

Community REPORTER

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

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVES

Addressing Minnesota's Public Education Crisis



SEN. SANDY PAPPAS
columnist

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our public schools over the past two years. Teachers are stressed, students are dealing with mental health issues, and parents have taken on extra responsibilities at

home to help educate their children.

Lack of resources has left schools with crowded classrooms, unaffordable special education costs, and a lack of counselors to provide students with the support they need. To make matters worse, teachers are departing the profession at an alarming rate because they are burnt out and lack support. Students cannot learn in this environment. That's why I'm fighting to provide schools with the resources they need.

Teachers, parents, and students across the state are all telling us the same thing: they need additional funding to hire on-site counselors, reduce class sizes, and provide funds to recruit teachers and retain the ones we currently have.

Funding for schools was once an area of bipartisan cooperation at the legislature. Unfortunately, it has become highly partisan in recent years. What I'm hearing from my community is that we should use our state's \$9.25 billion surplus to invest in the things our schools need.

Right now, the Saint Paul Public School District is swamped with special education costs. These costs take away funding that could be invested in other areas. If special education and English Language Learners (ELL) programs were properly funded, it would free up millions of dollars that schools could use to hire teachers, expand mental health resources and improve school facilities. That's why it's so important that the state begins to take this burden off our schools.

Minnesota also needs to confront its achievement gap. Communities of color have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic. There are already existing programs, such as Grow Your Own, which helps identify future teachers at a young age, and the Collaborative Urban Educators Program, which provides scholarships for college students seeking to enter the profession. Investing in these programs and other educational initiatives will not only help students of color find careers but also create safer and healthier communities.

As the legislature works to appropriate our historic budget surplus, we must focus more resources toward public education by increasing salaries for teachers and expanding support for education support professionals (ESPs). Education has always been critically important to Minnesota families, communities and our economy. By making these necessary investments, we will take an important step toward keeping our schools strong now and into the future.

Contact info: 95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2205
St. Paul, MN 55155; 651-296-1802

Fort Road Federation gears up for annual meeting

BY CASEY EK

For the first time in over two years, the Fort Road Federation, the independent nonprofit district council representing the West 7th/Fort Road Neighborhood, will hold its annual meeting in person.

The meeting will take place at the Summit Brewing Ratskeller at 910 Montreal Circle, April 26 at 6 p.m.

Federation Executive Director Mary Cutrufello said the meeting will give the organization, which serves as a voice for the neighborhood and informs elected officials' decisions, a chance to attract new members and said bringing community members to the table will be a key focus of this year's meeting.

"One of the things we're looking at is getting some new faces that are reflective of the neighborhood," Cutrufello said. "We've got some folks who are interested, but we can always take more."

The Fort Road Federation Board will elect a new president, first vice president, second vice president and treasurer at the meeting. These are at-large positions. Those unable to attend the April 26 meeting can vote online at fortroadfederation.org or in person at the Federation office, 882 West 7th St., Suite 6.

Additionally, one area coordinator position for each of the Federation's three geographical areas is open. These must be filled by renters at this time, although a homeowner/business owner position may open in Area 1. Area coordinators are board members. Contact fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org for more info.

The long-awaited Fort Road cookbook will



ST. PATRICK'S
DAY PARADE
IS BACK!
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VOL. 52 NO. 4

APRIL 2022

CIRCULATION 13,000



Attendees at the 2019 Fort Road Federation annual meeting enjoy themselves at the Summit Ratskeller. This year marks the first time in two years that the meeting will be held in person again.

also be for sale at this year's meeting.

The public will also have a chance to interact with not only Fort Road Federation members but also several to-be-determined community leaders. One such leader who will be in attendance is Brooke Blakey

Blakey is the inaugural director of the new Office of Neighborhood Safety. She previously served as the chief of staff for Metro Transit. Mayor Melvin Carter appointed Blakey as part of his office's efforts to advance its community-first public safety efforts.

Visitors will also get a chance to talk about

community topics at one of several discussion tables set out at the event.

Cutrufello said the return to an in-person meeting not only signals a cautious return to normalcy, but it also means the Federation can hit the ground running this spring so long as neighbors are willing to get involved with the Federation.

"We're a boots-on-the-ground organization," Cutrufello said. "We have a strong voice with the city council and elected officials that represent our neighborhood, but it's not as strong if people don't know who we are or what we do."

Pedestrian-safe Shepard Road crossings on city's radar

BY CASEY EK

Kathy Carruth, the Highland District Council executive director, recalls standing alongside members of Mayor Melvin Carter's office, St. Paul Police Department leadership and other civic leaders on March 15 looking for an answer to the question of whether the intersection of Shepard Road and Alton Street is safe or not on for pedestrians. It didn't take long to get their answer.

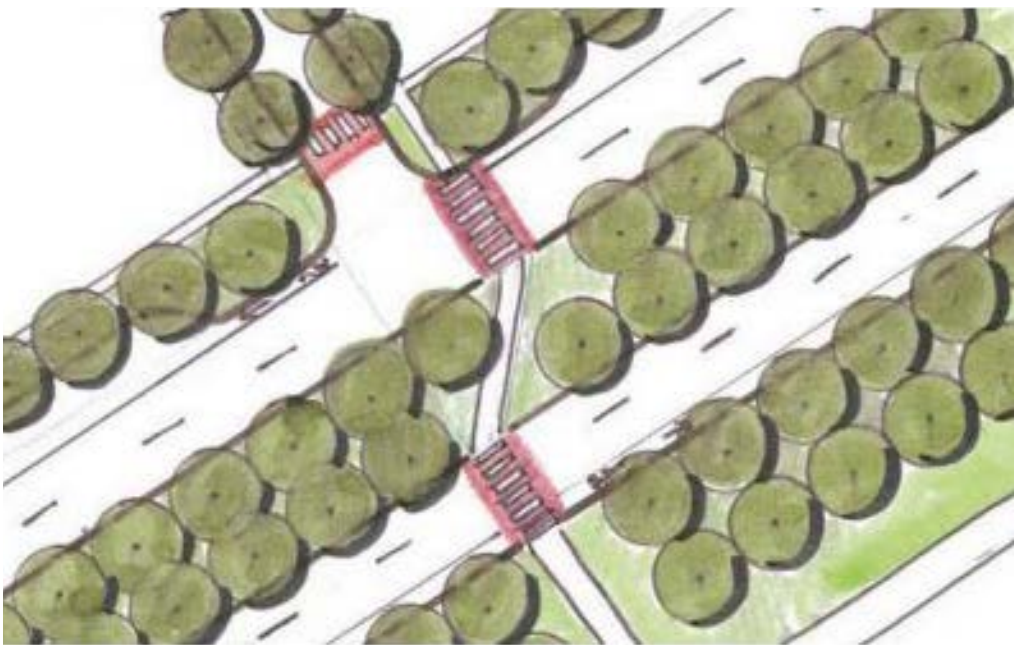
"During the meeting, we witnessed multiple people crossing on Shepard (Road) and climbing over the metal barricade (on the south side of the roadway). It was unsafe and scary to see," Carruth said.

But, a safer option for pedestrians crossing Shepard Road between Elway and Davern streets may be gaining some traction to the delight of the HDC and area residents, who have been pushing the project for over a decade.

Carruth recently submitted plans for a pedestrian crossing as part of the City of St. Paul's open call for capital improvement projects, but Carruth pointed out that safe crossings of Shepard Road to the Mississippi River parklands, including Crosby Farm Park, on the south side of the roadway are outlined in both the Great River Passage Plan, a guiding document drafted in 2011 that outlines how the city should orient itself toward the Mississippi River, and the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan, drafted in 2013. The HDC's most recent capital improvement proposal suggests either Madison Street or Alton Street as possible crossing points.

The proposed pedestrian crossings, Carruth said, would provide clear pedestrian zones with crosswalk pavement markings, median refuges, guard rail breaks, contrasting pavement types and/or raised traffic tables.

For the roughly 11,000 residents living between West 7th and Shepard Road in Highland Park, the project could mark



This drawing, which was included in 2011 Great River Passage Plan, shows how potential Shepard Road pedestrian crossings might look.

significant quality of life improvements, according to Kathy Bell, who manages Sibley Manor Apartments, off Maynard Drive, where about 2000 people reside.

"If I had to guess, I would suggest that 95% of our community has never visited Hidden Falls Regional Park, Two Rivers Overlook, Fort Snelling Scenic Overlook, Crosby Farm Regional Park, Watergate Marina, or Crosby Farm Park. Nor have they walked the Crosby Farm Trail system or fished in Crosby Lake. What a shame this is," Bell wrote in a letter of support for the pedestrian crossing project to city leaders. "These are all natural amenities that are only being used by those that drive to these locations or the few that are brave enough

to cross Shepherd Road on foot. And with the soon to be added River Learning Center, there is no better time to open this up to those that live nearby."

The pedestrian crossing plan was among 86 capital improvement project ideas submitted under the city's umbrella effort of "crime prevention through environmental design." The city was accepting formal project applications through March 27, at which point they fell under the Capital Improvement Committee's review. The public will have a chance to weigh in on projects before applicants make their final presentations to the committee. The committee then makes their recommendations to the mayor.

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265 Oneida St. St Paul, MN 55102
Copy Deadline: April 18
Ad Deadline: April 20
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Editorials & Opinions

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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 at editor@communityreporter.org.
-- Casey Ek, Editor, *Community Reporter*

BUILDING AN ANTIRACIST COMMUNITY The Wisdom of Funerals



TIM JOHNSON
columnist

It can feel good to get the last word. You are in a debate or maybe an argument and while you may have failed to convince anyone of anything, you make a final point that goes unrefuted. It feels like a victory, at least partially.
If there is any place one might have the capacity to have the last word, it is a funeral. After all, the person being remembered is hardly going to offer a rejoinder or comeback to what you said. My experience, however, is that funerals are seldom used to get the last word. For the most part, when it comes to remembering those who have died, we choose to remember the positive, the places where the person's life shines light on what is good.
As a pastor, I was occasionally asked by a local funeral home to do a service for someone I had never met. On one such occasion, there were only a dozen or so folks at the funeral. As usual, I had asked the family to share some stories about the person so that I might discover some way in which this person brought light into the world. They had stories, but none that you would wish to repeat. Turns out the person was mean spirited, extremely unlikable, and as far as anyone would share, without any redeeming traits. Since I also believed it was never helpful to paint a picture of someone that was untrue or no one would recognize, I opted to share what I had been told. But, rather than say this man was a miserable, unlikable human being, I simply shared that he clearly was a broken person,

much in need of healing, as are we all. Perhaps this is what the poet and singer Leonard Cohen had in mind when he said, "There is a crack, a crack in everything. That is how the light gets in."
Where does the light shine? It is a question that is central for anyone wishing to build community. When we primarily focus on our place of disagreements it becomes easy to lose sight of what we share. In his book, *Our Only World*, author Wendell Berry makes this observation, "Maybe people who focus their minds for a long time upon enmity finally begin to resemble their enemies." At its core, this is what makes racism so self-destructive. The more we reject the light in one another, the more we deny the light in ourselves.
None of this is to say that one should ignore things like disagreements, deep challenges or injustice. Rather, the invitation to look for the light is to relinquish having the last word in favor of the convincing word that can change hearts and minds by attending to those places where we have common ground. The apostle Paul in

his book to the Philippians offers this advice. Without prioritizing a Christian point of view, he simply says, "Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things." Every day we wake to news about how bad things are and indeed, those problems are real. They demand our attention and feed our desire to have the final word so that we might put to rest the discomfort we feel. But, in giving the preponderance of our energy to that which we find destructive we run the risk of losing sight of that which is good and life giving.
Living in relationship to others is seldom easy, whether in family, community, or as world citizens. But, we do well to remember the wisdom of funerals, "look for the light."
Tim Johnson is a retired pastor of the United Church of Christ.

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WEST END HEALTHLINE Impact of isolation during COVID pandemic, resources to help

BY ASHLEY WITTRICK, MD
Humans are social creatures. Our fellow humans help us maintain healthy habits, care for us when we are sick and even help us live longer lives. To slow the spread of COVID over the past two years, however, we took actions such as social distancing and quarantining. While this has proven to be important, it has also impacted our mental health.
Isolation during this pandemic has shown to cause loneliness, boredom, anger, anxiety, depression and thoughts of suicide. People may have impaired mental function and higher risk of dementia. Alcohol and drug use has increased, suggesting people are struggling to cope with life stressors. Diets have changed to include more snacking and sugary foods and beverages. Studies have also shown people are less physically active, have worse quality of sleep and reduced activities of daily living. Things like showering, cleaning the house, doing laundry, etc. I personally have just put a sweater over my pajamas for a zoom meeting. Nobody will know, right? While this kind of behavior can be fine every now and then, it can take a toll on your mental health if it becomes a habit.
The impact on our physical health is apparent as well. Studies have shown isolation and loneliness increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, headache, breathing problems, gastrointestinal (GI) issues, weaker immune system and a shorter lifespan. Some say it equates to smoking 15 cigarettes or drinking six alcoholic beverages a day. That is shocking to me. So, enough doom and gloom. What can we do? Proper diet, exercise, good sleep and a structured daily routine are all necessary. Healthy coping skills are important as well. Examples include reframing negative thoughts, deep breathing, meditation, mindfulness, yoga and Tai chi. It is beneficial to maintain religious and cultural practices. I also recommend challenging your mind by reading books or playing strategy and memory games. Learn new skills like cooking, painting or a new language. Entertain your senses by listening to music, tasting new food or looking at art. Appreciate nature by going for walks. Find companionship with pets; even robotic pets for the



elderly have been shown to significantly improve feelings of loneliness.
Technology has also come a long way to keep us connected in times like these. We can always reach out to family and friends via calling, texting or chatting on Facetime or social media. Doctor appointments can also be done by phone or video visits. Keep in mind, some barriers to technology are access to the internet or smart devices and knowledge of how to use the technology. So be understanding of other people's situations and help when possible.
As social isolation impacts the youth and elderly the most, I wanted to provide excellent online resources offered by Allina Health. Health Powered Kids (healthpoweredkids.org) focuses on 3-12-year-olds. The website has lesson plans, activities and resources for families related to nutrition, physical fitness, hygiene and mind-body balance. Change to Chill (changetochill.org) helps teens become more aware of things that stress them out and equips them with tools and resources to better manage stress and anxiety so they can live happier and more resilient lives. On their website you will find coping mechanisms and activities on mindfulness, guided imagery, mindful movement and mental remix. In March 2022, they published new resources related to stress and identity, as well as materials for teens identifying as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+. These will continue to be expanded upon throughout the year. Lastly, Hello4Health (hello4health.org) has activities and skill-building tools to help older adults develop and maintain social connections. Take a pause and assess how you are doing. Check in with loved ones. Think about your friends, coworkers and strangers you pass by throughout your day. Remember to be kind to yourself and others. We are all in this together!
Ashley Wittrock, MD, is a family medicine doctor at Allina Health United Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55102. 651-241-5200

LETTER TO THE EDITOR LRT: Money better spent elsewhere

[Editor's Note: Public Safety is the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce's advocacy priority this year, and they have invited St. Paul businesses to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas. This response from Brennan Malanaphy, managing partner of the Banfil Office Court and West 7th Business Association board member, has been shared with the *Community Reporter* for publication.]
I am managing partner of an office complex at 555, 557 and 561 West 7th doing business as Banfil Office Court. We have owned and operated the three-building office campus since December, 1999, providing office space to roughly 20 small businesses offering a variety of professional services.
Over the years we have had numerous crimes occur on our property: four break-ins, all with much more loss from damage than theft, and a few "smash and grabs" of purses from cars in our parking lot or along West 7th. Additionally, some tagging of surfaces. These events are not altogether surprising, given our proximity to the street, the composition of our neighborhood, the rising crime in urban settings generally and our long tenure at the location. The recent escalation in gunfire and shootings are more troublesome. These are complex and nuanced problems, and the solutions will doubtless be multifaceted, investment dependent and protracted.
What is of greater concern, is the avoidable degradation of public safety downtown and along West 7th, and squandering of billions of public dollars, as a consequence of the proposed alignment of the Riverview Corridor LRT project described as a "Modern Streetcar" on West 7th.
While Ramsey County leadership cites improving safety is a principle aim of the LRT project, for many reasons it is difficult to conceive how that would be achieved.
1. West 7th lacks adequate width to safely accommodate LRT in whatever form, in addition to the many other forms of pedestrian, bicycle and motorized traffic that rely on daily use of this roadway.
2. The neighborhoods and industrial areas adjacent to West 7th are tightly geographically bound by river bluffs and I-35E, greatly limiting alternative routes for the traffic LRT vehicles would compete with.
3. Many narrow east-west and north-south angled crossings already intersect West 7th, exacerbating safety issues for every mode of traffic and constricting access for certain types of essential vehicles.

4. A "rail-bound" LRT running and stopping in mixed traffic at curbs that are proposed to extend out to the traffic lanes, will pose an impediment to all vehicles including safe and timely operation of fire, ambulance, law enforcement and snow and street maintenance vehicles on this already space-challenged street. Delivery service to the many thriving businesses on West 7th will be severely impaired by LRT vehicles, forcing delivery vehicles into the narrow side streets, reducing safety in those zones.
5. The reduction in stops and alternative bus transit means longer distances and more crossings on foot for pedestrians and cyclists, which are increasing in number with the rising costs of automobile ownership.
6. The expenditure of \$2 billion to 3 billion dollars on LRT infrastructure and annual operating losses will come at the exclusion of other more cost-effective and urgent infrastructure, for example Bus Rapid Transit lines, law enforcement, education, libraries, stop lights, etc., that improve safety in the near and long term.
7. City law enforcement has long recognized that increased crime is associated with LRT ridership.
Compare the recent action by Sound Transit, the operator of the Seattle area's expanding light rail network, to ban all future network extensions from running on, next to or within medians of city streets or arterials. This, after nine years' experience with the system's "most dangerous line," a four-mile stretch of the Central Link line between downtown Seattle and SeaTac Airport running down the surface median of MLK Way, a four-lane arterial serving the diverse South Seattle community.
The lessons here for the Riverview Corridor "Modern Streetcar," are obvious — and the consequences probably more dire for West 7th vehicular and pedestrian traffic if the line is indeed operated in traffic. That's because West 7th cuts through the West End residential street grid at a sharper angle than the Seattle line and will have the rail transit operation running in mixed traffic rather than over a 20 foot-wide wide median. A formula for transportation chaos.
With the complex challenges we already face, it would seem senseless to compound our woes by saddling ourselves with LRT that would degrade both public safety and transit in downtown and along West 7th for the next 50 years.
- Brennan Malanaphy



Community News & Events



Sundays at Landmark: Minnesota Mandolin Orchestra

Enjoy the music of this old-world string instrument in a concert of pops, classical and more. Sundays at Landmark is a series of cultural and art events that are designed to entertain, enrich and educate an audience. The 2021/2022 season of programs will be a mix of mostly in-person events with virtual elements noted in the event descriptions. Most programs begin at 1 PM and are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. See the full schedule at landmarkcenter.org/sundays-at-landmark.

Police chief search underway

The members of the St. Paul Chief of Police Examining Committee, an advisory board appointed by the St. Paul City Council to review the applications for the police chief position that outgoing Chief Todd Axtell will retire from in June, were set to be finalized after March 24, when the application window for the chief role closed. The city council anticipates the committee to begin meeting once a week beginning in mid-April and until they complete their work of recommending a pool of five candidates to the mayor. The Mayor will then appoint a chief for a six-year term starting late June. Visit bit.ly/3KPYKu0 for more information.

St. Paul Public Schools and St. Paul Federation of Educators reach agreement

On March 16, the St. Paul Federation of Educator voted to ratify their two-year contract with St. Paul Public Schools. The contract, which is likely to be voted on by the St. Paul Board of Education at their April 19 meeting, puts a cap on class sizes, allots one-time payments of \$3000 to teachers for their work during the pandemic and provides for the hiring of six school psychologists at the cost of \$650,000. If approved by the school board, the contract also includes 13.5% wage increases for educational assistants, among other items. "Now, more than ever, our students need more support. Not less. This contract is proof that educators and district leaders can come

together to give students the resources they need and educators the recognition they deserve," said SPFE President Leah VanDassor. The district was expected to release further details about the contract ahead of the April board meeting. The agreement came as SPFE was on the verge of striking. As of this issue's publishing, the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers was on strike, hoping for similar provisions laid out in St. Paul's deal.

Home Tour is back, West 7th well-represented

Three west end residences will be open during the Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour. Joe Landsberger and Steve Shimer will show 112 Leech St., their long-term re-imagining that will be newly completed. Ranelle Kirchner and Adrian Schramm's home is the John Lewis House at 412 Goodrich. Sid Korpi at 1234 West 7th is "a proud example of what folks with more creativity than cash can create." Homes will be open for the free, self-guided tour Saturday, April 30 and Sunday, May 1, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. More information is available at MSPHomeTour.com.

Art on the Island, April 22-24

Come to the 4th and 5th floors of the newly remodeled Warehouse 2* to see painters, drawing artists and print makers of diverse styles from traditional to contemporary and everything in between. Artists working in textiles, wood, clay and other 3D materials will also be exhibiting.

More than 20 Harriet Island Artists are once again able to open up their workspaces and invite guests to view their work. This includes the Old Town Artists group, who paint in a traditional way. Hours: April 22 5-9pm; April 23 12-5pm; April 24, 12-5pm. *The building has been renamed Warehouse 2 but is not yet searchable by that name. Instead, enter the address: 106 W Water St, St Paul 55107

"Black Violin" At the Ordway

Black Violin, coming to the Ordway April 3, is composed of classically trained violist and violinist Wil B. and Kev Marcus, who combine their classical training and hip-hop influences to create a distinctive multi-genre sound that is often described as "classical boom." Black Violin has shared stages with top names including Kanye West, Aerosmith, and Tom Petty, and has creatively collaborated with the likes of Wu-Tang Clan, Wyclef Jean, and Alicia Keys.

Cybersecurity in the Modern Age

Join the St. Paul Chamber for the 2022 Business Education Series in partnership with the Cities of Roseville, Shoreview and Maplewood where they will deliver educational programing geared towards business - large or small - for training and development. Computer and IT threats are real and growing for both business and personal sectors. Cyber security is the application of technologies, processes and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices and data from cyber-attacks. It aims to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks and protect against the unauthorized exploitation of systems, networks and technologies. This meeting will provide information and tools to better equip us to recognize threats on both business and personal levels. This event will be offered hybrid- you can attend virtually or in person at Metropolitan State University- Ecolab Community Room, 700 Seventh St E, Library Building, Room 302, St. Paul.

Cherokee Park United Church receives national award

Cherokee Park United Church recently received the 2021 Restoring Creation Award from the national Presbyterians for Earth Care

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Nicole Soley's Poultry Pickup 2016.

Friedli Gallery Highlights Local and National Book Arts

Friedli Gallery's April Book Arts Exhibition is set to book arts in a one-of-a-kind exhibition curated by nationally acclaimed book artist Erin Maurelli. Featuring artists from across the United States, Friedli Gallery's Book Arts Exhibition highlights artists' explorations of the idea of a book as an art object. The opening reception is Friday, April 1, from 6-8p.m. Highlights from this show include works by nationally acclaimed artist Julia Strand and her book carvings, and local Saint Paul artist and Jerome Grant Book Arts Residency winner Nicole Soley and her colorful imaginative prints created in eye-popping book art fashion. Learn more about the event and future events at friedliartsgallery.com.

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Community Nourishment

St. Patrick’s Day Parade returns with a bang



(top) The St. Paul Bouncing Team draws chants from parade attendees posted along 5th Street as a tumbler performs an aerial maneuver.

(above) A child in St. Patrick's Day regalia runs gleefully along the parade route.

(right) Archie Dickens, left, and Larry Yank avoid the crowds and posted up in Subtext Books on 5th Street to watch the St. Patrick's Day parade.

PHOTOS BY CASEY EK



St. Paul’s downtown burst into life Thursday, March 17, 2022, St. Patrick’s Day, as thousands poured into the capital city for its annual parade and festivities. Parade organizers reversed the route, this year as it ran from Rice Park to Mears Park before the masses filed into CHS Field for an inaugural “Ballpark Hooley” event designed to offset the costs of the parade and to raise

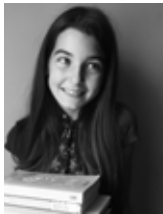
money for local charities. Irish cultural events kicked off at the Landmark Center, where guests could watch live performances of the Rince na Chroi dance group, among other performers. The parade was canceled due to COVID in 2020 and was downsized in 2021 before making its big return this year.



Turn on all the lights and get ready to be terrified, *Living Ghosts & Mischievous Monsters* await.

BEA'S BOOKS

Living Ghosts & Mischievous Monsters



BEATRICE COSGROVE reviewer

Living Ghosts & Mischievous Monsters: Chilling American Indian Stories (written by Dan SaSuWeh Jones and illustrated by Weshoyot Alvitre) is a collection of stories passed down from generations or that may have recently happened. These stories come from American Indian cultures across North America and are truly terrifying. Once upon a time, I had been complaining that I couldn't find any good ghost stories that really scared me. Then I read *Living Ghosts & Mischievous Monsters*, and I finally found supernatural and monster stories that I enjoyed reading. These stories are told by the people who the story had been passed down to, or, more terrifying yet, the stories had happened to them. Each story has a unique illustration that is well drawn and goes well with the story. One of my favorites was called My Great Aunt's Last Ten A.M. Visit. It is about a great aunt who comes for one last visit to her family,

though not living. Be aware that these stories can get very scary and sometimes can include violence, so if you avoid these themes, this book may not be for you. I recommend this book to ages 10+.

NEWS BRIEFS, PG 3

organization. The award honors the intentional sustainability and stewardship practices at the church. These include the installation and maintenance of solar panels and a rain-garden, ongoing energy-saving efforts, and advocacy for climate justice. The church is located at 371 Baker Street West on St. Paul's West Side. For more information visit the church's website at cherokeeparkunitied.org.

Church of St. Matthew Fish Fry Fridays
Every Friday Drive up to go only Fish Fry through April 15 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wild caught and hand breaded Alaskan Pollock (baked, fried or combo), potato, vegetable, coleslaw, roll and dessert, grilled cheese or spaghetti for non-fish options makes up the menu. Cash or card, \$13 per meal. Enter drive-up to-go lanes off Humboldt Ave onto Robie. 497 Humboldt Ave. Info: st-matts.org, 651-224-9793.

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Arts & Culture



Schmidt Spring Art Crawl returns

Making its return at the Schmidt Artist Lofts, 900 West 7th St., from April 29 to May 1, and the artistic living space is abuzz with creative energy as the event draws nearer.

Art crawl guests will have a chance to view and purchase the works of 60 artists, ranging from painters and sculptors to photographers and beyond. Art crawlers can also attend classes, an offering that began last January.

Among the artists to be featured is Kelly Ludeking, a metal artist who will be demonstrating live molten metal art. Guests will also have a chance to make their own.

While the event will carry COVID precautions, such as keeping the event to the brew house portion, and not artists' apartments like past years, organizers feel safe being optimistic.

"We are allowing ourselves to be more optimistic realizing that things could change, and we are all looking forward to spring,"

In addition to the Lofts holding their art crawl, neighboring businesses -- The Rathskeller by Mancinis, Rok, Keg and Case and the Friedli Gallery -- also plan to hold events to complement the occasion.

Gilmer said that while the isolation caused by the pandemic had its obvious challenges,

it also brought with it some upsides for the artists living and creating at Schmidt. While locked down, many had the chance to artistically experiment, often outside their typical genres and media, Gilmer said. The fruits of that creative labor and the creative airwaves that come with spring will be on display at the art crawl.

Also being featured is the annual spring nationwide arts competition sponsored by the U.S. House of Representatives. The contest is open to all high school students either attending school or residing in the Fourth Congressional District. All entries will be displayed in the Atrium Gallery of the Schmidt Artist Lofts as part of the art crawl. All entries will also be displayed in a digital exhibit on Congresswoman Betty McCollum's official website, mcollum.house.gov.

The winning entry from the Fourth District will be displayed as part of a national exhibit in the U.S. Capitol. Entries by the runners-up will be displayed in Congresswoman McCollum's offices in Saint Paul and in Washington, D.C. "Each year, I'm blown away by the talent and creativity of the young artists who submit entries to the Congressional Art Competition," McCollum said per a release.



Habitat for Humanity Virtual Hill Day

Join Habitat supporters from across Minnesota to advocate for affordable homeownership -- virtually April 29 at 11 a.m. At the Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity's Virtual Hill Day, you'll hear from affordable housing advocates, learn how about the critical need for more affordable homeownership and find out how you can help. Register by April 15 at tchabitat.salsalabs.org/virtualhillday2022/.

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In the Community

Notebook Recollections: St. Stan's Burns

Local staple Tim Rumsey walked to work most days from 1987 to 2000. He began as a form of exercise but kept at it for his love of local lore harvested through his interactions with people on the street. He began documenting his musings and eventually filled 53 pocketbooks with his observations. Here is just one tale.

BY TIM RUMSEY, MD

April 5, 1934: Palm Sunday. Frank Heller was 13, Raymond 14. The whole Heller family walked back from 9 a.m. mass at their church, St. Francis. After breakfast, Frank and Raymond sat outside on the front steps. Raymond smelled it first. Fire. From the east. They started walking through the neighborhood. Smoke drifted down the streets. The closer they got to wherever the fire was, the more they heard shouting and timber snapping. Sparks flew overhead. On Michigan, people watered down the roofs and sides of their homes. Three houses caught fire. They saw a huge crowd around the Czech Hall and headed that way. At Michigan and 7th, they saw the fire. A blast of heat and orange flame knocked them backwards. Raymond put his arm in front of Frank and the steeple of St. Stanislaus church dropped to the street in a rumble of brick, wood and black smoke. St. Stan's burned all day and night. Firemen stood by with giant lanyards to direct collapsing brick walls towards the

interior. All that was left the next morning was a burnt out, smoldering shell. For three years, masses were held in the school basement, which also became the parish social hall. Mabel Nelson rescheduled her St. Stan's wedding to St. Francis because the St. Stan's basement smelled like beer, and she wanted to be married in a real church. Frank Keller attended the inaugural mass at the rebuild of St. Stan's in 1936 just to see what a brand-new church smelled like. **1987:** The day after her white poodle, Cindy, died, Mabel Nelson fell down her basement steps and fractured her pelvis and two lumbar vertebrae. It was amazing that she survived. The paramedics took her to United. I called her 93-year-old brother in California. I heard his voice start to quiver. He didn't think he could get back to St. Paul. Mabel stayed a week at United and then transferred to St. Mary's Home. Father Clay stopped by. There was talk of her never returning home again. Her house was 120 years old. The only bathroom was on the second floor. The stairways were steep and dangerous. The appliances were old. The wiring and plumbing were old. The house, with which she had become so intimate—her entire 85 years were spent there; she was born there—was now her enemy. Eventually Mabel did go back home. Her

home. Mabel made two ER visits to United for dehydration. She refused to be admitted each time. The residents gave her blood and IV fluids and sent her back home. Mabel Nelson's kidneys quit doing their job in the middle of May. Two months of dialysis gave no assistance. Mabel's body stopped working. I got a call at the office. When I got to the hospital, she was in heaven. I used a phone on the wall of her dialysis room to call her brother. I could hear his moist eyes. Mabel Nelson may not have had her wedding at St. Stanislaus, but she did have her funeral there. Father Clay mentioned the church fire and wedding story. **1991:** Daisy Barret's son, Bobby, was having a tough time. He had diabetes and high blood pressure. Deep depression didn't help. He still lived with his mother who had troubles of her own. But her main worry was what would happen to Bobby if she died. Father Clay made a house call. He gave her a 64-year-old crucifix that had survived the St. Stan's fire. She showed it to me on my walk home one evening. I held it. It was heavy. Slightly burnished wood and blacked brass. One-and-a-half feet long. I smelled it to see if I could smell what Frank and Raymond had all those years ago. But it just smelled like brass and wood.

Reflections on Women's History Month: Women of St.Paul

BY DROU

The feel of a hardhat. Against the sound of once moving bulldozers. And the equally moving parts of injustice. The stiffness of flaccid muscles suddenly and wholly rigid. A form-defining frame that changes and is charged with errant electrical signals. ...And pain. Besides sharing membership in the St. Paul community, the common denominator for the people represented by these life experiences is simply this: These extremely gifted people faced copious challenges as individuals born with double X chromosomes. Though neither of them ever hesitated to ask the Y's. Why? About the status quo for women? People of color? People with disabilities? People...at all? Women trailblazers' atypical paths are typically characterized by adventure in uncharted territories. Often ending in uncommon victory but always fraught with disproportionate opposition and apparent failure. Their pursuits, their definitions of success and the paths they take to reach them are often like the dynamic women themselves; so far beyond the norm they are not understood or embraced for how courageous and avant garde they truly are. Until later. The pluck germane to getting back up to re-engage after being pushed out of efforts towards betterment (or to begin the efforts in the first place) is a little something of which a woman named Angela Duckworth, not of St. Paul, made a big deal. In a read-worthy tome called *Grit* (2016). Perseverance may have been the subject of Duckworth's book; but for two very special (and countless other) women of St. Paul, perseverance became the subject of their lives. In 1964, Katie McWatt lost her race for city council; but won the respect of her own kind of constituency, initially as an activist and later as an educator. What McWatt lacked in political jurisdiction as the first African American ever to campaign for a seat on the St. Paul City Council, she more than made up for in social authority, demands for justice and the progressive power of influence.

The lost city council seat was no stop sign or detour for her. Four years after not gaining it, she set her course on a place in the Minnesota State Legislature. That seat would elude the eventual DFL Women's Hall of Fame inductee as well. But McWatt kept on running, necessarily for office, but for inclusion in justice for people of color, women, the economically disempowered and, yes, even men. Whether in the arena of education, fair hiring, public transport or gang relations, McWatt stood up, often low places, like ditches to halt a construction project, which was built on racist politics and economics. McWatt refused to stand down in high places, like the big business corporation onto whose lawn she (and those she organized) spilled cereal boxes; to acknowledge the food producer's readiness to accept green dollars from the Black consumers it did not demonstrate the same readiness to employ. McWatt's stance and her voice are easily described as unwavering. Hers was a voice hailed for simultaneously lighting sparks of revolution and inspiring the warmth of hope

and peace in those who heard it and listened. That kind of edifying boldness typifies another visionary St. Paul woman representative of a different historically marginalized group. Rachel Wobschall survived symptoms such as muscle stiffness and weakness along with surviving the coursework of not one, not two, but three degree programs. She eventually earned her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. She, too, achieved an admirable list of firsts. Wobschall was the first in her family to attend not just the University of St. Thomas but any university. While there, she was the first woman All-College Council President. She was celebrated as the first female Tommie Award recipient; an award granted on consensus from students, faculty and staff. The award lauds St. Thomas students who embody leadership, service, and campus community involvement. Wobschall accomplished all these groundbreaking feats while remaining undefeated by the effects of cerebral palsy, a lifelong disease affecting muscular function. According to an interview with fox9.com, Wobschall "was at the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act over 30 years ago," proving that Wobschall has been a history maker in her own family life as well as for the benefit of the lives of others. As a woman undaunted, Wobschall acquainted herself with the president of her university at orientation, professional positions on political playing fields, and issues of people living with disabilities. The eventual winner of the Monsignor James Lavin Award, another St. Thomas prize, also directed a program that focused on technology-disability matters. Her involvement in championing those living, and succeeding, with disabilities even extends to her inclusion in a book, *Pure Grit*, 2021.

With a steadfastness located somewhere between deeply compassionate motivations and passionate maneuvers, these women navigated struggles on diverse platforms, with impact in dynamic and fruitful ways such that the city of St. Paul and its citizenry have never been, well...quite the same. Located between Lexington and Dale, a portion of road bears witness to the life and life-giving aspect of a woman-turned-demonstrator-turned-educator. This is a portion of road that re-routes progress and history. Where motor inactivity or overactivity due to her illness could have detoured her journey, sure strength of character turned a young patient into a seasoned doctor of education. After Women's History Month and history itself, one of the best ways to honor these pioneers of our St. Paul past is to ensure their unparalleled contributions inform our present as well as our future. As we look back on our history in the rearview mirror, let us remain mindful of these voices and all the undaunted steps of women, people of color and people succeeding with disabilities, as we drive our fair and complex city forward. Let us respect, as apropos and abundant encouragement, the guiding wisdom these ladies have gifted us in order to unapologetically and authentically live our present; to boldly and bountifully shape our future; and to, in these precarious times on the world stage, respect those who have historically helped make us who we are. Let's remember to appreciate the good in each other today. *Drou is a once-upon-a-time educator, an erstwhile entrepreneur, and currently an unapologetic enjoyer of life and fine chocolates.*

FEDERATION
UPDATE

fortroadfederation.org

Come join our Board
The Fort Road Federation Board will elect a new president, first vice president, second vice president and treasurer at its annual meeting April 26. These are at-large positions. In addition, one area coordinator position for each of the Federation's three geographical areas is open. These must be filled by renters at this time, although a homeowner/business owner position may open in Area 1. Area coordinators are board members. Contact fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org for more info. Interested? Complete a self-nomination form at fortroadfederation.org. You must be 18 or older and live, own property or own a business in the area served by the Fort Road Federation. **Upcoming Meetings, via Zoom**
Info: fortroadfederation.org/calendar

- Transportation & Land Use Committee, Wed, 4/6, 6:30 pm
- Annual Board Meeting Mon, 4/26, 6pm; in person at Summit Brewery
- Community Engagement and Outreach Committee - Thu, 4/21 6:30 pm

Stay in touch
"Like" us on Facebook. Subscribe to its e-newsletter fortroadfederation.org. **Contact**
Mary Cutrufello, executive director, 651-298-5599; mary@fortroadfederation.org; 882 West 7th, Suite 6, Rathskeller Building.

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Free Drive-Through Grocery Event April 9

Keystone Community Services drive-through grocery event at Roseville Public Works requires pre-registration, and all households will receive a box containing five to seven varieties of fruits and vegetables as well as assorted shelf-stable grocery items. April 9, 10am-1pm, and all participants MUST pre-register. To sign up, visit keystoneservices.org/events/ or call 651-645-0349.

Get Ready for Spring at Express Bike Shop

April is finally here, and the biking season is upon us. Express Bike Shop is open Tuesday – Saturday to make sure you and your bike are ready to roll this spring. We sell high-quality refurbished bicycles at affordable prices. Or you can update the bike you already have by purchasing new accessories like seats, locks, or bells, or bringing it in for a tune up. Whatever your bike needs, Express Bike Shop is here. Give us a call at 651-644-9660 or stop by 1158 Selby Ave. to get started today.

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Stretch your spring grocery budget with low-cost food packages on Friday, April 1, 10am to 12pm; Friday, May 6 10am to 12pm. Come by the West 7th Community Center.

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Get Ready for the Garden Season

By Terry Giinther, Library Manager
Whether you're a seasoned gardener or you want to learn how green your thumb really is (or isn't), the Saint Paul Public Library has resources to help you grow your gardening skills in 2022. The library offers many options for the aspiring or advanced gardener of all ages, allowing one to practice some planning and organizational skills. In addition, we have magazines, DVDs, e-books and online resources that can provide tips, techniques and ideas to help you get started and dig in.
Learn how to use your library card to access thousands of e-books, audiobooks and digital magazines on your e-reader, tablet, phone or computer. There are no overdue fees; return or items will auto-return at due date.
Discover our collection of gardening magazines, including *Mother Earth News*, *Good Organic Gardening* and more. Explore



the benefits of growing your own fruits, vegetables and herbs and incorporating them into your diet which is also good for healthy living. We also have plenty of cookbooks to help you make the most of your harvest. There are few things more delicious than fresh vegetables and herbs that you grow yourself.
Library Hours
The library at 265 Oneida St. is open Mondays, Thursdays 12:30-8pm, Tuesdays 11:30am-5:30pm and Wednesdays, Fridays 10am-5:30pm; closed Saturdays and Sundays.

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VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING FOR THE FUTURE RIVER LEARNING CENTER
Join the City of Saint Paul and Great River Passage Conservancy to learn and share your thoughts April 14, 7-8pm. A city-led project, the Center will combine a mixed-use, river-focused space with a National Park Service headquarters at Crosby Farm Regional Park. Register: bit.ly/3hYDoOE.
2022 MINNESOTA HORSE EXPO
Minnesota's largest equine trade show and breed exhibition April 14-16, MN State Fairgrounds. Two PRCA Rodeo performances on April 15-16, 7:30 pm in the Coliseum. Visit mnhorseexpo.org.

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