

# MN Preservationist

The Magazine of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota

Issue 2, 2015





# Upcoming Events

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## September 12

Winterizing Windows (Fridley)

## September 16

Pub Night at Club Jager in Minneapolis!

## September 26

Repairing Old Windows (Albert Lea)

## September 26

Historic Irvine Park Walking Tour (Saint Paul)

## October 8

PAM Benefit Gala (St. Paul Athletic Club)

## October 22

Pub Night at 612 Brewery in NE Minneapolis!

Production of this issue of **The Minnesota Preservationist** was made possible through a generous grant from the



CARL AND VERNA SCHMIDT FOUNDATION

Rochester, Minnesota

## On The Cover

Ellie on Magelssen Bluff in Rushford, MN.  
Photo provided by Tyler Anderson.





#### Gala Sponsors:



Please join us for the **2015 Preservation Alliance Benefit Gala on Thursday, October 8th at the extraordinary St. Paul Athletic Club**. We're thrilled to host this event. Attending is a great way to support the programing and mission of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota and honor a number of exemplary individuals and projects from across the state through the Minnesota Preservation Awards. This year's event will be better than ever! The rarely seen and newly renovated St. Paul Athletic Club is the perfect site for a fantastic evening.

The night will feature great music from internationally acclaimed jazz singer **Lucia Newell** and singer/songwriter **Paul Seeba**, a reception, dinner, awards presentations, and, of course, a live auction full of amazing and nearby experiences.

Following the Gala, celebrate the incredible work of the award winners at the first ever **After Party** on the second floor mezzanine featuring delectable deserts from the renowned Le Cordon Bleu and enjoy some Preservation Punch! Tickets are selling fast so be sure to get yours!

We are premiering two new Minnesota Preservation Awards representing years of effort and contribution to preservation and the highest honors we can bestow, **the President's Award - awarded this year to Mr. John Herman**, a central figure in Minnesota real estate development for over 25 years and instrumental

in the development of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's most effective real estate tool, the investment partnership - and **the Executive Director's Award - awarded this year to Ms. Carolyn Sundquist**, the heart and soul of the preservation movement in Duluth and Minnesota and demonstrating the value of historic places such as the Duluth Armory and Granitoid streets to people living and working in her community.

For their projects of undeniable impact, quality and vision in the field of preservation:

#### **Honor Awards**

**Henderson School  
Mayowood Mansion  
Pioneer Endicott**

**"Last Call for the Mitchell Yards"**

**-WDSE (PBS North) Documentary**

#### **Impact Awards**

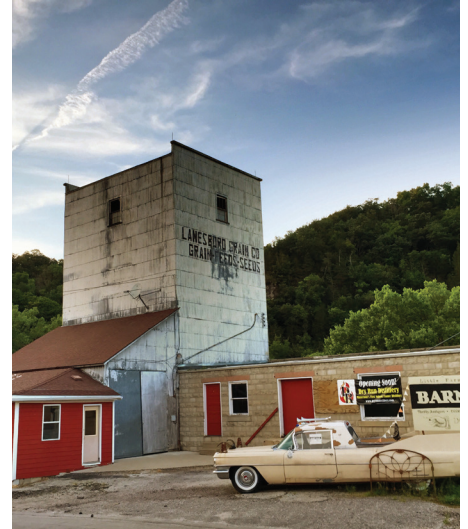
**Fort Snelling Upper Post Veterans Community  
Rayette Lofts  
Roosevelt Bridge  
Soo Line Building City Apartments**

To be a part of this fantastic evening and to celebrate the incredible work of the award winners get your tickets now! Visit [www.mnpreservation.org/the-preservation-alliance-benefit-gala/](http://www.mnpreservation.org/the-preservation-alliance-benefit-gala/) or give us a call at 651.293.9047 and ask for Denise or Todd.

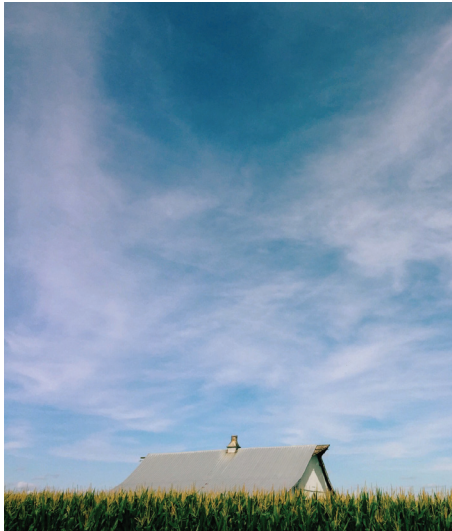


# A Photo Narrative: Bluff Country in SE MN

Tyler Anderson









# Inquiring minds want to know: who is Anne Ketz?

**Get to know PAM's newest staffer with a quick round of Q & A.**

PAM staff are thrilled to welcome a bright new addition into the fold. Anne Ketz, Real Estate Program Coordinator, joined the team in May, but has been a key part of our organization as a volunteer and intern since 2011. She's a great addition to our dedicated team. We hope you get to know her more in the coming years—but here's a starting place. Interviewer, Anne Ketz, President and CEO of the 106 Group, sat down recently and talked with Anne Ketz of PAM about her career to help PAM's members get to know her and clear up any name confusion.

**Anne K. Ketz (106 Group):** So why is Anne Ketz interviewing Anne Ketz?

**Anne M. Ketz (PAM):** Some of our readers and followers know you and I'm sure there has already been some confusion now that there are two Anne Ketz's in the Minnesota preservation community. To clear up the confusion for everyone, yes there is a relation, you're my aunt. For the record though, I was born before you were married, so I was Anne Ketz first :-)

**AKK:** What inspired you from a young age to be interested in historic preservation?

**AMK:** I was never one of those people who always knew what I wanted to do when I grew up, but honestly visiting the 106 Group's archaeology site at the current site of the Science Museum when I was 12 opened my eyes to that type of work. It was an influential experience—I remember I even shared it with my 6th grade Social Studies class back in Wisconsin. I've always loved studying history, but to see someone practicing it as a career gave me inspiration, although I didn't follow that inspiration into preservation until much later that experience has always stayed with me.

**AKK:** What is the most inspiring place you've visited and why?

**AMK:** Outside of the U.S., Ireland is the place that has inspired me the most—both for its natural beauty and its history. Seeing how well communities and places were preserved and reused really made me reflect on how we view our own heritage in the U.S. and the value we place on our own communities. Within the U.S., the place that inspired me the most was my grandparent's farm near Clayton, Wisconsin where I spent most of my childhood summers and holidays. The rooted family, community, history, and traditions of this 4-generation family farm taught me a lot about valuing place and stories.

**AKK:** It's been great to witness your career path. How did that path lead you here, today?

**AMK:** I worked for a construction company for many years in program management and project coordination and after more than 7 years in that industry, I was at a turning point in my life and career where if I was going to make a change it had to be now. At the time, I was a preservationist who still didn't really know I was a preservationist. A car

trip with my cousin around New England led me to reflect on my life and my passions and I began researching how to make a career in history and protecting special places. I found that preservation is a natural combination of my love of history, work experience, and values instilled in me during childhood. Soon after this decision I connected with PAM as a volunteer, an intern, and, following grad school in Maryland, now as staff. I'm thrilled to be back!

**AKK:** What do you like most about your role as Real Estate Program Coordinator?

**AMK:** I'm excited to be in a role where I can provide some real economic and financial solutions to the challenges of preservation. I also like that no two days are the same. There's a lot of variety both in the work and places I've been. Since early May, I've traveled to several places throughout the state, have seen some great sites and met a lot of inspiring people working hard in their communities to keep places that matter in use.

**AKK:** What do you hope to achieve with and for PAM in the next few years?

**AMK:** I want PAM to be a leader in the region—to help people who don't yet know they are preservationists (like I was), to know who PAM is without intentionally seeking out preservation organizations. I feel the real estate program is one of the best ways to do this as we work in communities where people can see the tangible results of preservation and reuse in practice.

**AKK:** In the spirit of a popular BBC radio show *Desert Island Discs*, if you were to be cast away alone on a desert island what is, 1) the one book 2) the one piece of music 3) the one movie you'd take with you?

**AMK:** I don't like picking favorites, there's just too many I love, but in the spirit of the question I suppose I would pick these:

1. Book: I'm a big fan of historical fiction—any book I can immerse myself in and lay on the beach. *Pillars of the Earth* is one favorite.

2. Music: One of my favorite artists for the last 10 years or so, is an Australian band—the John Butler Trio—folk rock genre, and a seriously talented guitar player.

3. Movie: I would have to choose the *Princess Bride*. I have a lot of love for this movie partly because we used to watch it all the time as kids on the farm, and also because it's ridiculously hilarious.







# Top 10 Cabins, Campgrounds, and Motels

As the summer travel season winds to an end, we thought this would be a good time to reflect on some of Minnesota's vacation spots. Here's a sampling of 10 of our state's top historic Cabins, Campgrounds, and Motels.



**The Maple Springs Campground** is nestled along the Forestville Creek in the beautiful Bluff Country of southern Minnesota near Preston. The site is a century farm featuring a historic barn and original farmhouse as well as 69 campsites, hiking trails, and easy access to trout fishing, nearby caves, and Historic Forestville.

*Photograph: Maple Springs Campground*



**The Big Winnie Store, RV Park & Campground** has been a Northern Minnesota landmark since 1932. Located along Hwy. 2 in Bena (just down the road from the Big Fish), the red, white, and blue paint scheme emphasizes the eye-catching details of the Bavarian-inspired architecture. The store, guest cottages, and gas pump canopy are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

*Photograph: Minnesota Historical Society*



**Taber's**, a 1930s cabin court in Bemidji only a few blocks from the lake, melds rustic Northwoods charm with automobile travel convenience. The one-room cabins feature original built-in rustic log furniture and cast-iron gas cooktops. Just as classic - the bait shop and neon sign out front.

*Photograph: PAM*



**Lamb's Resort** on Lake Superior is quintessentially North Shore, with 14 log cabins that date from the early 1920s and campsites along the rugged lakeshore or tucked among the trees. The nearby Schroeder Area Historical Society hosts an annual tour of vacation homes, including cabins designed by historic architect Edwin Lundie.

*Photograph: Lamb's Resort*



Established in 1906, this community of summer cottages occupies **Crane Island** in Lake Minnetonka, near Minnetrista. The founders, all members of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, would take the streetcar to Excelsior before ferrying out to the island - a typical journey for the growing number of middle-class vacationers at this popular destination. Fourteen of the island's cottages, built between 1906 and 1936, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

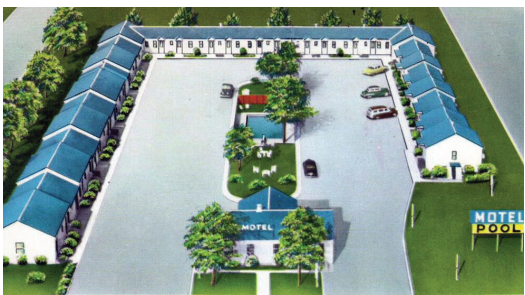
*Photograph: Minnesota Historical Society*





**The Chadwick Cottages**, tiny, 16 x 30-foot, mirror-image buildings, were built in 1902 on West Fourtieth Street in Minneapolis, halfway between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. Joined together to form one year-round residence in 1972, the Chadwick Cottages are listed in the National Register and are also designated Minneapolis landmarks.

*Photograph: Minnesota Historical Society*



Built as the **Miller Motel** along former U.S. Hwy 16 just outside of Austin, this U-shaped “motor inn” epitomized post-World War II automobile travel and tourist accommodations. Still in use as the Rodeway Inn along present-day I-90, the basic form and layout is evident despite the slightly remodeled exterior.

*Photograph: lakesandwoods.com*



The flat-roofed, L-shaped **Hilltop Motel** in International Falls, built in the 1950s, still beckons travelers and tourists to this city along the Canadian border. The log-cabin-meets-International-Style exterior is a woodsy interpretation of the early modern era.

*Photograph: Hilltop Motel*



In 1945, Ernie and Luella Pederson founded Ernie's Resort on Star Lake, about midway between Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls. Still going strong as the **Galaxy Resort**, this collection of 11 “modern” cabins retains the knotty pine interiors and lakefront way of life that brings vacationers back to the golden years of Minnesota's resort era.

*Photograph: Minnesota Historical Society*



This rustic, island cabin on Rainy Lake, within Voyageurs National Park, was built by Japanese immigrant photographer and poet **Jun Fujita** as a retreat from his busy career in Chicago. Fujita used the cabin, which he constructed from cedar poles in 1928, until the outbreak of World War II, when anti-Japanese sentiment curtailed his ability to travel freely. The cabin was listed in the National Register in 1996.

*Photograph: National Park Service*



*Bonus site:* Owned by the family of one of PAM's staff members, this salmon-pink cottage on Lake Osakis was built in 1902. Constructed of telephone poles, with a screened-in porch around the front and sides, it was much less noticeable in its early years, when it was known as the **Long Prairie Clubhouse** and rumored to be a summertime speakeasy during Prohibition.

*Photograph: PAM*

# ArtPlace Update: Experimenting and Creatively Activating

**Doug Gasek, Executive Director and Emily Northey, Minnesota Main Street Coordinator**

This April, PAM was selected as one of only three finalists in Minnesota for ArtPlace America's Community Development Investment program. The selected organization will work with ArtPlace over the next three years, learning and practicing how to permanently and sustainably integrate the arts into its work. Arts engage communities in a way that historic preservation has struggled. Arts bring to life the commercial district corridors that are coming into their own – adding an unrepeatable layer of unique experience for the visitor.

As representatives of a finalist, Executive Director Doug Gasek and Main Street Coordinator Emily Northey attended ArtPlace's annual conference to learn from their past grantees. What I (Emily) took away from attending the ArtPlace America Summit:

The greatest opportunity for our field, by embracing creative placemaking and involving arts early on, is to make not just the resulting project more interesting but to more deeply engage people in the community who usually don't show up to meetings.

"Arts as improving glue." I heard about a rural area experiencing high amounts of new residents unite both long-time residents and new through small, painted "fairy doors" on vacant buildings (Hazard, KY).

I learned of an organization teaching youth how to be arts entrepreneurs. Who were then hired to do outreach to the kids who hangout on Block E. The result? A vendor stand run by youth, giving other youth something safe to do downtown in the evening (and that doesn't creep out the adults who see them). (Juxtaposition Arts)

I took away a lot of questions, too.

Every time we speak, what do we talk about?

What are equity concerns and how will arts and culture (and community development) address it?

What collaborations are needed for success and how will we formalize them?

And finally, "Once you have this great story, tell it well and tell it over and over and over again. Telling

the story is part of the work. [We] all love the work and would do 95% of the time on the work. But we'd be better served by spending 70% on the work and the rest on messaging, communication, branding, and telling the story," Dennis Scholl retiring VP of the Knight Foundation.

There were also some concepts, such as taking preservation to the streets, youth engagement and creative ways to activate vacant spaces, which I (Doug) think we can start planning to implement soon. Public Workshop, housed in the Philadelphia based Department of Making + Doing, takes creativity to the streets and helps people reimagine public spaces in their community. Some of the reimagining is temporary while other is permanent, but both are uniquely engaging. During our visit, we broke into teams that used Build-It! Disks to







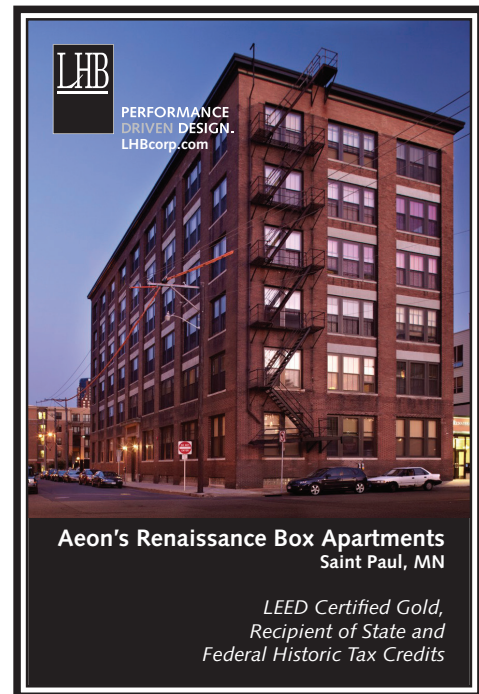
build towers in a park sandwiched between two office buildings. This created an environment where builders collaborated and communicated and onlookers stopped to take pictures, peered down from their office spaces and inquired about our projects. A fun building project brought strangers together and engaged onlookers in an underutilized public space in seconds.

Experimenting and creatively activating unused spaces helps inspire ideas that could result in the eventual reuse of the space. All too often in historic preservation, we are obsessed with the architecture and the preservation of that architecture, but we forget about the soul of the place, the real reason a building is important to a community. We need to do a better job of meeting people where they are at, rather than telling people about the ideals and purity of preservation. Working with the arts and artists, the soul of the building can be captured, through all types of arts from visual to performance and from traditional craft to culinary, and invigorate conversation about the potential future and ideal use of space for the people that live, work and play in the neighborhood.

Lastly and related to both items above, is youth engagement. To build a preservation movement, it is necessary to engage youth so preservation is instilled as a community value. There are so many organizations that do excellent youth engagement

work that we don't need to reinvent how to specialize in youth engagement, we just need to find the right partners to ensure that youth are exposed to values of historic places and community vitality.

We won't find out if PAM is ultimately selected for this \$3 million award until early fall, but based on what we learned at the Summit, we are committed to earnestly experimenting with what leveraging the arts could do for PAM's work and our partners' work. Come learn what works (and sometimes doesn't work) with us.



If you have an idea for an article let us know at [info@mnpreservation.org](mailto:info@mnpreservation.org).

# The Closing Letter to the Log Cabin Grill

LaRee Mitchell Ewers



*Heartbombing event from February 2015*



## **The Log Cabin Grill in Rochester, MN was heart bombed in February 2015**

This article shares family thoughts on this honor

### **The Closing Letter to the Log Cabin Grill**

**By LaRee Mitchell Ewers, daughter of the proprietors**

Dear Log Cabin Grill,

Your aging wood walls surrounded by closing-in trees and weeds reflect a soulful presence. Decades of the Mitchell family breathing purpose into your acreage imprints. Ghosts whisper of labors won, family raised, friends endeared and dreams fulfilled and dreams abandoned. Stories shared bring knowing smiles with the words, "I remember when ...". We love the slippage back into memories of better times.

It is a reciprocal agreement between the souls in the Mitchell family and your soulful presence. The sand sets into our shoes. The trees protect. The house warms. Your things give back to us. We are joined in a forever dance. It is sixty-eight years of partnership. Neither imagines life without the other. Yet here we are. It is time for the feet of the Mitchell family to surrender to the footsteps of others. It is time for a new vision for this acreage to flower.

Benj and I have wrestled with your future. Who would want your haggard outward appearance? Should we haul off your almost pristine 1950s circa stainless steel equipment to a recycling facility? Would someone relocate the interior to strong walls and a new roof to once again serve customers in food and friendship?

We did nothing as we could not part with you as the heart of this seven acres of land. And in our doing nothing the most wonderful honor dressed you in hearts of every size. You were selected as a property of interest by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. Old friends previously touched by the camaraderie, the Norwegian gas (coffee) and the sourdough pancakes cheered that a possibility of once again beamed. New friends began dreams of your future. Ideas were coming out of the box. What about this? What about that? Could there be more?

Benj and I are humbled with a closer look at the grill by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. This is a legacy item for our parents. We saw the working pair putting in the long hours to provide for us. But it is not the hard work that dominates our memories. It is walking into the grill and seeing familiar faces of joy. There is an animation of diverse



people finding the things that really matter in this journey of life. These “regulars” are our unofficial cousins, aunts and uncles. Benj and I were truly raised in a community.

You were a place where everyone knew everyone’s name. If not in the first step in, it was in the first step out. Our parents truly loved people. And their enthusiasm for others seeped into the food served. The “regulars” truly enjoyed the others sitting with them day after day and with elbow touching elbow.

As our mother’s body bowed with osteoporosis your structural bones also began to bend. Upkeep was overwhelming. And then her community stepped in. All the years of her welcoming smile were repaid in the sidewalks swept, the yard mowed, the repairs made, her vegetable garden planted, snow cleared and surprise dinners delivered. Truly a lesson for us that everything does come back around.

Saying goodbye is hard. The years of sweetness call for gratitude. The decaying boards and the overgrown woods show the time is now to die to function. Its brokenness cannot hide the beauty that still remains. It is time for resurrection of this much-loved land. It is a forever memory that resides safely within.

Thank you. Many curious passersby stepped under the smiley faces and found unexpected treasures. The sourdough pancakes might have been the initial draw of a diverse group, but it was the friendships that kept them coming back over the decades. A family of friends meets here.

The countertop is worn where the regulars shared the news of the day. Perhaps it was political or social or sports or weather or about a child’s achievement at school or the loss of a loved one. Each had a voice around this most unusual kitchen table.

Each visitor’s story flavored the ambiance that still lingers. I believe a place pulls into its wood a small part of each visitor. Sit long enough in the big booth and one will hear the whispers of shuffling cards, the yippee of cribbage victories and the clinking of cups with Norwegian Gas.

Now you sit in anticipation of what might be. What new stories are yet to be told? The Preservation Association of Minnesota may author the next chapters. There is hope.

Love and always with me,

LaRee



# Celebrating 40 Years of Hmong in Minnesota

**Natalie Heneghan, Program Assistant**

Ever thought of a soccer field as an historic site? Neither did I! That is, until I started to research Hmong history in the Twin Cities. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the first Hmong refugees arriving in Minnesota. Riding the wave of anniversary-related initiatives, PAM received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage grant last fall to gather resources on Hmong history and local historic sites.

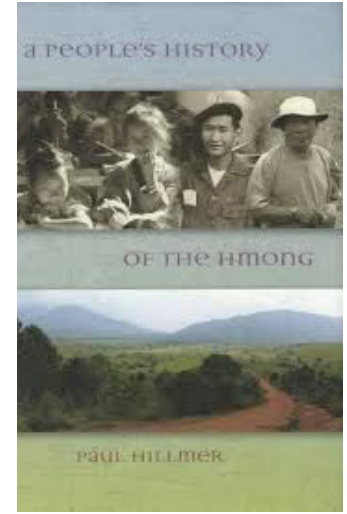
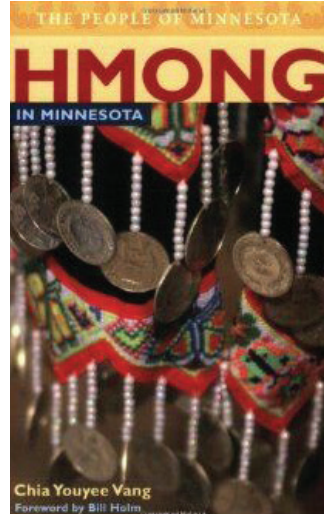
Many of the Hmong who fled war-torn Laos in the mid-1970s clustered here in Minnesota. Today, over 66,000 Hmong call Minnesota home, and the Twin Cities metro area has the highest concentration of Hmong anywhere in the U.S.\*

Compiling articles, books, essays, oral histories, and photographs is the first step of our project. Then I have to ask, what places are important to the Hmong community? What places tell their story and help us all understand this important piece of our recent history? I am no expert in Hmong history or culture, so I am looking to the Hmong community here for guidance.

Mai Vang is the Board Chair and Founder of the Hmong Museum Initiative, which plans to establish a Hmong Museum in the Twin Cities. Mai said in a recent email, “All history is intertwined and continuous. The Hmong Museum is important for this reason, by providing a piece of Hmong history that connects to the history of the wider audience. When we know ourselves and understand our neighbors, we are better citizens.”

So, what places help us better understand our Hmong neighbors? Liberty Plaza is one site that comes up repeatedly in discussions with Hmong community members. The housing complex near Arundel Street and Marshall Avenue in St. Paul is one of the first places Hmong settled in the Twin Cities and where the earliest Hmong organizations took root. Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc. began in Liberty Plaza to support Hmong refugees. The nonprofit occupies an office building on University Avenue, another space considered historic by members of the community.

The Hmong have added new layers of history to some of the oldest places in St. Paul, too. The annual Hmong Freedom Celebration, an event that draws as many as 30,000, takes place at Como Park. The festivities center around McMurray Field, where the weekend’s signature sports tournament plays out. This summer marked the 35th year of the celebration.



*Recommended books*



*Liberty Plaza*

Oakland Cemetery (founded in 1853) is another example. In between big Minnesota names like Ramsey and Sibley, you can see names like Vang, Moua, and Xiong. Tzianeng Vang, the interim director of Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc., told me that the “unofficial” reason so many Hmong choose to be buried at Oakland Cemetery is that it sits facing the State Capitol. According to the Hmong belief in feng shui, energy flow fosters prosperity in government and leadership.

\* For a concise but informative timeline of Hmong history, visit <http://www.mnhs.org/hmong>.



Earlier this year I connected with Noah Vang and Brian Horrigan, co-curators of the *We Are Hmong Minnesota* exhibit now on view at the Minnesota Historical Society. With many artifacts curated from local individuals, the exhibit marks a major step forward in sharing the stories of not just Hmong but all immigrant and underrepresented people in Minnesota. It has been overwhelmingly successful, particularly within the Hmong community. Opening Family Day on March 7 saw over 3,500 visitors, one of the highest single day attendance totals since the History Center opened 23 years ago. About 62% of attendees identified as Hmong-American.

Hmong history is Minnesota history. I see this project as one way we can help carry out Mai Vang's vision to become better, more informed citizens. We are excited to have support from Hmong community members and leaders, Hmong Studies scholars, and others who value Minnesota's historic resources. Look for our full list of Hmong historic places later this year.

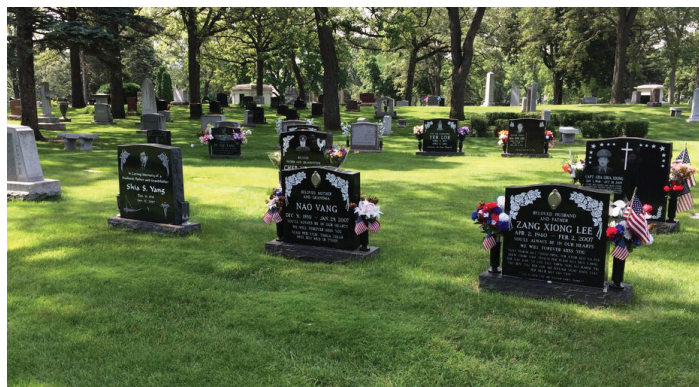
Interested in learning more? Here's what I've been reading:

*A People's History of the Hmong* by Paul Hillmer, 2010.

*Hmong in Minnesota* by Chia Youyee Vang, 2008.

*Hmong and American: From Refugees to Citizens* edited by Vincent K. Her and Mary Louis Buley-Meissner, 2012.

This program has been financed in part with funds by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.



**Oakland Cemetery (Photo courtesy of MNHS)**



**Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc.**



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# Board Focus: 10 Questions for Sarina

**Vanessa Matiski, PAM Board President**

I am pleased to introduce Sarina Otaibi, our newest member of the PAM Board of Directors. Sarina has a wealth of knowledge, experience and passion for preservation to bring to bear in her new Board position. As a resident of Granite Falls and a member of the Granite Falls City Council, Sarina brings the insights of living and working in a small community in greater Minnesota, an area of strategic focus for PAM. Enjoy reading Sarina's story of her beginnings in preservation and the enduring impact it has on her family and professional lives.



*Vanessa Matiski and her family*

**Vanessa Matiski:** What is it that draws you to preservation?

**Sarina Otaibi:** For me, it is all about the stories that are embedded in a place. Yes, it is nice to look at a well built structure and marvel at its architecture (I do a lot of that too!), but if you miss the layers of stories that come with that structure, then you may not be able to connect with it. I imagine the people and the activities that were happening in and around a particular place. Preservation provides a way for people to preserve their stories of the places that matter to them. Historic buildings also need to be able to change and adapt so that they are still needed and useful to the changing community outside its doors.

**VM:** Are you from MN originally?

**SO:** Not quite. My mother is from Granite Falls, MN, and my father is from Saudi Arabia. So I grew up in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain but spent my summers in Minnesota. At the age of 17, I moved to the U.S. on my own to graduate from high school and then go on to attend college in Florida and in the Washington, DC area. I moved back to Minnesota three and a half years ago. I feel very lucky to have experienced two very different worlds while growing up.

**VM:** Tell me what you love about Granite Falls?

**SO:** Where to start! I love its beautiful location in the Minnesota River Valley, its people, and its places, both the buildings and parks. There are many great groups working in Granite Falls to improve whatever challenge or opportunity they are passionate about. It is a great place to start projects and explore ideas because most people welcome them and the buildings are cheap.

**VM:** I hear you are on your City Council, what inspired you to want to get involved in your local government?

**SO:** Actually, historic preservation served as my initial interaction with the City Council on a few issues. No surprise there, I am sure. They were all related to the demolition of historic homes. Since the city was going through flood mitigation, it was either moving or demoing many historic homes and buildings. I ran to get a seat on the council for three reasons: (1) I was asked to run by residents; (2) I really wanted to understand what it was like to be a city council member and to learn how council members made decisions; and (3) I wanted to add diversity to the all white male city council. In my 3rd year as a council member, I can now say that I understand what it is like to be in this position, how I am influenced and why I think the way I do. I don't think people realize how much of an effect a city council really has on the residents of a community. It has really changed the way I view my work.

**VM:** There's a big difference between the thought of starting a project and actually committing, diving in and completing one. What attracts you to a project? Tell me about some of your projects.

Yes, I would have to agree! As I get older and hopefully wiser, I am beginning to better understand which projects I can handle and which ones I cannot. I started working on preservation related projects when I was sixteen. The first one was on an octagon house my parents purchased in Granite Falls. It was my first experience working on a historic building and when I began to realize my passion for the historic preservation field before I even knew it was a field. While I attended undergraduate school in Florida, I spent my summers saving and moving a house in Granite Falls that was designated as a national register of historic places from demolition. This also served as my first interaction with the Granite Falls City Council. I



decided to sell the house to move to the DC area to work on my master's degree in Historic Preservation.

**VM: What are you working on now?**

I am now working on two main projects. The first project is very special for me, the repurposing of a church that was built in 1882. It is the church that my great grandmother attended, so I probably will not be able to let it go! There are so many stories that live within its walls. I feel a responsibility to its community to preserve it. It is not uncommon for people to stop by and tell me their story of the old church. House concerts, music recordings, and play rehearsals offer opportunities for people in the community to still access the building a few times a year. The second project is starting a cooperative brewery, Bluenose Gopher Brewery, in downtown Granite Falls. I have always thought that Granite Falls was the place to open up a brewery because of its prohibition history and its location on the Minnesota River. Somehow, I convinced a few of my friends to join me and we turned it into a cooperative. This area has a rich cooperative history as well. If all goes according to plan, the brewery is expected to be open by next year.

**VM: What attracted you to the idea of joining the PAM Board?**

I am able to fulfill my passion for preservation and work on preservation issues that exist in rural southwest Minnesota. I am very excited about PAM's direction of expanding its work to greater Minnesota. There are a lot of opportunities for PAM to engage with people living in small, rural cities

**VM: What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing preservation in greater Minnesota?**

One challenge in small cities is the low property value in their historic downtowns. A person purchasing a building for \$20,000 in need of rehabilitation will not see any increase in value. The building will still only sell for \$20,000. Another challenge I have witnessed in some small towns is having investors from outside the community buy up cheap property off of websites, like Ebay, site unseen. They often either let it sit there to further deteriorate or abandon the property all together. People in greater Minnesota want to see their places preserved, but with the lack of capacity and funds to do so, many cities decide it is easier to just demolish the problem.

**VM: What projects or individuals do you consider to be most inspirational?**

Okay, I'm going to be that girl and say that my mother, Mary Gillespie, is an individual that I believe to be most inspirational to me. When I think back to all of the crazy projects I have taken on throughout my life so far, she was always the one there to say, "Yes, just go for it! Why not." When I moved back home to Granite Falls, she was saving a historic downtown building from demolition in one group, preserving and managing a National Historic Landmark in another group, and purchasing an old vacant church (the very one I now own) all while working on her own historic

octagon home! As you can see, it was not hard for me to hit the ground running on the first day I drove in to Granite Falls with my U-Haul. We basically worked together on all projects related to Granite Falls. She is now the Chamber of Commerce Director, so we are both making our marks on the city.

**VM: Can you share a few favorite spots in MN and what you love about them?**

That is a tough question. If I have to pick one of the many beautiful state, county, and city parks that are located nearby, I'd have to choose Upper Sioux Agency State Park, a park embedded with history. Another favorite spot for me would have to be downtown Granite Falls. I love biking and walking around its small downtown during the summer when the pelicans are hanging out by the dam, the famous popcorn stand is open for the season, and the historic footbridge is busy with people walking across to get a better view of the Minnesota River.





# Faces and Places





# The Last Word

## A Note from Executive Director Doug Gasek

It is never too early to start teaching preservation lessons to youth, and especially to the kids living in our homes. Over the last two years, there have been two big events that my three year old remembers clearly and will often bring up in conversation when buildings are discussed. The first was the implosion of Island Station that is located not too far from our house. On a Saturday morning the explosion went off and shook our house. We didn't know it was coming and it startled our youngster. He ran to us asking what happened. Honestly, it felt like an earthquake, but when I looked out the window, I realized that Island Station was no longer. I explained to our son, that some people were throwing the building away. His response was, "We recycle." What a proud moment.

More recently we were riding on the bus in the morning during the demolition of Seven Corners Hardware store. As we approached, Marcin yelled, "Who broke that building?" I told him that I wasn't sure. Being older and learning many more preservation lessons, he responded with "We don't break buildings, we fix things." Exactly.

I'm sure he picked up tons of information about preservation through the many conversations that I have at home and with friends, colleagues, and family. I'm also sure that it is through the intentional lessons that we teach. Two of the big rules in our house is to respect the environment and respect this place. That is why we recycle and we fix things. It could also be through my favorite kids stories that we read over and over again in our house. *The Little House* and *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* are great stories that highlight that old houses and machines still have value. He also cannot get enough of *How a House is Built*. He loves pulling out his hammer and tape measure to figure out how he can fix things around the house with his book under his arm.

Now, how do we keep this positive momentum going for kids that are preservation leaning? We've been noodling around with this concept around the office to hopefully develop new ideas that can be implemented. Some ideas that have surfaced include youth-based tactical urbanism, a hands-on preservation fair, kids creating interior spaces, and intergenerational story telling with youth and community elders are just some of the ideas that we have been considering. We would love to hear some of your ideas too! The more ways that we can incorporate youth into the preservation and hearing where they are currently at will be important to make preservation into a value, not just a movement.

People are always surrounded by historic places and oftentimes, that history and character is underappreciated. Old places often serve as the backdrops and locations of important events in our lives as well as our daily activities. In the PAM office, we've been working hard to capture our lives and the buildings that serve as the backdrops to those activities through photography and film. We would love to see how you and your family, furry friends included, interact with the buildings in your life. Make sure to have your camera ready this and take as many photos as possible and then please share them with us on our Facebook page. We would love to include them in upcoming issues of our magazine the in the face & places section.



Doug Gasek, Executive Director



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