



Hiawatha Academies' five-school strategy moves forward

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St. Albert's Lenten Fish Dinners draw a hungry, happy crowd

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Blue Tree Music mingles education, playfulness and fun

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What has Andrew Johnson been up to in his first term?

Ward 12 Council Member Johnson praised for commitment to constituents and ability to work with everyone

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Ward 12's City Council member Andrew Johnson is a self-described ideas person.

"How can we be innovative and get better outcomes?" he asks.

As he begins his third year in office, Johnson continues to put constituent service first.

"Andrew's greatest strengths are that he is incredibly smart, focused and accessible. He cares deeply for the community and does not shy away from any issue," said Longfellow Community Council (LCC) Executive Director Melanie Majors.

She pointed out that he is a huge proponent of development, transportation (including bike lanes, light rail, bus rapid transit), public safety, business support and development and community engagement.

"He does not believe in the status quo and seems to be able to find a solution or a compromise to everything," said Majors.

"He truly walks the walk and is committed to his constituents. I've never met anyone who has complained about him, and he can work with anyone."

A proactive life

The son of a single mother, Johnson grew up working hard. As a 10-year-old, he mowed lawns to pay for his clothes. As he got older, he bagged groceries at the Lund's on 50th and France, working eight-hour long shifts starting at 7am. Interested in IT, he used the money to buy his first computer and ordered Comcast high-speed internet at age 14. Johnson's interest in



computers landed him a job in the IT department at Target corporate, and he ran his own business on the side.

He earned his associates degree in communications from Normandale Community College and then headed to the University of Minnesota to study political science. Johnson didn't envision being elected to public office himself but instead thought he'd be working behind the scenes somewhere.

In 2010, he purchased a home in Longfellow. By happenstance, he attended a Longfellow Community Council annual meeting. When Johnson walked out the doors after the pie social, he was a brand new board member. After his first term, he was elected the LCC Board president.

On the LCC board, he stressed transparency, helped redo the neighborhood organization's web-

site and worked on marketing. Johnson found he enjoyed helping navigate through the various

Ward 12 Council Members Andrew Johnson chats with former staff member Ilhan Omar (left) and Longfellow resident Jeanne Burns during a visit to Firetoast Café. Johnson holds regular open office hours and attends most neighborhood association and community meetings. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

conflicts that arose between board members, and he appreciated community engagement.

Johnson began actively working to fill the vacancies on Lake St., networking with people and inviting potential business owners to come out to look at the vacant buildings and get to know the spaces. He was excited to see spots filled, first by the Longfellow Mar-

ket, and then Sonora Grill, Pepper and Fries and more.

He also connected LCC with the Minnesota Beer Activists, which resulted in the first Community Hops Garden in Minnesota, located at 3116 38th St.

Johnson is driven by this question: "How do we make our community a better place—and proactively do that, not just sit and wait until someone comes along?"

After battling glaucoma, Johnson realized that life is not guaranteed, and you should make the most of every minute. He finds more fulfillment in public service than in private sector work.

So, he decided to enter the political arena and run against Sandy Colvin Roy. He was elected to the

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South High VOICES Documentary Film Fest

High school course focuses on using digital media toward collaboration and social justice

Article and photos
by MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

More than a dozen aspiring filmmakers filled the lobby of the Riverview Theatre one late afternoon in early February. The South High School students were there for the release of nine films they had teamed up to make as their final VOICES project: an inter-disciplinary Social Studies and English course taught by Laura Lanik and Delainia Haug.

Students take this class in their senior year, and it meets daily for 1½ hours. They learn to find their voices on social justice issues and use digital media to share what they've learned.

The course has been offered at South for 25+ years. It builds on a teaching method where skills are "scaffolded," according to English teacher Delainia Haug. "The first assignment is to write a paper called, 'What I Believe,'" Haug said. "Each student learns digital photography skills, and creates images that support the values of their paper."

The next step is to record a podcast on a subject that they care about. "What's compelling," Social Studies teacher

Continued on page 2



The filmmakers outside the Riverview Theatre before their documentaries were screened. The Riverview has donated space for the VOICES Film Fest for the last four years. VOICES stands for values, options, issues, choices, explored in society.



After the 2013 storm, this group spent over 5 hours in terrible heat clearing trees for homeowners, with a focus on low-income and seniors. Council member Andrew Johnson is third from the right. (Photo submitted)

South High VOICES

Continued from page 1

Laura Lanik added, "is that the photo project is visual, and the podcast is audio, so students have to figure out how those media are different persuasively."

The final project is the big one—the production of a ten-minute documentary film. This requires learning to collaborate with a team of 2-3 others to choose a topic, research, interview, write and edit the finished film in only eight weeks.

Local film artist John Akre is an essential part of the teaching team. He's been involved in teaching VOICES students for more than 20 years, and believes in the value of empowering youth to create media and explore social issues.

The students chose a wide range of topics as subjects for their films. Jenesis Fonder, whose mother is full Ojibwe, worked with three other young women to create a film called "Stolen Sisters." It looked unflinchingly at the connection between culture, exploitation and sex trafficking of Native American women.

Rilet Weston and three other students made a film called "Black: the End of the Achievement Gap." They visited classes designated only for Black male students at South, North and Edison High Schools, where the emphasis is on closing the achievement gap. "The Minneapolis Public Schools don't have enough teachers of color," Weston said, "I learned through making this



Delainia Haug (left) and Laura Lanik (right) have co-taught VOICES for three years. They believe that making the films is a great learning opportunity because every student has to ask themselves, "What is it that I'm passionate about?"

film that we need a whole lot more diversity in our schools on the teaching side of things."

The film "Painting is to Easel" looked at the problem of cultural bias embedded in standardized testing. Sam Stroup, one of five team members, said, "It made me look hard at the inequities in our educational system. The film showed interviews with University of Minnesota faculty candidly discussing the cultural limits of standardized testing. The title refers to the part of a standardized test that questions relationships between objects. The point being that if in your culture of upbringing, you don't use a particular object—how can you be expected to know what it is?"

The other films were: "Coming to America"; "The South High Newcomers Program"; "Our Streets: One Woman's Story of Breaking Free"; "Dress Coded"; "Music Matters"; "Can-Do Canines" and a tenth film that wasn't quite finished in time by Hamdi Mohammed and friends.

Mohammed explained their film, saying, "We wanted to give a voice to Muslim girls in Minneapolis who had faced discrimination in sports because of wearing their head scarves. We spent time at the Brian Coyle Center on the West Bank. They have Open Gym there twice a week specifically for girls, where they can wear their head scarves and play sports freely."

The only limitation of the VOICES class is that there are just ten cameras and, in a way, even that turns out to be a positive. "Students get to know each other well in this kind of collaboration, sharing the cameras and all of the responsibilities that go into making a film," Haug and Lankin agreed.

Check It Out - News from East Lake Library

Teen Geekery, book clubs, and Writers Workshop planned for March

The Adult Nonfiction Book Club will meet on Tues., Mar. 1, 6:30-7:30pm to discuss "David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants" by Malcolm Gladwell. Lending copies may be picked up at the information desk before the meeting.

Childcare Group Storytime meets the first Wednesday of the month (Mar. 2) at 10:15am. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format appropriate for the children in your care. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.

The Biography Adult Book Club will meet Wed., Mar. 2, 10:30-11:30am to discuss "A Singular Woman: The Untold Story of Barack Obama's Mother" by Janny Scott. Lending copies may be picked up at the information desk prior to the meeting.

Teen Geekery Club meets Thur., Mar. 3, 6-8pm. Are you an anime and manga fan? A cosplayer? A fan of Doctor Who, Sherlock, Homestuck or Supernatural? If yes to any of these, Teen Geekery Club is for you! Watch anime, share your artwork and discuss your favorite fandoms.

The Adult Book Club meets Fri., Mar. 11, 10:30-11:30am to discuss "Windigo Island" by William Kent Krueger. Lending copies may be picked up at the information desk before the meeting.

The East Lake Library Writers' Workshop will be held Sat., Mar. 12, 1-2:30pm. Share your stories, exchange advice, and support others in the creative process with the guidance and support of more experienced writers.

The Quick Reads Adult Book Club meets Mon., Mar. 14, 6:30-7:30pm to discuss "The House on Mango Street" by Sandra Cisneros. Lending copies may be picked up at the information desk prior to the meeting.

The Friends of the East Lake Library are sponsoring "Social Justice: Art and Activism" on Tue., Mar. 15, 6:30-7:30pm. Explore the use of art in local activism, as well as how art in protest has changed over time, in this first of a three-part Social Justice series

featuring local artists and activists.

Ongoing programs at the library include:

—Conversation Circles, Sundays, Mar. 6, 13, and 20, from 3-5pm. Non-native English speakers: practice English and make new friends in an informal, volunteer-led setting, and learn about the library, too.

—Family Storytime, Fridays, 10:15am. For children of all ages and their parent or care-

giver. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format appropriate for young children. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement. —Baby Storytime, Fridays, 11:15am. For children from birth to 24 months and their parent or caregiver. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format designed especially for babies. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.



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Now it's easier than ever to keep in touch with the Messenger. Letters to the editor and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail at editorial@deruyternelson.com. Be sure to send copy in the body of the e-mail, and please mark whether the copy is a letter, a news release for publication, or perhaps just your thoughts on the last issue. Don't forget to write!

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Transition Longfellow

By LESLIE MACKENZIE

Neighborhood sustainability and resiliency is group goal

Transition Longfellow is a neighborhood sustainability group that has been offering activities in greater Longfellow for five years. Have you wondered why it's called Transition? How it's connected to the global Transition Town movement? Who is involved and how you can make your community a more sustainable, resilient place?

This month's movie night, on Fri., Mar. 18, will feature "In Transition 2.0," which shares inspiring, real-life stories of ordinary citizens around the world working together to address challenges faced by their communities—costly energy, financial instability, and a changing climate. Twin Cities Transition participants will share their stories of why they were interested in participating in the Transition movement and how you can get involved. Come for the potluck at 6:30pm (vegetarian options always available), and stay for the movie/discussion at 7:15pm at Bethany Lutheran, 3901 36th Ave. S. Free will donation is accepted.

Other March activities are listed below. Visit the group's website for more information: www.transitionlongfellow.org.

For more info, call 612-724-4265.

Learn to Knit, (1st Tuesday) Mar. 1, 6:30pm at Lake Coffee House (33rd and Lake St.). New and experienced knitters gather to learn and practice knitting. Led by experienced knitter Susan Aguirre. Bring needles and yarn. Free.

Using Permaculture Principles in Garden Planning (1st Saturday), Mar. 5, 10:30am-noon, at Riverview Wine Bar, 3747 42nd Ave. S. (enter through the coffee shop). Join master gardeners Leslie MacKenzie and/or Teresa Rooney every first Saturday for garden tips. Topics change throughout the year, but they will always answer questions. Free.

Winter Seed Sowing, Sun., Mar. 6, 1-2:30 pm, at Bethany Lutheran 3901 36th Ave. S. Bring the kids and get your hands in the soil to plant cool-weather veggie seeds in gallon milk jugs. Take home your jugs and set them outside to await spring and baby plants. Free.

Inner Transition Discussion Group, (2nd and 4th Mondays) Mar. 14 and 28, 6:30pm at 2852 35th Ave. S.

Group discussion and exploration of Carolyn Baker's book "Navigating the Coming Chaos: A Handbook for Inner Transition," exploring the emotional journey that can accompany major changes and tools to deal with the fear, anger, denial and grief. Facilitated by Deb Schanilec. Free.

Registration for **Veggie Growing Basics Course** ends Mar. 16 (or when full), so sign up now! Transition Longfellow is partnering with Hennepin County Master Gardeners to bring its 5-week Veggie Growing Basics class to Longfellow. Classes take place every Satur-

day in April (2, 9, 16, 23, 30) from 10-11:30am in the community room at Gandhi Mahal (3009 27th Ave. S.). Participants work in a group and one-on-one with a master gardener. Class size is limited; registration is required. Participants are encouraged to attend ALL classes. See the website under food and gardening. \$10 for the course.

"Is Zero (Waste) in the Forecast for Your House?" is scheduled for Tuesdays, Mar. 8, 15, 22, 29, from 7-8pm at Peace Coffee, 3262 Minnehaha Ave. Whether you're going for gold with zero waste, or just want to reduce the amount of waste your household produces, this is the group for you. Each week we'll share practical ideas and inspiration for living more mindfully and sustainably by reducing waste in our homes and lives. See how much progress you can make toward your goal in just four weeks. Facilitated by Peter Foster. Free.

Four local students travel to Mexico to perform musical

In mid February, Project SUCCESS brought a delegation to Mexico City and Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, to perform an original, student-created musical entitled "And So I Did." The group performed for 800 local students, community/business members and leaders. Among the nine student performers were four South Minneapolis students—South High School students Lydia Zupanc, Natasha Otiso and Ray Johnson Jensen, and Roosevelt High School student Kate Anderson.

Project SUCCESS is a youth development organization that motivates and inspires young people to dream about the future, helps them take steps to get there, and gives them the tools they need to achieve their goals.

Planting for pollinators and clean water

By JOHN BLY

You may have heard; pollinators are having a rough time. In 2015, American beekeepers lost four out of every ten colonies. Research suggests native pollinators have also suffered severe declines due to loss of habitat and overuse of pesticides. This is worrying. Pollinators contribute over 24 billion dollars a year to our economy and are responsible for 1 out of every three bites of food we eat.

You may have also heard; our lakes, rivers, and streams are polluted. Most of the rain falling on our urban landscape is collected and directed to storm sewers, picking up more pollutants before entering the nearest body of water. Lakes Nokomis and Hiawatha, in particular, are polluted with the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen that come from yard and pet waste.

What's the connection? We need more native plants. The hard surfaces we live under and drive over don't allow water to seep into the ground, nor do they treat the rainwater runoff they create. They also don't supply any food or habitat to bene-



Metro Blooms presented one of its 2015 Best Public Raingarden awards to Nokomis Library, 5100 34th Ave. S.

miliar to stressed pollinators; some are even treated with pesticides that poison bees.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Minneapolis declared its own Pollinator Resolution in August and will begin planting more native flowers and cease large-scale applications of pesticides this year. Local government organizations continue to support clean water projects through cost-shares and grants—including 48 projects on properties around Lake Nokomis, Harriet, and Diamond Lake as part of Metro Blooms' Blooming Alleys initiative.

You can also take steps. One elegant solution is to install a rain garden—a depression in your yard planted with deep-rooted native plants—and route water from gutters and driveways to it. Other steps could include turning all or part of your yard or garden over to native plants; using less fertilizer on your turf and letting it grow taller (its roots generally grow as deep as it is tall); reducing your use of salt in the winter; or replacing asphalt or concrete surfaces with permeable pavers.

If you'd like to learn more about clean water, pollinators, and what you can do on your property to help, consider attending a Metro Blooms workshop in the coming months.

Planned area workshops include one at Longfellow Park Recreation Center (Thur., Mar. 31, 6-9pm) and one at Lake Hiawatha Recreation Center (Sat., Apr. 28, 1-4pm). Other workshop locations and dates can be found on the website. More information and registration options can be found at www.metroblooms.org/workshops.

John Bly is a Minnesota GreenCorps member serving with Metro Blooms.

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NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NENA is seeking community input on environmental and green initiatives

THINK GREEN

NENA wants to hear from residents about new projects and programs we could do this year and into the future.

Thursday, March 17, 6:00-8:00 pm
Keewaydin Park Recreation Center
3030 53rd St. E.
NENA will be providing light food, beverages, childcare and translators will be available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
612.724.5652
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HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday March 20
Traditional Worship 8:30 a.m.
Contemporary Worship 10:30 a.m.

Holy Thursday March 24
Worship & Communion 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday March 25
Worship 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday March 27
Worship 7:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.

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Community input needed

The Nokomis East community is known for its natural resources and its dedication to protecting them. Our community has been at the forefront of many initiatives to protect our resources, projects like the Nokomis Naturescape Garden, the Monarch Habitat Workshops, and the largest event in our neighborhood, the Minneapolis Monarch Festival, are just some of the more public things happening.

NENA wants to hear from residents about new projects and programs NENA could do this year and into the future. This meeting will help NENA move forward on the formation of a new Green Initiatives Committee to oversee these projects. This meeting is also an opportunity to ask questions and shape the scope and direction of future environmental initiatives for our community.

The event will be taking place on Mar. 17 from 6-8pm at the Keewaydin Park Recreation Center, 3030 53rd St. E. NENA will be providing light food, beverages, childcare, and interpreters.

Monarch Workshop registration is open

NENA is holding its annual "Grow Monarch Habitat" workshop on May 14, 10am-12pm at the Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Pkwy. This kid-friendly session offers a wealth of information for both beginning and advanced gardeners.

As the number of monarch butterflies has plummeted in the last few years, researchers and naturalists are urging people to create monarch habitat in urban and suburban areas throughout the Midwest Corn Belt, to replace lost agricultural habitat, especially milkweed. This how-to workshop will provide the information and essential plants to get started.

The presentation covers the monarch life cycle, habitat needs, the role of milkweed, the annual migration and an introduction to the plants in the "Monarch Garden-to-Go." The kit is available in 2 choices and contains 12 local native host, nectar and shelter plants to get you started. There is a registration fee of \$30 for the kits, with a May 8 deadline. Attendance is free for participants who do not want the kit.

NENA (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association)

3000 E. 50th St.

NENA wants to hear your ideas for new projects and programs

For information on the Grow Monarch Habitat workshop, the Minneapolis Monarch Festival or the Nokomis Naturescape, please call 612-724-5652 or email monarch@nokomiseast.org.

Community Input Meeting—affordable housing development on Riverview Dr.

Council Member Andrew Johnson and NENA's Housing, Commercial and Streetscape Committee are co-hosting a community input meeting for the community to review the selected project concepts from developers. Learn more about the designs and come ready with your questions and comments. The meeting will be held on Mar. 22, 6-7:30pm at the Morris Park Recreation Center, 5531 39th Ave S.

NENA is hiring a Community Organizer

NENA is seeking a motivated candidate to join our neighborhood team who shares our passion and commitment to community-driven initiatives and place-based organizing. The ideal applicant will have strong written and verbal skills in Spanish and English, be a self-starter, organized, and have strong relational skills and experience with community outreach.

The Community Organizer position will lead the organization's outreach and engagements initiatives. This position will be responsible for NENA's work with cultural communities and renters. The Community Organizer will split time between outreach, door-knocking, resource networking, leadership development and cultural events.

Those interested should go to nokomiseast.org for more information on NENA and the position. Complete applications are due by 5pm on Mar. 25.

Call for community leaders—NENA elections coming up soon

At the Annual meeting on Apr.

28, eight Board seats will be up for election—two seats from each of the neighborhoods of Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park and Wenonah. Residents from these neighborhoods are encouraged to run. Board members serve a vital role by steering the direction of NENA and helping the association carry out its mission. A strong, active association can make a huge difference in making our community a better place to live.

Interested individuals are encouraged to attend a Board Information Session in March and April, a NENA Board meeting, and schedule a time to meet with Becky Timm, NENA's Executive Director to learn more about serving on the Board. Visit NENA's website for more information, dates for upcoming meetings and the nomination form.

Two new board members appointed from Morris Park

In February, John Lambrecht and Mark Preston, both of Morris Park, were appointed to fill two recently vacated seats on the NENA Board.

Lambrecht is a longtime volunteer with Minneapolis Community Education working with children in grades K-2. He not only lives in the neighborhood but also works at McDonalds Liquor. Lambrecht's professional background in marketing and building partnerships will be put to good use as a member of the NENA team. "I want to serve on the NENA Board of Directors to make the Nokomis East Neighborhood an even

better place to live in and do business in," said Lambrecht.

Preston is a returning board member who previously served on the NENA board but stepped down to allow room for new neighbors to run. He is a member of the Twin Cities Chapter of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program and an Emerald Ash Borer first detector. Preston's experience in the neighborhood and his volunteer work make him a great fit for NENA. Preston says he "wants to work to improve engagement with less represented and less vocal populations within our neighborhood."

Community NRP notice

NENA and the Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA) will be launching two community-driven projects this summer. First, we plan to offer free Nokomis East-themed bike racks for local businesses. Also, we will be designing and distributing a Nokomis East Welcome Packet promoting our neighborhoods, businesses, and natural treasures. Look for your copy of the Welcome Packet in the mail this summer. Both ideas have come from community members, and we are thrilled to respond.

These projects require NENA to notify the community and seek feedback on these projects which will be funded by the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). To find out more information, please contact NENA and attend the NENA Housing, Commercial and Streetscape

Committee meeting on Mar. 2. Community members are also invited to attend the NENA Board meeting on Mar. 24. Time will be set aside at 7pm for community questions and comments.

Home Improvement Loan

Whether by choice or necessity, start planning your next home project now with the help of a home improvement loan from NENA. Owners of one to four unit residences can apply for up to \$15,000 to make improvements to their properties. Owner-occupants and investors may apply. Interest rates are either 2% or 3%, depend on income, and there are no income restrictions.

NENA also has available a limited amount of funds for our emergency repair loan program. Only owner-occupied households are eligible, and income restrictions do apply. There is a maximum loan amount of \$7,500 at 0% interest. The loan is due in full upon sale of the property or title transfer.

For more information or to request an application for the NENA loan program, call our partner, the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation's Housing Resource Center 612-722-7141, or visit www.gmhchousing.org. Loan applications are processed on a first-come, first served basis.

Sign up for NENA News

Your Guide to News, Events and Resources! Get your neighborhood news delivered to your inbox every other Wednesday. Sign up today at www.nokomiseast.org. Once you sign up, you'll receive updates on news and happenings in your neighborhood. You'll also be the first to see NENA's results of the strategic planning process we've done over the last year.

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Wednesdays, Mar 2, 9 & 16
11 am Worship
11:45 am Lunch
Maudy Thursday, Mar 24
11 am & 7 pm Worship
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Good Friday Tenebrae service at 7:00pm
Easter Sunday Services 8:45 and 11:00 am;
Brunch at 10:00 am
All other Sundays:
Contemporary Worship - 8:45 am
Sunday School for all ages - 10:00 am
Traditional Worship - 11:00 am
Español - 1:30pm
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Minnehaha Communion Lutheran
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www.minnehahacommunion.com

Pastors Dan and Sally Ankerfelt

Sunday Worship - 9:45 am
Sunday School - 9:45 am
Child Care Available
Lenten Soup and Bread Suppers & Bible Study
Wednesdays at 6 pm through March 16th
March 24: Maudy Thursday worship at
Bethany Lutheran on 36th at 7 pm
March 25: Good Friday worship at MCLC at
7 pm
Easter Breakfast 8:30 - 9:30 am
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Hiawatha Academies proceeds with its five-school strategy

Hiawatha Collegiate High School registered 104 9th-grade students in its first year; opened new building in January

By JAN WILLMS

Preparing its students for college is a primary goal of Hiawatha Academies, a network of tuition-free public schools in Minneapolis.

From its humble beginnings on the first floor of St. Joan of Arc Church, (4537 3rd Ave. S.), with a group of children in kindergarten and 1st grade, Hiawatha Academies has grown over the years.

"A diverse group of community leaders wanted a college preparatory school for scholars and their families," said Sean Elder, the chief operating officer of Hiawatha Academies.

"We have added a grade each year, and in February 2012 we reached our capacity at our first school, Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Morris Park, grades K-4, at 3810 E. 56th St.," Elder explained. "That same year we decided to adopt a five-school strategic vision for our network of schools."

Besides the Morris Park School, there is currently: another elementary, Hiawatha Leadership Academy-Northrop, at 1611 E. 46th St.; Hiawatha College Prep (3800 Pleasant Ave.), a grades 5-8 middle school; and the newest school, Hiawatha Collegiate High School in a new building at 4640 17th Ave. S. Another middle school will soon join the Hiawatha Academies network.

Elder said the Northrop El-



The Hiawatha Collegiate High School is in a new building at 4640 17th Ave. It is the newest school in the Hiawatha Academies network. (Photo submitted)

ementary was put in a building that was remodeled and renovated with a new addition put on. "It was a great development for us to work with the neighborhood and the community with a building that had been sitting vacant for years. We brought it back to life."

The high school, which this first year has 104 9th-grade students, will add grade 10 next year. The building offers 22 classrooms, and includes a gymnasium, science labs, and a media lab. But the high school location is temporary. "We are currently in a site search for a place in South Minneapolis for our high school to relocate in

2018-19," Elder said. The plan is to move the middle school into the new building at the 17th Ave. location.

"We have built a middle school building," Elder said. "This also allows us to fulfill our strategic plan to have a school ready, so when students graduate from 4th grade, they can move into this building for their middle school."

Elder said that as the Hiawatha Academies grew, so did the parents' desire to accelerate the creation of a high school. "Planning for growth has allowed us to staff for growth and connect with our families," he said.



Kyla Bobo, a scholar at Hiawatha Collegiate High School. Bobo has been attending Hiawatha Academies since she was in first grade. (Photo submitted)

"Every growing organization goes through challenges, and it's important to learn from them," Elder added. "We have gotten better at looking further in advance, especially in adopting our five-school strategic plan." He said that even when beginning talks about opening a high school, Hiawatha Academies proponents learned the importance of engaging families and community members. "We held focus groups with our families, and had transparency," he noted. He said that when it became clear that parents wanted the high school to open this year, planners went back to the drawing board to see how they could make that happen.

"We are excited that, both from a fiscally responsible and programmatically responsible standpoint, we were able to provide this school," he said. He added that exploration for offering 9th-grade academics began in 2013. The doors opened last fall, and the new school building opened its doors in January 2016.

The academic programs offered by Hiawatha Academies

have been recognized as an exemplary model in closing the achievement gap in Minnesota. "The achievement gap is a big challenge that has no silver bullet, or one secret, to end it," Elder said. "But there are a lot of elements about our schools that we believe are providing opportunities for our scholars to succeed."

Elder explained that the school programs focus on academics as well as developing strong character. He said the emphasis is on developing character and leadership skills that serve the common good.

"We have a longer school day and a longer school year," he stated. "We are also a very data-driven organization. We measure how we are doing towards reaching our goals. And we are very transparent. When you measure what you are doing, great people react."

"We know that excellent teaching is a central part of the experience for our scholars, so we spend a lot of time on devel-

Continued on page 7

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AA/EOE

St. Albert's Lenten Fish Dinners draw a hungry, happy crowd



The kids of the congregation are on-hand to clear tables, mop up spills, sell pop and popcorn in the BINGO hall and help with the mini raffle. "The fish dinners help build youth community within the church," said event chairperson Janelle Heikkila. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



You'll almost certainly find yourself sitting down with strangers and parting as friends. The church plans to make more than 7,000 diners this year. The staple menu of deep fried and baked tilapia (gluten free), silver dollar buns, cole slaw, potato cakes and tartar sauce is always being tweaked. Parishioner Kurt Schreck of "At Last Gourmet Foods" said, "This year we really upped the ante by sampling lobster bisque. It was so popular on the first night that we'll add it to the menu as a regular item next year." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



This event has taken place every year since 1999 and is the church's primary fundraiser. The doors open at 4:30 and close at 7:30; the cost is \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$5 for ages 6-12 years, and free for children 5 and under. The wait can be quite long as this is a hot meal ticket. Come prepared to be patient. There are musicians and other forms of entertainment to help pass the time enjoyably, and this long-time community event draws a crowd that likes to visit. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



The annual Lenten Fish Dinners at St. Albert the Great Catholic Church are a celebration of food, community, faith and fun. More than 125 volunteers make this event happen each week. It takes a lot of hands to purchase, prepare and serve 450 pounds of tilapia, 125 pounds of coleslaw, and desserts too numerous (and dizzily beautiful) to count—every Friday night during the six weeks of Lent. In the Christian calendar, Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and lasts until Easter. Observers of Lent don't eat meat on Fridays, choosing to eat fish instead. The church is located at 3216 E. 29th St. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



The dessert team is referred to as the "Sugar Babies." Most of the desserts are baked and donated by parishioners. Asked how many desserts were brought in for the first night, team leader Paula Lindgren said, "I have absolutely no idea. I just know that there's enough." Cupcakes, donuts, pies, brownies and cookies of every description were all available, as were pieces of fresh fruit. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



Parishioner Ben Wilkie was happy to have been asked to be the BINGO caller seven years ago. "I guess I must have a pretty nice voice," he said. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



The BINGO Hall welcomes all ages to join in the fun. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



"Our congregation is about 400 strong," said Father Joe Gillespie (pictured left in Valentine glasses), "and we have many times that coming to join in this event. It draws us close every year, both within our church and within the broader community too." Several neighborhood businesses contribute products at free or reduced prices: the Longfellow Market, the New French Bakery, Soderberg's Floral and Merlin's Rest, to name a few. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Former *Messenger* columnist publishes new book

Sherri Donovan Moore writes fictional novel, "You'll Be Nothing Without Me"

By LINDSAY GROME

Poised with a cup of tea with cream in hand at Merlin's Rest, Sherri Donovan Moore sits at ease discussing her life's unexpected roads and alleyways.

"[My] third career is as a writer, and I love it."

If you think you might recognize the name, it's because you likely do. Donovan Moore was the author of the flagship monthly column, "The Old White House," her first paid writing gig that appeared in the *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* for nearly 15 years.

The column focused on Donovan Moore's single-handed feat (with the help of her less-than-handy but helpful husband and some contractors) to renovate her old south Minneapolis home from top to bottom.

"We painted the entire interior, did major work on the furnace...put in a wood burning fireplace, knocked down the wall, changed all the lighting fixtures – stripped all woodwork on the first floor ... We only have one room left: the master bedroom."

She even flipped houses for a few years with her son. But now, the days of writing about her old, white house (in which she still lives) has turned into a full fledge career for the south Minneapolis resident who calls Lake Hiawatha home.

But Donovan Moore hadn't always realized she was a writer. Before her writing career took off, she worked in sales. It wasn't until she took a writing class while she was in college for her Bachelor's in sales and marketing where her fun past time seemed to have the potential to turn into something else.

"My mother always told me I had an active imagination—



Local author Sherri Donovan Moore introduces her first self-published book, "You'll Be Nothing Without Me," a fictional work based in St. Paul and telling the story of Kiki Halloran, an Irish Catholic woman in her early 30s who decides to change her complacent marriage and take charge of her life.

she lived long enough to see my writing in the columns, but never anything [more]. When I found this writer's group it was like I finally belonged somewhere," said Donovan Moore.

Up until now, the *Messenger* column and a few contest entries were the extent of her published writing. But her active imagination never ceased, calling her to a new adventure as a published novelist.

"The story has been with me

for so long...I started writing the book in 2006. I worked for 3M for five years and survived four layoffs, but the fifth one got me. The women in my writing group asked me, 'when are you going to turn your book over and let me edit?'"

Eventually, she did. Donovan Moore's first self-published book, "You'll Be Nothing Without Me," is a fictional work taking place in the Como neighborhood of St. Paul. It tells the story of Kiki Halloran, an Irish Catholic woman in her early 30s who decides to change her complacent marriage and take charge of her life. The story covers four years through marriage, separa-

tion and the new life she creates for herself and her son.

"This woman is pushing herself forward to live exactly how she wants," said Donovan Moore, "she redesigns herself, her house, and works on a new career."

Donovan Moore says the idea for the book came from all of her friends' divorces in the 1980s, mixed in with some love and drama she says she would have liked to have had at the time. Donovan Moore says she sees a lot of herself in Kiki, as at one time she was a divorced, single mother looking for a fresh start.

"For several years when I was young, I gave that power away to my first husband," said the author. "You have to decide what you want and then go about planning to get it. When getting a divorce, plan so you're not taken by surprise."

Donovan Moore credits Barbara Taylor Bradford's book, "A Woman of Substance," as an inspiration for her personally, as the main character's independence taught her that she too can be an independent woman.

"She was absolutely independent and running her own life. I thought, hell, if she can do it, I can do it."

She also credits writers such as Erin Hart, and local authors Lorna Landvik, Susan Schussler and Patty Janes as other inspiring authors.

Donovan Moore is currently working on her second book, which will be a continuation of her first, based in South Minneapolis and Ireland where Kiki explores the idea of marriage once again.

"What I want women to take away is that you really are the controller of your life. Nobody can tell you what to do. You give away your power recklessly sometimes, and you have the chance to live the life you want."

"You'll Be Nothing Without Me" is available for purchase

on Amazon and Kindle, and at Permanent Solutions hair salon on Minnehaha Ave. To find out more about the book, or about Donovan Moore, visit SherriDonovanMoore.com.

Hiawatha Academies

Continued from page 5

oping our people. Our model provides that our principals have a lot of professional development for our teachers so that they can get coaching and feedback."

The classroom sizes are approximately 26 students per room.

Elder said that families and scholars, the preferred term used for students, are engaged in college exploration even at the elementary level.

When students reach the 9th grade, they take a required class called Early College Seminar. "They have the opportunity to explore and learn about the value of a college degree, the types of colleges that are out there, the college admissions process and what it will take for them in high school to develop skills and experiences that will propel them towards success in college."

He said that when the students reach their junior year, they will take a required Senior College Seminar. "That will be when they do the hard work of the college application process," Elder noted.

"We pride ourselves on designing an academic program that goes above just graduation, but is truly college preparatory," he said.

Elder said the biggest challenge for the Academies is keeping a constant eye on staying committed to its mission, its scholars, and families while dealing with all the other everyday challenges that come along.

According to Elder, working in a school can be an incredibly rewarding experience. "Just ask any of our staff," he said. "And the most rewarding part is talking to the scholars and their families and seeing the opportunities for them along the pathways they take. Seeing our scholars active and taking hold of their future and their destiny. They are the ones who will succeed in their own lives. It is our opportunity and job to see that torch is lit."

He added that Hiawatha Academies is grateful for the support and engagement it has experienced opening the new high school and being a relatively new neighbor in the area. "We've had a great experience working with the neighborhood association and locally, and we hope that continues for many, many years."

Ambar Hanson, senior director of community engagement for Hiawatha Academies, added that the students have service learning every year that allows them to volunteer for things like the Monarch Festival, or at other local events in the area. "It's a way to give back and connect with the community," she said.

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Council Member Andrew Johnson

Continued from page 1

Ward 12 seat at age 29, the first Millennial to sit on the Minneapolis City Council.

"I really look at Ward 2 Minneapolis City Council member Cam Gordon as a role model," stated Johnson, pointing to Gordon's accessibility and his habit of showing up at community meetings.

Johnson works most days until 8 or 9pm, but tries to take Sundays off. He confesses sometimes he ponders a problem in the middle of the night, and ends up Googling possible solutions. That's how he discovered that Honeywell is making new sensors that, if installed on the gates at the light rail street crossings, would help prevent the lights cycling to a direction that is empty. He is hopeful the city will install these sensors in 2016 and re-time the lights to speed up traffic along Hiawatha.

Johnson recognizes that some politicians are driven by ego, but says his reward is accomplishing things that make the community better.

That might be looking into problem properties, figuring out ways to make pedestrians safer, or addressing alley noise complaints. Or it is co-hosting a meeting to listen to residents about the type of development they want to see on their block.

"A thousand little changes in sum add up," he pointed out, "and go so far in improving the quality of neighborhoods."

Majors pointed out that because Johnson always attends LCC Board meetings, committee meetings and events, he is always aware of community priorities and has never been in conflict with the desires of the community.

"There is no development project in the community where Andrew has not been involved, which includes co-sponsoring community meetings, advocating and collaborating with other public entities (specifically for bike lanes on Minnehaha Ave. pre-construction) and creating requests for proposals to seek out potential developers," said Majors. "He does all of this in concert with the LCC."

Nokomis East Neighborhood Association Executive Director Becky Timm pointed out that council member Johnson and NENA have hosted community input sessions on key neighborhood issues, such as the affordable housing project at 54th St. and Riverview Rd.; and inviting Cap's Grille to present plans for the up-



After battling glaucoma, Johnson realized that life has no guarantees, and you should make the most of every minute. He quit his job in the private sector because he finds more fulfillment in public service. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

coming brewpub project.

"Council Member Johnson shares NENA's excitement about the Nokomis East neighborhoods and how to make this an even better place to live and shop," said Timm.

What he's done in 2 years

As he looks back on the past two years in office, Johnson said that fighting for the funding for Nokomis Healthy Seniors was a paramount issue for him. He remembers meeting one senior woman, who fell off a ladder while trying to change a light bulb herself because she didn't want to bother her son. She spent two weeks in the hospital.

"The smallest thing, like changing a light bulb, can help seniors stay in their houses," Johnson pointed out. "It's the least we can do."

At the end of last year, \$25,000 in funding was restored to the Nokomis Healthy Seniors.

Another local organization, the Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Program, has left its mark on Johnson, and he strongly believes that "it's easier to build a strong child than to fix a broken man." As such, he is leading the restorative justice expansion, including working with the mayor to triple funding in the 2016 budget and hosting a city-wide forum. He also co-authored a 2016 budget amendment to fast-track implicit bias and procedural justice training for police officers. He co-hosted a forum in the aftermath of Ferguson to examine community/police relationships, and called for an independent federal investigation into the death of Jamar Clark.

On the environmental side, Johnson is working get trash grids installed at Lake Hiawatha to reduce the litter entering the lake from the stormwater system.

With a background in IT, Johnson focused on the city's IT contract with Unisys during his first year in office. He pushed to break up the city's largest contract, and fellow council members agreed to do so in 2015. Over \$3 million a year was saved, and 33 non-union jobs added in-house.

"It's cheaper and ultimately provides a higher quality service for the city," said Johnson.

When his aide Suzanne Murphy became pregnant, Johnson learned that the city didn't offer paid parental leave to its 4,000 employees, but instead required parents to either use vacation or sick time when their children were born or adopted. He helped lead the effort to change that and pointed out that the Governor has proposed that the state follow suit. Johnson said he enjoys being part of a city that leads the way on important issues. He has now focused his sights on ensuring paid sick leave for all employees.

Transparency in government remains a priority for Johnson. He led the effort to pass an open data policy and authored staff directives to post neighborhood association

budgets, performance reports, and bylaws online. He also worked to get city council meetings posted on YouTube.

Johnson also helped repeal over three dozen antiquated laws, lower some license fees, and simplify processes and regulations under the Business Made Simple initiative.

The Business Made Simple initiative empowers small businesses as they're able to access information, while fundamentally changing the city/business relationship dynamic, pointed out Johnson.

"It's really a partnership now," he observed.

Johnson loves bringing together different people and ideas, and he was able to do that on the Minnehaha Ave. street project. While meeting with someone about an affordable housing project, the idea for a billboard promoting the Minnehaha Mile was spontaneously born, a sign that helps pull some of the 23,000 cars a day along Hiawatha to shop along Minnehaha.

He seeks to leverage information that he picked up door-knock-

ing with city projects, and recently worked to prevent 4,000 dump trucks traveling down a street where 30 kids live.

"Since the basics are clearly important, it's worth noting that Ward 12 will be seeing the most street improvements of any ward this year. The two budgets I have been a part of have lowered property taxes for the majority of homeowners. Besides helping get the number of firefighters up, I helped get more resources for Minneapolis Police Department investigations, and worked with MPD to address neighborhood crime and hot spots," said Johnson.

What's next?

Looking ahead, Johnson is working hard to promote transit-oriented development at 46th and 38th, as well as Nokomis-East's "downtown" area.

"You're going to see the seeds I've been planting grow over the next several years," he promised.

On a personal note, he's excited to be wedding Sara Vine this June.



Council member Andrew Johnson will wed Sara Vine this summer. (Photo submitted)

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Pasty reservations due by Mar. 14

Epworth's Annual Winter Pasty Sale is planned for Mar. 19. Epworth's pasty is a hot and tasty meal you can hold in your hand made of ground beef and vegetables inside a homemade pastry dough. These pasties are larger than the average, but still cost only \$6 each. A vegetables-only option is available on request. Place your order by Mar. 14 by calling 612-724-3745 or 612-724-8942. Pick up your order after 2:30pm on Mar. 19 at Epworth UMC, 3207 37th Ave. S.

Indoor egg hunt planned Mar. 19

Families in the community are invited to a free indoor egg hunt on Sat., Mar. 19, at 10am at Trinity of Minnehaha Falls, 5212 41st Ave. S. The event will include kids' games and activities, food, door prizes and an egg hunt for children. For more details, contact Suzanne at 612-724-3691.

Volunteer visitors needed for seniors

Help seniors stay in their homes and keep socially connected. If you have a heart for seniors, you'll love this volunteer position! "Friendly Visitors" are needed to visit isolated seniors in the greater Longfellow and Seward neighborhoods. Volunteer drivers are also needed who can transport seniors to medical appointments and shopping. Call Kirstan at Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799 for more information.

Upcoming events at Healthy Seniors

"Hearing Loss and Healthy Aging" will be the presentation at the Mar. 15 Senior Social/Health Talk, 10:30am. New research shows a correlation between untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline, along with other health issues. Healthy Seniors meet at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E. 31st St.

A monthly Diabetes Support Group for adults of all ages meets on Mar. 9 from 6:30-8pm at Hiawatha School Park Recreation Center, 4305 E. 42nd St.

Gentle Yoga classes are held on Mondays and Fridays at 10am at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Yoga classes are \$4/each.

Healthy Seniors also sponsors a Low-Vision Support Group and Blood Pressure Clinic. Call Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799 for information on any of their events or services.

Alaska adventure: 3-yr-old preschoolers ride with sled dogs

Minnehaha Academy's 3-year-old preschoolers had special visitors in late January—sled dogs! The culmination of a month-long unit on Alaska, the preschoolers got to experience the thrill of the ride first-hand as they drove the sled dogs (with the help of a dog sled driver). The young students rode along a short track on W. River Pkwy. at Minnehaha Academy's south campus.



(Photo top) Minnehaha Academy preschooler Camilla Johnson takes a dog sled ride with her mother, Joy Johnson. The visit from Hastings Huskies was the culmination of a preschool unit on Alaska. (Photo bottom) Minnehaha Academy preschooler Hank Gordon excitedly says hello to a visiting sled dog on Friday. (Photos submitted)

"Nurse Is In" offered weekly at Bethel

Nokomis Healthy Seniors "Nurse Is In" clinic takes place from 9:30-11:30am every Thursday at Bethel Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave. S. The clinic offers blood pressure checks, along with coffee, treats, socialization, and has adult coloring. All are free and open to the public. For more information call 612-729-5499.

Annual fish dinner at St. Albert the Great

Full fish dinners are being served on all of the Fridays of Lent, now through Mar. 18, at the Church of St. Albert the Great, 2836 33rd Ave. S. US-raised baked and fried tilapia, potatoes, meatless spaghetti, coleslaw, rolls, desserts and beverages are included in the dinner. Cost is \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors age 65+, and \$5 for children age 6-12. Children 5 and under eat free. There will be live music, raffles, and Bingo

Additional parking is available one block north of the church at Sullivan School, served by shuttle bus.

Codfish and Meatball Dinner slated Mar. 4

St. Peder's Lutheran church will be holding its annual Codfish and Meatball Dinner on Fri., Mar. 4. There will be seatings at 5pm and 6:30pm. The dinner also includes boiled potatoes with their famous mustard gravy, peas, and carrots, Havarti cheese on pumpnickel, cupcakes, and beverages. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. St. Peder's Church is located at 4600 E. 42nd St. Call St. Peder's Church office at 612-722-8000 or email Sarah Zuber at office@stpeters.org for reservations. Please state how many meatball or cod dinners, seating time preference, and phone number if leaving a message.

Soup and Lenten Study offered

Who was Jesus, really? Wasn't he a man who denied all preconceived notions about what God should look like? Wouldn't associating with him have meant joining a rebel movement? Doesn't it still? Renegade Gospel is a 6-week Lenten study using videos, readings, and activities that challenge participants to come to terms with the real Jesus—the rebel Jesus. Sessions are offered through Mar. 22 on Sundays, noon -1:30pm, and Tuesdays, 1-2pm. Epworth UMC is located at 3207 37th Ave S. For more info, contact us at 612-722-0232 or epworthumcmplsmn@gmail.com.

Holistic Moms meets Mar. 16 at Fuller Rec

There are many complementary and alternative health care options. Come to the Holistic Moms Network meeting on Wed., Mar. 16 to hear from a panel of experts:

- * Naturopathy - Dr. Lori Hulsing, ND
- * Homeopathy - Kathryn Loeb, Classical Homeopath
- * Traditional Chinese Medicine - Carey Velenchenko, Licensed Acupuncturist
- * Ayurveda - Dena Jackson, Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist
- * Craniosacral and Myofascial Release Therapies - Kris Groth, OTR
- * Reiki - Barbara Heidelberger, Certified Reiki Master Teacher

Holistic Moms Network is a national non-profit organization that connects people who are passionate about holistic health and green living. The Twin Cities Chapter holds monthly meetings the third Wed of each month, 7-9pm, at Fuller Park Rec Center, 4800 Grand Ave. S. No matter where you are on your parenting or holistic journey, you are welcome! Children are also welcome. For more info, e-mail tcholicmoms@gmail.com or visit <http://twincitiesmn.holisticmoms.org> or www.facebook.com/HMNTwinCitiesMN.

Ahh-Spring: start those seeds!

The next meeting of the Longfellow Garden Club will be on Wed., Mar. 9, 7pm, at Epworth United Methodist Church (3207 37th Ave. S.). Master Gardener Theresa Rooney will get the group started with useful tips on starting vegetable, perennial, herb and flower bedding plants from seed. She will explain about the different types of soil mixes, trays, lighting requirements, and most importantly, how to have seedlings ready when the normal growing season starts. And, she

has a list of plants that do better directly seeded just where they are to grow. Bring pencil and notebook, Theresa always presents information you want to take home!

Meetings are free and open to everyone. More info is available at <http://www.facebook.com/LongfellowGardenClub> or <https://sites.google.com/site/longfellowgardenclubminnesota>.

"Mourning Son" screens at Tylon

Sound Unseen presents the Minnesota premiere of "Mourning Son" on Jane's Addiction/Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist Dave Navarro, looking for clues and coming to terms with his mother's brutal death. The film will be screened Wed., Mar. 9, 7pm at the Tylon microcinema, 3258 Minnehaha Ave. The cost is \$10.

Sometimes, the only way around fear is to walk right through it. Unbeknownst to many, Dave Navarro (Jane's Addiction/Red Hot Chili Peppers) is a trauma survivor of the highest order. A story of navigating the human experience, Navarro faces his deepest fears as he embarks on a journey through art, drug addiction, and escapism. Through revelations from friends and family to police and FBI, he uncovers the hard truth of domestic violence as he searches for paths to come to terms with his mother's brutal murder. (Dir. Todd Newman, 2015, USA, 107 min.)

Annual rummage sale scheduled Apr. 2

Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church will hold the Annual Rummage Sale on Sat., Apr. 2, 9am-1pm. Bag time starts at noon. Lunch, with the best sloppy joes and homemade bars available, will be for purchase. The churches address is 4101 37th Ave. S.

Blue Line extension gets design approval

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has voted to approve the physical design component of the preliminary plans for the Bottineau Light Rail Transit Project, also known as the Metro Blue Line Extension.

The METRO Blue Line Extension (LRT) will operate northwest from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park, drawing riders northwest of Brooklyn Park. The proposed alignment is primarily at-grade and will have 11 new stations in addition to Target Field Station and

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In Our Community

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about 13 miles of double track. The line will interline with the METRO Blue Line and connect Minneapolis and the region's northwestern communities with existing LRT on the METRO Green Line, future LRT on the METRO Green Line Extension, bus rapid transit on the METRO Red Line, the Northstar commuter rail line and local and express bus routes.

AA and NA meets

Every Monday night there is an AA meeting at 7pm at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church (4101 37th Ave. S.), and every Tuesday and Wednesday night there is an AA meeting at 7:30pm. On Thursday night, there is an NA meeting at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend.

Vendor applications available online

Are you interested in vending at the Midtown Farmers Market? Quality vendors are the heart of the Midtown Farmers Market as they strive to create a balanced and diverse vendor mix each season. Applications from Minnesota and Wisconsin farmers, artisans and producers are welcome! Visit their website, www.midtownfarmersmarket.org, for more information and to access the 2016 vendor application.

The application schedule and deadlines are:

Mar. 4: Applications due for all vendors except arts and crafts vendors

Mar. 11: Acceptance notification

Apr. 1: Application deadline for arts and craft vendors

Apr. 2: Annual Spring Vendor Meeting

Apr. 8: Acceptance and first half schedule notification for art and craft vendors

May 7: Opening day, Saturday market

June 7: Opening Day, Tuesday market

Oct. 25: Closing Day, Tuesday market

Oct. 29: Closing Day, Saturday market

Let's Do Lunch Cafe planned monthly

Every fourth Friday of the month (Feb. 26 and Mar. 25) from 11:30am-1:30pm, the Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly (1885 E. Lake St.) invite LGBTQ seniors, boomers, and allies to their "Let's Do Lunch cafe." The new "café" is a unique and welcoming Twin Cities venue where guests can relax, make friends and gather information on senior and LGBTQ services. There will be a hearty, catered lunch, a scrumptious dessert, great conversation and music, and a warm and welcoming environment. The cost is free, but seating is limited. RSVP to 612-746-0726 or email mhaas@littlebrothersmn.org.

Renegade Gospel study during Lent

Who was Jesus, really? Wasn't he a man who denied all preconceived notions about what God

should look like? Wouldn't associating with him have meant joining a rebel movement? Doesn't it still? Epworth United Methodist Church is planning Renegade Gospel, a 6-week Lenten study using videos, readings, and activities that challenge participants to come to terms with the real Jesus—the rebel Jesus. The study is planned every Sunday through Mar. 21, from noon-1:30pm at Epworth, 3207 37th Ave. S.

Adoption support group meets monthly

The Adoption Support Network holds monthly support groups at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church, 4101 -37th Ave. S.) for parents and teens who have been adopted. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month (Mar. 1) at 6:30pm. Adoptive parents are provided with a confidential, nonjudgmental environment where they can support each other and share resources. Teens are invited to meet other teens who understand what it's like to be adopted. The teen group is not a drop-off group – parent(s) must attend the parent support group. For more info and to RSVP, contact Ginny Blade at 651-646-5082 or ginnyblade@nacac.org (parents); or Christina Romo at 651-644-3036, ext. 17, or christinaromo@nacac.org (teens).

Annual block party planned Mar. 12

The third annual indoor block party returns on Sat., Mar. 12 from 10am-1pm at Keeywaydin School, 5209 30th Ave. S. The event is hosted by The Nokomis East Business Association and the Nokomis Community School PTA.

The block party features a variety of activities aimed at children, as well as adults, to make it a fun family event. Some "Bounce Houses" will be set up in the gym to provide an opportunity for some physical activity as well as craft, music, and food opportunities.

Local businesses, churches, and non-profit organizations will have exhibit tables in the lunchroom, corridor and atrium areas of the school. A variety of programs will also be hosted in the school's auditorium including a musical event for younger kids presented by Brighter Minds Music.

The indoor block party is one of three major events supported by the Nokomis East Business Association to help build strong positive relationships between the people of the area and the local business community. The Indoor block party makes a special effort to include not only the traditional brick and mortar businesses in the area, but also home based businesses, craftspeople, and work-at-home professionals.

For additional information about the Indoor Block Party, visit www.nokomiseast-ba.com.

"Taste the World" planned Feb. 28

The restaurants at the intersection of 27th Ave. and Lake St. invite the community to "Taste the World in Downtown Longfellow" on Sun., Feb. 28 from 5pm to close. The event will feature small plates and specialty drinks, live entertainment, prize giveaways and local artist vendors from the League of Longfellow Artists (LOLA).

This event is a unique opportunity for neighborhood residents and visitors alike. Participants will be able to enjoy the tastes, sights, and sounds of the district's global cuisine in an intimate yet lively setting. Enjoy a woodblock carving demonstration while sipping sake or chow down on frites while savoring a martini. All food, drink and locally produced art will be available for purchase.

Participants include:

—El Nuevo Rodeo Restaurant (authentic gourmet Mexican), 2709 E. Lake St., which will feature artist Terry Faust (Wee Weather Vanes);
—Gandhi Mahal Restaurant

(traditional Indian cuisine), 3009 27th Ave. S. They will feature artists Anita White (drawings and paintings), Jenny Levernier (jewelry), and Jane Strauss (photography, prints, and cards);

—Le Town Talk - French Diner and Drinkery (comfort French food bistro), 2707 E. Lake St., who will also feature artists Lauren Catlin (jewelry) and Megan Moore (paintings);

—Midori's Floating World Cafe (sushi & noodles), 2629 E. Lake St., featuring artists Lee Love (pottery) and Jean Shannon (Japanese woodblock print carving demo);

—Addis Ababa Ethiopian Restaurant and Bar (authentic Ethiopian lounge), 2713 E. Lake St. They will feature artists Rebecca Wicklund (jewelry) and Dan Goddard (pottery);

—Du Nord Craft Spirits (gin & vodka samples at El Nuevo Rodeo), 2610 E. 32nd St.; and
—Harriet Brewing (European-style beers), 3036 Minnehaha Ave., who will feature Blake Nellis (photography), Anna Rau

(paintings and sketches), and Tony Soruco (pottery).

The organizers will encourage participants to stroll between each establishment, gathering stamps in a passport. After collecting enough stamps, participants can turn in the passport to win prizes. Passports can be picked up at any participating business.

This event is the official launch of Downtown Longfellow, a new commercial district branding effort from the businesses in and around the 27th Ave., Minnehaha Ave. and Lake St. intersection.

Downtown Longfellow is a dense, walkable neighborhood located just steps away from the Lake Street Light Rail Station. It is home to many restaurants, a brewery, distillery, theater, bike shop, grocery, library, and more!

For more information about the event visit bit.ly/TasteTheWorldLongfellow. You can also RSVP (not required) on Facebook at www.facebook.com/events/452228168320848.

Traki to perform at International Night

Led by Nikolay Gueorguiev (gadulka/bowed folk-violin), the musical ensemble Traki will perform on International Folkdance Night, from 9-11pm, Fri., Mar. 18, at Tapestry Folkdance Center (3748 Minnehaha Ave. S.).

The band will share the folk traditions and culture of Bulgaria while performing songs that spotlight the unique characteristics of Balkan music—odd-meter time signatures and non-Western harmonies. Interspersed with the music will be information on the historical and cultural context of the songs and dances.

The core ensemble of Traki includes musicians Natalie Nowytski (vocals), Jim Parker (tambura/Bulgarian folk lute) and Eric Ray (accordion)—and may include Nikola "Kolyo" Nikolov (gaida/bagpipe) and Tim O'Keefe (percussion)).

Balkan dance instruction, with Jan Morse and other teach-



Traki will perform on International Folkdance Night on Fri., Mar. 18, at Tapestry Folkdance Center, 3748 Minnehaha Ave. S. (Photo submitted)

ers, precedes the performance, from 7:30-9pm. Bulgarian folk dance is characterized by a variety of "quick-slow" rhythms rather than the steady beat of the music we most commonly hear, which contributes an interesting complexity to learning this dance

style. Experienced Balkan folk dance teachers will provide instruction. Beginners are welcome.

Cost is \$10 for general admission, \$8 for members, \$7 for students, and free for children 13 and under with a paying adult.

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Messenger Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Messenger Classifieds, 125 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Messenger before Mar. 21 for the Mar. 31 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyternelson.com. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Messenger's website at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

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Blue Tree Music Education is humming right along

Article and photo
by MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

On Saturday mornings at 10:30, the drop-in Family Tree music class at Blue Tree Music Education is a warm and friendly place to be. For only \$12, the whole family (with children ages 0-5) can enjoy group singing, playful dancing and the introduction of different musical instruments.

Karen Massey and Lori Vander Poel co-teach the class, with themes that change weekly. They both bring a depth of talent and imagination to their teaching roles. Massey is an experienced vocalist and actress; Vander Poel is a certified music therapist and has nearly completed her yoga teacher training.

The cost of the Family Tree class can be further reduced by buying a \$100 punch card, good for ten sessions at \$10 apiece. These cards make great gifts for parents or grandparents of young children. The staff at Blue Tree believe that early music experiences are not only fun but prepare children to enter into music instruction as they grow older.

Blue Tree is only two years old in this location, but founder Rebecca Smith has already hired 15 teachers. They offer classes in piano, voice, cello, guitar, violin, songwriting, music theory, workshops and more. The piano lessons, reasonably priced at an average cost of \$25 for a 30-minute lesson, have been so popular that Smith is looking for two more instructors. (Anyone interested in applying can contact Smith at 612.338.5014.)

The studio is located at 3503 23rd Ave. S. It started in one storefront of the corner building, and has expanded to three. Its amenities include eight separate, sound-proofed rooms for private lessons.



The Blue Tree Songbirds Children's Choir meets every Sunday from 5:00-6:30. The all-ages children's choir is directed by Vanessa Christie. Quarterly sign-up is open now for the spring session, which begins in early April. Cost is \$85 per session for a child already registered for private music lessons at Blue Tree, and \$100 per session for choir only. The choir works hard, but knows how to have fun too.

Children typically start piano instruction between 4-5 years. Blue Tree has more than 200 students registered in private lessons, and discounts are given for siblings (and parents) of already registered students. Smith makes a point of calling their students, "part of the Blue Tree Family."

Smith continued, "We have a lounge where kids can visit or do homework before or after their lessons. Parents and siblings

often wait here for their family member to finish their lesson, and it's turned out to be a great place for people to connect. In the cold months, we always have complimentary hot tea, coffee, cocoa and apple cider on hand."

In support of their families, Blue Tree offers a "Parent's Night Out" on the last Friday of every month. While open to all ages, elementary school aged students prevail at this get-together from 5-8pm. Pizza, movies, and art

making are offered for \$25 per student, and siblings are half-price.

Smith is a native North Dakotan and a veteran of many family moves. "Through all the relocations," she said, "the one constant thing in my life was music." While she is the owner of Blue Tree Music Education, Smith considers herself first and foremost a teacher. She offers classes in piano, composition, theory and leads group classes.

The idea for Blue Tree Music Education came as an honest-to-goodness inspiration. Smith had released a few records, after a lucky break in college resulted in a recording contract. But her main source of income was a high-stress sales job, and she wasn't feeling too happy.

She did what any sane person would do at a low point, and went for a drive around the lakes with her best friend on a wintry night. They were both at a crossroads with questions about work and direction, when they came upon a tree beautifully decorated for the holidays with twinkling blue lights.

Smith remembered, "We stopped right there and talked about what we wanted to do with ourselves; both of us found the words to describe what our respective businesses might look like. My friend Renee went on to open her organic preschool, and I opened Blue Tree Music Education soon after."

"We still laugh about it," she said, "remembering the beauty of those branches sparkling in the night sky, and the clarity of the conversation that resulted from our 'blue tree moment.'"

A full class schedule can be found on-line at www.bluetreemusiceducation.com.

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