



NEW PRAGUE POPS POST

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“It’s (the) Time!” of the Season...

By Den Gardner, Chair, POPS Committee

Editor’s Note: “It’s Time!” is a monthly column by Den Gardner, chair of the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) Committee of the Forward New Prague Foundation. If you can read, we ask you to read it at your leisure! If you missed reading class in elementary school, an audio version may be available in the next three years. (OK, just kidding.) If you want any information about POPS, go to www.nppops.org. Or call me: 612/325-3981 or email me at dengardner@gandgcomm.com

The hit song in early 1969 by The Zombies – Time of the Season – will always have a special place/memory for me from my high school days as a senior. Maybe some of you baby boomers remember that song and some of the “fun” lyrics:

***What’s your name? (What’s your name?)
Who’s your daddy? (Who’s your daddy?)
(He rich) is he rich like me?
Has he taken (has he taken)
Any time (any time)
(To show) to show you what you need to live?***

The special place/memory for me is one night after dinner with my family at the tender age of 17. I’m drying dishes with brother Dan (who’s washing), including a glass milk bottle. I dropped it while drying it (around the sink) And the sink was porcelain, like most were back in 1969. The glass shattered into a hundred pieces and basically cut my small finger almost off my right hand. Yep-- pretty gross!



So, I wrapped a towel around it and mom quickly drove me to Dr. Pierre Guilfoyle's office in rural downtown Delano (a thriving community of about 1,200 people). Many stitches later, I was out of commission for basketball and band for two weeks. Couldn't hold my trumpet and, worse yet, couldn't dribble or shoot a basketball.

So, what does that have to do with The Zombies and Time of the Season? Well... That is the song I remember listening to on my car radio driving around after school feeling sorry for myself that I could only

watch band and basketball practice for two weeks while I healed. It was certainly a time of the season for me to reflect on my life as a teenager playing music and sports.

But now, back to the Zombies and those lyrics (actually just one verse):

*To take you in the sun (to promised lands),
To show you everyone,
It's the time of the season for loving*

As I'm wont to do on many occasions, I like to do a parody of lyrics and this one was right in my wheelhouse when it comes to POPS and fundraising. So, let's try this on for size (I only changed ONE word on one line!):

It's the time of the season for giving.

Not that there's anything wrong with loving. In fact, it's the time of the season for "loving" to give to POPS through the Forward New Prague Foundation.

We're now 18 months into our season of raising money for POPS, and we've got three-year pledges of about \$840,000, along with some pro bono services being offered of between \$25,000-\$50,000 (e.g., excavating, lighting, landscaping, etc.) WOW! This is all tremendous. But...

We're not to \$1 million yet in cash pledges. We have received donations (from buying a POPS t-shirt to a car raffle ticket last year to a silent auction item to giving five and six-figure cash donations) from hundreds of people. **I'll never stop saying "Thank you!"**

But we're not at the finish line. Imagine if we can find five businesses/families/individuals to provide a \$25,000 to \$50,000 donation? Or 20 wonderful people to give \$10,000 each. And you've got until the end of 2025 to provide that donation!

Can it be done? Well, I'd say yes! One should always keep in mind that: **"Don't ever let the pressure exceed the pleasure of reaching the goal."** The pleasure of watching the New Prague community step up and get us to \$840,000 in pledges has been immeasurable. The generosity has been overwhelming. Pressure? What pressure!

So, on behalf of all of the POPS Committee, we ask you to step up and get us over the top! It's the "time of the season." Every dollar matters. "It's Time!"



Fundraising Begins Critical Time Period for 2024

The POPS (Praha Outdoor Performance Stage) Fundraising Sub-Committee has reached about \$840,000 in three-year pledges and between \$25,000-\$50,000 in potential pro bono services as late spring arrives. Our NEW goal by the end of 2024 is the full \$1 million in pledges. We say thanks to everyone who has contributed.

As noted throughout the past several months, we are approaching our fundraising in 2024 from three areas:

- **Normal Contribution Program.** To continue our solicitation process to individuals, families, community service organizations, businesses, and others in the New Prague area to secure donations. Whether it's the "100 for \$100K" program (\$1,000 over three years to reach \$100,000 in total donations), buying a t-shirt or making a large donation through one of our giving levels in our formal fundraising plan, it all adds up. When you include donations, raffle ticket purchases for the SUV last year donated by Palmer and Susan Welcome, and the silent auction, hundreds of separate donations have been secured and we look forward to many more contributors in 2024.

- **POPS Gala II.** Ticket sales are live for POPS Gala II on Friday, Oct. 4, 5-9 p.m. at the Park Ballroom. "Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange" will perform a concert/dance. From 5-6 p.m., the Tim Chlan Band will play. The silent auction also will be held at this time. POPS Gala I raised nearly \$20,000 for POPS! We say thanks and we hope POPS Gala II will be just as successful. Thanks to the Park Ballroom for donating the space again for our event. For ticket information, go online to www.nppops.org and order them today! Some printed tickets are available at the New Prague Chamber of Commerce office and the New Prague Community Education office.

- **Special Fundraising Opportunities.** We are always looking for additional avenues for funding for POPS. In 2024, those will include:

- Bourbon at the Broz. This special event is coming up on June 1, 1-4 p.m., at The Broz, will feature bourbon tasting, appetizers from 13-19 Woodfire Tavern, cigars, music and much more. A portion of the net proceeds will be given to POPS. We thank Mark Braaten, publisher of New Prague Neighbors magazine/Best Version Media Publications, and 13/19 Woodfire and his committee for developing this event and assisting POPS. For ticket information, go to: www.1319tavern.com/bourbon-at-the-broz. Contact Mark at 952-239-0034 for more information.

- Our silent auction will return at POPS Gala II Oct. 4. Thanks to all the businesses in New Prague and elsewhere that stepped up and to Shannon Allen (Shannon Allen Design) and Mark Braaten (New Prague Neighbors magazine/Best Version Media Publications) for chairing the auction again. We are hopeful about exceeding last year's total of almost \$6,500.

- If you have a special event or fundraising idea, please let us know. We'd be glad to explore it with you.

The fundraising committee is Shannon Brusseau, Tom Vanasek & Den Gardner. Contact Den when you'd like to contribute – 612/325-3981 or dengardner@gandgcomm.com. "It's Time!"

<http://www.1319tavern.com/bourbon-at-the-broz>

13/19 WOODFIRE TAVERN Presents: **BOURBON at the BROZ**

- Bourbon/Whiskey Tasting
- 1319 Tavern Appetizers
- Cigars
- Music

Supporting Local Non-Profits: all proceeds go to:

POPS **MIDWEST**

JUNE 1ST 1-4PM
Sample more than 25+ Bourbon & Whiskeys
Held at the Historic "The Broz" Hotel

\$50 GENERAL ADMISSION **\$100** EARLY ACCESS VIP TICKETS

Cigar Lounge
Sponsored by: **LUXROOMS**

Location Feasibility/Design – Next Steps Underway

By Steve Frost

Sub-Committee Chair

When Bolton & Menk’s feasibility studies were completed, three sites—the Sliding Hill, Memorial Park, and City Center—were presented to the Park Board and, ultimately, the City Council for next steps. After much consideration and discussion, City Center has been chosen as the “preferred site” on which our POPS will live. A huge thank you goes out to the Park Board for approving \$5,000 for part of the feasibility studies of sites.

Now, with City Center in our sights, we are fine-tuning potential ideas regarding amenities and features that we’d like the structure to have—to meet the needs of the community and groups that will use it.

We have received survey results from Rosemount, Eden Prairie, Hudson, Buffalo, and Fort Myers regarding the specifics of their outdoor performance venues, and we’ll consider those details as we start to think about designing our structure.

Our committee and others have been working closely with the City on this. POPS leadership and the City will create a committee to begin meeting this summer regarding location and design ideas.

In addition, the City has been working with a planner to work on developing sketches of the City Center area. (One of the many ideas up for consideration is a small building for public meetings and restrooms at the City Center site!) The planner’s sketches were expected to be presented to the City Council in early May, and the City Council scheduled a public viewing of the plans for the City Center site on May 8 at The Broz. (See below)

City Holds Open House to Discuss City Center Small Area Plan

The City of New Prague staff held an open house on Wednesday, May 8, to show preliminary plans for redeveloping the former Creamery site (now known as the City Center site). The POPS building project is a prominent part of that. Attendees learned more about the small area plan through multiple interactive stations, reviewed draft site plans and discussed those plans with city staff and the project team hired by the city to develop it.

“It was a great chance to learn more about how POPS fits into this plan,” said Den Gardner, POPS chair. “The city and our POPS Committee continue to collaborate to move forward in an expeditious manner to get POPS built.” More details are coming over the next few months from the city on final plans for the area. The POPS Committee hopes to begin construction next spring.



Chris Janson, left, of MSA, the firm hired by the city of New Prague to work on concepts for the City Center site, visits with POPS Committee members Steve Frost, center, and Den Gardner, right, at the Open House Wednesday, May 8.



POPS Committee members discuss the City Center small area plan with other attendees Wednesday, May 8, at The Broz. The Open House by the city intended to inform attendees about plans to redevelop the area, the former Creamery site.

Kyra Chapman, New Prague City Planner, left, learns from POPS Committee Chair Den Gardner just how hi the committee is dreaming to build the structure as soon as the spring of 2025. Several POPS Committee members attended, along with dozens of community members.



The POPS Leadership Team is working tirelessly for the New Prague community to raise money needed to build the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) facility. Thanks to its members:

- Den Gardner, Chair
- Karen Steinhoff, Vice-Chair
- Bruce, Wolf, Treasurer
- Sandi Loxton, Secretary
- Shannon Allen
- Joe Barten
- Andy Beckius
- Lisa Brusseau
- Shannon Brusseau
- Tony Buthe
- Dr. Jon Colling
- Gina Fadden
- Steve Frost
- Pastor Ben Hilding
- Larry Pint
- Eddie Shimota
- Brooke Sticha



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