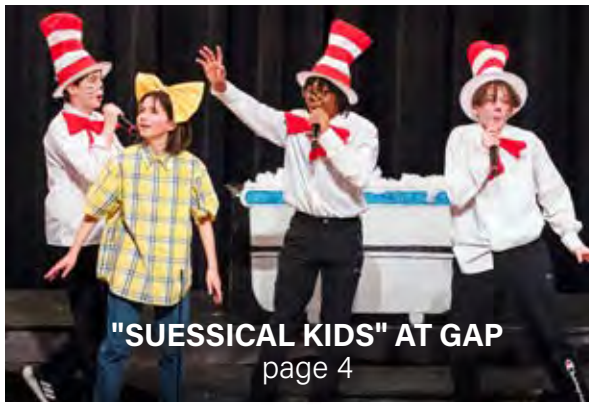


Community REPORTER

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



"SUESSICAL KIDS" AT GAP
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VOL. 54 NO. 3

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CIRCULATION 13,000

COUNCIL PERSPECTIVE

Housing, economic growth and more



REBECCA NOECKER
CITY COUNCIL
MEMBER, WARD 2
columnist

It's a new year with a first-of-its-kind City Council, and there's a lot of work to do.

I'm honored to have been chosen by my colleagues to chair the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). The HRA is responsible for much of the work I believe is critical to building a fair and just community – creating

more affordable housing and keeping our small businesses strong. To make sure people at all income levels can afford to live in St. Paul, we need many more affordable homes of many more types and sizes in all of our neighborhoods. To keep our neighborhoods strong, we need to support the small businesses that are at the heart of them.

I have a few ideas for how the HRA can be more effective at this work this year.

First, I believe we need to set a vision for housing development. Laying out a clear vision will help us know exactly where we are and where we need to go. It will signal both to the community and to potential developers what kind of development we want to see and where. Our housing vision should include goals for how much affordable housing we want to preserve and produce, tactics to help low-income and BIPOC families buy homes and tools to encourage the development of new types of housing, like twin homes and accessory dwelling units.

Next, we need a strategy for boosting commercial corridors citywide. From Cesar Chavez to Grand, Rice to 7th, Payne to Snelling, our retail arteries need support to

GROWTH, PG 2

Lack of snow creates opportunities, challenges

BY DAMIAN GOEBEL

First, some good news. St. Paul hasn't had a snow emergency yet in the 2023-24 snow season.

In fact, the region has seen just over 14 inches of snow this season, well below the average snowfall of 51.2 inches. Prior to this year, the latest St. Paul had seen a snow emergency was in the winter of 2018-19, when a snow emergency wasn't declared until January 28, though that winter ended up having seven snow emergencies and a one-sided parking ban.

Compared to last year's snow totals, which were just over 90 inches and the third snowiest ever, this year has been a walk in the (brown and muddy) park.

But all this lack of snow begs the question; what happens with snow plowing operations when there is now snow to plow?

For the City of St. Paul, they are able to get some things accomplished that typically are on the back burner during the winter months.

According to Lisa Hiebert, a spokesperson for the Department of Public Works, crews have been busy at work street sweeping and pothole patching, as well as working proactively on things like illegal dumping, bridge and equipment maintenance and even vegetation management.

"We are doing a lot of the things we weren't able to get into last year because of the sheer amount of snow we had," she said.

Hiebert said that the lack of snow has allowed City crews to be more proactive and responsive to resident complaints, which are atypical for a Minnesota February.

"We aren't getting a ton of pothole or street condition complaints. They are way down, lower than normal," she said. "One of the biggest complaints we are getting is there are leaves in the street."

She added the City is out sweeping some streets and does have their annual residential street sweeping planned for April.

For Tom Monson, owner of Monson Lawn and Landscaping located at 1133 S. Rankin St., the



Monson Lawn and Landscaping crews clearing snow last winter

warmer weather has been a bit tougher on the snow removal side of his business.

"We run 11 crews when it snows," he said. "Due to the severe lack of snow, we haven't been able to afford to keep all of our staff on, so some guys have been laid off."

Monson said that he and his administrative staff have been able to stay busy this season, and they have been able to keep some of his crews on by having them work in the shop doing things like deep cleaning and repairing broken down equipment.

Impact on the bottom line

Monson, who opened his lawn care business while he was in high school and has been offering snow removal for the past 10 years, said that this winter will be a financial blow for him.

"The lack of snow will result in a large revenue hit for us this winter because we are not charging for as many add-on services, like salting, snow hauling and billing our per-time clients," he said.

With that said, last year's above average snowfall wasn't as much of a windfall for his business as one might expect.

"We base our pricing for this flat rate off of the average number of snowfalls, and also the average total inches of accumulation, in a given season," Monson said. "Last year's 93 inches of accumulation was nearly double the average. But none of our flat rate clients were billed any extra. We ended up eating a lot of extra variable costs last year."

However, Monson said that, between the two years, the region should be on track for the average snowfall and snow events. He said his ongoing service contracts to over 275 clients based on those averages will keep him afloat, despite his overhead costs, including insurance, equipment purchases and leases, and having a dependable, steady workforce.

"We have a lot of skin in the game, therefore if a client wants a spot on our routes, we require them to have skin in the game as well," he said.

Impacts on the City budget work a little differently than a small business, though.

The City of St. Paul budgets for four snow emergencies per year, at an average cost of \$600,000-\$800,000 apiece. These events are over

SNOW, PG 7



House of Thune takes second in national snow sculpting competition

House of Thune members Jason Arney-O'Neil, Jessica Turtle and David Aichinger pose with their "Man-Bear" sculpture at the National Snow Sculpting Competition in Lake Geneva, Wis. Go to page 2 to read more.

COMMUNITYEATS

Little Brazil offers a taste of home



"I'm always trying to have foods that would stay under \$15," said Charles Spies, owner of Little Brazil Market and Cafe. (top inset) Charles shows off his Pelé display.

BY DAMIAN GOEBEL

One of the first things you notice walking into Little Brazil Market and cafe, located at 230 Spring St., is a framed photo and jersey of Brazilian soccer star Pelé hanging over the fireplace of the former Caribou Coffee. But that isn't the only taste of Brazil in the shop.

With a market full of Brazilian food and a cafe serving traditional dishes and coffee, Little Brazil is a little taste of home for owner Charles Spies. One he hopes he is bringing to his customers.

"A great number of people come and thank me for opening the business," he said. "It helps them so much feel like home here."

Spies, who grew up in Brazil and moved

here with his wife six-and-a-half years ago, said he started Little Brazil both for people with a connection to his home country, but also to introduce more casual Brazilian fare into the Twin Cities, as opposed the Brazilian steakhouses that have been popping up around town.

"I wanted to open a place where people can come on a daily, weekly basis and have a few different kinds of food," he said. "I'm always trying to have foods that would stay under \$15. That was kind of my target price"

He said that the made-to-order food in the cafe more emulates casual or street food you'd

LITTLE BRAZIL, PG 3





House of Thune takes second at national snow sculpting competition

By Damian Goebel

St. Paul snow sculpting collective House of Thune had a busy February, placing second at the National Snow Sculpting Championship in Lake Geneva, Wis. and third at the Minnesota State Snow Sculpting Competition this year, despite the warm temperatures and lack of snow.

"We did three events in a row, World's in Stillwater, Winter Carnival and then Nationals in Lake Geneva," said Jason Arney-O'Neil, who acted as the team captain at all three events this year.

Arney-O'Neil, who has been a part of House of Thune since 2019, said the warm weather definitely impacted their creations this year.

"At Nationals, because it was so warm, we had to sculpt through the night," he said. "We had to change our sleep schedule, and (the event) changed from four to two days, all while we were

changing the design."

"The sculptors all like that, pushing through the weather and the elements and the lack of sleep," he added.

Arney-O'Neil said that their regular team captain, Dusty Thune, wasn't able to participate in any of this year's events because of an injury followed by an illness. He said Thune asked him to run the team in his absence, with artist David Aichinger along for all three events. Team members Kelly Thune participated in the World Championship and Jessica Turtle was able to participate in Nationals.

He said that, because it was so warm at the National competition, the team had to adapt their sculpture, which changed pretty dramatically from their original design, drawing up the changes the night before the competition.

"Our original idea was to do a tomatillo skeleton. Because it was too

warm we decided to use some of that texture but added a face, based on Man-Bear, who is the brother of one of our teammates," Arney-O'Neil said. "He's a well known sculptor who wears a bear costume and has a big personality and a crooked smile. We did a tribute sculpture to him."

Arney-O'Neil said that winning prizes and being recognized for their work is great, but isn't why he creates snow sculpture.

"I go into these just having fun, we're not always about trying to place," he said. "We try to put out something people want to look at. It's just a gathering of crazy people."

"It is kind of a reunion party," he added. "It was nice to have it in our backyard."

Learn more and see photos of their sculptures at houseofthune.com.

House of Thune member David Aichinger shovels snow near their sculpture at the 2024 Winter Carnival snow sculpting competition.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Great Playgrounds and Great Communities

BY TIM JOHNSON

"What makes a great playground?" is not unlike the question, "what makes a great community?" Among the joys of being a grandparent is spending time at playgrounds that we once enjoyed with our own children. On this particular outing, the first place our almost two year old grandson headed was one of several slide options. He chose to go down head first, protected by winter gear that slowed him down substantially and a grandparent waiting with open arms at the bottom. After time on the slide it was onto the swings with choices for toddlers that provide the freedom of swinging without the risk of an injury for a child who hasn't quite developed the skills of holding on tight. Next, it was over to a horse planted in the ground with a spring as its feet. Like with the swings and slides, the horse was surrounded by sand to cushion any fall.

It is clear in watching the enthusiasm of our grandson at the playground and other children we encounter, that the playgrounds have been

designed with a couple key elements in mind. A well designed playground provides children the opportunity to maximize their potential. Whatever their age or whatever their ability, a great playground provides opportunities for children to challenge themselves, take some risks and learn what they are capable of and comfortable doing at this particular stage. In more recent years, a growing number of people understand children of differing abilities are among those who need to be included.

Second, a great playground is designed for safety. The taller slides that look so imposing, come with twists and turns, slowing the pull of gravity, so that a child may experience the exhilaration of height and speed without ending up with a trip to the hospital.

The third thing that one notices at playgrounds is that children, especially the younger children, are invariably accompanied by an adult who keeps a watchful eye at all times and stands ready to intervene if there is need. The first two elements of a great playground

go into the design and planning process. The third element is the essential role played by the parent or guardian.

Like playgrounds, great communities require institutions and leaders, who have as a central goal the maximization of potential for all its residents, where we can take risks, be challenged and have opportunities to grow and learn. Ibrahim Kendi in his book "How To Be An Antiracist," defines racism as the marriage of policies and ideas that produce and normalize racial inequities. To put it in playground terms, it would be reflected in playgrounds intentionally designed to maximize the potential of some children, but deny those opportunities to other children. Great communities will necessarily have in their planning the presence, the voice and needs of all their residents with the goal of being a place where everyone might live their best lives.

Like playgrounds, great communities are a place in which safety is a primary consideration. Safety, however, does not necessarily mean greater police presence and certainly not a militarized police presence.

On the contrary, a great playground is one in which you hardly notice the way in which safety has been woven into the design.

Curving slides, soft sand and age appropriate swings all add to the fun. Great Communities who take safety seriously recognize the value of such things as summer programs for youth, well-marked crosswalks for pedestrians and green spaces in which people can reconnect with nature, neighbors and even ourselves.

Like playgrounds, great communities require the participation of those who reside, shop and live in this place we call home. No responsible parent sends their young children off to a playground by themselves. Parents, grandparents or whoever a child's guardian is understand the importance of our presence. In communities, too often, we come to feel our vote, our voice, our presence is not all that important. But, showing up, being vigilant and engaged matters every bit as much as the ones watching children at the playground as they explore, grow and learn. There is great joy taking a grandchild to the playground and there can be great joy in helping create communities where everyone can thrive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for the great work you are doing

I am writing to this fine community newspaper of to thank you for the great work you are doing to inform our corner of the city of the many and varied points of interest: places to go and enjoy activities, businesses offering services to aid people of all ages in a variety of needs, articles and columns for children and adolescents written by them, stories of people's lives and especially writings that speak to the importance of creating a community of equality, of inclusion, of equal rights for everybody. I especially want to point out and thank Tim Johnson whose column on creating a non-racist society has been and continues to be so thoughtfully written, and done so without judging, without finger-pointing, usually starting with a personal story with which we could all identify and then elucidating on the theme to

assist us in seeing the underlying message, the bigger picture, the lesson to be learned.

The truth is, everybody does not, in fact, have equal access to all these services, to equal education, to housing, to health, employment, to justice in our criminal justice system. Listening to intelligent and informative programs on MPR and NPR- public radio stations- one can learn about the numbers regularly of Black women with a three times that of White women mortality rate in natal care and death of their infant, or the incarceration rate of Black, Indigenous and Latino men in jail and prison (90% of inmate populations, many for minor offenses, like they couldn't post bond), or the intergenerational trauma of Indigenous families because of Indian Residential Schools run

by our government and some Christian churches for decades whose mission was "Kill the Indian, Save the child," an effort to totally erase their culture and force assimilation: in other words, make them White.

These are facts of history, our American history, a history some states want to wipe out, erase, so that children don't learn it, don't learn the truth of how our nation was built and whose forced labor built it, of what our nation has done to BIPOC peoples, that is, those who aren't White. We want to believe America is a land of opportunity, of freedom, of equality, of all that is good and righteous but that is an American Myth. It is not the truth. That truth was not taught to us in school, in our growing up because "the winner writes the history" and that history was brutal and cruel, to say the least. It's a lot more convenient to avoid teaching our children those truths because it makes us look bad. And if we can't accept that, we won't move forward. We've got to know and accept the truth of our history to move forward.

Some nations, like South Africa and Canada, have entered into a Reconciliation process to address the atrocities endured by their Indigenous peoples. In that process, everybody sits at the table, everybody speaks their truth, their experience, feelings, and everybody listens; this is the effort needed to find Common Ground and move forward, to right the wrongs. This is the kind of effort we need to make in our country in order to move forward. I hope we in the United States can find and create a process of "conciliation," with Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other BIPOC peoples — everybody sitting at the table, speaking their truth, their experience and listening, listening, listening . . .

Larry Dittberner, West End Resident

GAP Creative Writers share their stories

In August of 2020, when I accepted my job as an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher at Global Arts Plus (GAP) Upper, I was given a semester-long Creative Writing elective. This class could take whatever shape I wanted, but I quickly learned that teaching creative writing to middle schoolers is a daunting task: the brief is broad, middle schoolers have varying interest levels in writing, and they make it known if they don't like an activity. One student may want to write a novel, while the next struggles with writers' block. Some students have never written anything for fun, and then the writing they produce blows me away.

Each of my eight Creative Writing classes have had their own unique personality. We've created fictional worlds, cities and nation-states, written poems, short (and not-so-short) stories and news

articles. One semester, students wrote goals on post-it notes and added them to a "goal snake" when they completed their goal (the snake hung in my classroom for years); another group was obsessed with the word "defenestrate." This semester's class will be the first to be published.

I've sought authentic writing experiences for students, but didn't have the bandwidth to find anything that felt sustainable and important to students beyond the classroom community. I've printed class sets of literary magazines on the school printer and created digital literary magazines at other times, but the execution has never quite met my vision. I had taken a step back from publishing this year, until Damian (a parent of a former Creative Writing student!) reached out to me about partnering with *The Community*

Reporter. I proposed the idea to my new class of writers, and they were thrilled - and a bit scared - by the prospect of their work having an audience outside the classroom. We pored over the *Reporter* archives, finding stories from the past about our school and community members. I saw in them an eagerness for their voices to be heard and their work seen, and I knew this was the right direction for our class.

This spring, GAP Creative Writing students will publish their work in each issue of the *Community Reporter* between March and June. Their work will range from long-form articles (starting with Tallulah's stunning piece about "Seussical") to bite-sized memoirs to poems and stories. We are so excited to share their stories with you.

Olivia Wilsson,
Global Arts Plus English Language Arts Teacher

other week as we have in the past. More frequent meetings will allow us to be more transparent and thoughtful. We'll have more time to consider complicated housing and development items before we vote on them and the public will have more of a chance to weigh in. The new schedule will also allow more time for presentations and discussion of complex financing tools like TIF and housing bonds, in-depth looks

at major development sites like Highland Bridge, Hillcrest and Central Station, and analysis of policies to keep properties on the tax rolls and develop them to their highest and best use.

I hope you'll attend an HRA meeting or tune in online this year. And as always, I'm eager to hear your thoughts on what else we should be prioritizing. You can reach me at ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us

GROWTH, PG 1

thrive in a post-pandemic reality. The HRA can create a strategic toolbox of policy, infrastructure and financial tools to bring to bear when commercial areas are struggling.

These and other new goals will take time to work through, so I introduced a change to our HRA by-laws mandating that we meet every week, instead of every

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Community News & Events

Evidence for giant prehistoric flood discovered in St. Paul

By Greg Brick, PhD

Highland Creek is among the more obscure streams in St. Paul, largely because it has been diverted underground by city engineers. But this stream has long harbored a secret—it was the scene of a giant prehistoric flood. Much of the evidence has been lying around in plain sight for years, but the dots have never been connected. Until now.

Glacial lake sediments stretch from what is now Cretin-Derham Hall south to the Highland Golf Course, the record of a vanished lake the size of Lake Phelan. The 1992 geologic atlas describes these as “deposits of a former lake that may have been partially confined by stagnant ice.” This north-south elongated lake formed in a former ice-block depression of the last lobe of the last ice sheet. You get a sense of just how large this “ice bowl” is by looking down into it, toward the east, from the Highland Water Tower. The lake could have been as much as 100 feet deep. At some point, the ice wall along one side collapsed, catastrophically releasing the lake volume all at once—this is called an outburst flood. But where did this flood of water go to? The Fort Road neighborhood.

Lying directly in its path, there’s a giant ravine largely unknown to the public because it is difficult to access, and filled with dense vegetation. It occupies the parkland between Circus Juventas on Montreal Avenue, and



Looking upstream in Mickey’s Ravine, possibly carved by glacial floodwater 10,000 years ago, photo by Russ Hanson, 2022. Mickey’s Diner on Fort Road. It may even account for the kink in Fort Road at this point, detouring around what might have been massive remnant debris in pioneer days. This ravine is the giant slash mark carved by the outburst of glacial meltwater. Together with the ice lake sediments, it all paints a picture of a truly colossal flood in this part of St. Paul.

Greg Brick, Ph.D., mapped thousands of springs around the state while employed as a hydrogeologist by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and is the author of several books on Midwestern caves.

AS GOTHARD ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE, TEACHERS POISED TO STRIKE

In a tumultuous day for St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) on February 26, Superintendent Joe Gothard announced he is leaving the district while the St. Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) informed the district they intended to go on strike March 11.

Gothard, who had been superintendent of SPPS since 2017, announced he would be taking over leading the Madison, Wis. school district this summer.

The Board of Education said they are working to create a transition plan and name an interim superintendent to lead the district during their search for a new leader.

This comes amidst a prolonged labor negotiation with SPFE, the largest union representing educators in the district. SPFE and SPPS leaders have been negotiating their new contract for months, agreeing in December to mediation.

At issue in the contract negotiations are wages, health benefits and classroom support for teachers like size limits, restorative practices and student mental health support. SPPS claims that much of the impasse comes from a \$107.7 million budget shortfall projected for next year.

On February 15, SPFE members overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike, allowing the union to give the district 10-day notice if they planned to walk the picket lines. Union officials informed the district on February 26 of their intent to strike, which would not begin before March 11.

If district educators cannot reach agreement on a new contract before March 11, all pre-K-12 classes will be canceled along with most before and after school activities. In addition, the school year could be extended if the strike drags on for multiple days or weeks.

SPPS said that free breakfast and lunch would still be available for pickup at schools during the strike.

2024 marks the fourth time out of four labor negotiations the union has authorized a strike in Gothard’s tenure as superintendent. A strike was averted in 2018 and 2022 with last minute agreements between the district and the union, with the lone strike happening in 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit and closed schools until the following year.

Learn more at spps.org/negotiations.

LITTLE BRAZIL, PG 1

find in different regions of Brazil, but that would appeal to the American palette.

“I picked dishes that are easier to introduce to the American community, easily introduced to somebody who has never eaten Brazilian before,” Spies said. “Sandwiches, fried snacks and baked goods, some cakes, sweet desserts. I only picked easy things.”

Spies said that, while the market, which is the only one of its kind in the Midwest, is more geared toward Brazilian clientele, with many of the labels only in Portuguese, he is looking for ways to make cooking dishes and choosing ingredients a bit easier for the average American customer.

“I’m going to have labels on the shelves with QR codes and you’ll be able to point

FOR MORE COMMUNITY NEWS, VISIT COMMUNITYREPORTER.ORG/CATEGORY/NEIGHBORHOOD-NEWS

NEW MOVIE FILMED ON WEST 7TH

The *Pioneer Press* reported on January 22 that a new movie was being filmed at locations in Minnesota, including along West 7th.

Crews were seen filming at Keenan’s Bar, among other places throughout the city, in January and February.

The film, “Unholy Communion,” is based on Scandia author Thomas Rumreich’s debut novel of the same name. It follows a local detective in pursuit of a serial killer targeting priests. The film stars Vincent Kartheiser of “Man Men” fame and Adam Bartley, whose credits include “Longmire” and “NCIS:Los Angeles,” both of whom are Minnesota natives.

According to the *Pioneer Press*, producers expect the film to be finished in about a year, at which point they will submit it to film festivals and search for distribution.

Read the full story at yahoo.com/entertainment/production-murder-mystery-film-began-020000862.html

ICE RINK UPDATES

To no one’s surprise, the City of St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation has decided to end skating season early this year. Parks and Recreation officials are asking people to stay off of the closed rinks to prevent damage and for safety reasons. They added that the ice rinks should never be used as dog parks, even when the rink is closed.

For information, visit stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/activities-events/winter-activities/ice-rinks.

MINNESOTA YACHT CLUB FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES ACTS, TICKET SALES

The Minnesota Yacht Club festival, a two day music festival taking place at Harriet Island Regional Park, announced the acts slated to play at the inaugural festival on July 19-20. The first night will be headlined by Gwen Stefani and Alanis Morissette while night two will be capped with a performance from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Black Crowes, The Offspring, Hippo Campus,

your phone and open our website,” he said. The website will include English translations, cooking instructions and recipe ideas for the items in the market. Spies said he is hoping to have the QR codes available to customers by the end of the month.

Spies said the cafe and market have had steady business and he has received mostly positive feedback from customers.

“The biggest challenge I’m having is with the coffee, because, like, you guys are very used to Starbucks and I’m not trying to compete with them,” he said. “But the sandwiches and the food itself, everything is having a very positive impact so far.”

LITTLE BRAZIL, 260 Spring St. Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. littlebrazilmn.com

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Community Traditions

“Suessical KIDS” brings together Global Arts Plus community



Students perform “Suessical KIDS” at Global Arts Plus Upper Campus on February 1.

BY TALLULAH WESTON

The Global Arts Plus (GAP) Upper after school theater program performed their own adaptation of the “Suessical KIDS” on February 1-2 for this year’s annual musical. Their production was filled to the absolute brim with colorful characters, vibrant sets and over fifteen amazingly performed musical numbers! I was astounded by what they could pull off in less than three months.

Additionally, this was the first time that GAP middle school students could finally perform for the lower campus students since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They’ve accomplished so much, and this article will cover much of what they’ve done in such a short time!

“Suessical KIDS” combines various Dr. Seuss tales, such as: “Horton Hears a Who,” “Gertrude McFuzz,” and “The Cat in the Hat” (kind of). Along with that, “Suessical” also cleverly sneaks in references to the likes of: “Yertle the Turtle,” “Green Eggs and Ham,” “Oh, the Places You’ll Go,” “I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew,” “McElligot’s Pool” and possibly others. “Yertle the Turtle” was referenced as a character; playing the court’s judge during Horton’s trial, in contrast to the other Seuss stories that were referenced in/had their own musical numbers.

The Cats (in the “Kids” casting, there’s a trio of Cats in Hats instead of just one, which works surprisingly well) are also interestingly integrated characters. Instead of having a narrative focus on their story, they act as energetic narrators of the others’ stories. They are fascinating narrators, because not only could they directly interact with the audience like asking us to join in with a chant, they also directly interacted with the characters! There is also some limit to what they can control in the story; this allows them to be so much more than bland narrators!

KIDS, PG 6

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Good News!
 My husband and I spent January in a town on a Gulf Beach in Alabama. The town has been built in a hurry, for people like us who want easy and affordable access to the white sand beaches and the magic of ocean waves and sunsets, which we enjoyed daily. But the town itself? It had many national-chain conveniences, but no soul, no pedestrians.
 Returning to St. Paul, and walking to Cooper’s, to St. Vinnie’s, to friends’ homes, or to downtown, I felt what I had missed in that newly sprung town. I had missed the walkability of a community where I can run errands on foot and pop into unique public spaces that have grown up slowly and organically. Thank you for that, West End.
 Margaret Kinney, Community Reporter Board member
 To submit your GOOD NEWS!
 Contact Jerry Rothstein at 651-587-8859.

SHOLOM & JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES CAREGIVER CRASH COURSE 2024

SHALLER FAMILY SHOLOM EAST CAMPUS: 740 KAY AVE, SAINT PAUL

Sholom and JFS invites anyone searching for help with their caregiver journey to the new Caregiver Crash Course. A six-class educational series covering different aspects of caregiving.

This series will be facilitated by JFS’ Bonnie Jaffe, RN and Tara Burns, MA, LPCC.

All classes are free and open to the public. Register for 1..2.. or all 6!

FEBRUARY 22
 Working with Emotions and Emotional Wellbeing

MARCH 28
 Caregiver Grief and Loss

MAY 23
 Quality Caregiving in the Home

JUNE 27
 Improving Communication Skills

JULY 25
 Quality Caregiving in a Facility

AUGUST 22
 Caregiver Resources

All classes will take place in the Main Auditorium at the Shaller Family Sholom East Campus. They will take place from 12-1p and lunch will be provided.

CEUs are available for professionals

RSVP is required



Please contact Ali Lilja to RSVP or for any questions alilja@sholom.com 651.328.2258



Community Nourishment

Stop smoking and feel better this year

BY KIRSTEN ROBINETT, DO

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable deaths worldwide. Most people know that smoking cigarettes is not good for their health, and the majority of current cigarette smokers have attempted to quit at least once. However, understanding that you should quit smoking does not always result in actually succeeding in stopping smoking.

Why should I quit?

Smoking cigarettes increases your risk of developing many health conditions including heart disease, lung problems such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and many types of cancer. If you already have chronic lung disease from smoking, quitting will likely improve your breathing. People who smoke are at increased risk of complications from respiratory illnesses such as influenza, RSV, and COVID-19. Second hand smoke is harmful to those around you, particularly children. There are many health reasons to quit smoking, but it is most important to identify what motivates you to quit and stay focused on your goal.

How do I quit?

There are many options to aid in smoking cessation. Some medications can be helpful in decreasing cravings including varenicline (Chantix) and bupropion (Wellbutrin). These medications are available by prescription and a discussion with your primary care provider to determine if medication is the right for you. Another option is nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) which is available over the counter or by prescription. NRT can be used on its own or in conjunction with medication. Options include nicotine patches which work by supplying



nicotine slowly throughout the day as well as faster acting nicotine replacement in the form of gum, lozenges, inhalers or nasal spray. It generally works best to use both a patch and a fast acting form of NRT to satisfy cravings throughout the day.

I've already tried nicotine patches and they didn't help, now what?

First, it is important to understand that most people make several attempts at quitting before achieving long term success. If you go back to smoking after an attempt at quitting, try not to get discouraged. Your next attempt may be the one that sticks! Second, NRT is often underdosed. If you have had uncontrolled cravings while using nicotine patches, you likely need a higher dose patch and/or to increase the frequency you are using faster acting NRT (gum/lozenge/inhaler). Talk to your primary care doctor to come up with a good strategy for you.



Should I vape instead?

While vaping nicotine is likely less harmful than smoking cigarettes, it still exposes you to harmful chemicals and we do not have enough data to know the long term health impacts of vaping. There is some evidence that vaping can help some smokers to quit, but given the uncertainty of long term outcomes, vaping is generally not recommended as an initial strategy to quit smoking. If you currently vape, the same strategies discussed above can help you quit vaping.

can help some smokers to quit, but given the uncertainty of long term outcomes, vaping is generally not recommended as an initial strategy to quit smoking. If you currently vape, the same strategies discussed above can help you quit vaping.

Where can I go for support?

You are more likely to successfully quit smoking if you have support from others. If you have a family member or friend who smokes, having them as a quit buddy can be a fantastic motivator. As mentioned above, talking to your primary care provider is always a great place to start when you are considering quitting smoking.

Quit Partner (www.quitpartnermn.com or 1-800-QUIT-NOW) is also a fantastic free resource for support on your quitting journey.

Dr. Robinett is a family physician at Allina Health United Family Physicians, 233 Grand Ave, St. Paul, 651-241-5200.

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ABBY'S ANGLE

"Maybe He Just Likes You" a thought-provoking, hard read

BY ABBY HORTON

"Maybe He Just Likes You," a book for middle-grade readers, written by author Barbara Dee follows a 12-year-old girl named Mila, who faces harassment from a group of boys who make a game to score points by making her uncomfortable through inappropriate touching and commenting on her clothes and body.

Initially, Mila is confused and uncomfortable, but as the harassment escalates, she realizes that they have crossed the line. However, she feels too uncomfortable with the situation to do anything about it, and her mother is unaware of it. The teachers also don't see it happening, and her friends think that she is responsible for it. In the end, Mila must find her voice, stand her ground and put a stop to the harassment, while also dealing with other personal problems.

When I was recommended this book, I was

hesitant to read it because I knew it dealt with sexual harassment and other sensitive topics. However, I didn't know the effect it would have on me. As I began to read, I found myself relating to Mila and her struggles as a middle school student. Mila made me think about things that I didn't realize I had felt before, and just made me truly think about what being a middle school student is as a whole, providing a realistic portrayal of what it's like to deal with problems like friend drama, family issues, body image insecurities and harassment from boys.

I read the book quickly and found very few faults with it. It provides a realistic view of what sexual harassment can look like in middle

school while being appropriate for younger audiences. I found the characters to be well-written, and the plot engaging, making this a short read for me. It made me think about my life, and I believe it will do the same for others. I would recommend this book to anyone in middle grade and above.

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In the Community

Read Brave this month with SPPL

By Donicia Soliz, Library Manager

St. Paul Public Library (SPPL) launched its annual citywide book club, Read Brave, inviting teens, their families and community members to read the same young adult book and have brave conversations about issues important to the city. This year's theme is "Celebrating Identities," and the book selection is "Man o' War" by Cory McCarthy.

A recipient of a 2023 Stonewall Book Award Honor, "Man o' War" follows the story of River McIntyre, an Irish Lebanese American trans teen on a journey of self-discovery amid the confines of a small Midwestern town.

This deeply intimate and emotional young adult novel explores the layers and complexities of coming out and transitioning, grappling with dysphoria, internalized transphobia and racism, bias and rejection, and, ultimately, acceptance, self-love, true love and joy. Told over the span of several years, "Man o' War" is as much an honest coming-of-age story as it is a love story that balances the heartache and pain that comes with learning to love all aspects of yourself and the joy that comes from being free to be who you truly are.

Residents can get their own copy of "Man o' War" to keep by stopping by any SPPL location during open hours while supplies last.

READ BRAVE SAINT PAUL



Print copies, e-books and audiobooks are also available for check-out. A limited supply of book club kits are also available at all library locations. Participating book clubs can sign up for a chance to host Mayor Carter at their book club discussion of "Man o' War".

SPPL will also drop books around town at grocery stores, barber shops, parks and other community gathering places. One of these copies will include a "golden ticket" inside, which can be redeemed for a free e-reader.

SPPL will host free events that are open to

the public March 18-24 throughout libraries in St. Paul. Events include "Read Brave, Talk Brave," a panel discussion with Mayor Carter and author Cory McCarthy on March 21, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Arlington Hills Library; a traveling art exhibit on the theme of identities by InProgress; a community volunteer event; and a storytime with Mayor Carter. McCarthy will also visit select St. Paul Public School classrooms. Learn more at sppl.org/read-brave.

WEST 7TH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 265 Oneida St. Hours: Mon, Thu 12:30-8 p.m., Tue 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Wed, Fri 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

SUESSICAL, PG 4

As for the story, we follow our three main characters: Horton the elephant, Gertrude McFuzz and JoJo, a character who originally had no relation to the mayor and now is his child in most adaptations, and was only present for around ten lines in the book. In this story, JoJo also acts as the Whoville mayor's child in parallel to the movie (although the musical is a completely different characterization where Jo-Jo is significantly more sunny).

The first act follows Horton trying to protect the clover containing the dust-speck-sized Whovian planet and JoJo's conflict with their parents about their excessive imagination that's getting in the way of their schoolwork. Then around halfway through, we are properly introduced to Gertrude McFuzz, a bird who is insecure about her lack of plumage in comparison to her flamboyant neighbor Mayzie Labird.

As Gertrude joins Horton in his attempt to protect the clover, the Cats use their narrator magic to enter the story and cheer up JoJo with a musical number about imagination. But after the Wickersham Brothers steal the clover, things get interesting, as Gertrude and Horton switch their original roles: Gertrude goes to save the clover and Horton ends up taking care of Mayzie's egg. After fifty-one weeks sitting on the egg, Gertrude returns to Horton after successfully finding the lost clover, and Mayzie comes back to officially give Horton guardianship over her egg. But then, Sour Kangaroo and others bring Horton on trial in "The People Versus Horton the Elephant." But just as all seems lost, JoJo gets their big moment and yells out a word nobody has heard before ("YOPI!"), proving that the Whos exist to the courtroom and saving the day. As everything is settling down, the egg hatches and it's an elephant-bird! (I'm not going to question how genetics work in the "Seussical" world, but it was probably because Horton incubated it.) In the end the entire cast comes together in celebration and they sing about green eggs and ham.

Plotwise, I do have a couple questions on how some of the storylines were resolved, such as Gertrude and JoJo's conflicts. I think a lot of it has to do with the story being shortened a lot from the original to fit the time restraints of a kids' version.

The sets and costumes were big highlights. The main background is a large colorful painting of a multicolored Truffula tree forest with rolling hills. Surrounding the stage are five life-size Truffula tree props in various hues. Mayzie, Vlad the Eagle's and JoJo's parents' costumes were my personal favorites because of how much character they had, especially Mayzie's extravagant and eye-catching dress and tail! But I can't forget the most memorable prop, the cartoonishly large "GAZAT" book shown at the beginning before the opening number. This is all even more impressive when you take into account that all the techies are students. Even alumni sometimes come back to help.

Speaking of musical numbers, I can't talk about "Seussical" without sharing some of my favorites. Most of the songs are very energetic and upbeat, so when songs have a more calm or somber section, it carries a lot more weight because of the contrast, and even more impact when some songs fully take on that tone. Great examples of this are "Solla Sollow" and "Alone in the Universe," with an honorable mention to Gertrude McFuzz's introductory song ("The One Feather Tail of Miss Gertrude McFuzz"). "Alone in the Universe" is a song where both characters vented their emotions to no-one in particular. It doesn't have much choreography because it's a moment between Horton and JoJo, and they're not singing directly to each other (because they're in different worlds), but I think it's still beautiful and heart touching because the build up and connection between them was perfect. "Solla Sollow" is a wholesome and slightly melancholy lullaby that Horton sings to the egg. That's not to say that there weren't any amazing energetic songs: "Monkey Around" was also one of my absolute favorite songs! It is very exhilarating and has one of the

best choreographies in my opinion; it even has kids doing gymnastics at the beginning!

The amazing director and theater teacher, Ms. Rasheed, graciously met up with me for an interview where she explained why she chose "Seussical."

"I think it's really important to view 'Seussical,' or any work of Dr. Seuss, in the context of 21st century narrative. And what I mean by that is, well, 'Seussical' is based on Dr. Seuss, and one of the most important books it's adapted from is 'Horton Hears a Who,' which is a very popular English literature. One of the biggest reasons why I chose this musical is the fact that I really like the music, and I also wanted to reimagine Dr. Seuss. Because what a lot of people don't know is that there is actually quite a bit of racist and sexist content in Dr. Seuss. There are six books which will currently probably be removed from print, because of their depictions of Asians, as well as black people just generally."

Ms. Rasheed elaborated even more on that by explaining to me what adapting the "Seussical" means to her: "For me as a woman of Asian descent, I want to reclaim that literature, and do Dr. Seuss with our amazing diverse population. So that's why I also did it nine years ago and why I want to revive it today, because for me theater is all about representation."

I learned a lot from interviewing Ms. Rasheed and it was a great experience hearing her perspective.

Overall, GAP's production of "Seussical KIDS" was such a fun, extraordinary experience that had so much hard work go into it. We can take a moment to appreciate how things like these can really bring a community together (whether as an audience, or in the cast and crew), which is especially important with younger generations who have limited access to third spaces. In true theater fashion, let's give a (figurative) round of applause to the amazing cast, crew and anyone else who helped to make "Seussical KIDS" so wonderful for everyone who saw it!

FEDERATION UPDATE



WEST 7TH RESURFACING PROJECT

March 6, 4:30-6:30pm at Palace Community Center. Neighbors are encouraged to attend this meeting, hosted by MnDOT, and share feedback and ideas.

PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBER SESSIONS

Interested in joining the board? Stop by, say hi, and learn more on March 9, 19. Candidate questionnaires are due at midnight on March 31.

2ND ANNUAL WEST 7TH COMMUNITY MERCHANDISE DESIGN CONTEST

Seeking artists to submit designs. Proceeds from the sale of the t-shirts will help the West 7th/Fort Road Federation fulfill its mission to promote a welcoming and safe community.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

April 23, Summit Brewing Company. Social Hour at 6 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m. Food provided and beverages available for purchase. Join us for conversation and connection.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Transportation & Land Use Committee: 4/3, 6:30 p.m.
Board Meeting - 3/11 7:00 p.m.
Community Engagement/Fundraising - 3/21, 6:30 p.m.

STAY IN TOUCH

"Like" us on Facebook. Subscribe to e-newsletter. More information at fortroadfederation.org

CONTACT

Julia McColley, julia@fortroadfederation.org;
651-298-5599; 882 West 7th, Suite 6,
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Check the website for the latest information or call the Center.

MN Foodshare Month

MN FoodShare's March Campaign brings together businesses, faith communities and individuals to help stock and support nearly 300 food shelves, including Keystone's. Host a food drive, contribute in-kind food donations or give generously to fill our food shelves with quality items like eggs, meat, milk and more. Visit our website to learn more.

Fare for All at West 7th Community Center

Fare for All allows you to shop for quality, nutritious foods at a discount and budget-friendly prices. All are welcome! The upcoming Fare for All events at West 7th Community Center are March 8, April 5 and May 3. The events will all run 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Visit keystoneservices.org/events

Kick Off Your Spring Season with Express Bike Shop

Bike season is almost upon us! Express Bike Shop is open Tuesday - Saturday to make sure you and your bike are ready to hit the trails this spring. We sell high-quality refurbished bicycles at affordable prices. Or update your bike by browsing accessories like seats, locks or bells. You can also bring your bike in for a tune up as well. Whatever your bike needs, Express Bike Shop has got you covered! Give us a call at 651-644-9660 or stop by 1158 Selby Ave.

Seniors, Get Active!

Active Seniors is a year-round program of diverse activities designed to support independence and enhance quality of life. Designed for adults 55-100+ years old, Keystone offers a wide array of exercise, wellness and social/recreational programs to help older adults stay healthy, independent and socially connected. For more information, please visit keystoneservices.org/seniors/activities.



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For information, visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/events

HOME IMPROVEMENT WORKSHOP DAY

Returns Saturday, March 9, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Cretin-Derham Hall (550 S. Albert St.) Attend one-hour workshops throughout the morning about topics relevant to homeowners and renters. More information and schedule at macgrove.org/hiwd.

SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS - ELECTION IN APRIL

Seeking candidates ages 18+ who live in or represent a business in Highland Park to run for a 2-year term on our board of directors. Board members represent their neighbors living in 55116 on issues like development, transportation, affordable housing and environmental concerns. Applications are due April 10 at 5 p.m. Call us at 651-695-4005 or email info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org with questions. The election will be held April 17 at 7 p.m. to April 22 at 10 p.m. More info at highlanddistrictcouncil.org/hdc-event/2024election.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Highland Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy with an online option. Zoom link and meeting agendas at highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

- HDC Board Meeting - 3/7, 7 p.m.
- Transportation Committee meeting - 3/12, 7 p.m.
- Community Development Committee meeting - 3/19, 6:30 p.m.
- Community Engagement Committee meeting - 3/25, at 7 p.m.

BULLETIN BOARD



ST. PATRICK'S DAY

March 16-17, West 7th St. and Downtown St. Paul. Check out Irish-themed events happening around town to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, including the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Visit visitsaintpaul.com/events-calendar/st-patricks-day for a full list of weekend's festivities.

COMMUNITY MEETING: WEST 7TH CONSTRUCTION

March 6, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Palace Community Center. MnDOT will discuss the upcoming West 7th St. construction project, scheduled to begin in 2027. Your chance to learn more about the project. While there won't be a formal presentation, MnDOT staff will be available to answer all your questions and gather feedback. Learn more at dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/w7thst-stpaul.

2024 STATE OF OUR CITY ADDRESS

March 11, 12 p.m. Xcel Energy Center. The 2024 State of Our City address is free and open to the public. The event will be held just beyond the Gate 1 entrance. Free parking provided 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the St. Paul RiverCentre Parking Ramp. The address will be live streamed online at facebook.com/cityofsaintpaul.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS WITH WARD 2 COUNCILMEMBER REBECCA NOECKER

March 14, 9-10 a.m. Linwood Recreation Center. A chance to get together and talk about the issues affecting the city and for Councilmember Noecker to answer any questions you might have. Visit stpaul.gov/department/city-council/ward-2.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH LENTEN FISH FRY

Through March 29, 4:30-7:30 p.m. St. Matthew's. \$15.

Meal includes fried or baked wild caught Alaskan Pollock, baked potato, vegetable, coleslaw, roll and dessert. Coffee, milk, and water included. Non-fish options are spaghetti or grilled cheese meals. Beer, wine and pop available for purchase. Cash, check or card. Dine-in via Social Hall entrance. Curbside-to-go enter line off Humboldt Ave onto Robie St to Hall Ave. St. Matthew's, 510 Hall Ave. st-matts.org

15TH MINNESOTA CUBAN FILM FESTIVAL

Through April 4. MSP Film Society at The Main Theatre. Minnesota Cuban Film Festival highlights diverse and challenging films of social change, human struggle and the boldness of the human spirit. Visit mspfilm.org/minnesota-cuban-film-festival

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

Fridays, 7 p.m. Twin Cities Friends Meetinghouse, 1725 Grand Ave., St. Paul. A 12-step program for emotional wellness and learning to live with unsolved problems. For more information call Paul at 651-402-6774. emotionsanonymous.org.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST, CRAFT, KOLÁČE BAKE SALE

March 24, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. C.S.P.S. Hall. \$6-\$30. Public welcome. Koláč (apricot, cream cheese, poppy seed, prune, raspberry) \$2 each. Place your pre-paid koláče order by March 17. sokolmn.org/all-events.

A UNIQUE ASSIGNMENT

March 16-April 7. History Theatre. This world premiere drama by Harrison David Rivers tells the story of two men - Henry Gallagher, white, and James Meredith, Black - who are thrust into each other's lives in the aftermath of the Ole Miss Riot in 1962. Witness this remarkable story that explores a milestone moment in Civil Rights history through their own words and perspectives on their shared experience. Learn more and purchase tickets at historytheatre.com or call 651-292-4323.



FOR MORE CALENDAR EVENTS, VISIT COMMUNITYREPORTER.ORG/EVENTS

SNOW pg 1

and above what is budgeted for typical winter maintenance of our streets and bridges.

So the City is saving a large portion of its budget this year because of the mild winter we are experiencing, right?

Well, it's complicated.

"First and foremost, a friendly reminder, we live in this wonderful state of Minnesota. We have a few more months of winter left to come," said Heibert.

Despite the unknowns of what will happen the rest of this snow season, it is still too early to tell if the record-low snow totals in St. Paul will work out to be a cost savings for taxpayers. The biggest reason is the city's budget runs from January to December, which encompasses parts of two snow seasons.

"2023 used and went beyond the winter maintenance budget," Hiebert said. "We had four total snow emergencies in 2023, two in January and two in February. We were going to do one in March but declared a one sided parking ban. We were very fortunate that we didn't have any in the fall."

In addition, the winter maintenance budget encompasses a lot of things over and above snow emergencies, and crews are taking care of some lingering issues left over from the last snow season.

"Last year was really hard on the equipment because it was used constantly. We are getting in some deferred maintenance," Hiebert said.

That said, according to Hiebert, this year's mild winter will hopefully set the City up for success come spring.

"Because of the type of winter we had last year, and the amount of plowing and winter work we had to do on our streets, it created a lot of damage and it pushed back our ability to



Tom Monson

get in and do pothole patching in the winter and put us behind," she said. "It set the tone for the summer because we were playing catch up all year long. It is a nice reprieve to allow us to get caught up. Hopefully when we go into the spring our streets are looking pretty good."

Hiebert added that City crews are out working all year long to make city streets safe and passable. Despite their ability to be more proactive this year, they still want to hear from residents and business owners if there is an issue.

"If people see things they should report it to us," she said.

Learn more

- Report an issue at publicworksinfo@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-266-6100.

- Visit stpaul.gov/snow to sign up for alerts and for more information on winter maintenance.

- Learn more about Monson Lawn and Landscaping and their services monsonlawnandlandscape.com.

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