

Community REPORTER

SERVING WEST END NEIGHBORHOODS, DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL TO FORT SNELLING, SINCE 1970



FUTURE OF FORT SNELLING
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CIRCULATION 12,000

BUILDING A NON-RACIST COMMUNITY

Racism, Runny Noses and the Myth of Freedom for All

by Tim Johnson
Retired Pastor, Cherokee Park United Church

[Editor's Note: This is the tenth article in Tim Johnson's series on racism. Comments and insights are welcome: send to editor@communityreporter.org.]

Although my own memory of the incident is vague, it was told often enough by adults I trusted that I believed it. The small-town church attended by my family was hosting its annual Christmas pageant in which children acted out the story of Jesus' birth. Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus, the wisemen, angels and the shepherds along with various animals were all assembled in the front of the church. Some had speaking parts, others of us, like the sheep, stood in quiet adoration. I was 6. My brother was 4. We were sheep. At some point in the solemn telling of the story, I noticed an unsightly strand running from my brother's nose. Without fanfare, deviating from the script we had been given, I walked across the stage and, with a Kleenex, gently wiped the snot from my brother's face.

The runny nose story, as it came to be known, was retold in part for its cuteness factor, always a draw for children's Christmas pageants. But I suspect the poignancy of the moment and

We are imperfect, incomplete and messy.

others like it is that they bring the messiness, imperfections and incompleteness of humanity squarely into this sacred story. For Christians, the Christmas story is a myth, which is not to say that it lacks historical truth, but rather that truth in the Christmas story lies in its capacity to transcend time so that we might encounter our own humanity, our own imperfections, our own incompleteness.

We have just finished an election in which one of the central issues was whether the American myth of "We the People" proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence is an idea and a story brought to perfection from the very beginning or whether it was born out of messiness, imperfections and our own incompleteness. In his book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, Parker Palmer notes that the Founding Fathers who wrote those words "fell far short of their own declaration."

However, by acknowledging the imperfections and incompleteness, the myth lives with the power of aspiration. Any assertion of original perfection makes the American freedom myth an outright lie—or, as Eddie Glaude, author of *Begin Again*, calls it, "The Lie." Palmer says that "when we imagine or pretend" that the American myth of freedom for all "describes current reality, the myth becomes an enemy of its own aspirations." It is what makes "Make America Great Again" so problematic. In contrast, by acknowledging snotty noses, messiness and incompleteness (what Palmer calls the "aspiration gap"), we give myths the power to transform our lives and our world.

Black Lives Matter refuses to ignore the runny nose. Native voices who seek reparation for stolen land refuse to ignore it, too. Immigrants, who come to this country expecting that neither their skin color nor religion will be a barrier to their aspirations of the American freedom myth, refuse to ignore the runny nose as well.

We are imperfect, incomplete and messy. No group should know this more than those who gather in community, as many believers do this time of year, telling sacred stories about love that has the power to make us a better people. Whatever tradition one grounds their beliefs in, we share a fundamental affirmation that love which has the power to transform does so in the context of our brokenness. Myths, which make room for runny noses, can unleash the imagination of who we might yet become.

Facing Pandemic Local Businesses Carve Paths Forward



The biergarten at Waldmann Brewery & Wurstery sits empty after Gov. Walz's Nov. 18 order to suspend in-person dining, its radiation heat system turned off.

BY DAVID LAMB

In a year that has become known for feeling to many like history's worst ever, things have been especially tough for small-business owners as well as their employees. The restaurant business, where many heavily rely on the tips of in-person dining and higher margins of serving alcoholic beverages, has been particularly threatened, with the unprecedented wave of COVID-19 infections that built throughout the fall only making things worse.

A longtime destination for dining and drinking—from the classic Italian fare of Cossetta's and steaks of Mancini's to trendy destinations like Bad Weather Brewing Co. and the Keg and Case food hall that have opened in recent years—the West End has not proved immune to the pandemic's headwinds. The Bay Street Grill, one longtime stalwart just off W. 7th on Randolph Street, closed in July, with its owners citing the uncertainty of the pandemic as well as personal medical issues.

In recent months, however, local entrepreneurs have turned their creativity to the pandemic, carving new solutions to survive the winter and outlast COVID-19. The novel innovations range from renovated

facilities to new processes and business models. Waldmann Brewery & Wurstery (445 Smith Ave. N.), which relies heavily on the popularity of its sprawling biergarten surrounded by several of St. Paul's oldest buildings, installed an elaborate system that will warm its entire patio with 500,00 BTUs of natural gas radiant heat. "The effect is subtle and pleasant, since infrared heat takes time to soak into you," Tom Schroeder, the restaurant's owner, said, noting that he installed it without tents, canopies or plastic bubbles to create the safest dining experience possible.

Bad Weather Brewing Co. (414 W. 7th St.), another brewery and restaurant, was fortunate to have already invested in redoing its patio in the fall of 2019. After the pandemic hit, it worked with the city through the spring to expand its renovated patio across what had been the restaurant's front parking lot. Realizing the importance of heat for extending the outdoor dining season, Bad Weather's owner, Joe Giambruno, worked with a welding company to build a custom outdoor table, where bargeons can rest their glasses around an open, gas-fed fire.

Claddagh Coffee, a coffee house and homemade pastry shop with outposts in the West End (459 W. 7th St.) and Cathedral

Hill (612 Selby Ave.) neighborhoods, converted from in-person dining to a service window over the summer, allowing customers to get their breakfast and lunch without stepping foot inside. "We created a whole new website for ordering online," said Mary Hogan-Bard, who owns the business. Heat lamps that Bard purchased for each of the shops will keep customers warm while they place orders outside.

One St. Paul mainstay since 1975, Day by Day Café (477 W. 7th St.), shook up its menu to keep diners streaming into its secluded outdoor garden and newly added outdoor seating along W. 7th over the summer and through the fall. In July, it added an outdoor wood-burning oven to its facilities, ushering distinctive pizzas onto its list of offerings (six oven-baked sandwiches will debut soon).

The café's owner, Greg Ekhom, viewed Governor's Walz's November 18 order to suspend in-person dining as a mercy of sorts, since the surging pandemic had left the business losing money in recent weeks. "Now, we can focus on takeout and delivery," Ekhom said, adding that the company had forged new partnerships

PANDEMIC, PG 6

Elected reps tell United Family Medicine to halt changes, call for outside review

The following letter from nine elected officials, listed below it, was sent to UFM leadership on November 25:

United Family Medicine (UFM) has a long and rich history of serving the medical health and wellness needs of the West Seventh community and far beyond. The clinic's foundational, personal patient-doctor relationships and nationally acclaimed "To Serve and to Teach" Family Medicine Residency mission have demonstrated outstanding outcomes regardless of income, ethnicity, age and familial status.

The unique collaboration between the community, United Hospital and Allina

Health has undergirded UFM's progressive, professional medical staff and 21st century clinic facilities. Nearly \$15 million was raised to fund UFM's clinic building (which opened in 2009) in large part through the efforts and initiative of the United Hospital Foundation and Allina Health's support.

The West Seventh community and patients from all around the Twin Cities were distressed to learn of the clinic's new CEO and board leaders' intentions to dismantle UFM's "continuous health care" model, the model that has evolved and served so many so well over decades. As UFM's mission and focus has long been to provide personalized primary care with a family physician — at clinic, hospital or other venues — the forced departure of UFM's physicians and medical residents is a devastating prospect for patients and the entire community.

The imminent dislocation of the United Family Medicine Residency program (21 MDs) and the accompanying departure of the clinic's 13 "legacy" physicians —

LETTER, PG 6

[A]s elected officials in this community, we call for a halt to the impending changes to UFM's successful operating model and reestablishment of the United Family Medical Residency program.



FEDERATION UPDATE

882 West 7th, Suite 6
fortroadfederation.org

Board Update

At the November 9 meeting, the Board approved a request for support of Saint Paul Public Library in upcoming City budgeting. The Board also approved a variance to make changes to the interior of a residence for a home occupation, a business at 284 Nugent. Finally, the Board heard a presentation about fiscal sponsorship; discussed risks and benefits; and reviewed a draft updated fiscal sponsor policy. The issue was tabled.

Yard Signs

See the yard sign design and order at fortroadfederation.org/yardsign. Yard signs are ready for curbside pickup at our office after purchase.

Virtual Trivia Night Fundraiser

Dec. 10, 7pm: Zoom in, meet friends, and have fun! All proceeds go to supporting the Fort Road Federation Test your skills on history, landmarks and West 7th! Winning team will receive a traveling trophy from local KRL Foundry. Individual/team tickets available at fortroadfederation.org.

Upcoming Meetings, via Zoom.

Details, log-in info at fortroadfederation.org/calendar
• Transportation and Land Use Committee - 12/2, 6:30 pm
• Joint Riverview Task Force - Thursday, 12/3, 6-7pm
• Board Meeting - 12/14, 7 pm
• Community Engagement and Outreach Committee - 12/17, 6:30 pm

Stay in touch

"Like" us on Facebook. Subscribe to its e-newsletter fortroadfederation.org.

Contact

Emily Northey, executive director, community organizer 651-298-5599; emily@fortroadfederation.org; 882 West 7th St, Suite 6, Rathskeller Building.

Editorials & Opinions

The letters, opinions, and editorials expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors of this newspaper or any of our advertisers or sponsors.

Your involvement is requested

As a nonprofit organization we are governed by a Board of Directors, and we have openings for community members to join.

We encourage your involvement in the creative side of things. We have correspondents, reporters, reviewers and general writers involved. You can write a letter to the editor on a topic we have written about, or in response to one of our columnists, or a longer "Neighbors Speak Out" piece.

You can also contribute story ideas: We aim to cover a wide range of interesting areas in the neighborhood. Your ideas for stories and topics are always welcome. Discuss the many possibilities with the Editor. Leave a voice message at 781-330-1341, or e-mail editor@communityreporter.org.

-- David Lamb, Editor, Community Reporter



WEST END HEALTHLINE

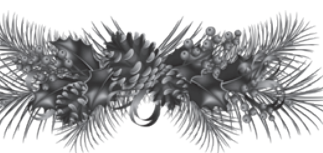
Holiday Planning in the Time of COVID-19

BY NICHOLAS SWENSON, MD AND ANGELA ULRICH, PHD

As snow falls and the pandemic surges, families across Minnesota are wondering how to celebrate the holidays without putting themselves or those they love at risk. After months of physical distancing, mask wearing, and hand washing, many of us are feeling "pandemic fatigue" as 2020 draws to a close. If you find yourself feeling fed up with the pandemic, know that you are in good company!

Unfortunately, the ways in which we are accustomed to celebrating our holiday traditions—gathering around a Christmas tree, for example, or a bountiful meal—create the perfect environment for spreading COVID-19. Even while our traditions may seem to urge us to visit one another, the science of this yet-to-crest wave compels us to behave differently. As Minnesota Governor Walz ordered on November 19, residents must not gather until December 17 with those from other households. Even if the order is lifted by the Christmas holiday, Minnesotans should cautiously weigh the risks and benefits of gathering together, and make holiday plans that keep ourselves, loved ones, and communities healthy.

The safest option is to spend the holidays only with those who live in your household. Rather than gathering in person with extended family, consider celebrating virtually. Plan a time for an online event, send out invitations, and make it fun! Share new recipes, show off your decorations, maybe even have a friendly competition for the prettiest pie. If you're mourning



being able to taste and share those favorite holiday recipes, you don't have to—you can still have a potluck! Prepare home-baked traditional dishes and safely deliver them to the porch of your friends and loved ones.

If you plan to attend or host a holiday event (if and when local guidance permits gatherings with those outside of your immediate household), get creative about keeping your family and guests safe. Limit the size of your gathering to the fewest households and smallest number of individuals possible. If weather permits, host a short outside gathering, tell your guests to bundle up and prepare hot cocoa or apple cider to serve them while distancing around one (or more!) warm campfires. If you choose to gather indoors, use the largest, most well-ventilated space in your home and open a few windows. Seat households at separate, distanced tables rather than communal ones. Instead of serving a buffet or passing dishes, have each household bring their favorite take-out. Set up a handwashing station and remind everyone to mask up whenever they aren't eating or drinking. Most importantly, clearly communicate your plan to guests.

Consider postponing your holiday travel plans. Travel creates an opportunity for COVID-19 to infect both those you plan to

visit and those you will return home to. If you choose to travel by airplane, wear a mask properly (covering your mouth and nose) for the duration of your flight, while moving through the airport, and on rides to and from the airport. Lower the risk to the folks you visit by staying in a rental or hotel, visiting outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces, physically distancing, and wearing a mask throughout your visit.

Limit contact with others for 10-14 days before attending family gatherings or traveling, and get tested for COVID-19. But remember that a negative test doesn't make good ventilation, physical distancing or wearing a mask any less important. Viruses have an "incubation period," which means that you can have a negative test a day or two before seeing family but still be infectious during your visit, even if you don't have any symptoms.

The good news is that the pandemic won't last forever! Conversations about your holiday plans this year may be difficult, but have them anyway. Focus on the things you can do right now to avoid an empty seat at the dinner table in the future: gathering virtually and postponing travel, staying outdoors and increasing ventilation when inside, keeping your distance, wearing a mask, and washing your hands. Remind your loved ones that the choice to celebrate differently in 2020 helps ensure you'll all be around to celebrate together for many years to come.

Nicholas Swenson, MD is a resident physician at Allina Health/United Family Medicine Residency Program. Angela Ulrich, PhD is an epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota.



COMMISSIONER
RAFAEL ORTEGA
columnist

Reintroducing the Riverview Corridor

Dear Community Reporter readers,

I am happy to share that we have just begun the Engineering and Pre-Environmental Phase of the Riverview Corridor. To review for

those of you who are familiar with the line, and to share details for people who are unfamiliar with it, the Riverview Corridor is a 12-mile modern streetcar line traveling mainly along West Seventh Street from the Union Depot downtown to the airport and the Mall of America. Modern streetcar vehicles can operate on the same track and stations as light rail, but modern streetcar vehicles and stations are generally smaller than light rail.

This is the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) chosen by the Riverview Policy Advisory Committee, Saint Paul, Bloomington, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Hennepin County and Ramsey County and adopted into the region's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan by the Metropolitan Council as the alternative most likely to be

competitive for federal funding.

In August 2020, the Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar project passed a major milestone with the approval of four contracts that established the project team for the Engineering and Pre-Environmental Phase. Throughout the three-year phase, the project team will undertake environmental and project-development work including engineering, environmental review, station area planning and community engagement to prepare for the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement as part of a future project phase.

We also have two advisory committees for citizens to participate on. One is the Community Advisory Committee and the other is the Station Area Planning Committee. Applications can be found on the project website, www.riverviewcorridor.com. The deadline to apply for both is December 15. I encourage you to apply if you want to be more involved.

And, as always, email me directly if you'd like to share your thoughts: rafael.e.ortega@co.ramsey.mn.us.

Letter to the Editor

Transit Improvement for *This* Generation

BY KENT PETTERSON

Last month the Community Reporter brought us a story written by Jim Schoettler of CART (Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit). In this current study process for the Riverview Corridor, the CART regional light-rail transit (LRT) plan is a distraction and not on the table. Jim and I and many others spent what seemed like endless meeting hours observing and commenting during the earlier study. It was led by Ramsey County Commissioner Raphael Ortega and a Policy Advisory Committee (which I will call PAC-1). That process ultimately ended with the unsatisfying result of choosing modern streetcar as the mode and West 7th Street as the alignment for what's called the "locally preferred alternative" (LPA) that we have before us. This LPA is a required step for eligibility to receive roughly 50 percent federal matching of local funding for such large-scale transit projects.

We now have spent six years seeking those federal dollars for this big-buck project. My own frustration—and that of many others who wanted to see better transit in our neighborhoods—already boiled over years ago in 2014, when Metro Transit had

federal funding committed for an arterial Bus Rapid Transit (A-BRT) project on West 7th that could have been built and been serving transit-dependent people in roughly 2017. It is tragic and confounding that the proposed LPA may, per Ramsey County's projection, not be in service until 2032. Nearly a generation of public transit riders could be deprived of improvements by this faulty process.

The delays need to stop! But instead, Ramsey County is back at the table with a new advisory committee (PAC-2, for lack of a better acronym), which must be completed before we are even able to move on to the Environmental Impact Study Phase required by the Feds.

This current PAC-2 is projected to take three years. As announced on November 5 at its first meeting, Ramsey County, with an array of hired consultants, has given itself 16 months to overcome the failure points it discovered and couldn't resolve in the three years of the previous PAC-1.

Now, again, we wait, while our "little engine that could" neighborhood is getting jerked around, not getting transit improvements. At the same time, other neighborhoods like those along East 7th Street are getting needed investments, and the Minnesota legislature has authorized funding for two more BRT projects across the region.

This PAC-2's composition is also disappointing. While the members are largely the same as the previous committee, our neighborhood representative Laurel Severson was replaced by a member from Highland. In another potentially more damaging shortcoming, no representative from our local Joint Riverview Transit Task Force (JRTTF) was invited to be on PAC-2. Three members of the West 7th Business Association and three from the Ft. Road

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Third Monday of each month. Articles should be typed, double spaced. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted copy. We can design your ads, camera ready, tiff or jpeg files on disk.

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Community News & Events



Overcoming Racism Conference

Dr. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.

The Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative's (FREC) annual Overcoming Racism Conference took place virtually Nov. 12-13. Emceed by FREC member William Moore, the conference featured a keynote speech by Dr. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., Princeton University's James S. McDonnell Distinguished Professor and chair of its department of African American Studies as well as the author of *Democracy in Black* and *In a Shade of Blue*. Other speakers and performers included the Funny Asian Women Collective, a group founded to combat the invisibility and dehumanization of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American women; VocalEssence Singers of This Age, a dynamic group of young people from over twenty Twin Cities-area high schools who sing, move and write their own music, from classical to hip hop; Jim Bear Jacobs, a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation with degrees in Pastoral Studies and Christian Theology; and May Lee-Yang, a playwright, poet, prose writer and performance artist.

Riverview Corridor Committees Seeking Applicants
The Community Advisory Committee and the Station Area Planning Committee are seeking residents who can join and provide input. (See Commissioner Rafael Ortega's column on page 2). Visit riverviewcorridor.com to apply. Deadline for both is December 15.

Arab Film Fest Collab (AFFC)

The Arab American National Museum, Arab Film and Media Institute, ArteEast and the St. Paul-based nonprofit Mizna are collaborating to present the virtual AFFC, Dec. 3-13. Featuring films, panel discussions and performances from Southwest Asia and North Africa, the AFFC highlights Arab, Afro-Arab and Black SWANA voices, capturing the complexity of the Arabic-speaking world and its diverse narratives. Screening the work of

filmmakers from countries like Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, and Morocco, the AFFC exhibits all films in their original languages with English subtitles. Visit arabfilmfestcollab.org.

St. Paul Business Awards

Candyland (435 Wabasha Ave. N.), the downtown stalwart where one can indulge in sugar and nostalgia, won this year's Traditions Award, honoring a business that has been active in the city for at least 20 years. Jandrich Floral (976 W. 7th St.) won the People's Choice Award.

Landmark Center Holiday Bazaar Goes Virtual

The 42nd Annual Landmark Center Old-Fashioned Holiday Bazaar™ is moving online, Dec. 3-13. Features jewelry, decor, woven and wearable art, children's

toys and clothes, handmade lotions, soaps, food items and more. This year, you'll find links to favorite local musicians that regularly perform and a recipe for a festive holiday cocktail and mocktail. Visit www.landmarkcenter.org/old-fashioned-holiday-bazaar/.

United Family Medicine Seeks New Board Members

The clinic is recruiting people to its board of directors. Submit your interest via email to pjaques@unitedfamilymedicine.org. For info, www.rb.gy/rozazd

Community-Oriented Public Safety Commission

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, who announced the new initiative on Nov. 17, said it would convene 40 people who will spend several months rethinking the city's approach to public safety. Led by the nonprofit Citizens League and co-chaired by John Marshall, Xcel Energy's director of community relations for Minnesota, a community relations director at Xcel Energy, and Acooa Ellis, senior vice president of community impact for the Greater Twin Cities United Way, the commission will bring together people with experience in education and public service as well as faith leaders and businesspeople.

Historic Turnout as State Dems Score Decisive Wins

Democratic MN Sen. Erin Murphy and Rep. Dave Pinto were reelected in landslide victories to represent the 64th state senate and house districts. In the 65th state senate and house districts, Rep. Carlos Mariani and Sen. Sandy Pappas scored similarly decisive wins. With about 80 percent of the state's registered voters weighing in this year (and more than 85 percent of St. Paul voters), according to the *Star Tribune*, Minnesota's turnout was higher than it has been in any election since 1960, when JFK was propelled to the White House. Minnesota's 2020 turnout was also the highest registered so far for any state in this year's election.

Holistic Focus and Community Service Propel Minnesota's Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Bethany Wood, owner of HealthSource of St. Paul Grand Ave., a chiropractic and holistic medicine practice, won the 2020 U.S. Small Business Administration's Entrepreneur of the Year Award for the Minnesota district. In 2017, she used a SBA loan to purchase an existing practice and accomplish a longtime dream of owning her own clinic. For more information on her practice, visit www.healthsourcechiro.com.

Miss Richfield Returns to Illusion for Virtual Shows

Shelter in place and attend a party at the same time with "Miss Richfield's Guide to a Socially Distanced Holiday." Miss Richfield—will teach you how to comfortably fit a social disease into your annual holiday celebration. For tickets, visit rb.gy/gquty.

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West 7th Locally Owned

Ayd Mill Road reopens with new pedestrian, bike path



The 1.5 mile stretch of road was closed on August 1 to implement a new 3-lane street design with two southbound vehicle lanes, one northbound vehicle lane and the creation of a new shared pedestrian and bicycle trail along the eastside of Ayd Mill Road.

In addition to the improvements on Ayd Mill Road and installation of the new bike and pedestrian infrastructure, Saint Paul Public Works determined that the new, lower speed limit on Ayd Mill Road would be 35 mph. The change in speed limit is due to the modified design and use of the roadway, and it takes into account user safety, roadway access, roadway design and adjacent land use. "Ayd Mill Road has challenged our city for over a generation," Mayor Melvin Carter said of the reopening. "Reimagining this critical route as a complete street we can all use and enjoy demonstrates our community's commitment to our residents and our planet alike."

TRANSIT, PG 2

Federation have been meeting for nearly three years as this task force and worked to keep our organizations and the neighborhood informed about this very issue. As a member of the JRTTF, I don't endorse this peculiar snub. We have met with Metro Transit, our Metropolitan Council representative, Kris Fredson, and with Commissioner Ortega's staff, and we have assembled an in-depth study of our neighborhood desires for the future. Apparently, Ramsey County doesn't want to have direct communication about this.

The modern streetcar LPA is bad for our street. I have written about this many times in the *Community Reporter*. More importantly, it is a bad LPA for transit-dependent riders who need improvement sooner rather than a generation later, if the plan indeed ever comes to completion.

CART's November article raised a crucial compatibility issue between the region's Blue & Green LRT lines and modern streetcar. Although this never came up publicly in the PAC-1 or related technical meetings, all of which I attended, when I recently asked for a clarification

from Ramsey County, I was told there were background assurances the compatibility issue was not a problem. Well, it is a problem, and it will require a major work around. Otherwise the streetcar vehicle will be isolated on the Riverview alignment, unable to unload passengers onto the Blue or Green LRT stations, which it is in fact planned to be able to do. The situation makes one wonder whether the entire planning exercise has been one long con, a giant bait and switch of mode that will only be revealed when our county's consultants inform us one morning that there was a mistake, and we're back to LRT on West 7th.

After enduring this process beside them, I agree with Jim Schoettler and his colleagues at CART that the first priority for transit improvement in the corridor should be a local bus on West 7th, with high-service frequency. And I agree with them that any rail transit in the corridor must be on a separate right-of-way based on regional rail transit needs and standards. It is a folly to try to combine the two as Ramsey County has with its LPA.

Email Kent Peterson at terrace@wineternet.com.

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Arts & Culture

When the Gangsters Ruled St. Paul

BY DAVID LAMB

A century ago, the "Public Enemy Number One," the leader of the group whose members J. Edgar Hoover called "the toughest mob we ever cracked," roamed the streets of St. Paul. His name was Alvin Karpis, and for five years he orchestrated dozens of robberies out of his St. Paul base, protected by paid-off police and an instinct for smelling trouble and skipping town. In *Alvin Karpis and the Barker Gang in Minnesota* by Deborah Frethem and Cynthia Schreiner Smith, the St. Paul of the gangster era springs vividly to life again.

Born Albin Francis Karpowicz in 1908 in Montreal, Alvin "Creepy" Karpis, as he came to be known, was a precocious criminal who became a mastermind. At the age of 10, he helped a teenager rob a grocery store, breaking in late at night and "picking it over like vultures." By age 17, he was in prison in Kansas, serving his first sentence for burglary. There he met his mentor, Larry DeVol, with whom he broke out of the prison in 1929. The two embarked on a crime and murder spree across Kansas and Colorado that was only brought to a halt a year later, when Kansas City police found a trove of safe-cracking tools in the trunk of their motorcycle.

In the resulting prison stint, Karpis' second, he met Freddie Barker, already an experienced robber, who would become the other guiding force of the Karpis-Barker gang. With Barker's "itchy trigger finger" and Karpis' experience as "a strategist who liked planning jobs, figuring escape routes and running numbers," they made a formidable team. After being paroled, they proved their chemistry



Alvin Karpis, in the hands of federal agents, returns to St. Paul in 1936.

through a streak of large robberies.

Their move to Minnesota came as a result of a crime run amok. The day after robbing a store in Missouri, Karpis took his sputtering 1931 DeSoto to an auto mechanic. When it was recognized as one seen at the robbery, the sheriff was notified and then, arriving at the shop, killed. Barker became wanted for the murder, and St. Paul, which teemed with corruption, was the only haven where he could find safety.

The Green Lantern, a long-ago demolished speakeasy on Wabasha Street in downtown St. Paul, was the naturalization site of sorts. Freddie Sawyer, the saloon's owner and the man who brought Karpis to St. Paul, introduced him to a coterie of gangsters. Karpis wrote that the assembly, which included "escapees from every major US penitentiary," left him "dazzled." With the Green Lantern as his unofficial "headquarters" and a home base in West St. Paul, Karpis' gang terrorized the Midwest, robbing banks throughout Kansas, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota.

One day, a West St. Paul neighbor, realizing that Karpis was wanted for a killing of an officer in Kansas,

reported a tip in person to Inspector James Crumley of the St. Paul police, and Karpis' criminal career might have come to end. But it turned out that Crumley happened to be, as Frethem and Smith write, the "right-hand man to corrupt police chief Tom Brown," and so he proceeded to lock the confused tipster in a file room while he phoned Chief Brown and stalled the inevitable police raid. In an image that captures the frequent attempts to apprehend Karpis and his associates, the police swarming his house found only his lukewarm, partially eaten breakfast.

Eventually, after the gang murdered two Minneapolis police officers as they escaped



St. Paul Police Detective Thomas A. Brown, who served as chief from 1930 to 1932, was paid by Alvin Karpis to alternately look the other way and tip off Karpis' gang when police were closing in.



Investigators review evidence outside the Hamm's mansion shortly after the kidnapping of Hamm's Brewery president, William R. Hamm.



BEATRICE COSGROVE
reviewer

BEA'S BOOKS

The Hero Next Door ★★★★★

(5 out of 5 stars)

The Hero Next Door, edited by Olugemisola Rhuday-Perkovich, is a collection of short stories about kids being heroes.

Whether they did something big or small. All the stories in the collection are written by bestselling and award-winning writers. One story is "A girl's best friend" by Cynthia Leitch Smith, about a girl named Sophie who really wants a dog. Miz Wilson, the landlady, won't allow it. When Sophie starts volunteering at an animal shelter, walking dogs, Miz Wilson thinks Sophie and her mom are hiding a dog in their apartment over a

garage (they aren't) and puts a note up on their door that says they need to leave. Can Sophie convince Miz Wilson that they are not hiding a dog, and maybe find lonely Miz Wilson a companion of her own?

The book teaches you that doing one good deed can make you a hero. You don't need special powers or a costume. You can be a hero by doing something to make even the smallest of all places much better. There are so many heroes out there, big and small. You have the power to be a hero, so use that power to work towards peace, kindness and a better world. I recommend it to ages 8+.

Beatrice Cosgrove, 10, is a reader and writer in St. Paul.

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Allina Health's United Family Medicine (UFM) Residency Program trains family physicians to provide comprehensive medical care. This three-year program has seven medical residents per class. During their training, these doctors develop a community project in collaboration with West End neighbors that helps them develop new perspectives on community health.

One group of residents has been working with the West End Seniors' Group to explore and offer resources for seniors living in social isolation. Because the Keystone programs described above share the project goals, it is supporting the placement of this information in the Community Reporter and its social media sites.



In the Community



(left) The former administration building at Fort Snelling's Upper Post. Dominion plans to redevelop 21 buildings into moderately-priced housing and five additional buildings into common areas.



(above) Officer's quarters buildings at Fort Snelling's Upper Post site.

PHILIP PROWSE, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Fort Snelling affordable housing project to cost \$900,000 per unit to build

BY MAX NESTERAK

A plan to save 26 crumbling buildings at Fort Snelling's Upper Post and turn them into moderately priced apartments for veterans narrowly secured critical financing in November, with the Hennepin County commissioners voting to issue \$88 million in bonds to Plymouth-based developer Dominion.

The Upper Post Flats will include 191 apartments with a projected total cost of about \$172.5 million — or \$902,893 per unit, which is more than three times the cost of the average single-family home in the Twin Cities.

Three of the seven Hennepin County commissioners — Mike Opat, Angela Conley and Irene Fernando — voted against the financing, citing the price. (The commissioners technically voted as the Housing Redevelopment Authority, which is made up of the same people as the Board, and must vote again on the bonds during their board meeting in two weeks.)

"I think the cost at \$900,000 a unit is exorbitant," Opat said. "I think that's just too much, especially for a project that at the end of it isn't for use by the general public."

The approval caps off a yearslong fight for public financing — with Dominion

pushing through a special state law in 2018 to circumvent a cost ceiling — to build what will be the most expensive affordable housing development per unit in Minnesota history.

The project pits historic preservation against limited resources available to build affordable housing amid a worsening housing and homelessness crisis in the region.

Preserving historic buildings, mitigating noise pollution from the nearby airport and cleaning up hazards like lead paint,

asbestos and contaminated soil are all costly. For people who see the Upper Post as part of the state's most important landmarks, it's well worth the price.

"If we don't preserve this now, it will not be preserved," said Commissioner Debbie Goettel, who noted as mayor of Richfield she saw multiple failed attempts to preserve the site due to lack of funding. "These are historic buildings. I want them preserved. And I think putting people who need houses into these is great."

The Fort Snelling Upper Post Site was built beginning in 1879 and over the years served as a Japanese language and intelligence school and a rehabilitation center for wounded veterans before it was decommissioned in 1946 and transferred to the

NEIGHBORS SPEAK OUT

Rehab restores landmark, builds on track record of success

BY DAVE THUNE

The historic stone and brick complex atop a bluff high above the Mississippi River has lived many lives—a Japanese language and intelligence school during WWII and a place for veterans to recover after that, it is now known by many as a pastoral park in which to exercise or spend a day with family and friends. For me, Fort Snelling is also a place I once spent many afternoons as a graduate architect in the 1970s, painstakingly making measured drawings of the historic Officers' Quarters for the Minnesota Historical Society.

Now, with the Twin Cities-based developer Dominion implementing a plan for rehabilitating the crumbling buildings into affordable housing for veterans and others, I rest easier, knowing that the history of this unique site will be preserved. I trust Dominion to do right by this landmark, under the oversight of local leaders, and not just because, as I should disclose, I have a contract with the company in my semi-retirement. Rather, I have chosen to work for Dominion because I'm a fan. While I was on the St. Paul City Council, I

REHAB, PG 7

PROJECT, PG 6

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Community Nourishment



KENT PETERSON
columnist

GARDEN VIEWS

A season for pruning woodyies

Most maintenance and shaping of your landscape trees and shrubs is best if done in the winter

dormant season after freeze up and before the sap flows in spring. I say "most" because some of our woody plants are flowering. Since the new flower buds form after flowering, these are best pruned just after and before new buds are formed during that growing season.

When flowering and fruiting are not involved, it is always best to prune during

colder weather. The wound at the pruning cut is a source of disease for these plants, but a proper cut minimizes exposure and fungi and viral diseases are least active when it is cold.

A proper cut is much more than just giving the plant a haircut or eliminating branches that are growing too close to utility wires.

First rule is to sharpen and clean your cutting tools.

Second, don't do too much. The plant needs buds that leaf out to produce food for the plant in the next year. No more than 1/3 of the plant top volume should be pruned.

Third, check out a pruning reference to understand some of the specific pruning methods. There are too many to cover here.

Fourth, remove dead and dying branches.

Fifth, be careful when cutting at the point of attachment at a branch or trunk of the plants. Research has determined that a cut that is perpendicular to the branch. The growing point is a "branch collar" of growth tissue at the point of attachment. This must not be damaged. If this growing point is damaged by breakage, do not dress the wound with any covering. It is best to let it heal exposed to the air.

Good luck, and when you are feeling uninspired, remember that by turning your attention to pruning you will allow your woodyies to return a more attractive plant in the spring.

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PANDEMIC, PG 1

with Door Dash and Grubhub and made its full menu available for takeout for the first time on November 21.

Coming at the end of a year that piled many other challenges on the restaurant industry, Walz's order was not universally embraced. "So much for encouraging innovation," Schroeder remarked, pointing out that the state-mandated suspension treated his customized open-air heated patio the same way as indoor dining. "Owners have already lost their shirts on 2020," he said, "[and] who survives and what this industry looks like in 2021 is anyone's guess." Giambruno conceded that while he understood the reasoning of the order, "that

doesn't make it any easier."

According to several of the restaurant owners, the employees they have managed to keep on and their customers remind them why, in times of struggle, they keep going. "Early on in the pandemic, we didn't know how we were going to make it," Giambruno said, "but we've been blown away by the support that neighbors and regulars—and even the competition—have shown us." He said that the day after Walz's order, he and other restaurant- and bar-owners discussed over a Zoom meeting how they could get through it.

Schroeder described himself as "the luckiest guy in the world to work with the people at Waldmann" and serve its guests, saying, "We so badly want to survive for

all of you!" To that end, local restaurant owners encouraged supporters to order takeout from their favorite haunts while in-person dining remains suspended.

Ekbom, whose children have for some time run the bulk of operations at the café he started 45 years ago, said that he keeps at it for them and for the customers. "When I drive down Grand," he said, "I see the restaurants that used to all be packed, and they're empty, closing down early. I worry about the next generation, with our politics so messed up that we can't even get a stimulus to folks who need it. Even if I didn't have kids in the business, I'm sure I'd have someone else looking to take it over, and I'd want to keep it going for them."

GANGSTERS, PG 4

a robbery, Karpis decided to turn his attention to a more lucrative venture: kidnapping. For his first target, he snatched William R. Hamm, president of St. Paul's Hamm Brewery. The abduction of one of the city's most prominent businessmen — a story fed by the ransom notes Karpis left behind in a booth at a pharmacy on Grand Avenue — riveted the city.

Astonishingly, Karpis remained under the radar for several more years. With Brown feeding false clues to federal authorities, the FBI wasn't even aware of Karpis' gang, instead pinning the Hamm kidnapping on a rival gangster. Details like that one, expertly unfurled in this sordid biography, make certain parallels to the present unavoidable.

Tragic failures at the highest levels — from the current White House's bungling of a coherent COVID-19 response to the inability of the FBI and CIA to circumvent the terrorism attacks of 9/11 — have never proven entirely avoidable. And contrary to the elaborate conspiracies some invent to explain them, the real reasons behind these failures are often as simple and mundane as the payroll on which Karpis kept many of St. Paul's police.

His gang went on to kidnap Ed Bremer, president of the Commercial State Bank and the son of the president of the Schmidt Brewery. By then, J. Edgar Hoover had grown suspicious of Brown; and Karpis, who had since been discovered by the FBI and swiftly named as its num-

ber one most-wanted fugitive, was within Hoover's sights, the "last major criminal of the gangster era still on the loose."

The manhunt would not proceed smoothly for Hoover. He was hauled before a Senate appropriations committee, grilled over his failures and criticized for shooting up houses without successfully capturing Karpis. Yet Hoover was not someone to ever let criticism stop him.

Filled with dozens of photos of the men — and one woman — in Karpis' gang as well as of the places across St. Paul that their dangerous lives took them, Frithem and Smith's book is a captivating glimpse into a shadowy era in the city's history that, for better and for worse, shaped the place we inherit.

PROJECT, PG 5

Department of Natural Resources. Since then, the buildings have fallen into such disrepair it was named one of the most endangered places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In addition to the money approved Tuesday, Dominion has pulled together a combination of private and public money, including historic preservation tax credits and low-income housing tax credits to finance the development, which is situated on 41 acres.

The project has found detractors on both ends of the political spectrum. But it has received bipartisan support as well, in part because the project tells a compelling story: A historic military site at risk of being lost to neglect will be renovated into affordable housing for veterans.

But the image that the word "affordable" conjures — of homeless veterans moving off the street and into meticulously renovated apartments — is not quite accurate.

Affordable, in this development, means average Twin Cities rent. The units are

reserved for people making 60 percent of the area median income or less, currently about \$43,000 (or \$62,000 for a four-person household). Rents will be capped around \$1,200 for a one-bedroom and \$1,400 for a two-bedroom — the same as the average rent for one- and two-bedroom apartments in the Twin Cities.

Although Dominion will give preference to veterans, it's not required to rent to veterans exclusively. Dominion may accept non-veterans while also turning veterans away if they don't make enough money, have poor rental history or are otherwise not attractive tenants.

Native Americans serve in the military at the highest rate of any group, but the average Native resident of Hennepin County would not be able to afford to live at the Upper Post Flats. The same is true for Black residents, who also serve in the military at high rates. Both groups are the most likely to have experience homelessness.

"The average income for Black individuals in Hennepin County is \$30,000, and you have to be making \$43,000. So we just can't afford to live in this develop-

ment," said Conley, who is the first Black person to serve on the Hennepin County Board. She won her seat in 2018 from one of the earliest and most ardent supporters of the Upper Post Flats project, Peter McLaughlin.

"The average income is even lower for Native Americans, for whom this land specifically is sacred," Conley added.

A longer version of this article appeared online at minnesotareformer.com. Max Nesterak is the deputy editor of the *Minnesota Reformer*, where he reports on labor and housing.



LETTER, PG 1

many of whom have provided care for generations of their patients — has spurred more than 300 patients and community members to sign a petition that declares a vote of "no confidence" in UFM's self-perpetuated (self-appointed) board of directors and new CEO.

Contrary to the assertions of UFM's CEO, there appears to be no clear direction by the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA's) 2018 compliance report that would mandate the program changes underway. (HRSA is the agency that monitors Federally Qualified Health Centers such as UFM.) Furthermore, according to HRSA, UFM had resolved all 2018 "operational site visit findings" by mid-2020.

With a reported 2019 net revenue over expenses of nearly \$500,000, and net assets of more than \$22 million, we are unconvinced the "redesign" of UFM's care delivery model is driven by valid financial concerns.

Therefore, as elected officials in this community, we call for a halt to the impending changes to UFM's successful operating model and re-establishment of the United Family Medical Residency program.

Further, as UFM is a federally funded community-based nonprofit, we call for an outside review of the makeup and transitions of members of its board of directors from 2018 to present, with the intent of returning majority representation to the West Seventh community.

The following state, county and local representatives signed this statement: Minnesota State Sen. Sandy Pappas Minnesota State Rep. Carlos Mariani Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega

St. Paul City Council President Amy Brendmoen

St. Paul City Councilmember Rebecca Noecker

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After a busy summer of selling bikes, the Express Bike Shop is in need of bike donations! We'll put your old bikes or bike parts to good use as our talented staff and youth apprentices turn them into outstanding, durable, and affordable bikes. Donation process is quick, easy and completely no-contact; just follow the arrows on the outside of the building! Donations are accepted in back of our shop at 1158 Selby Ave, St. Paul.

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

Love to read and talk to your friends about books? This group is for you! As part of our new virtual programming for seniors, we've launched a brand new Zoom Book Club! The club meets on the third Wednesday of each month. After a successful first meeting in November, our next meeting will be December 16, 1pm. This month's book is *The Guernsey Literary and Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer. The West 7th Library has set aside plenty of copies for our book club so everyone can participate. Happy reading!

REHAB, PG 5

worked with it for four years to help bring about the neighborhood jewel known as Schmidt Artists' Lofts.

Preservation projects like that one have played a crucial role in the revitalization and continuing success of the West Seventh neighborhood. Irvine Park, the West Seventh Federation's housing rehab, Historic St. Paul, Schmidt and our latest landmark, Keg and Case, have collectively raised property values in our community and offer us a source of pride, housing and jobs.

Recently, a number of affordable housing advocates have begun to pit the value of preservation against that of creating more affordable housing. I argue that this debate is not useful, since the goals of preservation and housing are not mutually exclusive. We can build affordable housing and invest in preservation where it is appropriate.

Here in West Seventh, a community that we often describe as stretching from Seven Corners to Fort Snelling, we should be delighted by the restoration of the century old Fort Snelling Upper Post buildings. And we can be proud of how it is being done—turning them into affordable housing targeted to veterans.

One observer has implied that the high cost of restoring the historic Fort's 130-year-old housing units is wasteful and doesn't meet the needs of our poor. The corollary to this argument leads one to presume that quality and character should not be offered to folks like us here in the "inner city."

The cost of restoring historic buildings is higher than run-of-the-mill new construction. For that reason, our federal and state governments have made a financing program available to developers willing to take on historic restoration. These programs provide tax credits that allow other investors to support the development. A similar program of bonding and tax credits exists for projects that offer housing to people within an income range. Investors participate by buying the tax credits. The bonds are paid back over time by the developer. This financing is not intermingled, specifically so that money targeted for affordable housing is not diminished. In keeping with this model, the Fort Snelling apartments will offer affordability and, when coupled to Section 8 vouchers, provide quality housing to lower-income families.

Dominium's experience in historic and affordable developments makes it one of the few developers willing to take on the risk of projects like these, where regional landmarks might otherwise be razed. Our Schmidt development was scheduled to become an asphalted used car lot before West 7th partnered with Dominium and the City.

While developments like Schmidt and Fort Snelling do not provide housing for the homeless, they successfully create more housing in a market that needs it, make our communities stronger and benefit us all by preserving an important piece of our history for future generations.

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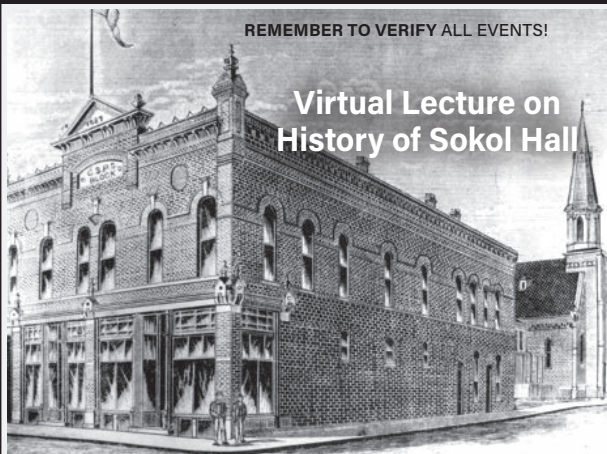
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Stuart Loughridge Holiday Show

Through Dec. 15, 9am-9pm, by appt only, call 612-701-9956. The Studio, 265 W. 7th. Masks required. Etchings, watercolors, silkscreens. Copper plate printing demos upon request.

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Daytime Homeless Shelter to Open

Freedom House opens daily 7am-8pm at 296 W. 7th. A haven for homeless people who stay in shelters, rely on rec centers, libraries to stay warm, buildings whose operations COVID-19 has curtailed.

Minnesota Gerontological Society Seeks

Presenters for Spring Conference
View call for presenters: <https://rb.gy/gquty>.

Free Food for Families in Need

Families with one or more children under the age of 18 are eligible to pick up one meal bag per child per week. Pick up Tue & Thu, 2-4pm, Palace Recreation Center, 781 Palace Ave. For a full pick-up sites, visit rb.gy/gquty.

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Goar Named President, CEO of Catholic Charities

Michael Goar, currently the chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities, has been selected to succeed Tim Marx as the next president and chief executive officer. Over the next several weeks Michael will transition from his current responsibilities and will assume his new position January 4, 2021.

**Jeremiah Program launches new program**

The Minneapolis-based nonprofit that offers support and training programs for qualifying single mothers aimed at disrupting cycles of poverty has announced a new fellowship program for its alumni, which allows them to help steer the organization's programs and agenda. Thirteen mothers were selected from 54 nominations, three from the St. Paul campus. Britany Block, a hair stylist, is one of these mothers giving back. Visit jeremiahprogram.org/jpf/

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