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South St. Paul



Arts & Entertainment Page 6

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Your Community News & Information Source

April 2025

30th annual quilt show underway at Lawshe Museum

Jake Spitzack Staff Writer

outh St. Paul natives Rosemary South St. rau nauves recommended and her mother Jeannette Root, 93, have once again transformed Lawshe Museum, 130 3rd Ave. N., into a stunning gallery filled with brightly colored masterpieces. More than 75 quilts of varying size and style are on display through April 11 during the 30th annual Dakota County Star Quilters quilt show. Each is meticulously crafted by club members and the public can vote on their favorite quilt. The winner will receive a gift card to help cover the costs of supplies for future projects. Sue Heinz, owner of Kismet Quilting, will demonstrate quilting techniques at 3 and 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 8. The quilt show is open the same hours as the museum, and there's a suggested donation of \$5.

When describing the quilts in the show, Rosemary said, "There are modern quilts that use bright colors and simple geometric shapes, and then there's old fashioned ones that are made with reproductions of Civil War fabrics. Those quilts actually look like they could be a hundred years old, except that the fabric is all new."

Quilt show / Page 3

Unleash your inner farmer

Opportunities abound at area community gardens



Submitted photo

Master gardeners use a section of the garden at First Presbyterian in South St. Paul to run seed trials for the University of Minnesota and to grow produce for the local food shelf. They also teach free classes and demonstrate organic gardening methods.

> Tim Spitzack Editor

Tf you think the quality of fruits and ■vegetables in supermarkets these days has diminished, your observation is not off-base. According to a 2024 National Library of Medicine report, the nutritional quality of food worldwide has declined significantly over the past 70-plus years due to changes in farming techniques, artificial fertilization, pesticides, the cultivation of high-yielding varieties and environmental factors that deplete the soil.

Apples, oranges, bananas and tomatoes, for example, have lost 25-50% nutritional density since the 1940s. To combat this trend, many have turned to growing food themselves, either in their own backyard or a community garden. While there is a fair amount of work involved, any avid gardener will tell you it's worth the effort because you can enjoy nutritious, fresh produce within minutes or days of harvest.

There are other benefits as well. Numerous studies show that gardening

Gardening / Page 8

SSP artist featured in St. Paul **Art Crawl**

Jake Spitzack Staff Writer

ne of South St. Paul's own will be featured in the St. Paul Spring Art Crawl, which kicks off April 25-27. Sara Tibbetts will showcase more than a dozen oil and acrylic paintings at the Tilsner Artist Lofts in Lowertown. The venue is open Friday, 6-10 p.m.; Saturday, noon-8 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The Crawl allows people to view locally made art and meet the artists who created it. You may also purchase a piece that catches your

Tibbetts uses bright colors and varied brushstrokes to illustrate layers within her pieces. While earning a bachelor's degree in art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she was an abstract artist working with sculptural assemblage paintings some six-by-six-feet in size – but those days are behind her. Now most of her work is about one-square-foot in size or slightly larger. She tries to complete one painting a week in addition to working full-time at an insurance company.

"I try to stay pretty versatile," she said. "I do still life, landscapes, interiors and occasionally figures."

Interestingly, Tibbetts has a connection to Grant Wood, one of the most well-known painters of the

Artist / Page 5

Packers and Warriors join forces for new swim team

Jake Spitzack Staff Writer

tudents and head swim Scoaches from South St. Paul Public Schools and School District 197 have temporarily put their neighborhood rivalry aside to help build up the next wave of high school swimmers. In mid-March, South St. Paul middle school teacher and Two Rivers girls head

in grades 5-8. Operated through TriDistrict Community Education and using the 8-lane pool at Two Rivers High School, it runs through April 17 and culminates in two meets against the Hastings middle school swim team.

"When I started with the Two Rivers program, it

swim coach Chris Sjogren was by far one of the largest season, the Two Rivers girls launched a Packer-Warrior teams in our conference in program had dropped from consists of practices held year. He's joined by South St. swim team for students Metro East," Sjogren said. about 40 to 20 and the South 4-5 p.m. Monday through Paul/Two Rivers boys' head We've lost a lot of seniors to graduation and our numbers for seventh graders joining the program are much lower than our high school seniors graduating.... I want to see both programs build up and be successful. When both programs are doing well, it's good for the conference."

Going into the 2024-2025

St. Paul girls program was wavering in the low teens, and both boys programs were even lower. As such, the South St. Paul girls team became a cooperative program with Minnehaha Academy and Cristo Rey, and the boys swim teams at South St. Paul Secondary and Two Rivers joined.

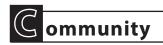
Thursday, with a week off for spring break. Students are introduced to a variety of strokes, swimming techniques and racing strategies but there's no overarching goal other than to have fun and become acquainted with competitive swimming. All 35 spots were filled this year, so Sjogren hopes to expand

The 6-week program capacity to around 45 next swim coach Spencer Heino, and high school athletes also volunteer at some practices.

Ideally, this program will grow enough to spark an official middle school swim team for both schools.

"They [school leaders] weren't entirely sure if

Swim team / Page 2



Swim team

the numbers would make sense to make it part of the official athletics programs for South St. Paul and Two Rivers, so we decided to run it through community ed for this first year and kind of go from there," said Sjogren.

"We're also working with the other Metro East schools in North St. Paul, trying to get them doing a team, too, so we can expand and build up this middle school program."

Sjogren said one of the reasons the swim programs

have been running dry in recent years is because students don't typically get involved until seventh grade. Whether it's a matter of access to a pool or something else, it's what he's always seen as a coach and even as a high school swimmer himself. He has been a South St. Paul middle school teacher for two years and involved in the Two Rivers girls swim program for five seasons, including the past four as head coach. He swam competitively at Gustavus Adolphus College.

"Swimming is a great way for kids to get in shape for whatever [sport] they're doing in the spring," he said. "It's one of the best crosstraining sports because it's lighter on the body than running is, and the cardio capacity that you grow is huge.... I really enjoy watching where some of the new swimmers are at the start of the season and then seeing how they progress and finish the season, both in time but also just in their technique, ability and their confidence."

The high school girls' swimming season runs from August to November and the boys' December to March. Registration for the Packer-Warrior Swim Team program through TriDistrict Community Education was \$175 per participant, and did not include swimsuit or

South St. Paul's unsung heroes: **DARTS** and Neighbors Inc. thrive through volunteer spirit

In South St. Paul, where community is more than just a word, two nonprofits DARTS and Neighbors, Inc. – stand as testaments to the power of local compassion. Born from the vision of volunteers decades ago, these organizations continue to uplift our city and beyond, driven by a special group of residents whose dedication keeps hope alive. Their impact on South St. Paul is profound, from helping seniors age in their homes to ensuring families have food and clothing in times of need.

DARTS traces its roots to 1974 when South St. Paul



Jimmy Francis South St. Paul Mayor

volunteers banded together as Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors. Their mission? To help older adults stay in the homes they love. Today, DARTS offices in West St. Paul and delivers essential services across Dakota County, but its heart remains in South

St. Paul. Volunteers - many of whom live just down the street - provide transportation, tackle home repairs and offer companionship. Programs like Tech Buddies pair tech-savvy locals with seniors to conquer digital challenges, while respite care gives caregivers a much-needed break. For South St. Paul's aging population, DARTS means independence and dignity, all thanks to neighbors who refuse to let their elders fade into the margins.

Neighbors, Inc. was sparked in 1972 by South St. Paul churchgoers determined to support struggling families. What began as a grassroots effort has grown into a lifeline for northern Dakota County, with South St. Paul as its beating pulse. The food shelf stocks pantries

for those whose money runs thin, and the Clothes Closet ensures that folks have coats for winter and other clothing and household items. All programs are run by many volunteers who call this city home. These services don't just meet immediate needs, they rebuild stability, giving families a foothold to climb out of hardship. South St. Paul benefits directly, as Neighbors keeps our community strong and resilient.

The real magic for both organizations lies in the volunteers - South St. Paul's own who helped found them and fuel them still. They're not just helpers, they're visionaries. Back in the '70s, they saw gaps in support and filled them, creating legacies that now touch lives far beyond our city limits. Today, they're retirees driving seniors to doctor visits, parents sorting clothes after work, and teens stocking shelves

on weekends. At DARTS, they mentor kids through Learning Buddies, connecting generations in our schools. At Neighbors, they pack grocery bags with care, knowing each one goes to a familiar face. These aren't faceless do-gooders, they're our neighbors, our friends, our family.

This volunteer spirit is uniquely South St. Paul. It's in the way a DARTS driver chats with a senior about old times on Grand Avenue, or how a Neighbors worker remembers a family's sizes from last season. Our volunteers don't just serve, they build bonds that make South St. Paul feel like home. Their efforts ripple outward, supporting Dakota County and beyond, but the roots stay here, deep in our soil.

The impact is tangible. DARTS keeps South St. Paul's seniors independent, reducing isolation and preserving the character of our neighborhoods. Neighbors ensures no one goes hungry or cold, reinforcing our city's safety net. Together, they've turned South St. Paul into a model of mutual care -aplace where people don't just live, but thrive because of one another.

Want to join this extraordinary group? Visit dartsconnects.org or neighborsmn. org to volunteer. Whether you've got an afternoon or a lifetime, your hands can shape South St. Paul's future just as others have shaped its past. Our volunteers started something special here, and they're not done yet. In a world that can feel divided, DARTS and Neighbors, Inc. prove that South St. Paul's heart beats strongest when we lift each other up.

With love from South St.

Mayor Jimmy Francis

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Quilt show

from page 1

The Dakota County Star Quilters has about 55 members from all over the county. Jeannette founded the club in 1995 after branching away from the statewide Minnesota Quilters club in search of a tighter-knit group. She has held the quilt show at Lawshe ever since, except for the year the museum was under construction and the show was brought to the Burnsville library.

Rosemary has five quilts in the show and another member has seven, but most quilters typically submit one to three. Each year features a special challenge for quilters to take on if they choose. Last year's was to incorporate the initials of their name, and this year's is to use a panel – a printed picture on fabric – in their quilt.

"I have lots of panels of things like lighthouses and planets, but I chose to use eight panels that have a leaf design...you add complementing fabrics to go around it," she said. "When we're getting ready for the show, my mother and I bring them [registered quilts] to the museum. My mother loves

those days because she gets a first look at all the quilts."

Rosemary said the club's monthly meeting will be held at the museum on Tuesday, April 8, along with the lectures, so that will likely be the busiest day for the show. The museum will be open 9 a.m.-8 p.m. that day. When the exhibit is done, two of her quilts will go to charity, as has become commonplace among members. For the past year, the club has made quilts for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a nonprofit that makes beds and bedding for kids in Dakota and Scott counties. It also creates placemats for Meals on Wheels, and donates quilts to 360 Communities, a nonprofit that finds places they are needed.

Rosemary made her first quilt at 16 and has been quilting ever since. Her two sisters tried their hand at the hobby but didn't catch the bug like she did. One of her most precious family heirlooms is a quilt her greatgrandmother created using chicken feed sacks.

[registered quilts] to the "The feed for chickens would come in fabric sacks"

and that's what she made it out of because that's what she had and she wasn't going to spend money buying fabric," she said. "If she knew what I spent on fabric now, she'd be appalled."

Quilting was originally a thrifty way for people to use leftover fabric from handmade clothing. Today, however, most quilts are made from purchased fabric because few people make their own clothing, said Rosemary.

"There are still some people who like the ethics of using stuff up," she said. "We have one member who likes to save even the smallest leftover pieces, and she'll sew them together to make blocks and get some very interesting effects."

The club welcomes new quilters but doesn't offer lessons. Those seeking to get into the hobby should look to community education or local fabric stores for help. Rosemary said fabric costs and the amount of time it takes to finish projects can be barriers, so she recommends people try creating something small before tackling a bed-sized quilt. For more information, visit dcsq.org



Quilt by Jeannette Root on display at the quilt show.

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Spring Art Crawl held over three weekends

Jake Spitzack
Staff Writer

7ith winter in the rearview mirror, it's finally time to stretch those legs and enjoy the sunshine, and what better way to do it than with St. Paul's biannual art crawl. This spring, it's being held over three weekends, with participating sites open based on what city ward they're located in. The West Side and Downtown, both in Ward 2, will kick off the fun April 25-27. Wards 5-7 will run May 2-4, and Wards 1, 3 and 4 will host events May 9-11. A full list of participating sites and what they offer is

Ward 2

Art of Counseling, 275 4th St. E.; April 25, 5-10 p.m., and April 26, noon-8 p.m. Twelve artists displaying paintings, photography, chalk pastel, ink, encaustic art, fiber arts, wall hangings, sculpture, assemblage and more. "Reflections of the Self: Art and Inner Harmony" art show in Suite #301. The site also features a rummage sale by artists, featuring artwork, handmade goods, art supplies, used studio gear, books and more.

Burl Gallery, 308 E. Prince St.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. "KALEIDOSCOPE II" exhibit featuring 70 pieces of art created by 70 local artists. Free admission. Artist celebration reception held 5-8 p.m., April 26.

Calendula Gallery, 275 E. 4th St.; April 25, 6-9 p.m.; April 26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and April 27, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Discover the work of 23 artists displaying paint-

ings, pottery, mixed media, woodwork, photography and digital art in the gallery and neighboring dining hall.

Erta Ale, 308 E. Prince St.; April 25, 6-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-9 p.m.; and April 27, noon-6 p.m. This Ethiopian restaurant will display paintings by two Ethiopian born artists.

F-O-K Studios, 106 W. Water St.; April 25, 5-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. More than 50 artists showcasing paintings, jewelry, sculptures, mixed media, photography and more, from open studios and gallery space. Live entertainment all three days. Free chips, salsa and guacamole from Boca Chica starting at noon on Saturday, and Egg Roll Queen food truck onsite all weekend. Complimentary refreshments also provided. Free parking available in F-O-K Studios lot and adjacent All Inc. lot.

Friedli Gallery, 943 W. 7th St.; April 26, noon-7 p.m., and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Five local artists selling paintings, ceramics, textiles, book arts and more. Also includes the gallery's 4th Annual Book Arts Exhibition. Located one block West of the Schmidt Artist Lofts.

Lost Fox, 213 4th St. E.; April 25-26, 8 a.m.-1 a.m., and April 27, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. This coffee shop, restaurant and bar will feature works of two artists, and possibly live music.

Lowertown Lofts Artists Cooperative, floors 3-5, 255 E. Kellogg Blvd.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, approximately 35 artists will display paintings, ceramics, mixed media, textiles, jewelry, home goods and more from galleries and artist studios. Music and performances will take place. Enter through the alley connecting Wall and Wacouta.

Nine Lives Thrift, 1165 7th St. W.; April 25-26, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., and April 27, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. This thrift shop will display work from two photographers, and offer a live photo shoot 6-8 p.m. on Saturday. Wine available all weekend.

Owl's Eye Art Collective, 340 N. Sibley St.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. Eight artists will show-case printmaking, painting, photography, ceramics and jewelry. Includes opportunities to make your own intaglio print and create a personalized gemstone bracelet. Wine and appetizers on Friday. Entrance is behind the Sibley/4th Street Gold Line Bus stop.

Pig's Eye Pottery, 1163 7th St. W.; April 25, 5-8 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, noon-4 p.m. Five artists will show ceramics, painting and jewelry in a gallery. Complimentary refreshments and free street parking

Schmidt Artist Lofts, 900 7th St. W.; April 25, 6-9 p.m.; April 26, noon-7 p.m.; and April 27, noon-5 p.m. More than 80 artists will show paintings, illustrations, graphic design, collages, printmaking, photography, ceramics, fiber art, jewelry, comic books, children's books, wood furniture, handmade brooms, botanical displays, dried floral wall art, shadow boxes, suncatchers, candles, magnet art, sand art and more. Art will be across five floors in common areas, galleries and

studios, as well as in the tap room and the rooftop atrium. Open Palette live art demonstrations will happen on the rooftop and walk-in dance lessons are offered 1-3 p.m., Saturday. Food trucks will be onsite. Free street parking. Enter at Door 1.

Tilsner Artists Lofts, 300 Broadway St.; April 25, 6-10 p.m.; April 26, noon-8 p.m.; and April 27, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Twenty artists will showcase mixed media, draping and fashion, paintings and more, from artist studios and hall-way spaces. Pop-ups in the back lot of the building, weather permitting. Will host performance artists and offer opportunities for karaoke and open mic sessions throughout the weekend.

Union Depot, 214 4th St. E., April 25, 5-9 p.m.; April 26; 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; and April 27, noon-6 p.m. Shop local artists including painters, photographers, mixed media artists, jewelry designers and apothecary creators. Hours are

Wards 5-7

ArT @ 967 Payne, 967 Payne Ave.; May 2, 5-9 p.m., and May 3, noon-8 p.m. Twenty artists will display paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, photographs, jewelry, ceramics and more from artist studios and wall displays. Opening reception for gallery exhibit "Our World We Live In" is May 2. Artist question and answer panel on Friday and Saturday, and live performances expected throughout the weekend. Food trucks may be on site. Free parking in the back lot or on street.

Urban Roots, 1110 Payne Ave.; May 3, 1-5 p.m. Three artists will display mixed media, handmade paper, basket weaving, handmade journals, printmaking and baked goods, from a gallery and outdoors, weather permitting. Music and crafts onsite.

Wards 1, 3 and 4

E&L Bindery Building, 708 Vandalia St.; May 9, 6-10 p.m., and May 10, noon-8 p.m. Ten artists will display paintings, drawings, photography, bookbindings and stone carvings. E & L Bindery will be open on the first floor with artists, and open studios will be on the third floor. Snacks and beverages available, and a tarot card reader onsite. Park in the lot or on Vandalia Street and enter next to the loading dock.

DOW Gallery, 2242 University Ave. W.; May 9, 5-9 p.m., and May 10, noon-8 p.m. Forty artists will showcase painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, wood working, notecards, and jewelry. Complimentary refreshments. Free parking on the street and in the Wright Building lot. Not handicap accessible.

House of heART 2, 763 Holly Ave.; May 9, 4-9 p.m.; May 10, noon-8 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Find 28 artists displaying paintings, photography, ceramics and mixed media across three floors of an Airbnb home, and outside, weather permitting. Complimentary refreshments and solo music performances throughout the weekend.

Midway Clay, 1708 University Ave. W.; May 9, 4-8 p.m.; May 10, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. More than a dozen artists will showcase ceramics as well as some 2D art from a gallery and studio space. Light refreshments available. Street parking.

Open Art Space, 2147 University Ave. W.; May 9, 6-9 p.m.; May 10, noon-8 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Ten artists in gallery, hallway and studio spaces will showcase wax paintings, photography, collage and mixed media, ceramics, pastel drawing, greeting cards and more. Light refreshments available and a family friendly art activity will be held Saturday and Sunday. Parking in the lot behind the building.

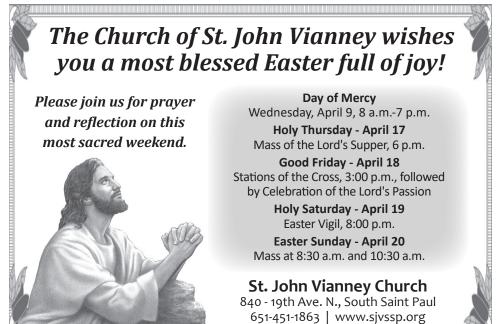
Spatial Effects, 1759 Selby Ave.; May 9, 4-6 p.m.; May 10, noon-6 p.m.; and May 11, noon-5 p.m. Nearly 30 artists in two gallery spaces will display paintings, drawings, photography, stone and metal sculpture, ceramics, glass paintings, mixed media, carved gourds and more. Also showing furniture by Third Street Studios. Refreshments available all days and live music by the Joel Shapira Jazz Trio 2-4 p.m., Saturday.

Springboard for the Arts, 262 University Ave. W.; May 10, noon-4 p.m. More than 40 artists with prints and printmaking art in the first floor community hall and on the front lawn. OG Za Za Pizza Trailer will be onsite and interactive artist led activities from Street Corner Letterpress will take place. Free street parking.

St. Paul Neighborhood Network, 550 Vandalia St.; May 9, 6-8 p.m.; May 10, noon-4 p.m.; and May 11, 1-5 p.m. Short documentary screening from first-time filmmakers on Friday, with food available. Photography, art and storytelling exhibits, including works by 10 youth, on Saturday and Sunday. Park in the lot.

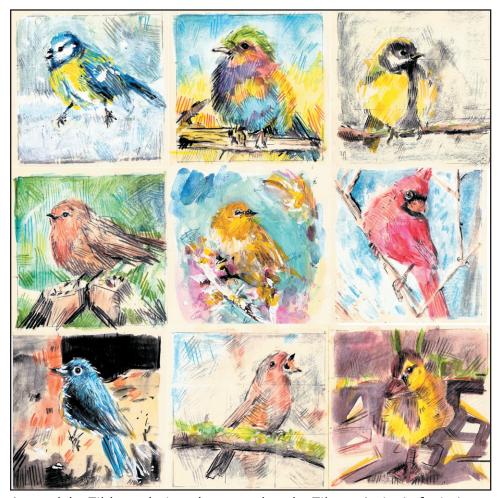
University of Minnesota Goldstein Museum of Design, level 2 of McNeal Hall (room #241), 1985 Buford Ave.; May 9-10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and May 11, noon- 5 p.m. An exhibit featuring historical and contemporary letterpress prints, advertising posters, wood type artifacts and graphic design pieces created using traditional printing techniques. Includes an interactive 2-color block printing installation. The site also has a window exhibit featuring clothing and textiles that use letters and numbers as design elements, reflecting their evolution from rare decorative motifs to bold statements in fashion and branding.

Virginia St. Church, 170 Virginia St., May 9-11. More than 20 artists will exhibit paintings, mosaics, quilting, ceramics, art glass, collages and drawings. Live music by Blues Stratum and other bands, and Liz Zini will play waltzes, tangoes and the chicken dance on her accordion. Food available.



Expanded Coverage

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Artwork by Tibbetts being showcased at the Tilsner Artist Lofts in Lowertown. Tibbetts joined the St. Paul Art Collective last year and participated in her first Crawl last fall.

Artist from page 1

1930s. Her grandmother's uncle, Arnold Pyle, was Grant's protégé and went on to become an acclaimed painter himself, winning numerous awards throughout Iowa and being commissioned for private collections across the country. Wood is known for his paintings of farm landscapes - his most famous work is "American Gothic" - and Pyle was the subject of one of his portraits dubbed, "Arnold Comes of Age."

"My grandma had one of his [Pyle's] still life paintings in her dining room, which I now have in my house," said Tibbetts. "I don't think I knew really who he was when I was young... but now it's a little more important to me and it has really encouraged me to keep on with painting."

Tibbetts dabbles with watercolor paint and pencil drawings, and in the past has even created dollhouses from scratch, including an Irish cottage which is used for an Irish festival in Wisconsin. She said creating dollhouses, which started as a hobby, refined her ability to capture small details and be patient with her creative processes.

"I also have one of the 19 free little art galleries in South St. Paul and sometimes I like to set up little miniature scenes in the gallery," she said. "Mine is the Squirrel and Sparrow behind town hall. All community members are welcome to take art, leave art, create art."

Tibbetts joined the St. Paul Art Collective last year and participated in her first Crawl last fall. Overall, she enjoyed the experience and said she learned a lot.

"It was a lot of fun talking to the other artists and the visitors," she said. "We had some really great conversations with some people.... As someone who has lived in three Midwest states throughout my art journey, I appreciate how active, diverse and welcoming the art community is here in the St Paul area."

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Children's Museum

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Exhibits and activities include "The Scramble," "The Studio," "Creativity Jam," "Sprouts," "Our World," "Forces at Play," "Shipwreck Adventures" and "Imaginopolis." Tickets are \$17 on weekdays and \$19 on weekends. Admission is free the first Sunday of each month; reservations are required, and tickets are limited. The next free date is April 6.

History Center

345 W. Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul 651-259-3000 mnhs.org

"Girlhood (It's Complicated)," through June 1. This exhibit from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History features more than 100 objects that explore how young women have influenced politics, education, work, health and fashion.

"Reframing our Stories" is featured through October. The exhibit was created from a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians." Inside the box were dozens of pictures of Native community members, organizations, activities, and events that are relevant today.

"Our Home: Native Minnesota" features historic and contemporary photo-

graphs, maps and artifacts that show how Minnesota's native communities have retained cultural practices, teachings and values.

Other exhibits include "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," "Then Now Wow," "Grainland" and "Weather Permitting." Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and college students, and \$8 for children ages five to 17. Admission and parking are free on Thursdays, 4-8 p.m.

History Theatre

30 E. 10th St. St. Paul 651-292-4323 Historytheatre.com

"Secret Warriors," Mar. 29-April 19. Inspired by the stories of the Japanese Americans who served as translators and interrogators for the U.S. Armed Forces, "Secret Warriors" highlights two men, Koji Kimura and



"Mean Girls" is presented April 8-13 at the Ordway Center.

Tamio Takahashi, who took extraordinary risks to save their fellow soldiers in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Discover their compelling personal journeys and heartfelt love stories set against the backdrop of the war and the incarceration of their families. From \$49.

Landmark Center

75 5th St. W. St. Paul 651-292-3225 landmarkcenter.org Courtroom Concerts, noon-1 p.m. on Thursdays. Music of Timothy C. Takach, April 3; Cléa Galhano, recorder, Tulio Rondòn, cello, Tim Lovelace, piano, April 10; Amos Lucidi, piano, April 17; Lumina, April 24. Free.

Skylark Opera Theatre, 1-3 p.m., Sunday, April 6. Skylark Opera Theatre is known for a wide-ranging repertoire of opera and musical theater. Free.

Ballet Tuesdays, noon-1 p.m. April 8. Ballet performances and demonstrations

by Ballet Co.Laboratory.

Romanian Easter Traditions, 1-3 p.m., each Sunday in April, except April 20. Visit the Romanian American Cultural Center to learn about painted eggs, Easter customs and painted icons on glass. Free.

Urban Expedition: Venezuela, 1-3 p.m., Sunday, April 13. Authentic music, food, dance performances and crafts. Free.

BandWidth Community Band Festival, noon-6 p.m.,

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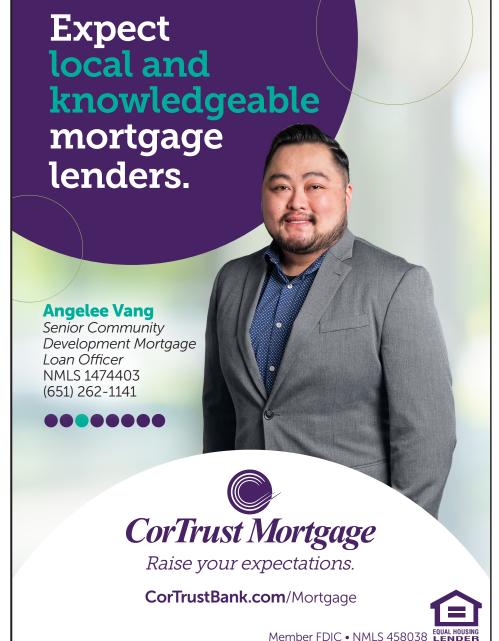


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Sunday, April 27. Marches, concert band classics, pop, Broadway, and jazz music performed by some of the top volunteer-based ensembles in Minnesota.

Woodturning demonstration, 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Mar. 20 in the AAW Gallery of Wood Art. Free.

Public Building Tour, 12:30-1:15 p.m., every Sunday. Learn about the building's history, gangster connections and restoration.

MN Museum of American Art

350 Robert St. N. St. Paul 651-797-2571 mmaa.org

"Here, Now" features 150 artworks across media from historically significant and notable new artists. All are in the M's permanent collection. The museum is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday.

"When You're in the Mirror," through April 27. A an offering of portraits that considers the repercussions of perception through a relational emphasis.

Admission is free.

Ordway Center

345 Washington St. St. Paul 651-224-4222 ordway.org

"Sister's Easter Catechism: Will My Bunny Go to Heaven?" 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Mar. 30. Sister answers timeworn questions of the Easter season like "Why isn't Easter the same day every year like Christmas?

"and "Will my bunny go to heaven?" From \$43.

Sona Jobarteh, 7:30 p.m., Monday, Mar. 31. African Jobarteh blends traditional music, blues and Afropop. From \$54.

Classic Albums Live: U2's "The Joshua Tree," 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 4. The entire album is performed

"Oceana" by Border Crossing, 8 p.m., Saturday, April 5. "Oceana" is a reinvention of the Bach cantata form for a modern age. From

"Sacred Voices" by Vocalessence, 4 p.m., Sunday, April 6. A concert of Sir James MacMillan songs, including "Seven Last Words from the Cross" and "The Sun Danced," based on the miraculous visions of Our Lady of Fatima to three Portuguese shepherd children in 1917. From \$26.

"Mean Girls," April 8-13. Cady Heron may have grown up on an African savanna, but nothing prepared her for the vicious ways of her strange new home in suburban Illinois. Soon, Cady falls prey to a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. But when Cady devises a plan to end Regina's reign, she learns the hard way that you can't cross a Queen Bee without getting stung. From \$45.

St. Paul Chamber Orchestra concerts - Mozart's 40th Symphony with Dmitry Sinkovsky, 11 a.m., Friday, April 11. Jasmine Chi plays Mozart's Second Flute Concerto, April 25-26. From \$16 for both concerts. Schubert Club concerts

Musicians on the Rise: Student Competition Winners Recital, 1 p.m., Sunday, April 13. Witness the best of the local rising musical stars in piano, strings, voice, guitar, brass and woodwinds. Free. Jess Gillam, saxophone, will perform April 16-17. From \$28.

The FAWK Hmong (+Friends) Super Show by Funny Asian Women Kollective, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 19. An evening of live standup, storytelling, sketches, and short films that celebrate what living in the U.S. for 50 years can do to Southeast Asians - and one Korean. From \$31.

Park Square **Theatre**

20 W. 7th Place St. Paul 651-291-7005

parksquaretheatre.org Kevin Kling and Victor Zupanc, 7 p.m., Saturday, Mar. 29. Heartfelt stories and songs to feed your soul and tickle your funny bone. From \$20.

RiverCentre

175 W. Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul 651-265-4800 rivercentre.org

Donnie Smith Bike Show, Mar. 29-30. Includes a bike show with over 35 classes and 20 custom bikes, vendors and entertainment.

Minnesota Roller Derby, 6 p.m., Saturday, Mar. 29 and April 26. From \$22.

People of Color Career Fair, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Tuesday, April 15. A networking and hiring event. Free.

Science Museum of Minnesota

120 W. Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul 651-221-9444, smm.org

"Butterfly Odyssey" through September 1. An interactive, maze-based exhibit that allows you to experience the fascinating behaviors and inspiring resilience of wild and farmed butterflies. The exhibit also examines how tropical butterfly farming can support the local community, impact the environment, and protect ecosystems around the world.

Virtual Reality Transporter, through December 2026. Use the VRT to hurtle through the cosmos at fantastic speeds, scuba dive into prehistoric seas, and join the astronauts of Apollo 11 as they moonwalk for the first time. \$9.95.

Museum Nights, 5-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Explore museum galleries, check out special Science Live performances, enjoy food and drink, then catch an Omnitheater show.

OmniFest continues through April 13. Includes:

"Extreme Weather" - An up-close look at some of the most astonishing and potentially deadly natural phenomena. Learn what causes turbulent tornadoes, receding glaciers and rampant wildfires.

"Cuba" - Journey to the heart of the Caribbean through the eyes of those exploring under the ocean's surface and dancing in the streets of Havana.

"Fungi Web of Life" -The film unravels how plants and animals would not exist without mushrooms, molds, yeasts and toadstools.

"Secrets of the Sea" -From the smallest krill to the largest whales, explore how ocean ecosystems depend on biodiversity and a surprising level of animal cooperation.

"Stellar Tours: A Star is Born," Wednesday-Sunday. Follow the life cycle of a star through this live digital telescope show.

Tickets are \$34.95 for adults and \$24.95 for ages 4-17 and include an Omnitheatre show.

Xcel Center

199 W. Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul 651-726-8240 xcelenergycenter.com

Papa Roach and Rise **Against**, 7 p.m., Sunday, April 13. From \$51.

Comedian Tom Segura, 7:30 p.m., Friday, April 18. From \$51.



Table service for dine-in, no buffet line



Every Friday Mar. 7-Good Friday April 18 **Serving Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.**

Baked and/or fried wild Alaskan pollock, baked potato, vegetable, cole slaw, roll and dessert. Grilled cheese or spaghetti available as non-fish option.

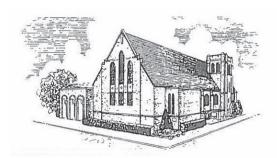
Beer, wine and pop available for purchase

Adult meal \$16 fish / \$14 non-fish. Cash, check or card. Children's meals at reduced price

Dine-in: enter at Door 5 at the rear of the church Curbside-to-go line off Humboldt Ave. onto Robie St. For more information, visit st-matts.org

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Wednesday Lenten Service Noon

HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday Service 5:00 p.m.

> Good Friday Service 5:00 p.m.

> > **Easter Sunday** 11:00 a.m.





Gardening

from page 1

helps improve strength, balance and flexibility, and improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and stress. Community gardens benefit neighborhoods by promoting social interaction, creating green space, and improving air and soil quality. Some gardeners have gone a step further and use their hobby to fight food insecurity by giving away the produce they grow. According to the University of Minnesota's Healthy Food, Healthy Lives Institute and the Institute on the Environment, food insecurity in Minnesota has surged as much as 40% since the pandemic.

Gardening season

In the coming weeks, the soil will be turned at community gardens across the city and people will be plodding through the muddy rows to dig in the dirt and plant seeds. If you'd like to give gardening a try, several opportunities await. All gardens are open to everyone,

is a source of exercise that regardless of residency.

South St. Paul Community Garden

The City of South St. Paul has operated a community garden for three decades. It attracts gardeners from South St. Paul and the surrounding communities, including St. Paul and Minneapolis. It has 119 plots and is located near the DNR boat launch and city compost site off Verderosa Avenue, near the I-494 Wakota Bridge. Residents may sign up for a plot beginning Mar. 24, and nonresidents on April 7. Plots are 15-by-20-feet and surrounded by fencing with a lock-secured gate. A total of nine water spigots are available. Rates are \$21.43 for residents and \$32.14 for nonresidents. Residents aged 55 and older pay \$16.07. For more information, call South St. Paul Parks and Recreation at 651-366-6200 or visit southstpaul.org.

Garden on the Hill

First Presbyterian in South St. Paul, 535 20th Ave. N.,

has been hosting a community garden for a dozen years. It has 20 fenced-in plots, ranging from \$40 for a 10-by-15-foot plot to \$50 for a 10-by-20-foot plot. Master gardeners use a section to run seed trials for the University of Minnesota and to grow produce for the local food shelf, and they also teach free classes and demonstrate organic gardening methods. Experienced gardeners are usually on site to share their knowledge and skills with gardening novices.

Since its inception, gardeners have donated nearly 11,000 pounds of organic vegetables. All plots are for organic gardening, meaning no commercial chemicals are allowed in the garden, including herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. Gardeners are required to maintain their plot, weed the path around it and attend a work session in the spring and fall. Garden coordinator Julie Close said people are attracted to the garden for its serene location, and the opportunity to grow their own food and learn techniques from master gardeners. A kick-off meeting is at 1 p.m., Sunday, April

13. For more information, call 651-459-5607 or visit fpcssp.org.

GROWS

Growing Resilience on the West Side (GROWS), a coalition of organizations and individuals working on food justice, is looking for gardeners for its communal gardens, which allow multiple people to help tend a garden and enjoy the bounty of it. All food is available free to anyone in the community who wants or needs it.

The Capitol View Communal Garden and Orchard, located at Smith and Cherokee avenues near the Smith Avenue High Bridge, is now in its fourth season. The 8,500-square-foot site is owned by the City of St. Paul and operates with the help of some 200 volunteers. It has 20 organic planting beds for vegetables and at least 20 fruit and nut trees, including apple, cherry, serviceberry, pear, plum and hazelnut. Paul Pfeiffer, who has lived on the West Side for nearly 20 years, is one of 15-20 volunteers who show up weekly during the growing season for watering, weeding and other chores. Thursdays are the designated work day,

from 6 p.m.-dark.

"This is a very different model," he said. "There are no work requirements or fees. It's community-led, not hierarchal. Anyone can help, and anyone can harvest. I'm always asked, 'can I come and take some stuff,' and the answer is always, 'yes, when it's ripe."

Pfeiffer said the garden has grown every year, both in size and popularity.

"Every year it grows bigger and more exciting, but bigger isn't what we're after – we're going for community," he said. "It's a very beautiful and welcoming space, and a fun environment. I've seen people doing yoga there,

wandering the beds, writing in journals, and of course gardening.... It has allowed me to know my neighbors better because we work side by side and share with each other, no strings attached."

Volunteers are also needed at the three other communal garden sites: the Robert Street Garden at Robert and Morton streets, Garden of Good Hearts at 441 Wabasha St. S. and a plot at 88 Cesar Chavez. Volunteers assist with planting, weeding and food distribution. Like the Capitol View Communal Garden and Orchard, anyone may harvest ripe produce from these gardens. Educational presentations are offered during the summer, and the produce is given away weekly from stands at Parque Castillo on Sunday afternoons, and Beautiful Laundrette, 625 Stryker Ave., on Wednesday afternoons. Information signage will be installed at all sites this summer to help people better understand the concept of a communal garden and to direct them to other community gardens in the region. For more information on GROWS, visit mfin. org/take-action/grows or contact Leah Mathiason at leah@rustypatchfarm.com.

Looking to plant your own garden? You can get free seed packets at the West Side Seed Library at Riverview Library, 1 George St. E. The seeds are provided by community gardeners and through other donations.

Dodge Nature Center gardens

Dodge Nature Center runs its community garden program May through October at its main property at 1701 Charlton St., West St. Paul, and its Shepard Farm site at 8946 70th St. S., Cottage Grove. For \$135, gardeners receive a 15-by-15-foot plot, the use of tools, water and

compost, and enrollment in an organic gardening class. Registration opens in early March and runs through Memorial Day, or until all plots are filled. Dodge's farm manager, Don Oberdorfer, said the gardens are particularly attractive to people who live in apartments because they don't have to buy and store their own tools.

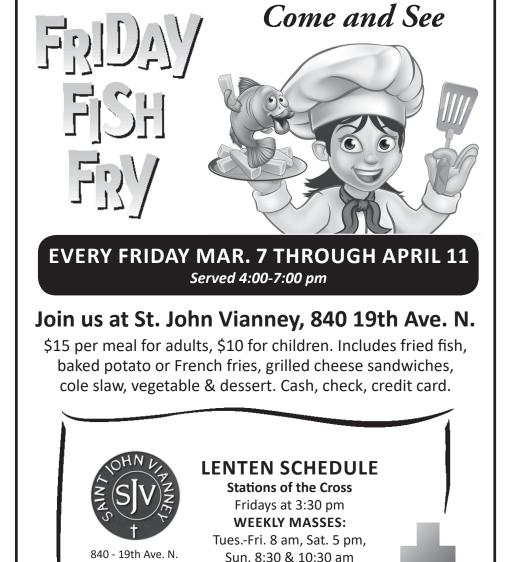
"All you have to do is show up and supply the seeds and labor," he said.

The popularity of the garden spiked during the pandemic and remains high. Before 2020, about 40 families participated. Today, the garden in West St. Paul is used by 70 families, and the newer garden in Cottage Grove by 25 families. An orientation session is held at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 9 in West St. Paul, and Thursday, April 10 in Cottage Grove. The class on organic gardening practices is offered at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 16 in West St. Paul, and Thursday, April 17 in Cottage Grove. For more information, call 651-789-5285 or visit dodge naturecenter.org.

Farmers markets

Farmers markets are a great place to find fresh produce without the work. The St. Paul Farmers Market, which operates year-round, begins its summer season in late April at the downtown market. It also hosts neighborhood markets in South St. Paul, West St. Paul and several other communities during the summer and fall. All food is grown within 100 miles of St. Paul. For more details, visit stpaulfarmersmarket.com.

The independent West Side Farmers Market is open 9 a.m.-noon every Saturday from June through October at Icy Cup, 63 George St. W. Community members may also grow their own produce in a small plot next to the building.



For more information, call 651-451-1863 or visit www.sjvssp.org

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Nutrition Services - Prepare and serve breakfast and lunch for students. Starting base wage \$21.25/hr.

Custodian - Perform cleaning, event set-up/cleanup, and ensure safety of buildings. Full-time starting base wage \$23.31/hr. Part-time and seasonal starting base wage \$20/hr. (DOQ).

Kids Club Supervisor – Lead a school-age child care program in one of our elementary buildings and supervise paraprofessional staff. Full-time, 12-month. Starting base wage \$21.93/hr. (DOQ).

For more information and to apply: sowashco.org/careers

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South St. Paul



Kaposia Days committee adjusts parade route, seeks honorees

South St. Paul's Kaposia Days will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year, and to tie-in with the "five" theme the Kaposia Days Committee has decided to move a portion of the parade route from 7th Avenue to 5th Avenue. Except for adding two additional blocks on Southview, the route will otherwise be the same as years past. The parade will start at 6:30 p.m., Friday, June 27 at the intersection of 12th Avenue North and 3rd Street North and travel south on 12th Avenue North, then east on Southview Boulevard, then south on 5th Avenue South. The final block of the parade between 7th and 8th streets will be a designated Quiet Zone without sirens, music or other loud noises. For more information on the event, visit kaposiadays.org.

The Kaposia Days Committee is seeking nominations for Community Grand Marshal, Celebrity Grand Marshal and Legacy Award. The Community Grand Marshal award recognizes a South St. Paul community member, business, organization or student who has

made a positive impact on the community by demonstrating leadership, civic pride and support for others. The Celebrity Grand Marshal honors a South St. Paul community member who has made a significant contribution to the city, state or nation, and the Legacy Award recognizes a South St. Paul resident aged 55 or older who has contributed to the community through leadership, civic pride and support for others. Email your nominations to info@ kaposiadays.org.

Library

The following events are held at Kaposia Library, 115 7th Ave. N., South St Paul. For more information, visit www.co.dakota.mn.us/libraries or call 651-480-0900

Storytime for ages 2-6, 10:30-11 a.m. each Thursday in April. Includes books, songs and activities that help develop early literacy skills.

Storytime for babies, 10:30-11 a.m. each Friday in April.

Kaposia Book Club, 7-8 p.m., Monday, April 14. The title is "I Must Betray You" by Ruta Sepetys. For adults.

Marbled Clay Pendants and Mini Dishes, 3-6 p.m.,

Tuesday, April 1. Create unique art from marbled patterns and blends. Ages 12-18

Fix-it Clinic, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, April 26. Bring up to three small household electronics, clothing, jewelry or other items to get help repairing them. First come, first served. For adults.

Eco-friendly Organizing: How to Minimize Your Environmental Impact, 6:30-7:45 p.m., Wednesday, April 30. Learn five eco-friendly strategies when decluttering and getting organized. For adults.

Central Square

The following events are held at Central Square Community Center, 100 7th Ave. N., South St. Paul. For more information, visit communityed.sspps.org or call 651-306-3632.

Free Take & Bake Meals - Free meals (single serve or to feed a family of four) are available to all South St. Paul residents on Mondays after 3 p.m. through Saturday at 2 p.m., while supplies last.

The Fare For All food program offers affordable groceries and packages of produce and meat at up to 40% off retail prices. The

next date is 4-6 p.m., Tuesday, April 22. Credit, debit, EBT or cash payments only, no checks. For more information, visit fareforall.org.

Open swim, 12:30-3 p.m., March 27-28. All ages. Ages six and under must have an adult in the water with them. \$5 per person or \$15 per family.

Senior Center activities for ages 55 and older

Happy Feet Walk the Square, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m., second Tuesday of each month. Get some exercise by walking inside Central Square.

South St. Paul Buzz, 8:30-11 a.m., Monday-Friday. Conversation of what's happening around the community.

Cribbage, noon-2:30 p.m. each Monday.

Penny Bingo, 1-2:30 p.m. each Monday.

Woodcarvers Group, 9-11 a.m. each Tuesday. Bring your own tools and supplies.

Line Dancing, 10:30-11:30 a.m. each Tuesday. Dance to a variety of music genres.

Craft Day, 1-3 p.m. each Tuesday. Socialize with other crafters or learn a new hobby.

500 card games, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. each Wednesday

and Friday.

Hand and Foot card games, 1-2:30 p.m. each Thursday.

Free lap swimming for Senior Center members ages 65 and older 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; and 7:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Saturday. Senior center membership is \$12 a year.

Book donations needed

First Presbyterian Church in South St. Paul is accepting books for its annual book sale, held May 2-3. Donations may be dropped off at the church 535 20th Ave. N. (call for hours) or call 651-451-6223 to request pick-up.

Rummage sale

Luther Memorial Church, 315 5th Ave. N., South St. Paul, is hosting its annual rummage sale April 24-26. Hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday and 9 a.m.-noon Saturday. For more information, call 651-451-2400.

Plant sale

The South St. Paul Garden Club will hold its annual plant sale 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, May 17 at 1900 Burma Lane, South St. Paul. The sale features perennials,

heritage vegetables, herbs and garden accessories.

Meeting dates

The **South St. Paul City Council** meets at 7 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month in the council chambers at City Hall, 125 3rd Ave. N. For agendas and city council member contact information, visit southstpaul.org or call 651-554-3284.

The **Special School District 6 School Board** meets at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Monday of each month. For agendas and school board member contact information, visit sspps. org or call 651-457-9400.

The **South St. Paul Lions Club** meets at 7:15 p.m. the first and third Thursday of the month (September-May). Locations vary. For more information, visit ssplions.org.

South St. Paul Southwest Lioness Lions Club meets the second Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. at Fireside Lounge, 1288 S. Robert St., West St. Paul. This group of women serves the community through fundraising and volunteering.

Letter to the Editor

SSP School Board challenges the State's Compensatory Education Revenue formula

Editor's note: The South St. Paul School Board wishes the community to see the following letter it sent to Governor Tim Walz, the Senate Education Finance Committee and House Education Finance Committee. We agreed to publish it because it sheds light on a financial challenge facing Special District 6.

Thank you for your commitment to serving the people of Minnesota. We appreciate the bipartisan work that has made Minnesota an education leader and value our shared partnership to provide lifelong learning beginning from birth through grade school and graduation, in classrooms serving all the students in our community, and continuing through adulthood.

The Minnesota Department of Education's mission is to "ensure every child receives a quality education, no matter their race or zip code." In support of this goal, we commend the State for establishing Compensatory Education Revenue which provides financial assistance to school districts,

and promotes greater equity for students who need additional support. We also appreciate the inclusion of inflation adjustments in the General Education Revenue Funding Formula. These efforts reflect the State's commitment to our greatest resource - the People of Minnesota.

However, we are deeply concerned about the unintended consequences of changes to the qualifications for the Compensatory Education Revenue Formula, a critical funding mechanism designed to address the additional challenges faced by students living in poverty. As it stands, by underestimating poverty levels, the South St. Paul Public School District will lose \$1.5 million dollars which is equivalent to 15 full-time teachers or 30 education support professionals, who serve the same population of students. For a district our size, this is a significant setback for our students, staff and community while other schools would receive disproportionate windfalls.

The current projections

would actively harm our students and community by forcing us to reduce staff and eliminate programs that are foundational to our students' success. This funding is essential for academic interventions that help students develop the skills necessary to meet grade-level expectations and the systems of support that address our students' diverse needs.

This sudden cut would require us to release up to 30 staff members for the 2025-26 school year. With an already limited pool of qualified teachers and paraprofessionals, the stress of awaiting promised correction creates uncertainty for these employees and their families, undermining the trust in the education field.

trust in the education field. We ask you to continue your bipartisan commitment to supporting students around the state by correcting the Compensatory Education Revenue Formula and ensuring this funding stream is sustainable, equitable, and sufficient for the long term. We have spoken with our local officials, Rep. Rick Hansen and Sen. Matt Klein,

who fully support our desire to be made whole. Additionally, we have advocated at the capitol with MN School Board Association (MSBA), MN Association of School Administrators (MASA), Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD), and as individuals to draw attention to this issue. We have reached out to other districts, who are in some cases, facing even greater cuts to engage in united advocacy for our students.

We also ask our community to help amplify this message. Please listen to our collective voices and those of other districts around the state, as we urge you to promptly correct the unintended cuts that will directly harm students and staff. We understand each day brings new challenges as the federal government takes unpredictable actions that reverberate beyond our focus on education. The start of this legislative session has left many across the state feeling frustrated and confused by what can and will be accomplished. However, addressing Compensatory

Education Revenue offers an opportunity to shift the narrative, emphasizing common ground and fostering bipartisan support for the education of our students.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your dedication to serving the people of Minnesota. We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

With gratitude,

The South St. Paul Public School Board

Let Us Know

Have a news tip or idea for an article?
Contact Tim:
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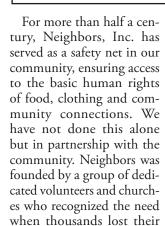






Neighbors, Inc.

Dawn Wambeke President & CEO



jobs as the stockyards began to decline due to changing market forces and the decentralization of the meatpacking industry. Since then, Neighbors' mission has been brought to life by thousands of dedicated volunteers and through community support of financial gifts, donated clothes and food. We are grateful that 50% of our funding is from community members, local businesses

and the faith community.

Today, the community stands ready to build on this beautiful foundation and launch Neighbors' next journey to ensure that all families have the opportunity for prosperity. I am excited to announce that Neighbors, Inc. was one of 28 organizations to be awarded the Transformative Career Pathways grant through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. This \$450,000 award will allow Neighbors to rapidly grow our Financial Empowerment Center and create even greater impact in our community. The Financial Empowerment Center will engage community members through integrated career training, employment and financial coaching. We

will focus on family-sustaining wages in a variety of high-demand fields such as manufacturing and trades, healthcare, the public sector and IT. Career training will be offered at community colleges and other training partners and will be available to help people in their educational endeavors, whether that is earning a certification needed in their current career or pursuing a new career.

Our dedicated team members are focused on wholistic support services to assist community members with transportation, technology, childcare and so much more. Financial education services will be offered long-term including credit building, decreasing debt and increasing assets.

Our approach is informed

through a social capital lens and leveraging the tremendous strength of the community. We are thrilled to launch a volunteer division within our new Financial Empowerment Center. We welcome community members and businesses to join us through mentoring as experts in their industry, resume reviews, mock interviews, researching employment opportunities and financial education classes. If you or your company are interested in volunteering, contact Jesse Osvold at jesse@neighborsmn.org.

I cannot overstate how exciting a time it is at Neighbors! We are here to disrupt poverty and help community members take steps toward building generational wealth. Ultimately,

it is about changing the lives of individuals and families, which strengthens the bedrock of the communities we are so honored to serve.

You might be asking yourself, "How can I help?" Consider becoming a volunteer. No amount of time is too short or too long and our self-scheduling makes things a breeze. Other ways you can help include referring people to our array of services (we do not have a geographic boundary) or connect us to great businesses. In addition, we are seeking professional attire donations for our thrift store. As always, you can reach me directly at dawn@ neighborsmn.org, 651-272-1135 or just stop on by.

Stay connected with Neighbors' latest updates at neighborsmn.org

POSTSCRIPT

What Peter does

"What is the cat doing?" I asked my husband, Peter.

"He's levitating," Peter said. Or at least I thought that's what he said.

"The cat is levitating?"
"Meditating!"
"Oh."

We have a lot of conversations like this and I suspect Peter and I are not alone. I was lying in bed later that evening, imagining our cat, Felix, floating over the nightstand, and the thing that struck me was that Peter would take it in stride.

Peter and I will celebrate our 10th anniversary this



Carrie Classon.com

week, which doesn't seem possible for two reasons. First, because it cannot be possible that 10 years have passed since we got married, and second, because it can-

not be possible there was ever a time I was not married to Peter.

In the past 10 years, I have learned that if the cat were to suddenly start levitating, Peter would not fly off the handle. He would do some quick research and determine how frequent cat levitation was and if there was cause for concern. Will the cat return to normal gravity in time? Will we need to keep him on a harness?

I'd still be watching Felix floating 3 feet off the night-stand and Peter would already have a plan of action in place in case we should need to fetch the cat off the ceiling or retrieve him as he started to float out the window. My beloved would know what

to do. This is what he does. It's not the only reason I love him but it is one of the reasons.

"Learned helplessness" is when a patient forgets how to make her own coffee (or buy it, for that matter), and everything required for her meal shows up, like magic, in the cupboard. That would be me. Peter occasionally expresses frustration if we run out of something, because he has a secret inventory system that I'm entirely oblivious to. If I start eating an inordinate amount of tuna or honey or potatoes, we will suddenly run low and Peter does not allow us to run low on anything.

Peter plans our travel and pays the bills. He knows

how I'm feeling before I do, which is handy because then I can just ask him.

"Why do I feel this way?" I'll ask.

"You've felt this way before," he'll remind me. "It will pass." And he's always right.

He does all these things because he cares for me. After 10 years I could easily take what he does for granted.

But I don't.

Because we weren't young when we married 10 years ago, and even then I knew that coffee does not appear by magic and the bathroom is not automatically filled with toilet paper. I knew that problems must be solved, that life would serve up an

increasing number of problems as we aged, and that having someone beside me to help solve those problems was a precious gift.

Peter often reminds me that we don't know if we will be given another day together or another 30 years. "But either way," he says, "it will be too short." And he is right.

But as long as we are together, I know he will be there to help figure out whatever comes our way. And so, no, I was not overly worried about the cat levitating yesterday. It would certainly be unusual, but it would be nothing that Peter couldn't handle.

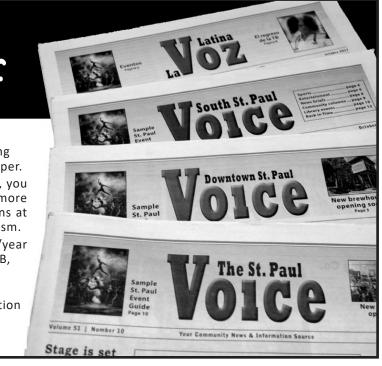
Till next time.

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Local libraries named best in Minnesota

Dakota County's 10-branch library system, which includes Wentworth Library in West St. Paul and the newly opened Kaposia Library in South St. Paul, continues to receive accolades and set records for visitor engagement. Recognized as Minnesota's best library system by Minnesota Star Tribune readers last year, Dakota County Libraries have also been honored with the county's prestigious HE-ROES Award. This recognition highlights the success of the innovative self-service hours program, which has significantly extended access to library resources without increasing costs for taxpayers.

Pioneering innovation and accessibility - Residents of Dakota County have long appreciated our exceptional library system, and now the entire state is taking notice. Voted the best in Minnesota by Minnesota Star Tribune readers, Dakota County Libraries continue to lead in



Joe Atkins
Dakota County Commissioner

innovation, accessibility and community engagement. With 10 branches serving the county, these libraries are more than just places to borrow books. They are thriving centers for learning, connection and opportunity. From record-breaking numbers of visits to the introduction of pioneering self-service programs, Dakota County Libraries are evolving to meet the changing needs of the community while remaining committed to their mission: providing free, accessible and enriching resources for all.

Expanding access with self-service hours - One of the most groundbreaking developments in the library

system is the introduction and expansion of self-service hours. Now available at all 10 Dakota County branches, this program allows registered users to access library spaces and materials daily from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., including holidays. This extended availability benefits students, small businesses and families by providing greater flexibility in accessing library resources.

The program received the Dakota County's HEROES Award, which recognizes outstanding collaborative efforts. Since its launch in 2023, over 5,000 customers have signed up, collectively logging more than 42,000 visits and 39,000 checkouts in 2024 alone. Community groups, scout troops and small businesses have taken advantage of extended meeting space availability, while individuals use the additional hours to study, work remotely and access digital resources. Safety remains a top priority, with all locations equipped with security cameras and strict adherence to library policies.

Registration is simple: watch a brief training video, agree to a waiver, and receive an access card. To learn more, visit www.dakotacounty. us/library and search "selfservice."

Wentworth Library: a new chapter for West St. Paul - Exciting changes are coming to Wentworth Library in West St. Paul. After 32 years, this beloved community resource is undergoing a major renovation to modernize its spaces, enhance technology, and create a more welcoming and functional environment. Key improvements include:

- Expanded meeting and study areas for collaboration and quiet work
- Dedicated spaces for children and teens, including interactive play areas
- For those who still prefer that old-fashioned library feel, a new quiet zone for reading and studying
- A calming room designed for individuals with sensory sensitivities
- Improved accessibility, updated technology and energy-efficient upgrades

During renovation, Wentworth Library will close for several months starting in the spring. Library services will be available at a temporary location on the second floor of the Dakota County Northern Service Center, 1 Mendota Road W., West St. Paul, where visitors can pick up holds, browse materials and use computers and

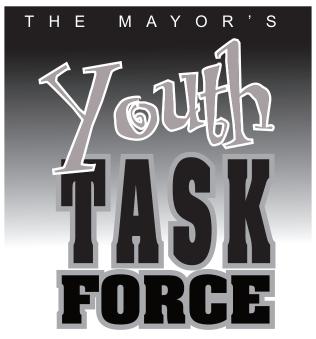
Libraries: more than just books - Today's libraries serve as vital community centers, offering far more than books. Dakota County Libraries provide:

- Free Wi-Fi, computer workstations and digital resources
- Classes on job skills, technology and language learning
- Makerspaces, podcasting studios and creative workshops
- Social and community events for all ages
- Study spaces, quiet zones and meeting rooms for businesses and organizations

The opening of Kaposia Library in early 2024 further demonstrates Dakota County's commitment to modern, innovative library services. Already a popular gathering place, Kaposia Library exemplifies the future of libraries – dynamic, welcoming, and adaptable to the needs of all residents.

A bright future for Dakota County Libraries -With record-setting visits, forward-thinking programs and major renovations ahead, Dakota County Libraries continue to play a vital role in the community. Whether you're stopping by to borrow a book, attend a career workshop or take advantage of self-service hours, these libraries are here to serve residents of all ages. For more information on upcoming projects and services, visit www. dakotacounty.us/library.

Joe Atkins represents District 2 on the Dakota County Board, which includes South St. Paul, West St. Paul, and Inver Grove Heights. He welcomes feedback. To share comments, concerns or questions, contact him at Joe. Atkins@co.dakota.mn.us or 651-438-4430.



Happy Earth Day Month! Since 1970, Earth Day has been a catalyst for ongoing action, education and change. This year, Earth Day will be celebrated around the world on Tuesday, April 22. It's an annual reminder to appreciate our connection to the Earth and to raise awarechallenges. Everyone young and old is invited to participate in community-wide projects such as environmental and neighborhood cleanups, and to spread the Earth Day message. Here are just a few ways you can get involved locally.

Attend the 3rd Annual South St. Paul Earth Day Environmental Expo host-

ed by the South St. Paul Sustainability Task Force. It will take place 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, April 26 at Central Square Community Center, 100 7th Ave. N. Here you can learn about everyday actions you can take to conserve energy, save money and benefit the community. This free family-friendly event includes environmentally friendly ideas and giveaways. New this year is a cookbook exchange. If you have cookbooks you no longer use, bring them to Central Square Community Center starting April 21. The cookbooks will be available to view and exchange at the expo.

South St. Paul Neighborhood Cleanup Packs

- Get the neighborhood kids together one evening and take a stroll around your neighborhood to pick up litter. The packs include bags, gloves, water and some goodies, and are available starting April 14. Adopt-a-Street Clean-ups bags are also available for school, church or youth groups to reserve.

Attend the **Spring Paper Shred Event** on Friday, April 11 from 9 a.m.-noon at the West St. Paul Sports Complex at 1650 Oakdale Ave. This free event is open to South St. Paul residents.

Do you have athletic gear you no longer use? Donate it to families in need served by the United Heroes League. A collection bin will be located at the Doug Woog Arena March 31-April 11.

The South St. Paul Mississippi River Beatification Project is scheduled to take place on Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22. Registration begins at 5 p.m. at the Spiral Bridge at Grand and Hardman. Gloves and bags will be provided.

There are many other things that you can do as a family throughout the year to support the environment, such as planting a tree in your yard, landscaping with wildflowers and native plants, and using a rain barrel for your garden and yard. For more ideas or

activities, watch the South St. Paul Parks, Recreation and Events Facebook page or contact Deb Griffith at community affairs at 651-554-3230 or Deb.griffith@southstpaul.org.







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First Presbyterian

535 20th Ave. N. 651-451-6223 fpcssp.org

Woodbury Lutheran Wakota Ridge Campus

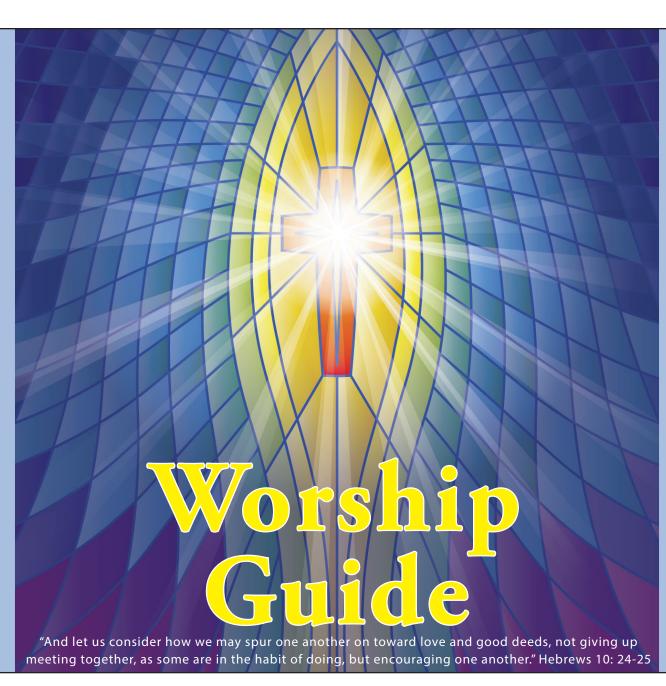
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South St. Paul Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist

140 6th Ave. N. 651-455-0777

Grace Lutheran Church

155 8th Ave. S. 651-451-1035 grace-ssp.org



Holy Trinity Catholic Church

Catholic church 749 6th Ave. S. 651-455-1302 holytrinitysspmn.org

Clark Grace United Church 779 15th Ave. N.

779 15th Ave. N. 651-451-7278 clarkgraceucc.org

St. Sava Serbian Orthodox church

357 2nd Ave. S. 651-451-0775 www.stsavamn.org

Saint John Vianney Catholic Church

789 17th Ave. N. 651-451-1863 info@sjvssp.org

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