phase 2 of the Woodlawn-Jefferson street reconstruction project. Those streets include Stonebridge, Woodlawn, Stanford Court, Mount Curve, Berkeley, Stanford and Wellesley avenues.

The city of St. Paul used to allow abutting property owners to stipulate that sidewalks not be included in local street reconstruction projects. However, last year the City Council adopted a policy requiring new sidewalks to be built in conjunction with every street reconstruction project.

The Stonebridge, Woodlawn and Stanford Court neighbors met with City Council member Chris Tolbert, his staff and St. Paul Department of Public Works officials in early November to discuss their desire to forgo sidewalks. By mid-November, all of the affected property owners on the three streets had signed a petition against having sidewalks.

The neighbors are concerned that the new sidewalks would require the removal of mature shade trees and green space, according to Woodlawn residents Dan Hollihan and Elizabeth Miller. "Frankly, we don't need sidewalks," Hollihan said. "We don't see a lot of people walking along Woodlawn as it is." According to him, people walking to and from the paths along Mississippi River Boulevard use Jefferson and St. Clair avenues.

The decision on whether to allow the area to opt out of the street reconstruction project is up to the city engineer. Opting out would mean pushing the Phase 2 of the Woodlawn-Jefferson project to the end of the city's street reconstruction schedule. Thus, the residents of that area could be waiting 20 or more years for new streets, according to Nick Peterson, the manager of street construction in Public Works.

Tolbert and Public Works officials are concerned about delaying the reconstruction and replacement of that area's streets, streetlights and water and sewer lines. "From the city's perspective, the (Woodlawn-Jefferson) area has infrastructure that is almost 100 years old," Peterson said.

"Sidewalks are important, and we need to fill the gaps in the system," said Tolbert, whose Ward 3 includes the Woodlawn-Jefferson area. The alternative is to have people walking in the street, which is unsafe, he said.

Sidewalks are part of a multi-modal transportation system—a national trend and not just something St. Paul is promoting, according to Peterson. "We're working toward closing sidewalk gaps here," he said. "Everybody walks and uses sidewalks at some point."

"But (sidewalks) would take away from our neighborhood's historical character," Miller said. The area was once part of the 28-acre Stonebridge estate owned by Oliver Crosby, the founder, president and chief engineer of American Hoist and Derrick Company of St. Paul. After Crosby's death in 1922, the property went into tax forfeiture and the Crosby mansion was demolished and the property subdivided. The only thing left from the old estate is a small stone bridge on private property.

The neighbors contended that the graceful curves of Woodlawn and Stonebridge in that area may have been inspired by the former mansion and estate grounds. A flier titled "Save Our Historic Stonebridge Neighborhood" maintains that the streets were deliberately laid out without sidewalks to set it apart from the surrounding area. However, city staff said there is no proof of that.

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County gets an earful from property owners on the hook for higher taxes

BY JANE MCCLURE

More than 50 people turned out at St. Paul's Union Depot on November 26 for Ramsey County's annual Truth in Taxation hearing. Close to a dozen of them addressed the County Board to complain about higher property taxes.

The board is scheduled to vote on December 11 on the county's 2019 budget and property tax levy. It is considering a 4.37 percent increase in the property tax levy—from \$299.3 million in 2018 to \$312.4 million in 2019, a 13.1 million increase.

For St. Paul property owners, that is on top of a proposed 11.5 percent tax levy increase for city government, a 3.9 percent increase in the St. Paul Public Schools' regular tax levy and the \$18.6 million per year increase in the school district's annual excess levy that was approved by a majority of St. Paul voters in the November 6 general election.

Two Summit-University residents, Dee DePass and Jennifer Kramm, were among those who testified about higher taxes. DePass and her husband bought "an absolute beater of a house" more than two decades ago, she said. They fixed up the home, then watched as their property taxes increased by more than 300 percent. In recent years, the couple have seen double-digit increases in their property tax bill. "We can't sustain this," DePass said. "We can't make this work."

Kramm purchased rental property in Summit-University with the goal of providing affordable housing for her tenants. However, her property taxes have gone up more than 70 percent in the few years she has owned the building. "All of that increase has to be borne by my tenants," she said.

Noting the increases in her property taxes, East Side resident Linda Pearson said, "maybe this is not the place for me to live."

Patrick Heavirland told the County Board that he had purchased Charles Cabinets in Roseville in 2017 and is now paying almost \$3,000 per month in property taxes. He was

shocked to see another proposed increase for 2019. "How much money is enough?" he asked.

Paula Justick moved to downtown St. Paul more than a year ago for the convenient services and the local arts community. A former arts organizer, she said the higher property taxes are causing local artists to lose their studio space. "I think we have to be concerned that we're driving people out," Justick said.

Ramsey County auditor and treasurer Chris Samuel noted that property tax bills are not only affected by the levy, but by the increase in a property's value relative to other properties in the county. Some neighborhoods' home values are just now rebounding from the housing bust of 2008, he said, and their homes have jumped in value over the past year. Apartments, too, are seeing large increases in value overall, according to Samuel, however, the value of commercial and industrial properties has remained stable.

County Board chair Jim McDonough said he understands the difficulty many property owners will be facing with their 2019 property tax bills. "We hear your pain and we feel your pain," he said. He urged homeowners to see whether they qualify for a state property tax refund or senior citizen property tax deferral.

McDonough also spoke at length about the services the county provides, and how the tax increases are needed to pay for those services. Next year is the second year of the county's two-year budget process, and 2018 also brought a property tax levy increase of about 4.3 percent.

Ramsey County's Regional Rail Authority is proposing to raise its property tax levy by 7.8 percent—from \$22.52 million in 2018 to \$24.27 million in 2019.

Ramsey County is considering a 3.3 percent increase in its general operating budget for 2019, to \$737.8 million, without any major changes in staffing or programs. Property taxes make up about 42 percent of county revenue. The rest comes from state and federal funds, fees for services and other sources.

HDC reviews Ford site plan changes

BY JANE MCCLURE

Ryan Companies' amendments to the city's master plan for redeveloping the 122-acre site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park will be reviewed by the Highland District Council (HDC) at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 6, at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. The HDC will make a recommendation on Ryan's plan and forward it to the St. Paul Planning Commission, which will hold a public hearing on the master plan on January 25.

"When the City Council adopted the Ford site master plan and zoning changes in 2017, we intended it as a framework with the understanding that when a master developer was picked, that developer has the right to propose plan changes for the city to consider," said Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert. As the development rolls out over the course of what may be a decade, Tolbert added, the master plan could be further amended by the city to address market conditions.

The HDC's Community Development Committee recommended in November that the full district council approve Ryan's amendments to the master plan. Committee members viewed Ryan's plan as being faithful to the city's vision for the Ford site while providing additional amenities requested at public meetings on the plan. Those amenities include rowhouses on the western side of the central water feature, single-family rather than multi-family homes along Mississippi River Boulevard, a reconfiguration of some blocks

in the commercial area, and the retention of two of the three baseball diamonds that have been used for more than 60 years by Highland Ball (formerly Highland Little League).

Minneapolis-based Ryan was chosen in June to be the Ford site's master developer. Its revisions to the city's master plan were unveiled this fall to a generally favorable response. However, the changes have met opposition from city planners as well as some members of the Planning Commission who forced a delay in the public hearing from mid-December to late January.

Several commissioners criticized Ryan's proposed reduction in the density of the development—from 4,000 to 3,800 new housing units. They were especially critical of the single-family homes and rowhouses and what they considered to be the disproportionate influence of Highland Park residents on the amended plan.

Some Planning Commission members wanted to give residents in other parts of the city more opportunity to comment on the plan. According to commissioner Taque Khaled, the master plan lacked input from outside the Highland area and does not reflect a vision for all of St. Paul.

Commissioner Ann deJoy disagreed, citing the decade-long process for shaping the redevelopment plan and the well-attended Planning Commission and City Council hearings prior to its adoption.

Ryan officials will be hosting at least one more public meeting on the master plan prior to the Planning Commission's public hearing, said company spokesman Tony Barranco.

News Briefs

BZA approves sign variance for Highland Park McDonald's

The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved a sign variance on November 19 for the McDonald's restaurant at 2322 W. Seventh St. The owners of the restaurant are seeking to convert the static, lit menu signs in its drive-through lanes to dynamic display signs.

The city's zoning code states that dynamic display signs must be monochromatic and turned off from 11 p.m.-7 a.m. or after a business is closed. McDonald's sought a variance in order to turn the signs on at 5 a.m. when it opens.

Approval of the variance did not come without questions about neighborhood notification and whether the new menu boards would be obtrusive. The BZA was told by a contractor that light from the new signs would not spill over to adjacent properties. The restaurant is in the Shepard-Davern neighborhood near homes, apartments and commercial uses.

The Highland District Council took no position on the request and the BZA received no oral or written testimony in opposition. Variances to the sign code, especially with respect to dynamic or changing displays, have drawn fire in the past from neighbors and activist groups, including Scenic St. Paul.

Council considers replacing outdated murals in chambers

A proposal to replace the 1930s-era murals in the council chambers of the St. Paul City Hall/Courthouse building will go before the City Council and Ramsey County Board for action in the weeks ahead. City Council



A mural in the council chambers at the St. Paul City Hall/Courthouse building.

members say they are responding to concerns that the images of American Indians and black men are outdated and unwelcoming to people who come to meetings.

The four large murals are original to the building and depict eras in the city's history from the voyageur days to the 1930s. Each mural has a white male as its central focus, which has drawn complaints about the artwork not being representative of the population of the city and county.

Elected officials are likely to vote this month on the process for new murals to cover or hang alongside the old ones. The new murals would be rotated inside and outside of the council chambers.

The process would cost more than \$34,000 and would come out of city-county building funds. The Ramsey County Historical Society will be involved in the process, which is expected to take about a year. Council members said they hope the new murals will spark conversations about the city today.

Artist John Norton painted the murals when the building was constructed in 1932. Because the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, interior changes will require review by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Town and County will remain open for public use this winter

Town and Country Club on Marshall and Cretin avenues will be open for winter sledging, cross-country skiing and walking dogs, club management has confirmed. A sign stating that the golf course was temporarily closed for winter preparations had sparked rumors on social media that the course would be closed to the public this winter.

Town and Country general manager Bob White said he was surprised by the flurry of queries in early November. He said the course should be winterized by mid-November and

then reopen for public use.

"We're not closing the course," he said. "We're being a good neighbor."

White said there have been a few problems with people who do not pick up after their dogs while walking them on the course. Earlier this year, the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association (DPIA) organized a spring cleaning day at the golf course to pick up after dogs. DPIA members have cautioned that if course users do not respect the property, they could lose access to it.

Red Cross schedules four local blood drives to stem shortage

The American Red Cross is currently facing a severe blood shortage and urgently needs blood and platelet donors to step forward to avoid delays in administering lifesaving medical care. In September and October, the Red Cross collected 21,000 fewer blood and platelet donations than were needed by hospitals.

Four blood drives are scheduled locally in the coming week. The Red Cross will be accepting blood donations from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, December 9, at the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave.; from noon-6 p.m. Monday, December 10, at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.; from 1-7 p.m. Tuesday, December 11, at Nativity Church, 1900 Stanford Ave.; and from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, at the St. Paul Police Building, 367 Grove St.

Walk-ins are welcome at blood drives, but reservations are recommended. Call 800-733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and Dale Mischke.

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Viewpoint

With master plan in hand, Ford site is a work in progress

BY DALE MISCHKE

The rubber has hit the road regarding the redevelopment of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park. After more than a decade of research and design, the city of St. Paul has adopted a master plan for the 122-acre site, Ryan Companies has been brought in as the master developer, and after five months of due diligence and four public meetings, Ryan has amended the master plan in response to public comment and its own expertise in the real estate market.

The St. Paul Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Ryan's proposed amendments on January 25. Already we are hearing grumbling from city planners and members of the Planning Commission about several of Ryan's changes.

Ryan is proposing 35 single-family homes along Mississippi River Boulevard to soften the transition from the rest of the Highland Park neighborhood and to complement the single-family homes elsewhere on river road. Ryan is also proposing 270 rowhouse or townhouse units to go along with the 2,250 apartments, 710 affordable apartments, 400 senior apartments and 80 condominiums. The master developer is striving for a greater variety of housing options to insulate the development from fluctuations in the real estate market.

City planning staff have objected to the three-story townhouses and rowhouses, especially on the west side of the central water feature. The city's master plan had taller apartment buildings on both sides of the water feature. Planning commissioners were critical of the rowhouses and single-family homes and of the overall reduction in density from a total of 4,000 housing units in the city's master plan to 3,745 units in Ryan's amended plan.

Some planning commissioners have criticized the Ford site plan for being too heavily influenced by folks from the Highland area. They successfully sought to postpone the



The full build-out of the Ford site under Ryan Companies' amendment of the master plan, looking to the southeast.

public hearing from December to January to give people across the city a greater opportunity to be heard and to provide that the plan more closely reflected the vision for the Ford site held by all of St. Paul.

Ryan Companies is anxious to get started on the project. The city has been projecting a 2019 start for constructing the new streets and installing the new sewer, water, gas and electrical lines. St. Paul residents and business people do need to take a close look at the amendments sought by Ryan in preparation for the Planning Commission hearing. Our hope is that the Planning Commission keeps an open mind.

The demand for multi-family housing is high in St. Paul. Hundreds of new units are now under construction on just a mile and half of Snelling Avenue. The Ford site is a large canvas, and the city has a well-thought out plan for this prime real estate. However, the full build-out of the Ford site is projected to take at least a decade. A lot can happen in 10 years. Memories of the housing bust that postponed for years the development of Victoria Park are still fresh in St. Paul's West End neighborhood.

Deferring to Ryan Companies' firmer grasp on the real estate market is in the city's best interest. This should apply

to the variety of housing options and to the provision of off-street parking. Ryan is asking the city to double the number of parking spaces in the commercial areas to make the new storefronts more attractive to prospective tenants.

The decade of planning for the Ford site has always been a citywide effort. Many of the meetings on the Ford site were held in Highland, but they were open to citywide participation. If more Highland folks participated, that is just a reflection of the greater interest and the larger impact the development will have in the area.

To Ryan Companies' credit, the master developer has been receptive to public criticism of the city's master plan. Ryan has lowered the maximum height of the taller buildings, provided for more green space, preserved two of the three historic Highland Little League fields, planned for more housing options and considered the impact of a dearth of off-street parking on the surrounding neighborhood.

For a copy of Ryan's proposed amendments to the city's Ford site master plan, visit tinyurl.com/y7ecblus.

Dale Mischke is co-editor of the Villager newspaper.

Inbox

Immigration in terrifying times

I agree with the letter that David Fox wrote in the November 21 issue of the *Villager* ("Story of Immigration success"). Our community should be extremely proud of and embrace its immigrants and those who serve them. This is one reason why I am leading a two-year Interdisciplinary collaborative workshop at the University of Minnesota titled, "Migration and Migrants in Terrifying Times."

On December 13, we will be holding a symposium from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Coffman Theatre in Coffman Memorial Union at the U of M. Free and open to the public, the event will feature two keynote speakers: Daniel González, a reporter for the *Arizona Republic* who won a Pulitzer Prize for his work on "The Wall: Unknown Stories, Unintended Consequences"; and Matthew Hall, a sociologist and demographer who is an expert on immigration.

Please join us!

Jack DeWaard
Highland Park

Editor's note: Jack DeWaard is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Graduate Faculty of Population Studies in the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota.

Welcome the caravan

Letter writer Rolf Westgard's sympathy for the caravan is commendable (*Villager* Inbox, November 7). I work with a man born in Mexico who is a legal immigrant, becoming a citizen some 18 years ago. This man recently talked to friends and relatives in Mexico. He tells me the Mexicans hate the caravan. They commit crimes. Thousands overrun grocery stores along the way, take whatever they please, walk out without paying and leave their trash behind for the locals to clean up. There is nothing to be done about it, so the communities pay to move the fleeing immigrants north on buses and flatbed trucks. He said he has sympathy for the women and children, but they are just a sprinkling as the vast majority are men.

If President Trump allows the caravan in, they will have to be housed somewhere. California is burning itself up, so get ready to welcome them here.

Robert Bushard
Merriam Park

Neither party is always right

In "Not in Lincoln's league" (*Villager* Inbox, November 21), J.K. McKim states, "I want a leader for the U.S. for all of us." I can assure J.K. that we all want this common good, but I have to ask that he or she not defer to the previous president and his policies that have led to drag-queen storytellers for toddlers in public libraries, intrusive teen questionnaires in doctor's offices, gender fluidity rather than gender science, sharing high school locker rooms with the opposite sex, indoctrination of students to be activists opposing white privilege, discipline in schools that is not behavior-based, discipline by police always viewed as race-biased, community organizing at the expense of civil discussion and political correctness blocking freedom.

This is not a complete list of problematic policies, but none is of the mind of Lincoln.

Neither party is always right. As long as we cling to one of them rather than seek the truth, we may be always wrong.

Stephen Miller
Merriam Park

Cherry-picking history

As the descendant of a close relative of Mary Todd Lincoln, I am alarmed by the comparison of today's president to Abraham Lincoln. The cherry-picking of our nation's history to prove a political point on Trump's mannerisms is asinine at best. To state that civility in 1860s America is an example to be followed is a lie. Have we forgotten that our nation was embroiled then in a violent conflict that took the lives of more than 800,000 Americans? Or that Mr. Lincoln himself engaged in fist fights on the Illinois state senate floor over political and policy disagreements?

If you want to bring up the distant past to prove a point, use all of the facts, not just the ones that suit your personal beliefs—facts like the Democrats were opposed to abolishing slavery, interracial marriage and women's right to vote.

The only thing embarrassing about President Trump is the weakness of his critics, the lack of vision for the future, and the lack of knowledge of our history that his opponents display.

Steven Ray Duke
Summit Hill

After tragedy comes safety push

A story in the November 21 issue of the *Villager* tells of the efforts of bicycling advocates to include \$500,000 in the city of St. Paul's 2019 budget for bike safety improvements on Summit Avenue. The story says that one of those advocacy groups, Safety on Summit, was formed after Minneapolis bicyclist Alan Grahm was struck and killed by a school bus in May at Summit and Snelling avenues.

While safe streets for all pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers should be a top priority for city leaders, the duty to obey traffic laws is the responsibility of all who use those streets. As sad and tragic as Mr. Grahm's death was, the fact remains that the bus driver, Leland Jacobs, had the right-of-way, according to two eyewitnesses. Mr. Grahm went through a red light on his bicycle and struck the bus, according to the St. Paul Police Department. While this event was devastating to the Grahm family, I can't imagine how traumatizing it was for the bus driver and the Ramsey Middle School students who witnessed the crash.

Following the accident, the ad hoc group Safety on Summit was formed. Within weeks it began an on-line petition and fundraising drive and then organized a June 12 meeting at Macalester College, complete with media coverage. Safety for bicyclists is an important issue, but it's disingenuous for Safety on Summit to exploit a tragedy for the purpose of raising money and furthering a political agenda. I wonder how the bus driver is dealing with it.

Jim Ginther
Highland Park

Moon Palace sheds more literary light in Longfellow

BY IRIC NATHANSON

This time last year was a hectic period for Angela and Jamie Schwesnedl. On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving 2017, several dozen friends and volunteers helped the couple stock the shelves of their new bookstore. Then on Black Friday, their Moon Palace Books opened at its new location in a former warehouse on Minnehaha Avenue just south of Lake Street. The 8,000-square-foot building had room for 15,000 books, a cafe, and an event space for concerts and parties.

It was a big change from five years earlier, when the couple opened the bookstore two blocks away in a space not much bigger than a broom closet.

"It was something we'd thought about doing for quite a while," Angela recalled. "I'd helped set up the Trylon Cinema, so when a space next to the theater opened up, Jamie and I decided to move ahead. We started out on a shoestring without much inventory. When we sold books, we bought more. We'd expected to sell a mix of new and used books, but we found that the neighborhood wanted new."

Moon Palace, which is a reference to a 1989 novel about a bookseller, opened at a time when brick-and-mortar bookstores across the country were struggling. More people were buying their books online from Amazon, forcing chains like B. Dalton and Borders to close. Between 2002 and 2011, the number of bookstores in the country declined by more than 20 percent.

Those daunting numbers did not dissuade the Schwesnedls. "We were offering something that you couldn't get online or at the chain stores—an authentic community experience and an opportunity to interact with books and authors in a more personal way," Angela said. "Those of us who were coming along when we did were able to survive Amazon. Many of the stores that closed were in high-rent districts and lacked the community connections we had."

When the couple launched their new bookstore in 2012, electronic readers were still gaining in popularity. Amazon's Kindle had



Owners Angela and Jamie Schwesnedl are over the moon about their bookstore at 3032 Minnehaha Ave., which also features the Geek Love Cafe and is gaining attention as a music venue.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

appeared on the scene five years earlier.

"Back then, the Kindles were something of a novelty," Angela recalled. "They were attracting people who were just entering the digital age. Now, young people are digital natives. We're finding that many people who are spending all day in front of a screen would just as soon relax with a real book at the end of the day. Bookstores like ours have found a way to coexist with the Kindles and the Nooks."

These days, Angela spends much of her day deciding what to buy for Moon Palace. "It's not an easy job," she said. "There are a huge number of books published every month. I have to say 'no' to most of them. I try to know my customers and what they want. I can't personally read all the books that we buy, but I do try to read the first couple of pages of all new books to get a sense of what they're all about."

Unlike many other independent bookstores in the Twin Cities, Moon Palace accepts some self-published work on consignment. The store's website has an online form that authors can use if they want to place their books on Moon Palace's shelves. One warning though: Self-publishers who call the store instead of using the online form will be dropped from consideration.

"We have to pass on 90 percent of the self-



published requests we receive, but then we also pass on 90 percent of the offerings we get from commercial publishers," Angela said. "It's more expensive for us to work with people who do their own publishing, because we have to handle each book as a special case."

While Angela looks after the reading material, her husband Jamie oversees the store's Geek Love Cafe. "Initially, we'd thought about subletting to a coffee shop or opening up at a location that had one next door," Jamie said, "but we found that insurance and licensing requirements meant we had to have one business operating the bookstore and the food service. Now, people can take their beverages into just about any area of the bookstore. Only, the children's section is off-limits for beer and wine."

During the year that it has been open at 3032 Minnehaha Ave., Moon Palace has gained a growing reputation as a music venue. With a bookstore, cafe and event space all under one roof, the store seems to have created a successful template that meets the multiple needs of its customers.

"There are some sleepless nights," Angela acknowledged, "but it all seems to be coming together. Our model appears to be working."

VILLAGER

Volume 66, Number 21

Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

757 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul, MN 55116
myvillager.com
651-699-1462

The Villager serves the Highland Park, Lexington-Hamline, Macalester-Groveland, Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, Summit Hill, Summit-University and West 7th neighborhoods of St. Paul, the Longfellow and Nokomis neighborhoods of Minneapolis, Lilydale, Mendota and Mendota Heights.

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CIRCULATION

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

Next Issue: December 19

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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported at Smash Burger, 2138 Ford Pkwy., at 9:24 p.m. Thursday, November 15.

Burglary—An Xbox 1 and MacBook computer were stolen from an apartment on the 1900 block of Ford Parkway during the evening of November 15-16.

—A home break-in occurred on the 1900 block of Wordsworth Avenue between 7:30 a.m. -5:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 20.

Theft—A suspect stole \$1,700 in merchandise at the Highland Target at 8:00 p.m. Thursday, November 15. A TV also was stolen there between 1:59-2:35 p.m. Sunday, November 18.

—Two laptop computers, medical kits and hand warmers were stolen from a vehicle on the 500 block of South Mississippi River Boulevard at 4:47 p.m. Sunday, November 18.

—Six cellphones, a passport, cash and other items were stolen from a vehicle at Ras Restaurant and Lounge, 2516 W. Seventh St., around 7:45 p.m. Sunday, November 18.

—A leaf blower was stolen from an unlocked garage on the 1500 block of Edgumbe Road during the evening of November 20-21.

—Reports of stolen vehicles included one on the 1300 block of Eleanor Avenue on November 22; two from National Car Rental, 2500 Stewart Ave., on November 25; and one at the Ras Restaurant, 2515 W. Seventh St., on November 26.

—A skimming device was discovered on an ATM at Wells Fargo, 2145 Ford Pkwy., at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, November 25.

Assault—An assault with a dangerous weapon was reported at Ras Restaurant and Lounge, 2516 W. Seventh St., at 2:30 a.m. Monday, November 19.

Weapons—Two handguns were found in a shoebox at the entrance to Hidden Falls Park at 8:30 a.m. Friday, November 23. The guns were handed over to police.

Miscellaneous—Someone slashed three tires and egged a vehicle on the 1200 block of St. Paul Avenue during the evening of November 14-15. An ex-girlfriend was suspected.

Lexington-Hamline

Theft—A vehicle was stolen on Marshall Avenue and Syndicate Street during the

evening of November 14-15.

—Two circular saws, two impact drivers and three batteries were stolen from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Portland Avenue during the evening of November 17-18.

—A shoplifter stole more than \$500 in merchandise from the Midway Target at 10:09 p.m. Saturday, November 24.

—Hand and power tools worth \$10,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1100 block of Summit Avenue at 11:55 a.m. Monday, November 26.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—A burglary was reported at the Lexington Hills Apartments, 360 S. Lexington Pkwy., at 9:44 a.m. Monday, November 19.

—A break-in occurred at a commercial building at 1326 Grand Ave. between November 20-21.

—Sweet Peas Public House, 472 S. Snelling Ave., was broken into at 5:41 a.m. Thursday, November 22.

—Police observed a van suspected of being involved in several thefts in the area and arrested a 34-year-old man for possession of burglary tools and for two felony warrants at 5 a.m. Friday, November 23, on Griggs Street and Jefferson Avenue.

Theft—A backpack with cellphone, clothes and wallet was stolen from a vehicle on Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard between 10-11:05 a.m. Sunday, November 18.

—Vehicles were stolen on the 200 block of Mount Curve Boulevard on November 22, and on Snelling and St. Clair avenues on November 22-23.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A home burglary was reported on the 2100 block of Patricia Street at 4:28 p.m. Friday, November 9.

—Power tools were reported stolen from an office on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 6:35 a.m. Monday, November 12.

—Golf clubs, bicycles and other items were stolen from several storage units and vehicles at a residential complex on the 700 block of South Plaza Way between 7:02 a.m.-3:43 p.m. Wednesday, November 14.

Theft—CDs were stolen from a vehicle on the 1000 block of Twin Circle Drive during the evening of November 8-9.

—A male suspect stole a display case full of electronic cigarettes at 10 p.m. Saturday, November 10, on the 1200 block of Mendota

Heights Road.

Miscellaneous—Police received a report of an animal attack between a pet fox and a dog at 2:28 p.m. Friday, November 9, on the 700 block of Third Avenue. Police said the animals were reportedly up to date on their shots.

Merriam Park

Burglary—Two guitars and other musical equipment were stolen from a recording studio on the 500 block of North Prior Avenue on Tuesday, November 20.

Theft—A backpack with clothes was stolen from a vehicle on Laurel Avenue and Wheeler Street during the evening of November 15-16.

—A laptop computer and medication were stolen from a vehicle on Snelling and Ashland avenues at 8 p.m. Thursday, November 15.

—Police received a report of a carjacking at gunpoint with a 3-year-old boy in the vehicle at 2 a.m. Monday, November 19, at Denny's, 1664 University Ave. A 36-year-old man was arrested for the theft, but it was later discovered that the victim lied about the gun and child. A charge of making a false report to police was pending.

—A man said unknown suspects kept his cellphone when he could not pay for a ride from Minneapolis to the University of St. Thomas at 4 a.m. Saturday, November 24.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 1700 block of Carroll Avenue at 9:30 p.m. Thursday, November 8.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—A break-in was reported at Palda and Sons, 1462 Dayton Ave., at 8:37 a.m. Monday, November 19.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1300 block of Ashland Avenue on November 15 and on the 1300 block of University Avenue on November 24.

Summit Hill

Burglary—Baseball cards and a coin collection were stolen from a storage locker that was broken into between November 8-22 at an apartment building on the 1000 block of Grand Ave.

—Several items were stolen from a storage locker at an apartment building on the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue between November 12-16.

—An occupied residence was broken into on the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue at 10:23 a.m. Friday, November 16.

—Fjallraven, 797 Grand Ave., was burglarized during the evening of November 17-18.

—A residence was burglarized on the 800 block of Fairmount Avenue between 9:35-10:27 a.m. Tuesday, November 27.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 800 block of Lincoln Avenue on November 12 and on the 700 block of Grand Avenue on November 25.

—Kick plates worth more than \$1,000 were reported stolen at Linwood School, 1023 Osceola Ave., at 2:18 a.m. Sunday, November 18.

—A package was stolen on Grand Avenue and Milton Street between 5:50-7:30 p.m. Monday, November 19.

—A male suspect broke a window and stole a purse from a vehicle on the 1000 block of Grand Avenue at 11:37 a.m. Friday, November 23, before driving off in a white Cadillac.

—Two male suspects stole more than \$1,000 in coats from the North Face, 799 Grand Ave., around 10:20 a.m. Monday, November 26.

Miscellaneous—Clinton Leonard Fougrette, 59, was charged with first-degree criminal damage to property after using an SUV to ram the gates of the Governor's Residence, 1006 Summit Ave., at 9:36 p.m. Sunday, November 25. He said he wanted to speak with the governor. Damage was estimated at \$50,000-\$75,000.

Summit-University

Theft—Construction tools were stolen on the 800 block of Selby Avenue between November 9-13.

—Laptop computers were stolen from two vehicles on the 500 block of Selby Avenue between 8:30-8:45 p.m. Thursday, November 15.

—Vehicles were stolen on the 200 block of Selby Avenue on November 15-16, on the 500 block of Portland Avenue on November 16-17 and on the 1000 block of Ashland Avenue on November 19.

—Several thefts from vehicles were reported on the 400 block of Selby Avenue between 6:07-6:30 p.m. Friday, November 16. Items stolen included a backpack with clothing, a laptop computer, and a backpack with a laptop, iPad and Social Security card.

—Power tools, a stereo and batteries were stolen from a vehicle on Oxford Street and Ashland Avenue during the evening of November 21-22.

CRIME REPORT ► 11

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10◀ CRIME REPORT

—Cash and car keys were stolen from an apartment on the 100 block of North Chatsworth Street during the evening of November 22-23.

Weapons—Police observed a fight involving around 20 people in the parking lot of the BP Station, 374 N. Lexington Pkwy., at 12:09 a.m. Wednesday, November 21. Several of the vehicles involved were occupied by people who were displaying handguns. One vehicle was detained by police at gunpoint. Several squad cars responded to the incident and police took several people into custody. Police said it was not the first large fight where groups of people have met at the station.

West End

Burglary—Claddagh Coffee, 459 W. Seventh St., was burglarized at 3:49 a.m. Saturday, November 10.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 200 block of West Kellogg Boulevard on November 15, on the 1700 block of West Seventh Street on November 18 and on the 200 block of West Seventh Street on November 24.

—A tailgate was stolen from a truck on the 800 block of James Avenue during the evening of November 16-17.

—A cable lock was cut and a bicycle was stolen from the garage at the Victoria Park 2 Apartments, 750 Otto Ave., between November 21-24. A wallet also was stolen from a vehicle parked there between 3:30-6:58 a.m. Saturday, November 24.

—A wallet was reported stolen at Pajarito's, 605 W. Seventh St., between 7-9 p.m. Friday, November 23.

Assault—A female was reportedly assaulted at Cossetta's, 211 W. Seventh St., at 5:40 p.m. Friday, November 16. Medics were requested.

—A 27-year-old man was arrested for assaulting a security guard in the emergency room at United Hospital around 6:29 a.m. Monday, November 26.

Weapons—A domestic assault with a firearm was reported on the 600 block of James Avenue at 4:14 a.m. Thursday, November 22.

—The reckless discharge of a firearm was reported on the 300 block of North Smith Avenue at 10:35 p.m. Monday, November 26.

Miscellaneous—A 36-year-old woman was cited for dumping garbage on the driveway of a residence on the 1800 block of Ivan Way at 12:25 p.m. Wednesday, November 14.

—A 47-year-old man was arrested for occupying a condemned dwelling and fleeing from police officers at 8:58 p.m. Thursday, November 15, on the 900 block of Jefferson Avenue.

—Felony damage to property was reported at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation on Drake Street and Watson Avenue at 7:45 p.m. Friday, November 23.

WSNAC applauds proposal for two new dorms at St. Thomas

Plans by the University of St. Thomas to build two new residence halls on its north campus, renovate two other dorms, and move to a residency requirement for freshmen and sophomores drew cheers and applause at the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) meeting on November 20.

"Thank you," said WSNAC co-chair and Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association representative Rachel Westermeyer. "I've been waiting for this since 2010."

St. Thomas plans to tear down the John Paul II Residence Hall north of the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas as well as the faculty apartments south of the chapel. They will be replaced with a five-story building for 480 first-year students and a four- or five-story building for 200 second-year students, respectively. Construction is expected to start next summer and be finished by the fall of 2020.

Dowling and Brady halls on the north campus also will be renovated as part of the \$85 million project. The work will be staged over the next two to three summers to allow for occupancy during the academic year.

WSNAC member and Macalester-Groveland Community Council representative Marc Manderscheid suggested that the new dorm on the faculty apartments site could be seven stories tall under the campus' current conditional use permit. "These are likely to be your last new residence halls on the north campus," he said. "You could fit a more substantial building on the faculty site."

Mark Vangsgard, the university's vice president for business affairs and chief financial officer, said a taller building there could overshadow the chapel, which is slated for its own \$12.7 million renovation and expansion beginning next year. Manderscheid said the taller residence hall could be designed with stepbacks to make it appear shorter. St. Thomas officials did not dismiss the idea out of hand for a larger building there.

University officials will return to WSNAC in the months ahead to discuss details of the project.

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JANUARY

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13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31

Jan. 2: Education
Health and Fitness
Jan. 16: Education
Jan. 30: Summer Camps
Valentine's Day

FEBRUARY

3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28

Feb. 13: Boomers & Beyond
Feb. 27: Home Improvement
St. Patrick's Day

MARCH

3 4 5 6 7 8 9
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31

Mar. 13: Mac-Grove/Highland
Home Improvement Fair
St. Patrick's Day
Mar. 27: Home Improvement

APRIL

1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13
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April 10: Home Improvement
Easter
April 24: Gardening
Cinco De Mayo

MAY

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May 8: Health & Fitness
Graduation
Mother's Day
May 22: Grand Old Day

JUNE

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30

June 5: Father's Day
June 19: Boomers & Beyond

JULY

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July 17: Highland Fest
Rondo Days
July 31: Education

AUGUST

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Aug. 14: Education
Aug. 28: Home Improvement

SEPTEMBER

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Sept. 11: Home Improvement
Selby JazzFest
Sept. 25: Home Improvement

OCTOBER

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Oct. 9: Boomers & Beyond
Halloween
Oct. 23: General Election
Halloween

NOVEMBER

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Nov. 6: Holiday Gift Ideas
Nov. 20: Holiday Gift Ideas

DECEMBER

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15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31 1 2 3 4

Dec. 4: Holiday Gift Ideas
Grand Meander
Dec. 18: Last Minute Gift Guide
Health & Fitness
Jan. 1: Education
Health & Fitness

From Laos to St. Paul, District 64A's new House rep has come a long way

BY KEVIN DRISCOLL

Kaohly Her comes to her new status as state representative-elect in St. Paul's District 64A with a master's degree in business administration, broad experience in both the public and private sectors and a reputation for success in building relationships and solving problems.

A newcomer to political office, Her won the DFL endorsement last spring after incumbent Erin Murphy decided to run for governor. She defeated her Republican opponent, Patrick J.D. Griffin, 84 to 16 percent in the general election.

Married and the mother of two children, Her lives in the Summit-University neighborhood. She was born in Laos in 1973, the second of six children, and lived for close to a year in a Thai refugee camp before immigrating to the U.S. in 1977 at the age of 4.

She spent most of her childhood in Appleton, Wisconsin, where her father worked at the local paper mill and her mother was a teacher's aide. After graduating from high school, she earned a degree in business administration and finance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1995 and moved to St. Paul. She earned an MBA from Northeastern University in Boston and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in educational leadership at the University of St. Thomas.

Her is currently employed as a policy aide in St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter's office. "We've been working on establishing a college savings program for every child in St. Paul and on early childhood education programs," she said. However, she plans to take a leave of absence just prior to the opening of the legislative session on January 8. "We'll assess in May, after the session, whether I can return to

the mayor's office," she said.

Her has worked as a consultant to the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, director of Grants Process and Administration at Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, executive director of Hmong Women Achieving Together and in several positions at American Express.

She served as the administrator for the St. Paul School Board in 2016-17, a 13-month stint that impressed board member Jon Schumacher. "Kaohly was very personable and had wide-ranging, high-level experience in both the for-profit and nonprofit worlds," he said. "She was also highly organized and knowledgeable in financial matters."

"Her's empathy and relationship-building skills helped to bring together a school district and Board of Education that were sometimes at odds," Schumacher added. "She garnered trust across all constituencies, so she was able to help represent differing perspectives accurately. That led to inclusive and effective problem-solving. Those skills should be incredibly helpful in identifying concerns and building consensus around solutions in a deeply divided Legislature."

As the School Board administrator, Her "was a strong advocate for partnerships among schools, libraries, recreation centers, law enforcement and youth development programs," said Kristin Beckmann, deputy mayor under former Mayor Chris Coleman. "Her ability to make community connections will allow her to draw on the many talented people in District 64A to help her form positions on state issues. She will represent us well because she believes in engaging people."

Her has also served on the St. Paul Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission, the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, the



District 64A Representative-elect Kaohly Her is poised to take her place among the DFL majority in the Minnesota House. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Strategic Planning Committee for Neighborhood House and the St. Paul Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Commission.

As a freshman legislator, Her will not have much of a choice for committee assignments. However, she said, "with my finance background, I hope to join funding and policy committees for education, taxes, environment and natural resources, capital investment, universal health care and affordable and secure housing. Most of my constituents are well-educated and economically comfortable. They asked me during the campaign to focus on statewide issues, to be sure the rural areas aren't forgotten."

"Kaohly is smart and honest and she genuinely cares about her effect on the world," said Bo Thao-Urabe, senior director of capacity building and organizational learning for

Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. Thao-Urabe is a fellow Laotian immigrant who met Her when they were children in Chicago and followed her to Wisconsin and Minnesota where together they started the Building More Philanthropy with Purpose Giving Circle.

"That combination (of traits), along with her ability to build teamwork, makes Her an effective leader," Thao-Urabe said. "She has always been driven by social justice, and I believe this will continue to drive her actions. I know she will ensure that the voices of her constituents, especially those most impacted by policy, are heard."

District 64A includes the Merriam Park, Summit Hill and St. Anthony Park neighborhoods and part of the Macalester-Groveland, Hamline-Midway, Snelling-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline and Summit-University areas.

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Reimagine the railway—A public hearing on the preliminary design study for reusing the Canadian Pacific/Ford Spur railway property will be held at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 5, in the St. Paul City Council Chambers, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd. The city is studying potential reuses for the 5-mile railway corridor that used to serve the Ford plant in Highland Park. For information on the study, visit stpaul.gov/fordspurstudy.

Highland 9-Hole—For those who missed the second public meeting on the possible repurposing of the Highland 9-Hole Golf Course on November 19, the presentation is now available at tinyurl.com/y8rag6ow.

Ford site survey—Ryan Companies has put together a brief survey to help schedule a fifth neighborhood meeting regarding its plans to redevelop the Ford's former assembly plant. Ryan wants to determine a meeting time that is convenient for most people, especially those who have not been able to attend the previous meetings. The survey is at tinyurl.com/y8zvuo93.

Ford plan comments—The comment period has begun for the Ford site's zoning and master plan. Comments on the proposed amendments to the city's plan can be made online at opentownhall.com/6951, emailed to FordSitePlanning@ci.stpaul.mn.us or mailed to St. Paul Planning Commission, 25 W. Fourth St., Suite 1400, St. Paul, MN 55102. The comment period closes on January 24. All public testimony must include a street address as part of the public record.

Upcoming meeting—HDC board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, December 6, Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Calling all creative types—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council is looking for people to submit T-shirt designs that represent the neighborhood. The winning design will be printed on shirts that will be sold to the public. The submission deadline is December 31. For full contest details, visit macgrove.org/2019tshirt.

Home Improvement Fair—Registration is now open for businesses and organizations that want to participate in the Macalester-Groveland & Highland Park Home Improvement Fair. The 27th annual fair will take place from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, March 16, at Cretin-Derham Hall, 550 S. Albert St. Visit macgrove.org/hif2019 for a registration form.

Science of saving—People can save on visits to the Science Museum of Minnesota by signing up at the community council's office in the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St. Office hours are 3-6 p.m. Mondays and noon-3 p.m. Thursdays.

Join a committee—The community council has three standing committees that meet once a month. Those who attend three consecutive meetings can become voting members.

Upcoming meetings—No board or committee meetings will be held in December.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

Neighborhood Honor Roll—The Summit Hill Association is seeking nominations for inclusion on the St. Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll. This year, one honoree will be selected from each of three categories—individuals, businesses and organizations. Email nominations to info@summithillassociation.org, or visit the SHA website citing the name of a nominee and including a brief statement about why they should be recognized. Nominations will be accepted until the end of the year.

HPC seeks feedback—The St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission will hold a public listening session for property owners in the Historic Hill District from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 11, at the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, 270 Kent St. The HPC is currently seeking comments on the policies, procedures and impact of heritage preservation in St. Paul. Links to a questionnaire, reference information and recent news articles will be available on the SHA's website.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Neighborhood Honor Roll—Every year, the Union Park District Council recognizes three outstanding community members or groups from the area for inclusion on the St. Paul

Neighborhood Honor Roll. The inductees will be honored during a citywide celebration early next year. Email nominations to alexa@unionparkdc.org.

Community Benefits Fund—The UPDC cosponsored a discussion on November 28 regarding a proposed Community Benefits Fund for the area around the new Allianz Field soccer stadium. Those who could not make the event are asked to fill out a short survey to provide feedback on the proposed fund at Bit.ly/MidwayBenefits.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 5, Otto Hall at Episcopal Homes, 1860 University Ave.; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 10, 1821 University Ave., Suite 127; Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 17, 1821 University Ave., Suite 330; and Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 19, Merriam Park Recreation Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave.

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

West 7th

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Board update—At its meeting on November 12, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's board of directors heard two presentations. The first was from former board member Dave Bredemus about the federation's history with Linwood Monroe School over the decades. The second was from St. Paul Library director Catherine Penkert about the proposed elimination of late fines, the Read Brave St. Paul program, and updates on the West Seventh Library. The board's next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, December 10, at 974 W. Seventh St.

Neighborhood Honor Roll—The Fort Road Federation is seeking nominations of outstanding individuals, businesses and organizations from the West Seventh area to be included on the St. Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll. For information and a nomination form, visit the federation's website.

Stay in touch—Neighbors are invited to "like" the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation on its Facebook page and subscribe to its e-newsletter on its website.

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A Simple Christmas Dinner

A SHORT STORY BY ROGER BARR

On the first Sunday in December, Matthew Bartholomew finished his nightly inspection and paused on the sidewalk to admire the familiar crèche figures in his front yard. All was quiet on Pinehurst Avenue. In the stable Mary and Joseph sat next to the manger where the infant Jesus slumbered. Behind them in the shadows stood the two cows and the donkey. Beside the stable, six shepherds who came in search of what the Lord had made known to them tended their flock of 25 sheep. Opposite the shepherds, three wise men from the east bearing gifts, bowed in adoration, their camels forming a regal line behind them. A heavenly host of angels hovered above the stable, praising God.

Everything was in order, but Matt felt uneasy about the approaching holiday, now just three weeks away. It was more than the post-election doldrums, which this year felt a lot like the pre-election doldrums. The feeling was something he couldn't quite put his finger on.

The Bartholomew household's Christmas celebration embraced a host of beloved traditions. These days, however, getting the whole family together was complicated. Matt and Deidre were empty-nesters. Daughter Allison lived in Washington, D.C., where she worked for the federal government. She hadn't come home for Thanksgiving and had missed that weekend's extended Bartholomew family dinner and crèche-lighting ceremony. Son Christopher, a senior at Northland College in Wisconsin, came home only for holidays.

In a series of group emails, everyone confessed that they didn't really need any Christmas gifts. Each said what they wanted most was just to be together for the holiday. Allison had best captured their collective sentiment: "Everything is so complicated these days. All I want for Christmas is to get away from everything, be home with all of you and celebrate Christmas just like we always do."

They had all agreed to adhere strictly to tradition this year. On Christmas Eve, they'd attend the candlelight service at New Shepherd. They'd enjoy their traditional spaghetti dinner. They'd exchange Secret Santa gifts that cost no money and sit in the living room, admire the Christmas tree and tell stories. They'd hang their stockings on the same hooks that Matt and his siblings had used as children. Christmas morning, they'd open presents and enjoy a pancake breakfast. Deidre would prepare Christmas dinner—the menu varied from year to year. After dinner, they'd play board games or just relax.

Matt moved on to the next step in his nightly routine. For the past 15 years he had collected food donations from crèche visitors for the Open Cupboard Food Shelf. He checked the donation barrels, saw that both were only half full and decided to wait until morning to swap the filled barrels with empty ones. He armed the security system.

Everything looked perfect. That, he real-

ized, was the reason he felt uneasy—not because the approaching holiday wouldn't be perfect, but because it probably would be. They all drew comfort from the ritual of holiday traditions, but in clinging to tradition—getting away from everything, as Allison put it—were they just insulating themselves from the world around them?

Matt looked at the crèche figures. What would have happened long ago if the shepherds had remained safely in their fields instead of venturing in search of the Christ child? What if the wise men had ignored the star instead of following it to Bethlehem?

♦ ♦ ♦

Retired now, Matt volunteered at the Open Cupboard Food Shelf on Wednesday afternoons. The Open Cupboard occupied the two-car garage behind the house of Matt's longtime friend, Handyman. Handyman was a force of nature. A towering figure with a shaved head and coffee-colored skin, he worked as a county social worker by day and operated the Open Cupboard nights and weekends. They had been friends since Matt began collecting food donations.

Matt stepped into the warmth of the Open Cupboard's cramped interior expecting the place to be empty on a work day. Handyman used the honor system. The service door had no lock. There were no applications, no limits on quantity. People helped themselves to canned goods, packaged food and perishables from the cooler. Sometimes people visited in the middle of the night. Everyone obeyed the handwritten signs: "Help yourself. Leave some for the next person." The Open Cupboard doubled as an emergency shelter. On cold winter mornings, Handyman often found somebody sleeping in one of the aisles. He never turned anyone away.

A stately Christmas tree decorated with candy canes stood at the end of the middle row of shelves. In large red letters, the words Merry Christmas hung on a string in front of the array of political signs that graced the walls, the newest of which read, "Can't we all just get along?"

To Matt's surprise, Handyman was sitting at his desk in the corner, sifting through the mountain of papers piled in front of him. "I imagine an inspector will drop in on me." Handyman's voice was elevated.

"When?" a voice called from one of the narrow aisles. Matt recognized the voice as that of Darryl Carter, the retired police officer.

"Don't know," Handyman said. "Hey, Matt."

"Hey yourself. Off today?"

Handyman nodded.

"Do you have to do anything to get ready?" Carter called.

"Besides conducting business as usual?" Handyman said.

Carter stepped out of the far aisle. "You're not taking this seriously."

"Taking what seriously?" Matt asked.

Handyman glared at Carter. "Oh, some guy who moved in down the street last summer filed a complaint about all the 'disruptive traffic' in the alley. He decided it's all because of Open Cupboard, so he sicced the city on me, trying to get me shut down."

"You're kidding," Matt said.

"I wish I was."

"You've been here for years. What's changed?"

"Far as I can see, the only change is Mr. Not in My Backyard moved in."

"Can he close you down?!" Matt asked.

"Well, he thinks so," Handyman said.

"He's not taking this seriously," Carter said.

Handyman waved the issue away. "I'll straighten it out somehow. This ain't my first rodeo."

"Do you need references?" Matt asked. "I could write a letter."

Handyman shrugged. "Couldn't hurt."

"What do you want me to do today?"

"Several cases of canned goods just came in. You can unpack and shelve those."

Everyone returned to work. They talked back and forth across the aisles. People like Handyman's neighbor, they agreed, made everything more complicated than it needed to be, than it used to be.

"What's everybody doing Christmas Day this year?" Carter asked to change the subject.

"I'll just be around here," Handyman said.

"Denard'll be home on leave. He's finished his year's deployment in Afghanistan. You?"

"We're home," Carter said. "Lucille and I had planned to go to Jamaica—just the two of us. Last year we went to Chicago so Kayla could show us their new condo. This year she begged to come home, but she won't say why. Lucille is afraid Kayla and Isaiah are having marital trouble since the baby came. So, they're spending the holiday with us."

"Matt, how 'bout you?" Handyman asked.

Matt felt his uneasiness return. They were expecting to have a perfect holiday. No threats from angry neighbors, no concerns about struggling children. "Nothing special," he said. "A simple Christmas dinner with just the four of us. You're welcome to stop by in the afternoon."

♦ ♦ ♦

Ironically, Allison was the first to throw a wrench into the family's Christmas dinner plans. "I have a big favor to ask of everyone," she wrote in an email to all of them titled URGENT! "I know we agreed it would be just us this Christmas, but I just got a late birthday card from Lynn. She has no plans for Christmas. Confidentially, I don't think she can afford to drive home to Indiana. She was our Mary Poppins! I can't stand the idea of her being alone. Can she have Christmas dinner with us? Please? Sorry to mess up our plans!"

Christopher replied that having their old nanny over for dinner was fine with him, but left the decision to Matt and Deidre.

"What do you think?" Matt asked.

"I did have my heart set on there being just the four of us," Deidre said. "How many more years do we have with just we four? I love our traditions."

"I do, too," Matt agreed.

"Are we saying no, then?"

"We could still do everything else. It's just Christmas dinner that'd be different."

"Then we're saying yes?"

"It's fine with me," Matt said. "What's most important to you?"

"Getting us all together. I do hate the thought of Lynn being alone. She was part of our household. The kids love her. As long as we're all under the same roof, I guess I don't mind having a dinner guest."

"Then we're saying yes."

"We had turkey for Thanksgiving," Deidre said. "I was thinking stuffed Cornish game hens for Christmas dinner would be nice, one for each of us. They look so pretty on our holiday dishes. I can squeeze one more into the oven."

♦ ♦ ♦

Christopher was the next to throw them a curve ball. "A guy on my floor, Dave, is from overseas," he emailed. "He's not going home over holiday break. The dorm is closed the weeks before and after Christmas. He's got nowhere to go. Since Allison invited Lynn for Christmas dinner, can he stay with us? I've told him all about our crèche. He wants to see it. He's very interested in how we celebrate Christmas."

"We said 'yes' to Allison," Deidre said.

"It's for two weeks," Matt said.

"I know," Deidre said, "but Chris says he's got nowhere to go."

"The best laid plans of mice and men," Matt said.

"Chefs, too," Deidre sighed. "If we're six for dinner, I'll have to rethink Cornish game hens."

Matt and Deidre emailed their OK. Their reply drew a guarded response from Allison that excluded Christopher. "I know I started this by asking if Lynn could come for Christmas dinner," she wrote, "but I thought we all agreed to keep it to just 'us' this year. Over Christmas, I was looking forward to getting away from everything that drives me crazy. I mean, we all know Lynn. It's different having a complete stranger join us."

"We understand," Matt replied. "But like Lynn, he's got nowhere else to go. We can't say 'no.'"

"I suppose not," Allison replied.

♦ ♦ ♦

At his next Open Cupboard shift, Matt gave Handyman an envelope. "My character reference," he said. "I'm testifying that indeed you're a character."

Handyman smiled. "I am that."

"Any word when this inspection will happen?"

Handyman shrugged. "They don't make appointments, they just knock on your door and come in."

"What'll you do if they find problems?"

"Deal with them then. Right now I'm focused on feeding hungry people over the holiday."

"I assume you tried to talk to this neighbor?"

Handyman nodded. "I did, but he's got a bee in his bonnet. He's not interested in talking." Handyman pulled on his coat. "Since you're here, I'm gonna run some errands."

Matt sorted through the Christmas CDs and finally selected "Soul Christmas." A falsetto, doo-wop rendition of "White Christmas" filled the air. As the soulful interpretations of familiar songs played, Matt tidied the shelves. He thought about how complicated Handyman's life was compared to his own, the headaches he put up with and shrugged off.



As Matt wound up his shift, Carter stepped through the service door. He helped himself to a candy cane from the Christmas tree. "Say," Carter said, "you said to drop by on Christmas Day. Kayla wants to show Isaiah your nativity. Maybe you could give them a little tour? What time would be good? We don't want to interrupt your plans."

"How's four o'clock?" Matt suggested. Carter gave him a thumbs-up. "Smooth."

♦ ♦ ♦

To keep a promise he made to his sister Carol before she died of cancer in 2014, Matt called his nieces every couple of weeks. Both single, Elizabeth and Ann shared an apartment in Minneapolis. They had no land line, so Matt alternated calling the girls on their cell phones. The calls were short, covering their jobs and family news. This time, when he called Ann, there was something exciting to discuss. At the Bartholomew family Thanksgiving get-together, Ann had told him she had reestablished contact with their father, who lived in Florida and had been absent from their lives since elementary school. She'd invited him to spend Christmas with them and to Matt's surprise Jack had agreed.

"So," Matt said, "you looking forward to seeing your father in a few days?"

"He's not coming." Ann's tone was bitter.

"Not coming? Did he say why?"

"Did he ever?" Ann said. "I thought maybe he'd finally changed after all these years."

"What are you doing for Christmas then?"

"We haven't really talked about it."

Matt glanced at Deidre. Before he could even mouth the question, she nodded her head.

"Why don't you come here for Christmas dinner?" Matt offered.

"No, that's too much trouble for you."

"No trouble," Matt said. "We always have room for you and Elizabeth."

"Well, if it's no trouble, sure! Thanks, Uncle Matt."

Matt clicked off his phone and looked at his wife. "From just us four to dinner for eight. How did that happen?"

"We can't have those girls be all alone on Christmas Day," Deidre said. "Nobody should be alone on Christmas."

♦ ♦ ♦

According to Christopher's text, the bus from Duluth would arrive at 7:50 p.m. As Matt and Deidre drove to Union Depot, they went over their holiday plans.

"Adding the girls eliminates Cornish game hens for sure," Deidre said. "Maybe I'll make a ham. Everybody likes ham."

"With cloves and pineapple?" Matt asked. "I'm in. Say, I told you I'd invited Handyman and Carter to drop by on Christmas Day. This afternoon, Carter asked what time they should come. His daughter wants to show her husband our crèche. Lucille thinks they're having marital problems and that's why they're coming home for Christmas. I told them four o'clock."

"I was planning to serve dinner at four o'clock," Deidre said.

"Oh. Sorry. Do you want me to change the time?"

"How many are there?"

"Four adults and a baby."

"If we're having a ham, there'll be plenty. You may as well invite them for dinner, too, since the genie is already out of the bottle."

"Uh," Matt said, "I also invited Handyman. He hasn't said if he's coming."

"It would be nice to have a final count," Deidre said.

"If he comes, his son Denard will be with him."

Even in the darkness of the car, Matt could see the look of bemusement on Deidre's face. "This dinner is taking on a life of its own."

At the depot, the door of the bus hissed

open and a dozen passengers filed off toting backpacks and small carry-ons. Christopher appeared to be alone. "Where's your friend?" Matt said.

"Right here," Christopher said, pointing to the dark-skinned figure behind him. "Dave, these are my parents. Parents, meet Dave."

Matt smothered his embarrassment and took the hand extended to him. "Um, I'm glad to meet you." He could tell by the look on the young man's face that he hadn't successfully covered his surprise.

"We're glad to have you, Dave," Deidre said.

"My actual name is Daud," the young man said. "That's David in English. Everyone on the floor calls me Dave. I am from Ethiopia, from Addis Ababa, the capital city."

"Welcome to St. Paul," Matt said lamely. "We're a capital city, too."

On the drive home, they learned their holiday guest was majoring in environmental studies with the intention of returning to his homeland to educate Ethiopians about environmental issues.

"I feel privileged to holiday with you," Dave said. "I had planned to go home to Ethiopia for a month, but I am afraid I may not be readmitted into the U.S. My family decided it was best if I remained. It is exciting to visit an American home. Christopher told me all about your Christmas traditions. I am very interested to see your presentation of the birth of Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth is a descendant of David, where my name comes from. In Islam, David is considered a prophet or a messenger from God."

At home, Christopher headed straight for the refrigerator. "Mom, you got anything to eat? We're starved."

"There's pork roast left over from dinner," Deidre said.

Christopher and Dave exchanged glances. "Dave is Muslim, Mom," Christopher said. "He doesn't eat pork."

"I'm sure we can find something else," Deidre said. "Just tell me what you'd like."

Later, after the tour of the crèche was finished and Christopher and Dave had gone upstairs, Matt and Deidre convened in the living room. "There goes my Christmas ham," Deidre lamented.

"He's here for two weeks," Matt said. "How do we manage this?"

"I'll ask him what his favorite American foods are," Deidre said. "There are Ethiopian restaurants in town."

"I'm sorry this has gotten so complicated," Matt said.

"Pffff!" Deidre scoffed. "This isn't complicated. A little inconvenient, maybe. Complicated is being unable to leave the country because you're afraid you won't get readmitted. All I have to do is adjust the menu. Maybe I'll bake a turkey after all—a big one."

Matt thought of their guest's dilemma and Handyman's ongoing conflict with his neighbor. "I'm beginning to think Dickens had it right."

"What?" Deidre asked. "You mean like in *A Christmas Carol*? The turkey in the poulterer's window, the one as big as me?"

"Different book," Matt said. I was thinking of *A Tale of Two Cities*. "The best of times, the worst of times."

♦ ♦ ♦

The next morning, Matt called Carter and extended the invitation to include Christmas dinner. An hour later Carter called back.

"Lucille says we'd love to come, but only if she can bring dessert. Lucille bakes the best sweet potato pie you've ever tasted."

"Sweet potato pie is fine with me," Deidre said.

Next Matt called Handyman. When he didn't answer, Matt left a message. It was evening before Handyman returned the call.

"Have to pass," Handyman said. "I told you

I always make a holiday meal for whoever shows up. Most years I get around a dozen. These homeless, phantom men are a brotherhood. They look out for one another. My bones are telling me there'll be more this year. If I'm not here, what'll they do?" Handyman paused. "You folks should come over here! I'm making my famous short ribs."

"What about your neighbor?" Matt asked. "All the disruption, I mean?"

"What about him?" Handyman said. "You can't surrender what you do just because someone disagrees with you."

"If you're going to have a crowd and you add the 13 of us, do you have room for everyone?"

"No," Handyman said. "Maybe I'll rent a tent." He chuckled. "Yeah, I like the idea of a big tent."

"You're going to rent a tent in the dead of winter?"

"Well, I'll figure something out."

"I could ask about using New Shepherd Church," Matt volunteered. "There's nothing planned for Christmas Day. The church will be locked."

"I can't leave here," Handyman reminded Matt. "What if someone showed up while I was gone?"

"You could post a meeting time," Matt said. "We could shuttle everyone over to the church."

The line was silent. "All right," Handyman said. "You talked me into it, given everything. Long as everyone gets a good meal, I don't care where it's served."

When Matt explained Handyman's dilemma and broached the idea of moving Christmas dinner to New Shepherd, his wife gave him a devilish look over the top of her reading glasses. "Are you sure you don't want to invite anyone else? The U. S. Army maybe?"

"What's their phone number?" Matt deadpanned.

"Well," Deidre said, "It makes sense, I guess, given everything. Long as we have Christmas Eve at home, I'm happy to eat Christmas dinner anywhere."

Matt called Pastor Buzza. The pastor listened while Matt explained the situation and made his request. "You can use our community room," the pastor said. "The kitchen, too. I'll come over myself and open the doors. But ... can I ask a favor in return? Could we open the dinner up to the congregation? You'd be surprised how many people don't have family or were overlooked by friends and will spend Christmas Day alone. Let's make it potluck. We could announce it during Sunday's service and send out an email blast."

Why not, Matt thought, what was one more extension of the guest list? "We'd need to come early to set up the room," he said.

"Leave that to me," the pastor said.

"I think we're set," Matt said to Deidre after ending the call.

"Which one of us gets to break the good news to Allison?" Deidre asked.

♦ ♦ ♦

On Christmas Day, the Bartholomew family and their guests Lynn and Dave arrived at New Shepherd at 1:30 p.m., a half hour before the potluck's advertised starting time. The community room had already been set up. Two long tables placed end to end formed a buffet line. Eight round tables, each set with eight chairs, filled most of the room.

Deidre and Lynn took charge of the kitchen. They started the coffee pots. Matt and Allison stocked the buffet line with plates, napkins and cutlery. Christopher and Dave set up a water station.

One by one the guests started to arrive. Matt organized the buffet line by courses: rolls and breads followed by salads, main dishes, side dishes and desserts. The Carters arrived and Lucille placed three sweet potato pies among the desserts. Handyman dropped

off his short ribs and he and Carter drove back to Open Cupboard to shuttle those who had gathered there for a ride. Elizabeth and Ann arrived carrying a crock pot filled with the meatballs their mother always brought to the family potluck. Deidre brought out two trays loaded with sliced turkey.

Among the guests, Matt recognized several clients from the Open Cupboard and a dozen men whom he had never seen before. He was surprised by the number of church members. There were several families with small children, but most were older members, many who had come alone.

The room filled and they set out two more tables. The buzz of conversation and the rich aroma of brewing coffee warmed the room. As they waited for Handyman and Carter to return from Open Cupboard, Matt felt a tap on his shoulder.

"Can I talk to you and Mom?"

In the vestibule, Allison studied the floor a moment before looking up at them. "I just wanted to say I'm sorry for the way I've been acting. I already told Chris and his friend Dave. I admit I didn't want to share our holiday. I just wanted to get away from everything. But after getting to know Chris' friend and seeing everyone here, hearing the buzz of all these people talking, having a good time, I decided I was being a little selfish. This is nice."

They exchanged hugs.

"Do you suppose anyone added humble pie to the buffet table?" Allison asked.

At two o'clock, Handyman, Denard and Carter ushered in another dozen men. All were dressed in multiple layers. Some carried black garbage bags stuffed with their possessions.

Matt called for attention. "Merry Christmas, everyone!" he said. "This Christmas dinner is a long way from the one we Bartholomews had planned. Originally, it was just the four of us, but then we started adding guests because we didn't want anyone to be alone on Christmas Day. At one point, my friend Handyman suggested renting a big tent. Well, we're here instead, and though there's no canvas over our heads, we're still gathered under a big tent. All of us—even Handyman who never compromises his principles—let go of something or took a little risk to be here, just like the shepherds and the wise men did. Judging from the buzz of conversation and what I see on the buffet table, we're receiving far more than we gave up." Matt paused. "I think this is the Christmas dinner we wanted to have all along."

Pastor Buzza led the saying of grace and kept it short: "Gracious God, we give thanks for this Christmas Day to celebrate our Savior's birth and your promise of peace on earth for us all. Thank you for this delicious food and for each other. We are all your children, Amen. Let's eat!"

A line quickly formed. As the unofficial hosts, it seemed appropriate for the Bartholomew family and their guests to let the others go first. As they waited in line, a white-haired woman whose face Matt recognized from Sundays but whose name he didn't know paused as she limped by with her loaded plate.

"Thank you," she said. "This sure beats the microwave dinner I planned to eat alone today."

As they reached the front of the line, Matt gestured for the others to go first. Then, as he filled his own plate, he thought again of the shepherds and the wise men and the message of hope they carried away from the stable in Bethlehem. Here, today, all that remained was for each of them to carry this moment of community back to their fields or their own country by another road. It seemed like such a simple thing to do.

Next year, Matt vowed, they would do this again, but start earlier, plan better. Then on Christmas day...

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Microapartments eyed for West End

Five-story building planned near Labor Center

By JANE MCCLURE

The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation reviewed McGough Development's conceptual plans in October for a five-story building of microapartments to be built in a triangular area bounded by Smith and Grand avenues and West Seventh streets. The developers plan to return with an update at the federation's meeting on December 10.

David Higgins, vice president of development for McGough, said the company wants to purchase the property from nearby Bonfè's Auto Services. The property, which is less than 75 feet wide in places, is located between the new St. Paul Labor Center and a Marriott Hotel that is now under construction. The site would be cleared to allow for a building that would extend from Smith to West Seventh.

Higgins said that most of the microapartments would be 375-425 square feet. A couple of larger two-bedroom units could also be part of the mix. If all goes as planned, construction would start next year and be complete in 2020. McGough would own the building with a financial partner.

Initial plans call for 103 apartments built on top of two floors of above-ground parking. Underground parking there is cost-prohibitive due to the area's underlying bedrock, according to Higgins. Each unit would have one assigned parking spot. "We're very conscious of the parking issues in the neighborhood," Higgins said.

The building's narrow design will require a spotlight system for vehicles to safely enter and exit the parking area. The first floor would also offer ample bike parking and maintenance space.

The site is zoned for traditional neighborhoods use. It is unclear if any variance or rezoning approvals would be needed, or what the market-rate units would rent for.

Higgins said microapartments are entering many urban markets across the country. The small units are expected to appeal especially to young people working downtown, single people needing less space, older people wanting to downsize and state lawmakers looking for housing during the legislative session.

Neil Reardon of ESG Architects, who recently worked on a microapartment building near University and Raymond avenues, said his plans for the McGough project are to have its primary entrance on West Seventh and a secondary entrance on Smith. The exterior would be made of glass, gray brick and darker panels, though he said those materials could change as design work progresses.

Every other unit would have a balcony. The building would also have some common spaces, including a fifth-floor deck.

West Seventh/Fort Road Federation vice president Denise Wickiser noted that the units are likely to appeal to local seniors and asked if the apartments would offer access for disabled renters. Higgins and Reardon said that is in their plans.

Other federation board members, while not taking a position on the project, did have other questions. One concern was the lack of affordable housing units. Board members noted that every residential development in the neighborhood in recent years has been a market-rate building. Higgins said it is difficult to build affordable housing without public subsidies.

Board member Mark Fangmeier suggested allowing only right turns to enter and exit the parking area on Smith, which the developers said they will consider. Other board members asked about the possibility of commercial space on the ground floor, which the property's current zoning would permit. Higgins said that is not in McGough's plans.

School Notes

Francie Reding of Highland Park has been named associate director of admissions at St. Thomas Academy. A 1992 graduate of Marquette University, Reding was previously in charge of human resources and operational support at Rustica Bakery.

Kinderberry Hill early childhood development center for children ages six weeks to kindergarten has opened in the former Close to Home location at 1457 Grand Ave. following extensive renovation and expansion work. Longtime St. Paul area resident Kathy Sjursen, who started as a Kinderberry teacher in 1994, has been named executive program director of the Grand Avenue location.

Mary Murphy, a Highland Park resident and senior at Visitation, was one of 25 students to receive a Target Women in Science and Technology EPIC Award in October. The award honors young women for their dedication to science, technology, engineering and math.

Rory King was promoted to the rank of cadet colonel and was assigned duties as brigade commander during the annual JROTC Diamond Promotions ceremony in October at Cretin-Derham Hall. Promoted to lieutenant colonel were Owen Mische, Edmundo Villalva-Lijo, Anthony Dahdah, Seamus Foley, Mary Andrzejek and Theodore Hoover.

The GHR Fellows program, the largest endowed scholarship at the University of St. Thomas, is now accepting applications. The four-year scholarships are designed to attract future business leaders. The application deadline is January 3, 2019. Visit stthomas.edu/landing/stthomas/ghrfellows.

Anita Jones Thomas has been chosen as St. Catherine University's new executive vice

president and provost. She will assume the role next June. Thomas has more than 20 years of experience in academia. She currently serves as founding dean of the College of Applied Behavioral Sciences at the University of Indianapolis.

Mac Weekly, the student-run newspaper at Macalester College, was presented with the Media Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota on November 3. The newspaper was recognized for its 16-page special report last spring about mental health at Macalester, which was prompted by a student's suicide.

Somerset Elementary School in Mendota Heights celebrated the 30th anniversary of its Special Pals in Fun Friendships program with a visit from Minnesota Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius on November 16. Since it began, the program has fostered almost 2,000 friendships between older adults and second-graders at the school.

Maureen Elwell Peltier, who teaches French at Central High School, has been named Minnesota's World Language Teacher of the Year by the Minnesota Council of the Teaching of Languages and Cultures. Peltier is a Fulbright Scholar and has been a teacher for 25 years. She began her career in Owatonna and 16 years ago came to the St. Paul Public Schools, first at the L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion, then at the Open World Community School and now at Central for the past decade.

Luke Kolar has been named the 111th cadet colonel at St. Thomas Academy. Promoted to lieutenant colonel were Callan Happe, Thomas Mayleben, Hayes Reding, Brendan McFadden, Maxwell McFarland and Joseph Motzel.

The Kiosk

Friday/December 7

FARE FOR ALL'S monthly distribution of fresh produce and frozen meat will take place from 10 a.m.-noon at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St. The food is available in packages priced from \$10-\$25. Holiday Packs with a 9- or 10-pound ham, meatballs, a whole chicken, chicken drumsticks, mild Italian sausage, mixed vegetables, corn and an apple pie will also be available for \$30. Cash, credit or debit cards are accepted. Call 651-298-5493.

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS, a 12-step program for people who want help in dealing with daily stress, is offered at 7 p.m. today and every Friday at the Twin Cities Friends Meetinghouse, 1725 Grand Ave. Everyone is welcome. For information, call Paul at 651-402-6774.

Saturday/December 8

METRO REPUBLICAN WOMEN will hear about the success of two St. Paul nonprofits, Small Sums and Dress for Success, from their top executives during a breakfast meeting at 8:30 a.m. at the Mendakota Country Club, in Mendota Heights. The public is invited. Admission is \$25. For reservations, visit metrogopwomen.org.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS and the origins of gun control will be discussed by author and historian Saul Cornell in a 90-minute forum beginning at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Tickets are \$16. Visit cart.mnhs.org or call 651-259-3000.

A HOLIDAY BAKE SALE will be held from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. in the historic Waiting Room at St. Paul's Union Depot, 214 E. 4th St. More than 30 local purveyors will be selling their freshly baked goods, confections and other holiday gifts. Admission is free.

Tuesday/December 11

THE WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT, a documentary film about the small town



Aria Miller, 2, looks on as the first candle in the menorah is lit on the first day of Hanukkah on December 2 at the Temple of Aaron. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Jewish Hanukkah lights up the night

Minnesota's Jews opened Hanukkah on December 2 with a menorah lighting outside of the state Capitol in St. Paul. The ceremony marked the first night of the eight-day Jewish Festival of Lights.

Chabad Lubavitch and Adath Israel Synagogue will hold a Grand Menorah Lighting Ceremony on the fourth night of Hanukkah, at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 5, at the St. Paul Police Department's Western District station, 389 N. Hamline Ave. Music, gelt, hot latkes and doughnuts will be part of the festivities.

A menorah lighting will also take place from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Thursday, December 6, at Keg & Case Market, 928 W. Seventh

St. Cosponsored by the House of Halva, a project of Chabad Lubavitch, the festivities will include music, latkes and crafts.

Congregation Or Emet will throw a Hanukkah party from 5-7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 8, at the Wellstone Center, 179 E. Robie St.

A Light Up the Night menorah parade will be held on the seventh night of Hanukkah on Saturday, December 8. The motorized parade will begin at 6:45 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue, 2337 Edgumbe Road, and proceed west to Highway 100 in St. Louis Park where a grand menorah lighting will take place at 8:30 p.m.

For information on these events or to join Saturday's parade, call 651-353-0588.

in France that saved over 5,000 Jews from imprisonment and death during World War II, will be shown from 7-9 p.m. at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, 875 Summit Ave. Nelly Trocme Hewitt, whose minister father led this effort, will speak. Mitchell Hamline professor Ellen Kennedy will also discuss the extermination of French Jews and the

postwar trials of leading perpetrators. Admission is \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. Call 651-695-7621.

THE ADVANTAGES of breastfeeding for mother and child and overcoming any difficulties will be discussed from 7-8:45 p.m. by the Como-Midway group of La

Leche League. Pregnant women, mothers and their children are invited to attend. For information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

Wednesday/December 12

THE CARD CLUB will meet for games of bridge, 500 and cribbage beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. New members are welcome to join in the competition every Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. An optional lunch is served at noon for \$10 per person.

Thursday/December 13

"PEARL HARBOR: The Attack That Brought the U.S. into World War II" will be discussed in a History Round Table from 7-9 p.m. in the Visitors Center at Historic Fort Snelling. Pearl Harbor veterans and author Michael Wenger will speak. Admission is \$5, free for students and veterans. Call 612-726-1171.

Monday/December 17

LOST A BUTTON on a shirt? Have a hole in your jeans? Mobile Menders will be offering its free sewing services from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St. For information, email mobilemenders2017@gmail.com.

Tuesday/December 18

A MENTAL HEALTH support group for adults ages 18-30 meets from 6:30-8 p.m. today and the first and third Tuesday of every month at Unity Unitarian Church, 733 Portland Ave. The group is facilitated by young adults with a mental illness who are doing well in recovery. It is sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. For information, call Tess at 507-226-3369.

Wednesday/December 19

HAVE SUPPER WITH SANTA from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Groveland Recreation Center, 2045 St. Clair Ave. There will be free food, crafts and entertainment by local youths. Bring a camera and take a photo with St. Nick. Call 651-695-3714.

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Red Rabbit's Burrata appetizer with its Shrimp Garganelli and Sticky Toffee Cake as a back-drop.

PHOTOS BY
BRAD STAUFFER

Red Rabbit expands on Grand Avenue with a menu for the more adventurous

I've never been to Red Rabbit in Minneapolis, so when owner Luke Shimp said his new Red Rabbit at 788 Grand Ave. in St. Paul has more of a sports bar feel, I took his word for it. However, anyone expecting to find a profusion of flat-screen TVs in the space formerly occupied by the Wild Onion will likely be disappointed.

Eight televisions hang in Red Rabbit's revamped bar area, but those can be clearly seen only from the rectangular bar. And though the Grand Avenue restaurant sports 36 different tap beers, there isn't a single hamburger on the menu—nor anything deep-fried, for that matter.

Sports bar or not, the crowds I bumped into there at two weekday lunches and a Sunday evening dinner didn't seem to care one way or another. Everybody appeared quite content with the mostly pizza and pasta offerings. The dance floor and disco ball from the Wild Onion days are gone, as is the deejay booth. In their place are a row of red booths separating the dining area from the bar, more booths along the west wall, high- and low-top tables in between and several chandeliers.

If I hadn't been familiar with the painting of the blue cow inside Shimp's Red Cow restaurant at 393 Selby Ave, I might have thought the blue rabbit artwork at Red Rabbit was out of place. Now I know it's just Shimp's idea of an inside joke.

The forty-something Shimp has been making his mark on the Twin Cities restaurant scene for the past half-dozen years. A former stock-car mechanic, he had planned to switch gears and open a restaurant in North Carolina 15 years ago. But when he called his older sister Stephanie for advice, the co-owner of Minnesota's Blue Plate Restaurant Company convinced him to return to the Twin Cities and help with her growing portfolio of successful Twin Cities restaurants.

Shimp obliged, and in 2013 he decided to branch out on his own with the burger-oriented Red Cow in the Fulton neighborhood of Minneapolis. The following year he opened the Red Cow on Selby. Through his company kindRED Hospitality, Shimp is now planning to further expand his red animal restaurant empire with a block-size development in northeast Minneapolis.

Our server at the Red Rabbit on Grand on a recent Sunday evening proved to be especially helpful. When I ordered the Salmon Crisps (\$11), she either suspected I wasn't fond of raw fish or figured I might have been confused by the name of the entrée. She double-checked to make sure I knew that I'd be getting something akin to sushi.

"You're right," I said. "With 'crisps' in the name, I assumed there'd be some fire involved." So I changed my order to Sausage & Peppers (\$10.25), a house-made sausage with grilled peppers served over polenta. For a side dish, I selected the Wood Grilled Veggies & Pearl Mozzarella (\$6).

This time I had only myself to blame. The menu clearly stated that the Wood Grilled Veggies were "served chilled." But with "wood grilled" in the name, I expected them to be hot. No matter. The grilled vegetables—which included zucchini, onions and tomatoes—were fine, and my wife Mecca and I polished them off handily.

I haven't eaten a lot of polenta, so to say the sausage dish



Hot Dish By Morgan Smith

included the best polenta I've ever tasted may be faint praise. But it was very creamy, as the menu promised, and very flavorful. I can't say as much for the sausage, which was a good-sized chunk of meat but seasoned with a little too much black pepper (or something like it) for my taste. Mecca, on the other hand, enjoyed the sausage, though she too thought it was a bit peppery.

Mecca ordered the Italian Chopped Salad (\$12.50) for her entrée, a combination of chicken, chickpeas, artichokes, salami, ham, Peppadew peppers, Kalamata olives, provolone and pepperoncini with an olive vinaigrette dressing. She and I agreed it was fabulous.

I dropped by Red Rabbit for lunch by myself a few days later and ordered the Spaghetti & Meatballs (\$13.50). The classic red sauce was fine, the noodles were OK, and the meatballs were firm but a little ho-hum. So unless you have a food blog, it's nothing to write home about. But as I was getting ready to leave, my server was so excited about the Sticky Toffee Cake (\$7.50), I decided to stick around.

You know how some foods can taste fine, but their texture doesn't seem quite right? I've always felt that way about rice pudding. Red Rabbit's Sticky Toffee Cake is made with salted caramel, candied orange and sour cream. It's almost like a toffee rice pudding. The odd thing is, I'd order it again any day.

On my third visit to Red Rabbit, I lunched with friends Dave, Juan and Jordan. The four of us selected the Friendly Vegan pizza (\$9), an Old World Margherita pizza (\$10.25), the Linguine Pomodoro (\$13) and a Grilled Chicken Parmesan sandwich (\$14). Nothing to complain about there.

The Friendly Vegan pizza had a red sauce with garlic poached in olive oil. Dave's only complaint was that there wasn't enough garlic. Juan loved everything about his Old World Margherita pizza—the red sauce, the mozzarella and the basil. The server had warned us that the Linguine Pomodoro with its heirloom tomatoes, basil and garlic had a bit of a kick. Neither Jordan nor I thought it did, but both of us thought it was quite good. And everyone at the table was amazed at the size of my Grilled Chicken Parmesan sandwich. When I took half of it home, Mecca commented on its girth.

When Red Rabbit opened on Grand this fall, executive chef Todd Macdonald updated the menu at the Minneapolis location to match St. Paul's. So if it has been a while since you've eaten at the original Red Rabbit, you may want to stop by the Grand Avenue location, sample the new casual Italian fare and check out the ambience of the new space.

On the Town

Art museum finds a permanent home in heart of St. Paul

Larger MMAA anticipates displaying its 4,500-piece collection of American art

BY LARRY ENGLUND

After six years of being squeezed into temporary quarters in downtown St. Paul's Pioneer Building, the Minnesota Museum of American Art reopened on December 2 with 20,000 square feet of gallery and education space and plans to add another 14,000 square feet in two years.

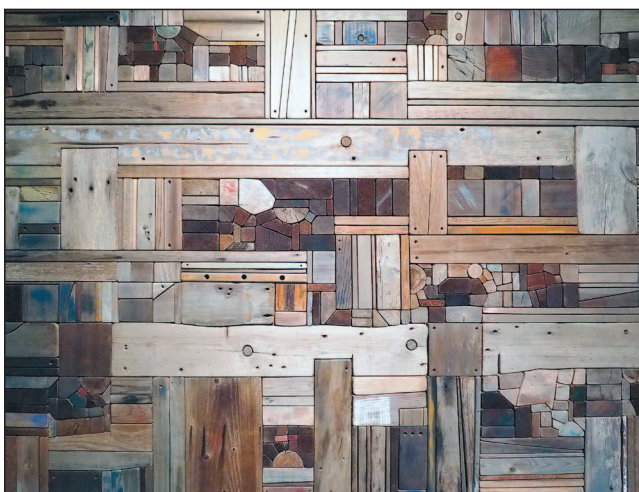
Following almost a year of construction, the MMAA, or M for short, now straddles the Pioneer and adjacent Endicott buildings at 350 N. Robert St. Its former Project Space has been turned into a Center for Creativity, offering classes and workshops for youths and adults and an artist residency with open studio hours when the public will be able to observe and engage with the artist at work.

For the residency program, called the Artist Takeover, "we're inviting artists into the studio to focus on their work and how they might bring it to the next level," said Courtney Gerber, the MMAA's curator of learning and engagement. The first artist residency, which runs through December 21, features Rebekah Chrisanta de Ybarra.

The MMAA traces its roots to 1894, when it was founded as the St. Paul School of Fine Arts. "We started as a school," Gerber said. "Then we were a school and a gallery. We then became a gallery with a school, and then we were a museum. Now we're kind of a museum and school. So we're reflecting back on our roots, which are firmly in education."

With the expansion into the Endicott Building, the museum has created a gallery across the hall from the Center for Creativity, and for the first time in many years it will be able to exhibit some of its 4,500-piece permanent collection. "The bulk of our permanent collection won't be brought out until the completion of Phase 2 of our expansion," said Kristin Makhholm, the MMAA's executive director.

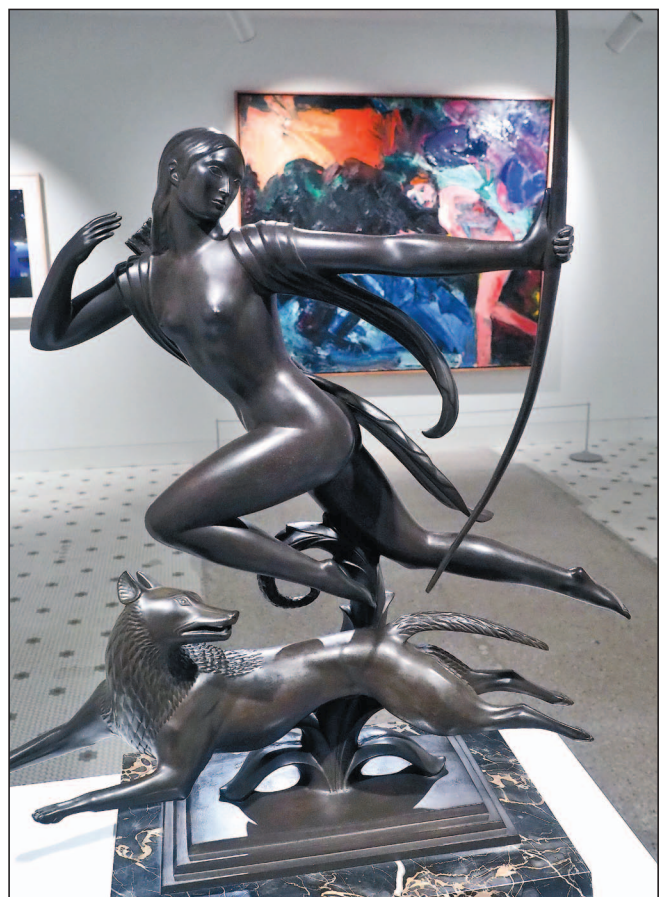
The new gallery's first exhibit, "100 Years and Counting," will showcase favorite works from the permanent collection, some of which have not been displayed for more than a



generation, according to Christopher Atkins, the MMAA's curator of exhibitions and public programs. Among the works are "Diana the Huntress and Actaeon" by native St. Paul sculptor Paul Manship, Alec Soth's photograph "Oil Field Worker," Margaret Bourke-White's painting "Gold Miners" and works by Judy Onofrio, George Morrisson and Frank Bigbear.

The museum's new entryway and two-story sculpture court is now filled with a colorful fiber art installation created by New York artist Sheila Pepe especially for the space. A window gallery along Robert Street features "Wave Line" by Duluth artist David Bowen, an installation that with LED lights creates a dynamic image of waves crashing on the shore.

"It took a while to learn if we could raise the money needed to expand the space," Makhholm said. "We wanted to make sure the location was right. Did the community want us? Would we be welcomed? Would foundations, corporations



Three views of the new Minnesota Museum of American Art show George Morrisson's wood assemblage "Landscape," Paul Manship's bronze sculpture "Diana" and a spray-painted mural by Vanghoua Anthony Vue.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

and the community support a capital campaign?"

The answer to all of those questions was a resounding "yes," and the MMAA embarked on a \$23 million capital campaign to fund the two-phase expansion project. "We're St. Paul's only major art museum," Gerber said, "so it was an important gap to fill. But I think in addition to that cultural gap, it's a specific amenity in an important location, connecting downtown and Lowertown."

Makhholm noted that the museum's individual donors have more than doubled in recent years. "Some were excited by our new vision," she said. "Others were excited about re-animating downtown. The Center for Creativity, and our intention to regrow our education and art-making program excited others. And some people remembered our collection, and the importance of showing it on a regular basis."

Jon Fure, executive director of the Capitol River Council, said he has heard from downtown residents who were eager to visit the museum. "It's a good addition to the quality of life downtown," he said, "especially since it's not just a museum to see art, but one where you can create art as well."

The MMAA's future looks bright, according to Makhholm. "With the capital campaign, we have a very diverse cadre of donors from the state, the city, foundations and organizations," she said. "We're very close to our capital campaign's goal of \$23 million."

"Frankly, it took a lot of beating the pavement to gain donors and make headway with corporations like Best Buy," Makhholm said. "Foundations are excited about our plans going forward. The Henry Luce Foundation gave us a large donation to reinstall the permanent collection in Phase 2. But we always have to be out there looking for new sources."

Phase 2 of the expansion is expected to be completed in 2020, according to Makhholm. Then it will be time for another grand opening.

Museum on the move

The Minnesota Museum of American Art (MMAA) has had nine different names and 14 locations in its 124-year history. Known at various times as the St. Paul School of Fine Arts, the St. Paul Institute School of Art, the Minnesota School of Art, the St. Paul School of Art, the St. Paul Galleries School of Art, the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art, the St. Paul Arts Center and the Minnesota Museum of Art, the MMAA has called all of the following locations home at one time or another:

1894-1895: Metropolitan Hotel, Third and Washington streets.

1895-1904: Moore's Block at Seven Corners.
1904-1909: St. Paul Auditorium on Fourth Street.
1924-1926: Court Block, Fourth and Wabasha streets
1926-1928: 107 E. Third St.
1928-1932: 23 E. Sixth St.
1932-1939: Haynes photographic studio, 341 Selby Ave.
1939-1964: Chauncey Griggs mansion, 476 Summit Ave.
1964-1979: Arts & Sciences Center, 30 E. 10th St.
1969-1993: Jemne Building, 305 St. Peter St.
1979-2004: Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth St.
2004-2009: Ramsey County Government Center (formerly West Publishing), 50 W. Kellogg Blvd.
2012-2018: Pioneer Building, Fourth and Robert streets.
2018-: Pioneer and Endicott buildings, 350 N. Robert St.

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On the Town *Briefly*

Books

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to free readings and discussions with authors Diane Jarvenpa and her poetry collection, *The Way She Told Her Story*, and Lynette Reini-Grandell and her poetry collection, *Wild Verge*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 6; and Barb Geiger and her book, *Paddle for a Purpose*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 13. Call 651-493-2791.

Master storyteller Richard Rousseau and fellow yarn-spinners Sue Searing and Loren Niemi will hold court from 6:45-7:45 p.m. Friday, December 7, at Coffee Bene, 53 S. Cleveland Ave. Their stories are free for the listening, though donations will be appreciated.

Common Good Books, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will play host to free readings and discussions with Thom Tamarro and Alan Davis, editors of the anthology, *Visiting Bob: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Bob Dylan*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 11; and author John J. Moriarty and photographer Siah L. St. Clair and their *Field Guide to the Natural World of the Twin Cities*, at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 13. Call 651-225-8989.

Merriam Park author Roger Barr will read his latest holiday story, "A Simple Christmas Dinner," on Thursday, December 13, at Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, 270 N. Kent St. A benefit for the Hallie Q. Brown foodshelf, the event will open with a social at 6:30 p.m. followed by the reading at 7 p.m. Admission is free, but monetary donations will be accepted for the food shelf. "A Simple Christmas Dinner" is the 21st holiday story written by Barr about the fictional Bartholomew family of Highland Park. Like all of the other stories, it appeared first in the *Villager* (see pages 14-15).

Dance

Take the classic holiday ballet and mix it with a magical children's story and you get *Nutcracker in Wonderland*. The new ballet will be staged by the new Ballet Co.Laboratory at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, December 14-16, at the Huss Center for Performing Arts at St. Paul Academy, 1712 Randolph Ave.



Vision of sugar plums. Ballet Minnesota will present its 31st annual production of *The Classic Nutcracker* on December 14-16 in the O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine University. Violeta Angelova and Matthew Prescott head up a cast of more than 130 professional and student dancers. Julia Cornette, 15, of Highland Park plays Clara, who receives a magical nutcracker from her godfather and is whisked off to the land of the Snow Queen, Rat King, Nutcracker Prince and Sugar Plum Fairy. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$21-\$46 with discounts for students and seniors. Call 651-690-6700 or visit oshag.stkate.edu.

Set to the music of Tchaikovsky, it tells of the journey of a college-age Clara and her friend Patty to a wonderland that Alice would surely recognize. Joining the company will be students from its school. Tickets are \$22, \$27 and \$35. Visit balletcolaboratory.org.

Exhibits

"Material Futurity," video, performance, sculpture, fiber, painting, and digital and mixed media by artists from across the U.S., is on view through December 16 in the Law Warschaw Gallery in the Fine Arts Center at Macalester College. Call 651-696-6279.

"States of Incarceration," a 678-square-foot exhibit created by college students who delved into the past, present and future of imprisonment in the U.S., is on view through February 18 in the first-floor gallery at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. With text and artifacts, the display demonstrates how centuries of trauma have

shaped Minnesota's prison population. Admission is free. Call 651-259-3000.

AZ Gallery, 308 Prince St., is presenting its holiday gift show. More than 25 local artists are showing and selling a variety of works through January 6. Hours are 5-8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays.

Christmas traditions of the Hill family of St. Paul and their servants around the turn of the 20th century are featured during guided tours of the James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave. The hour-long tours step out between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays and 1 and 3:30 p.m. Sundays, now through December 30. The cost is \$12, \$10 for seniors and college students, \$8 for children ages 5-17. Call 651-297-2555.

Revisit the sights, sounds and tastes of Christmas circa 1875 during guided tours of the Alexander Ramsey House, 265 S. Exchange St. The hour-long tours begin every 15 minutes between 10 a.m. and 5:30

p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and noon and 4:30 p.m. Sundays through December 30. The cost is \$12, \$10 for seniors and college students, \$8 for children ages 5-17. Call 651-296-8760 or visit cart.mnhs.org.

"Strong Women of the Bible," a series of more than 40 oil paintings and drawings by Carolyn C.S. Kleinberger, are on view through January 2 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 S. Snelling Ave. For gallery hours, call 651-699-1378.

Family

A *Charlie Brown Christmas*, a live version of the animated classic by Charles Schulz, is being staged through December 22 at SteppingStone Theatre, 55 N. Victoria St. Directed by Dane Stauffer, it features the talents of SteppingStone youths as well as actor Neal Skoy and pianist Sean Turner. Show times are 7 p.m. Fridays, noon and 3 p.m. Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays and 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, December 19 and 20. Tickets are \$12-\$18. Call 651-225-9265.

Preschool children and their caregivers are invited to stop by SteppingStone Theatre at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays for 30 minutes of stories, songs and creative play and 30 minutes of hands-on experience in creative dramatics and art making. The drop-in program runs weekly through December 19 at Steppingstone, 55 N. Victoria St. The cost is \$10 per family. Call 651-225-9265.

Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., will offer the following free programs: Board at the Library, games of Clue, Apples to Apples, chess, checkers and more, 2-4:30 p.m. every Wednesday; Paw Pals, a chance to read to a friendly dog, 6-7 p.m. Thursday, December 6; Family Storytime, 10:30 a.m. every Friday; You Can Make It, hands-on activities for children ages 7-11, 3-5 p.m. every Monday. Call 651-642-0385.

Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Pkwy., will offer the following free programs: Baby Storytime, 10:15 a.m. Wednesdays; 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. Thursdays; Yarn Night, fiberwork for crafty folks of all ages and abilities, 6:15 p.m. Thursday, December 6; Children's Storytime,

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See vintage model trains chugging through a winter wonderland in Night Trains from 6-9 p.m. Saturdays, now through February 23, at the Twin Cities Model Railroad Museum, 668 Transfer Road. The museum's overhead lights will be turned down and the street, train and building lights turned up, giving a warm holiday glow to the miniature landscape. Admission is \$15, free for children ages 4 and under. Santa will appear on December 15 and 22. Visit tcmrm.org.

A Year With Frog & Toad Jr., a musical about making and keeping friends, is playing afternoons and evenings through December 17 on the Youth Performance Company's stage at the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, 1900 Nicollet Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Based on the books by Arnold Lobel, the whimsical production tells of the cheerful frog and the rather grumpy toad. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for children and seniors. Call 612-623-9080.

Stop by Santa's Workshop and make gifts for friends and family, play games and get your photo taken with St. Nick between 1 and 3 p.m. Sunday, December 9, at Landmark Center. Call 651-292-3225.

The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota will present its annual family concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 9, at Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. The interactive concert, which is free to children in grades K-12, will feature Bruce Adolph's "Farmony for String Quartet and Kids" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A Major. Performers include clarinetist Sang Yoon Kim, violinists Ariana Kim and Young-Nam Kim, violist David Auerbach, cellist Rachel Bottner, pianist Thomas Bartsch and narrator Maria Jette. Call 651-450-0527.

Film

Sound Unseen will close out the year on Wednesday, December 12, with the screening of two full-length features from 2017, director John McPhail's debut *Anna and the Apocalypse* at 7 p.m. and director Joseph Kahn's *Bodied* at 9 p.m., at Trylon Cinema, 2820 E. 33rd St. in Minneapolis. Tickets to each screening are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. Visit soundunseen.com.

Music

Jazz singer Charmin Michelle will join Highland Park guitarist Joel Shapira in an Ask the Artist concert and program at 7 p.m. Friday, December 7, at Cadenza Music, 149 N. Snelling Ave. Admission is \$10, \$5 for students. Call 651-644-3611.

"On This Winter's Night With You," an assortment of nostalgic melodies and contemporary harmonies, will be performed by the River Heights Chorale at 7 p.m. Saturday, December 8, at Salem Lutheran Church, 11 W. Bernard St., West St. Paul. Admission is by donation.

Acoustic Guitarathon, a Minnesota Guitar Society concert featuring the varied talents of five artists, will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 8, in Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Guitarists Christopher Becknell, Sam Breckenridge, Danny Fromm, Jerry Kosak and Ben Woolman will perform. Tickets are \$10-\$25. Visit mnguitar.org.

Lyra Baroque Ensemble will join the Bach Society of Minnesota and soloists Sarah Brailey, Clara Osowski, Nicholas Chalmers and Jonathan Ten Brink in Bach's festive Christmas Oratorio at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 8, at St. Mary's Chapel at the St.



Chinese guitarist Tengyue Zhang, winner of the Guitar Foundation of America International Concert Artist competition in 2017, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Friday, December 7, in Sundin Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Tickets are \$10-\$25. Visit mnguitar.org.

Paul Seminary, 2260 Summit Ave. Tickets are \$5-\$25. Visit lyrabaroque.org.

Soprano Kim Sueoka will be joined by Serbian-born guitarist Milena Petković on December 8 and 9 in "The Heart's Joy," a concert steeped in themes of love, hope, devotion, grief, wonder and delight. The music begins at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 8, at the Summit Center for the Arts (formerly St. Paul's Church on the Hill), 1524 Summit Ave., and at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, December 9, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1917 Logan Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Admission is \$10, \$8 for students and seniors, free for children age 12 and under.

The Singers and harpist Min Kim will present "What Sweeter Music," a program of carols and music for the holidays, at 2 p.m. Sunday, December 9, at Nativity Church, 1900 Stanford Ave. Tickets are \$22-36, free for students with ID. Visit singersmca.org.

Kantorei will "Celebrate the Mystery" with choral music of Advent and Christmas at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 9, in St. Mary's Chapel at the St. Paul Seminary, 2260 Summit Ave. Tickets are \$15-\$25. Visit kantorei.net.

The St. Paul JCC Symphony will present a free concert at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, in the auditorium of the Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave. The program includes Brahms' Symphony No. 2, Haydn's The Representation of Chaos from *The Creation* oratorio, and Beethoven's overture to *Consecration of the House*. Conductor Amir Kats will offer a concert preview at 7 p.m.

Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band will perform at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, at Xcel Energy Center. For tickets, visit xcelenergycenter.com or livenation.com.

A holiday sing-along featuring carols from Renaissance England and Scotland will be led by the internationally acclaimed Rose Ensemble at 7 p.m. Tuesday, December 13, at Landmark Center. Admission is free.

Celebrate Christmas with Cantus. The eight-man vocal ensemble will present the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, re-imagined for the modern day, in nine concerts from December 13-23. The music begins at 11 a.m. December 13 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, 7:30 p.m. December 14 in Fridley District Auditorium, 7:30 p.m. December 15 at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Apple Valley, 11 a.m. December 17 at the Colonial Church of Edina, 7:30 p.m. December 18 at St. Bartholomew Catholic Church in Wayzata, 7:30 p.m. December 20 in the Chapel of



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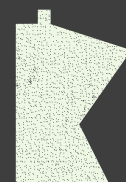
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St. Thomas Aquinas at the University of St. Thomas, 7:30 p.m. December 21 in the Ordway Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m. December 22 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stillwater, and 2 p.m. December 23 at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. Ticket prices vary by venue. Call 612-435-0055 or visit cantussings.org.

Tarnished Brass, an ensemble of brass musicians that has been performing together for 51 years, since they were members of the University of Minnesota Marching Band, will present a holiday concert at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, December 16, at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 900 Summit Ave. Flutist Jessica Peterson, soprano Kristin Morant and St. Paul's organist and choir will accompany the brass. Admission is \$15.

Pianist Steven C. Anderson will be joined by gospel singer Robert Robinson, organist Lawrence Lawyer, violinist Nate Wilson, cellist Charles Asch and the Sts. Cecilia and Gregory Choristers in his fourth annual Christmas Together concert at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 18, at the Cathedral of St. Paul. The program includes selections from Steven C's "Christmas Beyond" and "Emotive" albums, seasonal favorites and his original "Carol of the Birds and Bells" and "Ave Thanksgiving." The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, but a \$10 donation is suggested.

Theater

History Theatre has gone back to the '60s with a reprise of the musical *Teen Idol: The Bobby Vee Story*, playing through December 16 on the stage at 30 E. 10th St. The show captures the meteoric rise of the Fargo hit-maker. Show times are 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays, and 2 and 4 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$25-\$62, \$15 for college students, \$10 for children. Call 651-292-4323.

Triple Espresso: A Highly Caffeinated Comedy, the long-running hit at Minneapolis' Music Box Theatre, is being performed through January 13 on the thrust stage at Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place. Created by Bill Arnold, Bob Stromberg and Michael Pearce Donley, the drama recaptures the magic of vaudeville through the reminiscences of a hapless comedian, musician and illusionist. Tickets are \$25-\$52.50 with discounts for seniors, children and military personnel. Call 651-291-7005.

Agatha Christie's Go Back for Murder is playing through December 16 at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave. S. in Minneapolis. The mystery was adapted by Christie from her novel *Five Little Pigs*. Lynn Musgrave directs. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$22. Call 612-333-3010.

Marie & Rosetta, a musical drama by George Brandt about powerhouse gospel singer and guitar virtuoso Sister Rosetta Tharpe, is playing through December 30 on the proscenium stage at Park Square Theater, 20 W. Seventh Place. Tharpe (1915-1973) is being played by Twin Cities singer Jamecia Bennett. Rajane Katurah Brown plays her musical partner and protégé, Marie Knight. Wendy Knox directs. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$20-\$60 with discounts for seniors, military personnel and those under age 30. Call 651-291-7005.

Complex women who find power in powerless situations strut the stage in Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The Classical Actors Ensemble is presenting the plays in repertory at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through December 23 at Gremlin Theatre, 550 N. Vandalia St. Tickets are on a sliding scale from \$18-\$40. Pay-what-you-can shows are at 7:30 p.m. Mondays, December 10 and

17. Visit classicalactorsensemble.org.

A Hunting Shack Christmas, a holiday comedy in the spirit of Minnesota, is being staged by Actors Theater of Minnesota from December 1-29 in the Cabaret at Camp Bar, 490 N. Robert St. It follows the adventures of Charlie, who on the eve of his 10th wedding anniversary heads up north to his hunting shack to take stock of his life. Nick Wolf, Shana Berg, Maxwell Mars, Marci Lucht and John Haynes star. Show times are 7 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$27 and \$34. Visit brownpapertickets.com or call 800-838-3006.

The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley, a new sequel to Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, is being performed through December 30 at the Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Angela Timberman stars as the adored housekeeper Mrs. Reynolds in a drama about a holiday scandal among the servant corps at Pemberley where family secrets are revealed, loyalties are tested and love and affection prevail. Christina Baldwin directs the production. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$40-\$55. Call 612-822-7063.

The Minnesota Jewish Theatre has returned with its traditional holiday production, *The Chanukah Guest*, playing through December 18 in the auditorium of the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy. Based on the book by Eric Kimmel, the interactive drama by Jenna Zark tells the story of Bubba Brayna and her run-in with an unexpected guest on the first night of Chanukah. Craig Johnson directs. Show times are 1 p.m. Sundays and 9:45 and 11 a.m. Tuesdays through Fridays. For tickets, call 651-647-4325.

Elf, a musical drama about a young boy who is mistakenly transported to the North Pole, grows up a misfit among Santa's elves and returns to New York in search of his father, will be performed from December 5-30 at the Ordway Music Theater. Based on the 2003 movie comedy, the touring production features songs by Tony Award nominees Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin, book by Tony Award winners Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin and choreography by Connor Gallagher. Tickets start at \$53. Visit ordway.org or call 651-224-4222.

Distracted, a play by Lisa Loomer about the mother of a moody and easily distracted son who is diagnosed with ADHD and her efforts to treat the affliction, will be performed by the Macalester College Theater and Dance Department from December 7-15 at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. 4th St. in Minneapolis. Directed by Jack Reuler, the comedy explores the possible causes of ADHD and debates about its diagnosis and treatment. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$5. Call 651-696-6359.

Snow White, a freewheeling and twisted variation of the fairy tale, will be staged on December 14-16 by Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater Company. Written by Steven LaVigne and directed by LaVigne and Dawn Linnell, the drama tells of a delinquent Snow White, a kind Queen, a bipolar Magic Mirror, and asthmatic and unemployed dwarves. Show times are 7 p.m. Friday, 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday at Walker Church, 3104 16th Ave S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$10, \$8 for students and seniors.

Et cetera

Cocoon Central Dance Team, a show by New York City comedians Sunita Mani, Tallie Medel and Eleanore Pienta that is equal parts physical comedy and character-driven theatrics, will be performed at 8 p.m. Saturday, December 8, at the Parkway Theater, 3814 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are \$22 at the door, \$18 in advance. Visit theparkwaytheater.com.

Sports



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

U football attendance comes as no surprise

Back in the mid-1960s, National Football League teams played six exhibition games and 14 during the regular season. Home games were blacked out and preseason games were rarely televised. So when a call came that the Goodfellows organization had purchased a bunch of tickets for kids to attend a Detroit Lions preseason home game against the Baltimore Colts, a young man chomped at the bit and convinced his mother that it was well worth the \$1 price of admission.

Never mind that the seats were in the center field bleachers of Tiger Stadium and that many of the players wouldn't be around when the regular season opened. The ballpark was full and the kids had a wonderful time, even though the game ended in a 21-21 tie.

In theory, it was a losing proposition for the Lions. Between the cost of printing the tickets and paying ushers to watch over the young brood, the final bill was likely more than a buck a kid. But there was a side benefit. If going to that game convinced a few youngsters to become Lions fans, buy souvenirs, implore their parents to take them to another game and attend games on their own as adults one day, it was worth it.

The above is presented as an example of where a lot of big-time athletic entities, including Division I colleges, have lost their way and are now confounded when attendance for their teams has fallen off.

There was a recent investigation into just how many people are actually attending football games at the University of Minnesota. For some time, the daily newspapers have listed attendance figures as "announced" in their game stories. That's because the fans in the stands are considerably fewer than the number of tickets sold.

That became obvious this year when the Gophers' announced attendance for home games against Indiana, Purdue and Northwestern were all in the 30,000 or more range. Some detective work revealed that the actual number of people in the house was less than half that. (The Iowa game was an exception, with an announced crowd of 48,199 and an in-house number near 40,000. Good ol' Iowans.)

Granted, there were some extenuating circumstances in all three cases. The Indiana game was played on a rainy, cold Friday night at the same time as high school football. (Thanks, Big Ten Network.) Purdue had a big win over Ohio State, but not much else to advertise. Northwestern is obviously very good, but folks around these parts are not enthused about seeing the Wildcats. One reason might be that Northwestern seems to beat the U of M with regularity. It leaves one to wonder how the Wildcats can succeed when the Gophers can't, but that's a column for another day.

No, the problem goes deeper than that. These days, it seems the first thing a lot of big-time sports teams do is look for big spenders to fill the suites. Advertisers are often plied with tickets as well. The franchise pockets the money and the tickets often end up in the desk drawer of an executive vice president who wouldn't know a football from a bocce ball.

We were told that moving the Gopher gridders out of the Metrodome and back on campus would raise attendance figures. That hasn't proven to be so. We were told the Big Ten Network would increase visibility and raise local interest. Scheduling Friday night home games is an odd way to go about doing it.

On the field, the Gophers plowed their way to a .500 record with an impressive win at Wisconsin. It'll earn them a bowl game somewhere. None of that hurts.

But here's a thought. Next year's home schedule lists a non-conference game against South Dakota State. That one might draw some Jackrabbit fans to town, but the other

WRIGHT CALL ► 25

Boys' hockey preview

Local teams shoot for success this season

BY BILL WAGNER

Just about everybody likes to score goals—that's a given. However, local boys' hockey coaches have different thoughts about the emphasis placed on scoring and how they want their forwards to approach the game.

Minnehaha Academy coach Josh Hoekstra said that while many high school players are skilled and more aware than ever of the value of hitting the back of the net, they still need to be taught the best way to accomplish that goal—like passing the puck, for example.

"From a pure playmaking standpoint, there's a definite lag factor from 20 years ago," Hoekstra said. "Kids miss the net now more than I've ever seen."

He added that there needs to be more awareness of how to camp in the slot against strong defensemen and how to forage for rebounds. It's about going where it's difficult to score, he said, not just firing slap shots from 45-50 feet out.

"They don't want to score 'dirty' goals," Hoekstra said, "and they're not committed to shooting the puck low on the ice, so the goalie has more trouble handling it."

St. Thomas Academy co-coach Greg Vannelli agreed that there is often too great an emphasis on pure goal-scoring. He attributes much of the scoring craze to the arrival of elite league competition in Minnesota. That has allowed gifted players to get in extra games in the fall while still playing for their high school teams in the winter.

"The elite leagues are set up for scoring," Vannelli said. "There's just tons of scoring and kids think you need to score to get noticed. Colleges aren't helping by giving kids scholarships a lot earlier. So in high school, you tend to re-coach these kids and teach them that defensive hockey helps you win."

Most coaches agree that natural goal scorers are born, not made. However, that's not necessarily so, according to Joey Dziedzic, who coaches the Minneapolis public school team and had a brief career in the NHL. He pointed to Jake Erickson, who played for Minneapolis and graduated last year. Erickson was not a prolific scorer early in his career, but was a feared sniper by the time he was a senior.

"He just shot a ton of pucks," Dziedzic said, "and his senior year he scored 35 goals in 25 games. But the kid was an exception. Some guys only need one or two chances before they score. Other guys need nine or 10."

Cretin-Derham Hall coach Matt Funk is convinced that goal-scoring has been declining and he thinks he knows why. "There's more of a focus on the defensive side of the game," he said, "and goalies are better than they've ever been."

Here's a look at the local teams as the puck drops for another season of boys' hockey:



Head coach Mark Prokop diagrams plays behind the glass of the Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena during practice of the combined Highland Park and Central high school boys' hockey team. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

CRETIN-DERHAM HALL

League: Suburban East

Last year's record: 21-3-1

Coach: Matt Funk

Key players: senior forwards Zach Brydges and Grayson Milosch, senior defensemen Danny Magnuson and Ryne Mohrman, junior forwards Matt Gleason and Nick Davison.

Team strengths/weaknesses: CDH has a forward wall that can rival anyone's, but its defense and goaltending are in state of flux.

Outlook: The Raiders are the defending conference champs and hope to build on that. "We have a good nucleus and solid work ethic," coach Funk said.

HENRY SIBLEY

League: Metro East

Last year's record: 4-19-1

Coach: Corey Hessler

Key players: senior goalie Tommy Buell, senior defenseman Logan Woods, senior forwards Donnie Mahowald and John McGuire, junior forward Nate Pace.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Sibley will not be outworked, but the team has had to do some position switches with key personnel, and experience might be in short supply.

Outlook: Coach Hessler likes his veteran club's leadership and hopes to see improvement this year. "I think we can hit double digits (in wins) this season," he said.

HIGHLAND PARK-CENTRAL

League: Two Rivers

Last year's record: 17-8

Coach: Mark Prokop

Key players: senior forwards Evan Lindstrom, Mac Staloch and Sam Blindt.

Team strengths/weaknesses: The co-operative Highland-Central team has a solid first line, a decent second line and four goaltenders to help with depth. However, it will be replacing some solid players who graduated, and freshmen and sophomores will probably have to learn on the job.

Outlook: The team will be hard-pressed to duplicate last year's record with all the inexperience, but coach Prokop is hoping that the learning curve bears fruit in the future. "We'll have some struggles this year," he predicted.

MINNEAPOLIS

League: Independents

Last year's record: 10-8

Coach: Joey Dziedzic

Key players: senior goalies Tommy Walsh and Lucas White, senior defenseman Walter Eisenbeis, junior forward Ben Murray.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Minneapolis has some solid workers with a lot of pride, but creating offensive momentum could be iffy.

Outlook: The team hopes to get by on grit, but will be offensively challenged. "We'll have to score by committee," coach Dziedzic said.

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic

Last year's record: 13-11

Coach: Josh Hoekstra

Key players: senior forward Zach Roberts, junior forwards Josh Roberts and Hunter Greshowek, senior goalie

BOYS' HOCKEY ► 24

STA falls just shy of perfect season, state AAAAAA crown

BY BILL WAGNER

St. Thomas Academy's hopes for its first state high school football title in 43 years ended with a 14-3 loss to defending champion Owatonna in the Class AAAAA title game on November 24 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

While the Cadets (12-1) had their chances, the Huskies (13-0) proved they were simply too tough in the trenches as they captured their third state title in six years.

"Our players and coaches took it hard," said Dan O'Brien, who was in his first year of coaching STA. "Our goal was to win the thing."

There was still plenty for the Cadets to feel good about, both for this fall and for the future of the program. Coming off a 4-4 record in 2017, STA exceeded all preseason expectations this year. STA wasn't even on most people's radar early on as a state title contender, according to O'Brien.

"Our name was just not being mentioned," he said, "but the players played well and bought into a new system."

The state title game shaped up as a duel between two top senior running backs—STA's Brendan McFadden and Owatonna's Jason Williamson. McFadden entered the game with 36 touchdowns, but was stymied by the Huskies defense. He accounted for 105 of the Cadets' 139 total yards, but couldn't break off the big one that could turn the game around.

Williamson, a Gopher recruit, got the best of the ground battle. The Cadets were able to limit him to 38 yards in the first half, but Williamson broke free with touchdown runs of 71 and 44 yards in the second half to finish

with 184 yards overall. The state's rushing leader ended up with 46 touchdowns and more than 3,000 yards for the season.

"We thought we had a nice game plan going in," O'Brien said, "but he got those two plays. We had him wrapped up on one, but we didn't finish. And we were gambling, trying to get the ball back, on the second one."

"They're a good football team," O'Brien said about Owatonna. "That's the best offensive line we've seen this year. And (Williamson) is a special player."

The Cadets played strong defense for most of the game with solid performances at nearly all positions, including senior defensive linemen Tony Wright and Jason Samec, junior linebacker Ben Reppenhagen and senior defensive back Johnny Steveken.

The STA defense had yielded no more than 14 points a game all fall, but that was all Owatonna needed as the Cadets' offense could never get on track. Their only points came on a 27-yard field goal by senior kicker John Copeland on the first possession of the game.

STA was able to move deep into Huskies territory twice in the second half, but couldn't score. The second time was in the fourth quarter when the Cadets advanced to the Owatonna 6. The drive stalled there when senior quarterback Charlie Fafinski threw an incompleteness on fourth down.

The Owatonna defense sacked Fafinski four times and limited him to 60 yards in the air. Owatonna was up only 7-3 at the end of the third quarter, but then late in the fourth McFadden fumbled near midfield and Williamson broke free for his second scoring run.

O'Brien, like everybody else in the STA camp, was down about the loss, but he noted



STA star senior running back Brendan McFadden was held up momentarily by Bemidji's Justin Nelson, who was whistled for a facemask penalty in the third quarter of the Cadets' 33-21 win in the state Class AAAAA semifinals on November 17 at U.S. Bank Stadium. The following week, STA lost to Owatonna 14-3 in the final. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

that the real winners were the spectators.

"It was just a fantastic high school football game," was how O'Brien described the contest to the media afterward. "Coming in...we thought it would be two heavyweights going at it, and that's exactly what happened."

STA started slowly against upset-minded

Tartan in the state tournament opener, but soon took control in a 35-14 win, with McFadden scoring five rushing touchdowns. In a 33-21 win over Bemidji in the semifinals, McFadden rushed for 211 yards and scored three touchdowns while Fafinski passed for 197 yards and a touchdown.

23◀ BOYS' HOCKEY

Brandon Lucas, junior forward Bryce Becker, sophomore forwards Connor Nelson and A.J. Buegen, senior defenseman Tommy Sedgwick.

Team strengths/weaknesses: Minnehaha, which is a cooperative team with DeLaSalle and St. Agnes, will have veterans up front at forward, but there's a lot of youth on the backline.

Outlook: Coach Hoekstra cites a difficult schedule as a benefit to his team. "It'll be chal-

lenging due to the schedule," he said, "but it'll be a better test for us. Still, we're so young."

ST. PAUL ACADEMY

League: Independent Metro Athletic

Last year's record: 5-21

Coach: Eddie Wynne

Key players: senior forwards Adam Zukowski and Nolan Gifford, junior goalie Thomas Kuriscak, junior defenseman Jake Hosszu, sophomore defenseman Michael Bagnoli.

Team strengths/weaknesses: SPA, which is a cooperative team with Nova, Twin Cities

Academy, Great River School and St. Croix Lutheran Academy, looks fine in goal and on defense, but goal-scoring will have to develop.

Outlook: The Spartans return everybody from last year except a backup goalie, and there's a lot of optimism about the junior class. "I'd say we can be better than .500," coach Wynne said.

ST. THOMAS ACADEMY

League: Metro East

Last year's record: 28-3

Coaches: Tom and Greg Vannelli

Key players: senior goalie Muzzy Donohue, senior defenseman Thomas Wings, senior forwards Brendan McFadden, Luke Herzog, Rob Christy and Ryan O'Neill.

Team strengths/weaknesses: STA has a solid and deep roster with good skills and work ethic. There are no superstars, though, and special teams need some fine-tuning.

Outlook: The Cadets captured last year's state Class AA consolation crown and will once again be a threat in their conference, section and likely beyond. "Winning state is always our goal," coach Greg Vannelli said.

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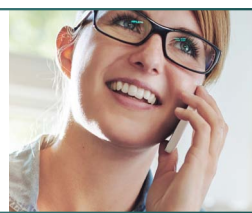
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Howling success

SMB Wolfpack cap off first state trip with AAAA title

BY BILL WAGNER

The SMB Wolfpack, a cooperative football team of players from St. Paul Academy, Minnehaha Academy and Blake, made the best of their first trip to the state high school tournament by capturing the Class AAAA title with a 44-18 victory over Willmar on November 23 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

"I just can't say enough about what good kids we have here and how hard they've worked all season for this," said Collin Quinn, who has coached the team since it was formed four years ago. "Willmar is a great football team, but I'm so proud that we have such outstanding leadership. We have guys who step up at key times and make big, big plays."

The game actually was a lot closer than the final score would suggest. Willmar (11-2) drove the ball deep inside the red zone twice in the second half, but both times the SMB defense rose up to thwart the Cardinals from scoring.

Though the victory was a thorough team effort for the Wolfpack (13-0), it's hard to find another player in the state who contributes more to his squad than junior Jalen Suggs. Perhaps better known for his skills on Minnehaha's state champion basketball team, Suggs was a force as both quarterback and defensive back for the Wolfpack in the title

game at state.

Suggs passed for 216 yards and three touchdowns, rushed for 67 yards and another touchdown, and had two interceptions, including one that he ran back 97 yards for another score that put the Wolfpack up 31-12 midway through the third quarter. His interception return was believed to be among the eight longest in high school league history.

As one might expect, Suggs' name came up often at the postgame press conference.

"(Suggs) is just a tremendous player," said Willmar coach Jon Kohnold. "He beat us with his legs and his arm. That team just has some super-athletic kids."

Suggs' 23-yard touchdown run in the first half was a thing of beauty. At least six tacklers tried to stop him, but he swerved into the end zone to score anyway. Junior Theo Crosby's conversion made it 17-6 in favor of SMB early in the second quarter.

"That just goes all the way back to (youth football)," Suggs said about his rushing TD. "It was about playing and having fun, just like when I was younger."

Suggs was modest about his second-half pick six that might have been the game's biggest turning point. He intercepted a throw by quarterback Drey Dirksen at his own 3 and was never threatened as he raced the length of the field to score.



Senior running back Siegel Howard scores the first touchdown for the Wolfpack during the team's 44-18 win over Willmar for the Class AAAA title on November 23 at U.S. Bank Stadium. PHOTO BY LOU MICHAELS

"I read the quarterback's eyes," Suggs said, "and was able to make a break on the ball."

Still, there was more than enough glory to be passed around among the state champs. Senior running back Siegel Howard surpassed 100 yards on the ground for the Wolfpack.

According to Howard, there wasn't much mystery to what motivated the team this fall. "Coach Quinn always tells us, 'Just get better,'" Howard said. "We try to do just that."

Senior linebacker Bennett Theisen, a tackling machine for the Wolfpack, first gave a shout-out to Howard for being a team leader. "Siegel Howard is our heart and soul," he said. "He makes us go."

Theisen also talked about how important it was for the Wolfpack to have had experience on other state champion squads, including Minnehaha's baseball and basketball title teams.

"You don't want to lose it when you get down," Theisen said. "Keeping a level head really helps. The senior class really wanted this. We wanted to come to play at U.S. Bank Stadium and win the title."

Crosby kicked a field goal to go with all five extra points he attempted in the game. Suggs threw two touchdown passes to junior Kaden Johnson, one from 6 yards out and another from 76 yards.

Just for good measure, Suggs added a 21-yard touchdown pass late in the fourth quarter to sophomore

Tony Avila-Tovalin.

Another Wolfpack player who distinguished himself was senior defensive lineman Andrew Molli-son, who was vital in helping stop a Willmar running play during a goal-line stand that ended with Suggs' interception on the next play.

The first quarter found the Wolfpack drawing first blood on Howard's 4-yard touchdown run. It capped off a 69-yard scoring drive in which Howard did all of the legwork.

Willmar's Ethan Roux stunned the Wolfpack late in the first quarter when he sprinted 90 yards for a touchdown on a kickoff return that trimmed the SMB lead to 10-7. However, the game opened up for SMB from there.

23◀ WRIGHT CALL

non-conference home game is against Georgia Southern. That game offers the perfect chance for the Gophers to reach out and offer people who normally couldn't afford to attend a game a chance to do so. The folks in the suites will never notice. Neither will the vice presidents who are at their cabins for the weekend.

The modern fan is more fickle than ever, in part, because there are many more entertainment options today than there were before. Winning back fans who have gone away means you have to give them a reason to put down their phones, shut off their TVs and get out of the house. Lindsay Whalen did just that a few weeks ago when the Gopher women's basketball team packed Williams Arena for their first game. Since then, attendance has returned to where it was before—in the 3,000-4,000 range. Everybody, including well-respected icons like Whalen, needs to sell their program these days.

Woldesslassie happy to be back at Mac

For a fellow who had watched his team lose its conference opener by 22 points the night before, new Macalester College men's basketball coach Abe Woldesslassie didn't sound in the least depressed. "Well, they took 73 shots and we only took 46," he said, referring to the Scots' 83-61 loss to the University of St. Thomas on November 28. "It was a tough first game, but we'll learn from it."

Woldesslassie was last on the Mac campus a decade ago when he was playing basketball for the Scots. After graduation, he helped lead basketball programs at three Division I colleges—Dartmouth, Davidson and Siena. The St. Thomas Academy graduate then jumped at the chance to come home and take over the Scots. Macalester is 2-3 as of this writing. One of those wins was an impressive 75-71 victory over Northwestern, a traditional UMAC power.

"First win over them since I played here," Woldesslassie said. "We made baskets when we needed to at the end." (Mac senior Wyatt Ferm, who scored 29 points in that game, was

named the MIAC Men's Basketball Player of the Week.)

Woldesslassie didn't get hired until May. "It was too late to get freshmen in," he said. "So, yes, I inherited this group, but they've adjusted to a new system well."

Getting the hang of winning a close game helps, too. In going 3-22 overall last season, the Scots played in just two contests that were decided by fewer than 10 points.

A decade away from campus gave Woldesslassie a new perspective on the college game. "There are several high-end Division III teams that could compete with the lower-end Division I teams," he observed.

Woldesslassie said he is aware of how the MIAC has changed since he played at Mac. "There's a lot more balance than before," he said. "This is a very competitive league."

When he was a junior, the Scots were among those competitive teams and missed making the postseason by only one game. Woldesslassie is confident that Mac can get back to that same competitive level again.

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

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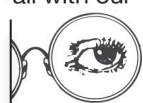


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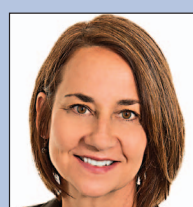
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You'll fall in love at the front porch! This rare Summit Hill beauty features amazing entertaining spaces with original woodwork built-in buffet and more! Spacious kitchen, 4+bedrooms, third level finished! 928 Linwood. GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com

SUE JOHNSON CRS, GRI
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1889 STANFORD AVENUE

Classic two-story features newly refinished hardwood floors, freshly painted walls, large living room with wood burning fireplace. Spacious formal dining room and updated kitchen. Amazing screened front porch, upper back deck and fully fenced back yard! GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com

SUE JOHNSON CRS, GRI
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Gracious & grand up/down duplex with room to roam! Each unit with 4BR's, 2BA's, office, formal dining + fabulous kitchen. Gleaming hardwood floors, living room with fireplace. Back yard oasis, 3-car garage! 1920 Summit Ave. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

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CLASSIC CHARM & APPEAL!

Pampered 3BR, 2BA beauty boasts lovely hardwood, living room with gas fireplace, formal dining & sun-drenched eat-in kitchen. Relax in the sparkling sunroom, or barbecue on the brick patio. Ideal location, 2-car! 1842 Berkeley Avenue. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

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1446 FURNESS PARKWAY

Sweet early 1900's built bungalow situated on over a quarter of an acre! Original oak built-in buffet and bookcases. Hrdwd flrs throughout. Charming, sunny front porch. Upper level FR. Amazing storage space throughout. Lower level ready to be finished. Fully fenced yard! GoodCompanyRealtyGroup.com

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Across the Ford Bridge you will find 5123 42nd Ave. So. - great starter with fabulous eat-in kitchen, new windows, private fenced yard and gleaming wood floors. Two bedrooms one bath - just move in - convenient to everything!

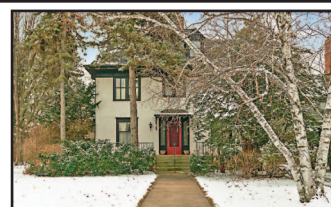
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Stunning four bedroom, four bath in the heart of Mendota Heights. Updated kitchen with granite, walk in pantry and stainless steel appliances. Wonderful entertaining and family spaces. Unbelievable backyard oasis!

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WELCOME HOME TO 1347 WHEELER STREET S!

This two-story home features, original woodwork, three bedrooms on one level, wood burning fireplace and main floor den/family room. Situated on a corner double lot, this is a unique private setting in convenient Highland Park location. Newer mechanicals and roof.

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1266 CLEVELAND

Welcome Home to this well maintained Highland Park rambler! Featuring 4BR's, 2 BA's & 2+ gar. This home has many updates including newer windows, furnace, A/C, W/H & kitch appls! Convenient location for walking to the River or restaurants/shops in the Village!

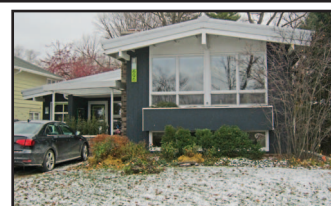
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EXCEPTIONAL!!!

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.

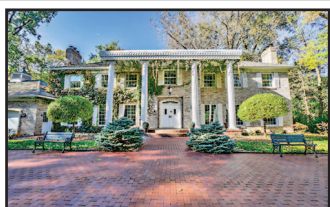
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JUST LISTED!!!

696 Mississippi River Blvd: This spectacular mid-century home has been completely renovated top to bottom. New metal roof, plumbing, wiring, heat and air, flooring, kitchen, baths, etc.. All top end finishes and appliances.

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TWO STORY BRICK COLONIAL!

Home features custom patterned hardwood floors, curved staircase, a wonderful mix of natural and enameled woodwork. Grand entertaining spaces. Brick paver driveway & heated garage. Newer windows throughout. Finished lower level. www.NorthOaksDream.com

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Two Story home in the Mounds View School District with 4 bedrooms up on over an acre of land. Newer kitchen, windows, carpet, paint and more. Ready to move right in & enjoy!

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This stately Crocus Hill home features 9,000 sq ft, breathtaking interiors, inlaid and pegged floors, a 1/2 acre lot with reflecting pool and a carriage house. This was an ASID showcase home in 2004 and is a designated National Historic Landmark. 633 Fairmount Ave.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$2,295,000



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 • \$670,000



STUNNING 3RD FLOOR CONDO!

This delightful 2BR/2BA condo, in the historic Horace Rugg house, is open and airy with huge windows and fabulous views, a balcony, a 1 car garage and a building elevator. This is a charming treetop retreat with all the amenities. Must see.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$430,000



CLASSIC ST. PAUL CONDO!

Open and airy, sunny and bright. This 2BR, 3BA condo features spacious rooms, hwd floors, a 4 season sun room, butler's pantry, fireplace and fabulous built-ins. Great location, close to everything. 56 Arundel Street.

SARAH KINNEY
651-282-9621 • \$360,000

