



Tents are pitched near bridges and in wooded sites across the metro area. (Photo by Terry Faust)

## Minneapolis wrestles with homelessness

*Playing a part are low income, mental health, lack of affordable education*

By JAN WILLMS

The combination of winter weather with its days of cold temperatures and shorter daylight hours, along with the isolation and fear caused by COVID-19, strikes a depressive chord within many. But if you are also homeless and facing these difficulties, the chord strikes a more resounding note.

Homeless encampments have long been used by city residents with no housing, but this year after the George Floyd tragedy they became more populated than ever. Most have been closed by the city, but three major ones remain at the Mall, a site along the Greenway; the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park and Minnehaha Falls Regional Park.

HOMELESSNESS >> 10

## TREASURE HUNTERS

*NEBA's medallion hunt helps families escape COVID-19 doldrums*



Leatrice Cox and her family got out before and after school – and sometimes during lunch – to hunt around the neighborhood, including searching one day at the Lake Hiawatha canoe racks. The medallion was found by Melissa Gross at Saint James on-the-Parkway Episcopal Church community garden. (Photo submitted by Laura Cox)

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

Finding a medallion is something Roosevelt High School graduate Melissa Gross has always wanted to do.

On Friday, Dec. 11, she crossed it off her bucket list.

Gross discovered the Nokomis East Business Association

Treasures Medallion at the community garden shed at Saint James on-the-Parkway Church (3225 E Minnehaha Pkwy.).

She pulled up to the church with another treasure seeker that she had met earlier in the week right behind her. They both jumped out of their cars.

Laura Cox went left and Gross went right, checking along the church. They met at the raised beds and both knew it was part of the clue. They scanned the bricks. Cox reached the garden shed first, glanced around and kept moving.

TREASURE HUNTERS >> 14-15

## Favorite neighborhood business?

*Neighbors support theirs with an ad in the Messenger*

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

When graphic designer Brian Cornell and his wife Kari moved to Longfellow in 1996, the Riverview Theater stood proud at the intersection of 38th Street and 42nd Avenue – but there wasn't much else happening there. Within a few short years, the Riverview Theater underwent renovation, Mother Earth Gardens and the new Hiawatha Clinic opened, and a video store was remade into the Riverview Café and Wine Bar.

Brian and Kari started a tradition of meeting friends for coffee every Wednesday, and the Riverview Café became their favorite stop. Cornell said, "We had all bought homes in the neighborhood recently, and everybody was just starting out. These get-togethers went on hiatus when several of us had young children, but our connection to the place remained strong."

That corner, and especially the Riverview Café and Wine Bar, has a special place in Brian Cornell's heart.

Recognize what matters

Cornell said, "I've known owners David and Mara Bernick since they opened their business

FAV BUSINESS? >> 8

## Mapping Prejudice brings light to history's structural racism that impacts today's community

## Looking back to move forward

By CHLOE PETERS

As a young child, Denise Pike experienced an attempted cross-burning on the front lawn of her family's home in St. Louis Park.

Her own family was multi-racial, and they shared the duplex with a Black family. Since then, Pike has wondered about racial differences and what housing in particular has to do with inciting violence against people of color.

During her master's program for Heritage Studies and Public

History at the University of Minnesota, Pike had the opportunity to be an intern for Mapping Prejudice.

Mapping Prejudice is a team of geographers, historians, digital humanists and community activists working with the University of Minnesota in order to expose structural racism. The data that they collect has brought thousands of racial covenants to light. These racial covenants were placed in order to prevent Black people from buying homes or property in Minnesota. On their

website, mappingprejudice.org, there is a map of the Twin Cities area where home owners have the option to find out if their home has a covenant placed on it and then have the option to remove it.

"This data makes the extent of racial discrimination across the city of Minneapolis and the surrounding areas impossible to ignore or discount," Pike said.

In January 2020, the project extended into St. Paul and greater Ramsey County, Mapping Prejudice hosts online training

events for volunteers to help read deeds and contribute to the database that plots covenants.

'Owning Up' exhibit

Since becoming an intern for Mapping Prejudice, Pike also worked on a project of her own. Her exhibit, "Owning Up," explores the history of racial housing discrimination in Minneapolis through the stories of three black families. Their experiences are displayed alongside the policy decisions and social practices that furthered the standard of racial segregation and continue to shape the city of Minneapolis.

MAPPING PREJUDICE >> 6



Denise Pike recalls a cross burning on the front lawn of her family's home in St. Louis Park when she was a girl. (Photo submitted)



North Star Touring Club embraces silent sports

PAGE 7



Book explores racism, social justice and George Floyd's killing

PAGE 13



REBUILD REPAIR RECYCLE MN150 concerned about 'energy we can't afford'

PAGE 16



## Glimpse into their lives as they juggle work and online schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic

### UP CLOSE WITH LOCAL FAMILIES

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Michael 'Taz' and Sakiko Nilan family has a global perspective on things as they've lived in both Japan (where Sakiko is from) and Minnesota (where Taz grew up) during their marriage. Taz works full-time from home as a consultant in the medical/technology industry. Sakiko is a stay-at-home mom. Together

they juggle three Northrop Elementary students. Ten-year-old Kenzo is in fourth grade; 7-year-old Yumika is in second grade, and 5-year-old Yuzo is in kindergarten.

*What's the biggest change for you this school year?*

Taz: With our 5-year-old starting kindergarten this autumn, our biggest change is to have all three children learning online at home and the parents



need to supervise what they are doing and teach as needed on a daily basis.

*What's the hardest part as a student?*

Taz: There are not many people who would disagree with the statement that elementary children should not be learning on an electronic tablet all day. I wish that my wife and I could throw away the tablets and become full-time home-school teachers for our children, but we don't have the time and abilities to take on those roles right now.

The fact that we have three elementary school age children all online at the same time offers its own challenges as we are completely out-manned. Friends with just one or two children, or older children seem to be faring better.

Sakiko: I think the hardest thing for them is not being able to feel connected to the class and the teacher as they can't build the real relationship through the screen.

*What's the best part?*

Taz: When I asked our children what they liked about learning online they all responded in unison "nothing."

Sakiko: If I try to find any positivity out of this difficult situation, for us parents, it's been nice to be able to see what and how the kids are actually doing at school and get more involved in their daily learning.

*What's going right for you this year?*

Taz: It would be difficult to find something that has gone right this year.

Sakiko: I have to say that the bond between siblings has been strengthened. I am so glad they have each other to entertain each other and get through this lonely time together.

*What are you and your family doing for your mental health?*

Taz: This has been a very trying year for my wife and I. My wife has been thrown into the

very difficult job of trying to manage the online education of three relatively young children while I manage my consulting job and our income. Along with millions of others, we have had to face a level of stress this year that we have not had to face in the past.

It's been extremely difficult to find time for ourselves, but we try to get outside and enjoy family time.

*What tips do you have for families?*

Taz: In terms of online education, raising a family, or holding down a job, do what you can this year and do not beat yourself up for not meeting your expectations of what you think "normal" is or should be. It is important to reach out for help when needed.

*How do you think this will change you for the long-term?*

Taz: Most children seem to have a face and set of behaviors for the home with the family, and a different face and set of behaviors for the outside world. It is the loss of the outside world socialization with teachers and classmates that worries me for the general development of young children moving ahead.

Hopefully we will get the children back into school soon enough to recover from 2020.

Germany, France, the U.K., Korea, Japan, Canada and many other developed countries have found safe ways to keep their children in school while fighting COVID-19. We need to get our children back into school ASAP where they belong. I am aware of a number of private schools in Minneapolis that have maintained in-classroom learning while effectively managing any COVID-19 cases for students and remain confused on why the same city has multiple forms of school going on at the same time.

MORE EDUCATION >> 3

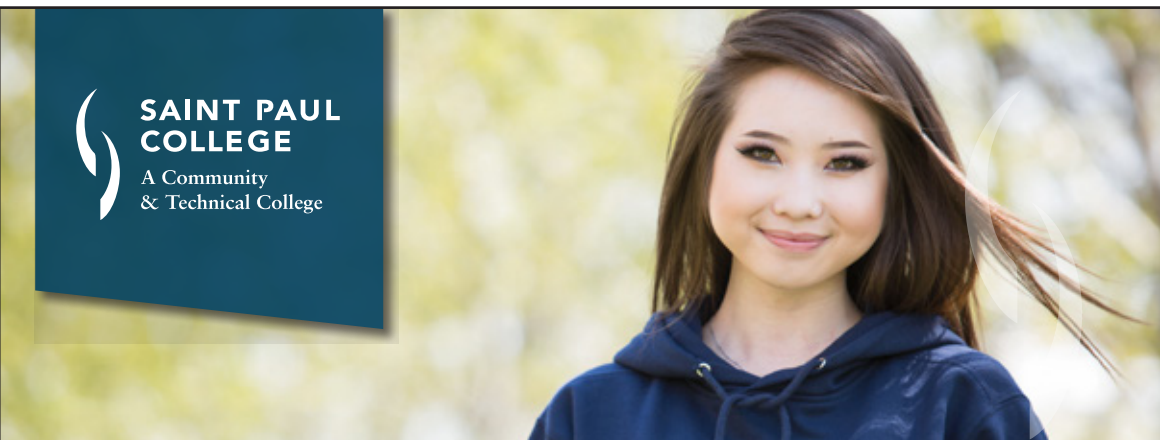


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## HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL

Meet the Jennifer Clough and Mike McMahon family. Twelve-year-old Liam attends sixth grade at Sanford Middle School while 16-year-old Gwen-dolyn is a junior at South High. The kids are doing online school while their parents are working from home.

Mom Jennifer said, "It's been so cute to see them have fun together as siblings again. They played well together when they were younger, but Gwen hit that point where little brother was just kind of annoying. Now that he is in middle school and 12.5, he is 'catching up' and this 'forced time' together has been great to bring them closer! And yes, the family game time has been great! I have also enjoyed when we do family walks - we did that more in the first few months of the pandemic."

"In general, I think having a middle schooler and high schooler sounds like it's much easier - since they are pretty independent - than elementary age kiddos. Poor elementary parents seem to have a tough time from the ones I've heard from. I'm feeling grateful as I know many are struggling through these

tough times on many levels."

*What's the biggest change for you this school year?*

Gwen: For me, the biggest change is probably the lack of interaction with other students. When we were in person, I was able to see my friends and just people in general every day and now I see them over Zoom or not at all!

Liam: School being online and not seeing people.

*What's the hardest part as a student?*

Gwen: Personally, the hardest part has been balancing school with other activities. I always have schoolwork to do, and if I let it take up all my time, it will. I have to remember to take breaks and focus on other things (exercise, drawing, etc.).

Liam: Being at meets for hours a day at screen is tiring.

*What's the best part?*

Liam: Having your own pace to do things and having the whole day instead of just a class period.

Gwen: The best part about online school is having more time to work independently as opposed to listening to the teacher talk for extended periods of time. I prefer to work on my own, so having more time to ourselves is ideal.

## UP CLOSE WITH LOCAL FAMILIES

*Juggling work and online schooling during pandemic*

>> from 2

*What's going right for you this year?*

Gwen: This might sound a little strange but I think my sleep schedule is a lot better this year. I prefer to stay up later and then wake up later, and when I don't have to catch a bus at 7:15 a.m. I get a lot more sleep.

Liam: The school work is not too much.

*What are you and your family doing for your mental health?*

Liam: We are playing games together.

Gwen: My parents encourage me to prioritize my mental health by consistently getting outside, even for a short walk. As the days get shorter, it's hard to get out before it gets dark, but I never regret it when I do.

*What tips do you have for families?*

Liam: Do things together and do what makes you happy.

Gwen: I don't have a ton of tips for other families because I don't really have things figured out myself. But one thing I would say is make a schedule or to-do list for yourself. It's easy to forget things when you aren't seeing people in person, so any reminders you can give yourself will help.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At Hiawatha-Howe PTO President Michelle Trumpy's house, there are two adults working from home, one third-grader in full-time distance learning, and two cats who love having their humans around.

*What's the biggest change for you this school year?*

There are so many, it's hard to choose! One of the biggest things is that we have not needed after school child care. When school and work are over, we can start our family time.

*What's the hardest part as a student?*

My daughter says it's really hard to make friends during distance learning. There are few opportunities to talk with classmates like you might if you were in person.

*What's the best part?*

Having lunch together :) And not having the hustle/bustle of getting out the door, catching the bus and driving to work.

*What's going right for you this year?*

Our daughter is self-sufficient in her work and is able to manage her own schedule. These are skills will serve her well

throughout her life.

*What are you and your family doing for your mental health?*

We try to do a variety of things, such as going outside on a regular basis and FaceTiming with friends. We also stick to the basics of good self care - getting enough sleep, exercise and eating a balanced diet.

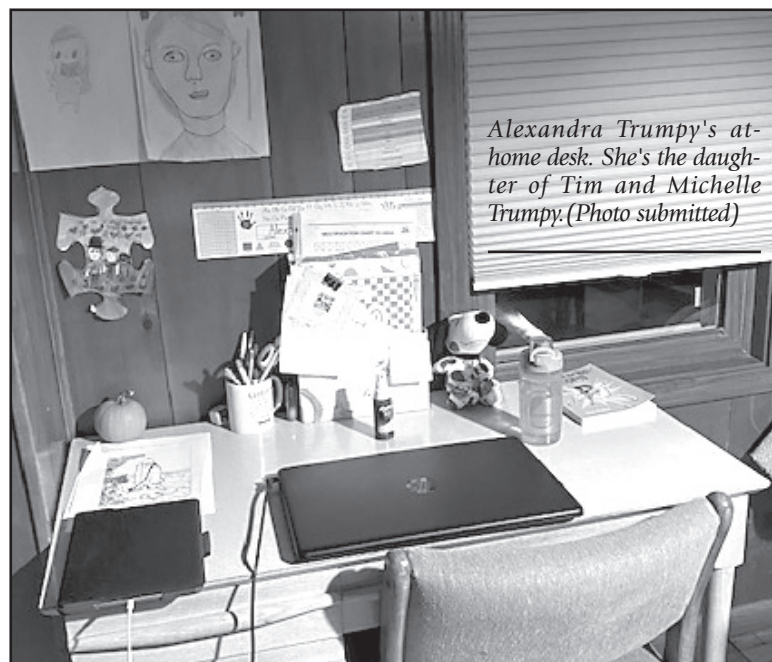
*What tips do you have for families?*

Find a routine that works for your family. Sometimes kids need a break from school/screen and it's okay! Make the students work area their own - have all their items accessible, hang the schedule on the wall, make sure the space is straightened up at the end of the day - it's nice to start fresh in the morning.

*How do you think this will change you for the long-term?*

I don't think we will go back to the office full time. I think we will find a balance with a hybrid situation.

There are so many silver linings to appreciate during this really hard time. I never would have been able to have this time all together in our usual world and I greatly appreciate it. I'm excited to see what we keep as we move into our "new normal."



Alexandra Trumpy's at-home desk. She's the daughter of Tim and Michelle Trumpy. (Photo submitted)

## Talking social-emotional learning for children with U of M

To help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in communities across Minnesota, many children have spent an important period of their development at home with limited interaction with others. This can affect a child's social-emotional learning, which develops the skills needed to manage their emotions, build and maintain healthy relationships with others, and make responsible decisions as a part of a larger community.

University of Minnesota Professor Clay Cook explains why social-emotional learning is a vital part of a child's development and how caregivers can support their children.

**Q: What is social-emotional learning?**

Prof. Cook: Social-emotional learning (SEL) aims to ensure each child is socially and emotionally well by helping them develop a sense of belonging and positive feelings about themselves and their situation. It also helps them develop key competencies to respond to life situations and enhance the likelihood of achieving the types of meaningful outcomes we want for children now and as they transition into adulthood.

**Q: How can parents and other caring adults help develop social-emotional learning with their children?**

Prof. Cook: Just as it is for any other skill like reading, shooting a basketball or learning to ride a bike, SEL develops with repetition, practice and modeling. We, as adults, all developed the skills we have through regular practice and use of that skill. Knowing that practice is key puts caring adults in a better position to create opportunities for their child to practice specific social-emotional competencies - such as social skills - to build healthy relationships with others or resolve conflicts productively.

Children are always watching. Modeling - which is when someone sees a behavior of another and then imitates it - is also a powerful tool that facilitates social-emotional learning. Through this, parents and caring adults can help a child learn the use of emotion regulation skills. These skills can be used to calm down after an upsetting situation or identifying and reframing unhelpful thoughts that are getting in the way of doing important things through intentionally modeling these through their

own actions.

**Q: During COVID-19, most children are spending time at home. How can the home environment help a child develop their social-emotional skill set?**

Prof. Cook: The home environment is one of the most influential environments on children's development and functioning. Caregiving adults have the capability of helping children better regulate themselves in response to life situations and increase their motivation to follow through with important tasks through creating predictable home environments.

Predictability comes by establishing consistent routines that allow children to get in a rhythm with their behavior, so they can anticipate what's going to happen. For example, creating a visual schedule that outlines the sequence of activities the child will follow each day helps create predictability so the child can anticipate what is going to happen. Also, establishing what is referred to as "first-then" routines. This involves outlining what children need to do "first" before they "then" engage in something that is more preferred. Predictability also happens for children when

the adults in their lives establish clear expectations for behavior so the adult and child are on the same page. Lack of clear expectations for behavior expects children to read an adult's mind, which leads to inconsistencies and sometimes conflict.

In addition to predictability, caregiving adults can create a reinforcing environment by paying careful attention to what a child says, does or achieves that is worthy of acknowledgment and recognition. This demonstrates appreciation for the energy and effort the child is putting into schoolwork or some other aspect of family functioning.

**Q: Healthy relationships are an important part of a child's development. How can caregiving adults help establish that?**

Prof. Cook: Caregiving adults can use a very straightforward strategy called child time. It involves identifying a window of time to spend with the child (e.g., 20 minutes) where the child gets to select the activity and the caregiving adult's job is to ask open-ended questions, express interest, remain present and go along with what the child wants to do. This helps build healthy relationships, as well as provide

a time where the caregiving adult is not giving an instruction to the child, correcting something the child isn't doing properly, or making a request of the child to transition from doing something they like to do to something less preferred (e.g., go to bed).

**Q: What research are you doing in this space?**

Prof. Cook: Recently, I've been working with other researchers at the University of Minnesota on a project to develop and test a family-focused intervention in which caregiving adults work to support their child's social-emotional and behavioral well-being at home. The intervention - Brief Remoted Intervention for Engaging Families (BRIEF) - is designed to empower caregiving adults to select topics they would like to learn more about and plan ways to support their child's well-being. This can include promoting healthy sleep as the foundation for health and well-being and practicing skills to promote emotional coping and resilience in response to life stressors.

Clay Cook is a professor of educational psychology in the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development. His research and interests lie in school-based mental health supports, emotional and behavioral disorders, and positive psychological approaches to intervention.



# It's confirmed: we're stronger together

No block party? No tree lighting event? No problem! At least that's what the Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA) board members were hoping for last summer while meeting virtually to discuss ways to support our member businesses and build community during the pandemic. After several brainstorming sessions, NEBA came up with our newest initiative that was part riddle, part scavenger hunt, and part social media promotion that we aptly named "Nokomis Treasures."

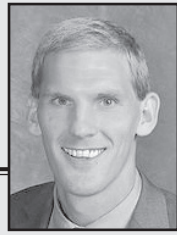
The goal? Give residents and fans of Nokomis East a reason to get out of the house and explore the neighborhood safely, while encouraging them to patronize their favorite businesses (Treasures!). The idea was one thing but launching a complete-

ly new project was another story, especially while social distancing. NEBA is a volunteer-driven organization, so this would be quite the undertaking for those involved.

Fortunately, we were able to take advantage of the diverse professional backgrounds and skills of our members to plan and execute the event. By far, the heavy lifting was carried out by NEBA Co-Chair, Heidi Van Heel of hvh Engage! Heidi has a home-based business in the neighborhood where she helps her clients with their own promotional strategies and content creation. It is safe to say that the project would not have gone anywhere without her efforts and expertise. With Heidi taking care of the marketing and execution, someone needed to actually seek out some locations

## Nokomis East Business Association

By **PATRICK JENSON**,  
Co-Chair  
nokomiseastba@gmail.com



and write the clues! For this, the planning committee turned to member and local real estate expert Bob Albrecht of Bob Albrecht Real Estate. It was a perfect fit for this lifelong realtor to utilize his knowledge of the neighborhood to identify some of its most treasured gems. But he further dazzled us all with his clever clue writing skills! With the loca-

tions determined and the clues prepared, all we needed was a medallion.

Once again, our dynamic Nokomis East business community showed its diversity with Jennie the Potter (Tang), owner of The Workshop Mpls, who got to work creating a beautiful custom medallion for the scavenger hunt. Of course, there were many other tasks to complete to make the project successful. NEBA Treasurer Kris Pearson (Keller Williams Realty) took the lead on securing prizes and the rest of the board, including me - Co-Chair Patrick Jensen (Edward Jones Investments), Nick Daugherty (McDonald's Liquor & Wine), Metal Mike (Nokomis Tattoo), and Neil Oxendale (Oxendale's Market) pitched in wherever needed. Plus, we also had numerous member businesses -- home-based and storefront -- who provided prizes for the ef-

fort, and #NokomisLife helped spread the word far and wide at every turn.

NEBA's mission is to promote its members and area businesses by working together to build a stronger, richer, and more vibrant community. This Nokomis Treasures initiative was a tremendous success. However, there is still a tough road ahead for many businesses. The block party, tree lighting, and other events will someday return, but one thing this project confirmed is that the neighborhood businesses and its residents are truly stronger together!

If you or someone you know would like to get involved with NEBA or find out how you can help with our next project, you can contact us at nokomiseastba@gmail.com.

List of prize winners and photos start on page 1 and jump to pages 14-15.

## Letters

### Loving where I live

To the Editor:

I just read this great book about loving your city: "This Is Where You Belong: the Art and Science of Loving the Place You Live" by Melody Warnick. Each chapter is about things you can do to feel more connected to your neighborhood (buy local, walk rather than drive, say hi to a neighbor, eat local, etc.). It reminded me of the many reasons I love living in Minneapolis.

It inspired me to look at my Target list and figure out what I could buy locally. I ended up at Hudson Hardware and Repair Lair on Lake St. I had nice conversations with the staff at both places, and enjoyed keeping the dollars in the community, especially after the double whammy of COVID-19 and the civil unrest. I knew Repair Lair did alterations, but I had no idea they sold secondhand winter and outdoor gear until I was trying to find a place to source kids' gloves locally.

Fittingly, I came across this book in one of the many little free lending libraries in my neighborhood. Yet another reason I love living in Longfellow!

Maybe other people would enjoy the book, too, and get ideas about staying connected in

Mpls. I highly recommend it.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Sheu  
Longfellow

### Governor should halt Line 3 construction

To the Editor:

At the beginning of December, Minnesota state regulators approved all the permits for the construction of Line 3, a tar sands pipeline that will run 337 miles across northern Minnesota, crossing 200 water bodies and 78 miles of wetlands.

The decision to grant the permits was premature. There are several pending lawsuits challenging the construction of Line 3 brought by Native nations, grassroots groups, and the Minnesota Department of Commerce. The Commerce Department lawsuit, which the Governor allowed to proceed in August, stated that "Enbridge did not introduce, and the commission did not evaluate the accuracy of, a long-range demand forecast for the type of energy that would be supplied by the proposed facility." Enbridge's plan is to complete Line 3 before these lawsuits go to court in the spring of 2021.

The reality is that we must reduce our use of fossil fuels if we want our legacy to be a livable climate for the children growing up today. To ensure that future, we need to invest in renewable energy sources, not chain ourselves to fossil fuel infrastructure like Line 3 which is projected to add the carbon equivalent of building 50 new coal-fired power plants.

And then there's the pandemic. Governor Walz, who has rightfully spent the past nine months urging us to limit our gatherings to stop the spread of COVID-19, quickly gave final approval for the project even though Enbridge Energy will be hiring at least 2000 out-of-state workers who will be placed in temporary housing in already under-resourced and vulnerable rural and tribal communities that are now being hit hard by COVID-19.

Governor Walz must order a halt to construction on Line 3 to stop a potential COVID super-spreader event and to allow a fair hearing for the objections to Line 3 of Native Americans, environmentalists, and young people that so far have been ignored.

Sincerely,  
Jay Lieberman  
Longfellow

### Muses by Anita White



## 2021 Special Sections Calendar

**JAN due Dec. 11**

Health & Wellness

School Guide

**FEB due Jan. 15**

Summer Camp Guide

Pet Matters

**MARCH due Feb. 12**

Home Improvement

Aging Well

**APRIL due March 15**

Home & Garden

Wheels

**MAY due April 19**

Home & Garden

Bicycling

**JUNE due May 17**

Aging Well

**JULY due June 21**

Along Lake Street

**AUGUST due July 19**

Back to School

**SEPT due Aug. 23**

Back to School - Health

Aging Well

**OCT due Sept. 20**

Home Improvement

Domestic Violence

Awareness Month

**NOV due Oct. 18**

Food & Drink

Shop Small/Buy Local

**DEC due Nov. 15**

Aging Well

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Mary Ghebremeskal

## South High junior named school board student representative

The Minneapolis Board of Education has announced South High School junior Mary Ghebremeskal will serve as its next Student Representative. She replaces outgoing Student Representative Nathaniel Genene from Washburn High School.

Thanking Genene for his service, MPS Board Chair Kim Ellison said, "Nathaniel's leadership and perspective during this particularly consequential year will positively impact the district for years to come. We are grateful for

his service, and we wish him the best in his studies next year at the University of Pennsylvania and beyond."

Ghebremeskal leads at South with a passion for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM), and for serving her community – including at the Brian Coyle Teen Tech Center and on the Cedar Riverside COVID Response Team. With a deep understanding of the challenges that face youth during the pandemic, she said she wants

to bring this perspective to the school board.

"In the same way that every student needs unique resources to succeed, every new problem MPS tackles will need a different solution. The reason I want to be a student representative is so I can be a part of that solution," said Ghebremeskal.

South staff describe Ghebremeskal as a natural leader, a curious learner, and a proactive community volunteer.

South teacher Michelle Ockmann described her as "inven-

tive, motivating, and inspiring." She said, "Mary makes important connections that allow others to join the conversation and look at things differently. She will shine in this position."

The Student Representative provides an important perspective and gives voice to those at the heart of the district's work: MPS students. The Board of Education has appointed a student representative since 2015. To learn more, visit: [board.mpls.k12.mn.us](http://board.mpls.k12.mn.us).



The Creative Enterprise Zone's new executive director is Nokomis resident Angela Casselton. The 18 murals that now grace the mostly industrial spaces of the CEZ are a great way to experience art, especially during the pandemic when museums are closed. View the map of where they are located on the CEZ website at [www.creativeenterprisezone.org](http://www.creativeenterprisezone.org). (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

## Creative Enterprise Zone hires new executive director

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Nokomis resident Angela Casselton was recently named executive director of the Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ), a non-profit organization that attracts and supports creatives of all kinds to "make it here."

Where exactly is here? The CEZ sits squarely between the University of Minnesota and the Midway along University Ave. It's a district that fosters creativity and innovation, equity and environmental health. Casselton is keenly aware of the economic challenge brought on by the pandemic, but remains hopeful as she starts her new job. She said, "I've been involved with this organization for years in different capacities. It's important to remember that the CEZ was born during a time of great disruption, when Green Line construction tore up the length of University Ave."

Most people know the CEZ for their work with the Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival in 2019, for which they have earned their moniker, "the mural people." A dozen murals were commissioned by artists from the Twin Cities and beyond two summers ago.

With the recent installation of Renee Spillum as board president, the CEZ board is prepared to move forward into the world of real estate negotiations. Spillum is a senior project manager for Seward Redesign, a community development corporation that promotes the health, vitality and self-determination of the

Seward neighborhood in Minneapolis. She holds a masters of public policy with a concentration in housing and community development from the Humphrey Institute, and has lived in the Midway area for 15 years.

One of the ideas up for consideration is forming a Community Investment Cooperative, modeled on the one being explored by the Hamline Midway Coalition (with technical assistance provided by CEZ consultant Erin Heelan.) That would give corridor residents a chance to buy into building ownership, preserving space for creative studios and shops.

Casselton said, "The definition of 'creative' includes artists of all kinds, manufacturers, entrepreneurs with a creative focus, architects, designers, writers, and artisans. Our vision is rooted in the belief that creative work is both necessary and deeply satisfying. A growing number of people make a living through their creative talents. The more vibrant the mix of people and ideas here, the more desirable the CEZ will be to live and work in."

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the staff and volunteers of CEZ continue with their core operations: a monthly newsletter, social media communications, community-driven real-estate work and more.

Questions about the CEZ can be directed to executive director Angela Casselton at [info@creativeenterprisezone.org](mailto:info@creativeenterprisezone.org). For newsletter sign-up, visit [www.creativeenterprisezone.org](http://www.creativeenterprisezone.org).

## Brandt seeks BET seat

Steve Brandt announces his candidacy for one of two citizen seats on the Minneapolis Board of Estimate and Taxation.

He pledged to employ common sense and good judgment on the board that sets the maximum levy for the city and approves its borrowing.

"I've spent my entire working life scrutinizing public finance issues at the local, county, regional and state levels of government," Brandt said, citing his 40-year career as a government reporter for the *Star Tribune*, from which he retired in 2016.

As a pensioner, Brandt appreciates the impact of property tax increases on people who have low or fixed incomes. Yet he also is keenly aware that a city that's 162 years old constantly requires infrastructure reinvestment, especially as a four-year member of the city's Capital Long-Range Capital Improvement Committee, which reviews and ranks capital projects proposed by city departments.

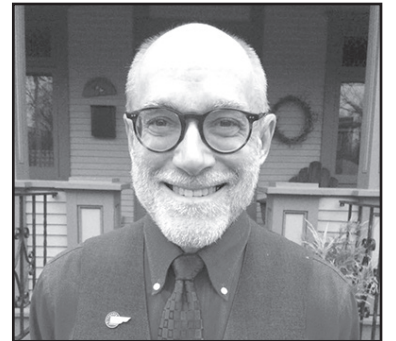
He'll said he be guided in voting on property tax proposals by the number of property owners facing an increase, the

size of that increase, the health of the city and national economy, and the actions of other major jurisdictions that tax Minneapolis property. He also hopes to use the board seat as a platform for supporting any needed changes to promote a fairer property tax system.

Three current or former members of the Board of Estimate and Taxation support Brandt's campaign.

Brandt brings a wealth of community and organizational experience to his candidacy. He is a 44-year member of The Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild, and has held various leadership positions in that organization. He has been a soccer coach, a Boy Scout leader, has led two parish councils, and served two terms on his neighborhood association board.

Since his retirement, Brandt devoted considerable time to cataloging racially discriminatory deed covenants, ranking among the top such Mapping Prejudice researchers for Hennepin County and Minneapolis. He's also been active in his church's voter registration efforts, especially for



Steve Brandt

low-income residents, and has been a consistent volunteer for its food distribution program during the pandemic. He has worked for several years on helping to advocate for the Great Northern Greenway, a recreational route across northeast and north Minneapolis, and was the originator of the RiverLake Greenway in south Minneapolis.

Brandt will seek DFL endorsement for the seat. He is a DFL precinct vice chair, is active in the DFL Senate District 62 organization, served on its Resolutions Committee, took an active role in the campaigns of DFLers Ray Dehn, Andrea Jenkins and Mark Haase. He has also served as a delegate to Hennepin County and Minneapolis DFL conventions.

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# Mapping Prejudice brings light to history's structural racism that impacts today's community

## BUILDING UPON OTHER WORK

Mapping Prejudice is based in the Borchert Map Library at the University of Minnesota. In 2016, the founding members of the project team joined forces to create the first-ever comprehensive visualization of racial covenants for an American city.

Mapping Prejudice was inspired by groundbreaking work in Seattle and Virginia that show how digital tools can illuminate structural racism and transform our understanding of the past.

Segregated Seattle was the brain-child of the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project at the University of Washington, which assembled a database of racial covenants that has become an important resource for historians, legal researchers and activists trying to understand how ideas about race shaped real estate law and housing policy.

Mapping Inequality was conceived by the University of Richmond's Digital Lab, which digitized New Deal redlining maps to illuminate how federal policy makers "used racial criteria to categorize lending and insurance risks." Historians have long understood the importance of redlining. Yet by using digital mapping software to organize, analyze and display historic data about this practice, this project retold the story in way that made it accessible for a popular audience.

4. That no building shall be left with paper exposure or with the exterior incomplete.  
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>> from 1

The exhibit aims to counter the idea of Minneapolis as a "model metropolis" so that as a city, it can begin to recognize its past. More about her exhibit can be found at [dpike.dash.umn.edu/owningup](http://dpike.dash.umn.edu/owningup).

"While we make no policy proposals, we hope that the exhibit encourages visitors to think critically about their neighborhoods and the future of the city of Minneapolis," Pike said.

She co-curated the exhibit along with Kacie Lucchini Butcher after their first year in the Heritage Studies and Public History Master's program at the University of Minnesota. They worked closely together with Mapping Prejudice. Their goal is to create a visible representation of the systematic racism that's happening. According to Pike, Minnesota is ranked highest in racial disparities and residential segregation in a predominantly White area. She believes that these covenants aren't just things of the past, but that they impact the community today and will in the future as well.

"It puts into perspective just how wide-spread and destructive racially-discriminatory policies

were to communities of color. In order to make reparations in the present day, we must fully understand the damages we are dealing with," Pike said.

## 'White public doesn't realize full extent of disparities'

Areas that had racial covenants placed on property are still some of the most predominately White areas of the city. The areas that people of color were allowed to live in are still areas with the highest population of color. Despite racial housing discrimination being illegal for over 50 years, there are still long lasting patterns of segregation.

"Minneapolis and the Twin Cities see themselves as very progressive places but, I think that a large portion of the White public don't realize the full extent of racial disparities here," Pike said.

She also believes that the segregation of housing, in part, has to do with the current Uprising. Mapping Prejudice is for the purpose of giving people a deeper understanding of how ingrained structural racism is in Minneapolis. It is a tool to connect the dots between housing, policing, health and school disparities among others.

## What are covenants?

During the twentieth century, racially-restrictive deeds were a ubiquitous part of real estate transactions. Covenants were embedded in property deeds all over the country to keep people who were not White from buying or even occupying land. In Minneapolis, the first racially-restrictive deed appeared in 1910, when Henry and Leonora Scott sold a property on 35th Avenue South to Nels Anderson. Covenants remained commonplace in much of the nation until 1968, when the Fair Housing Act made them explicitly illegal.

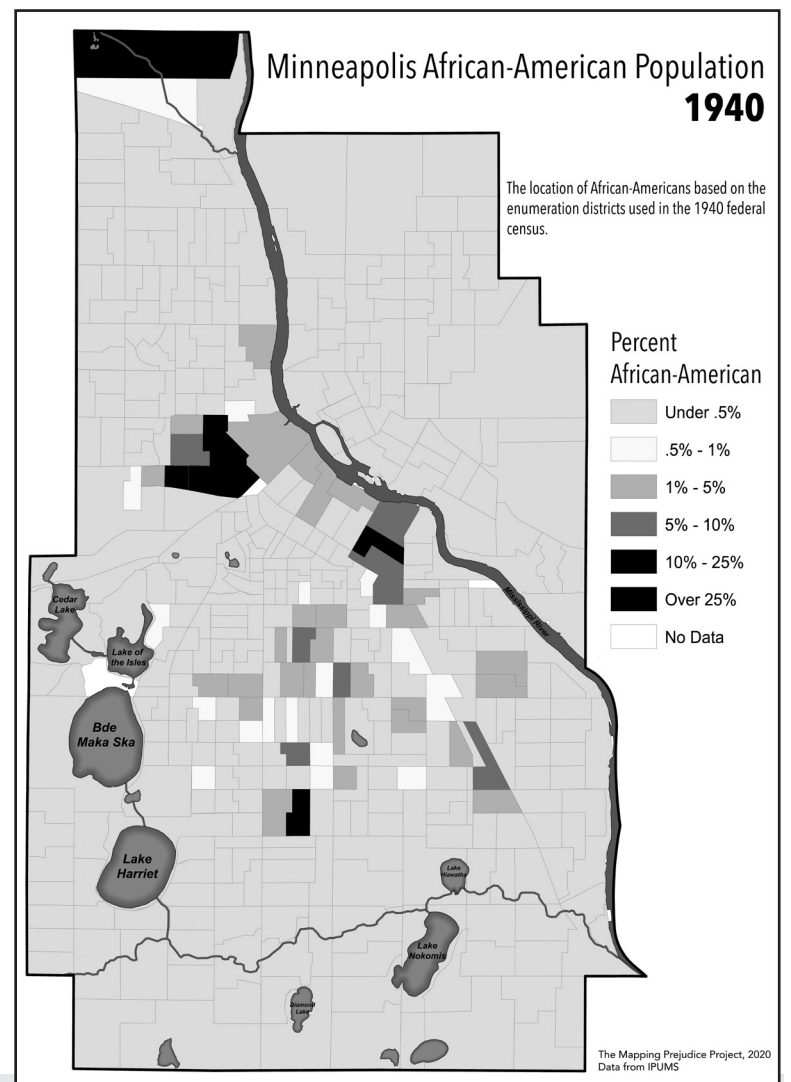
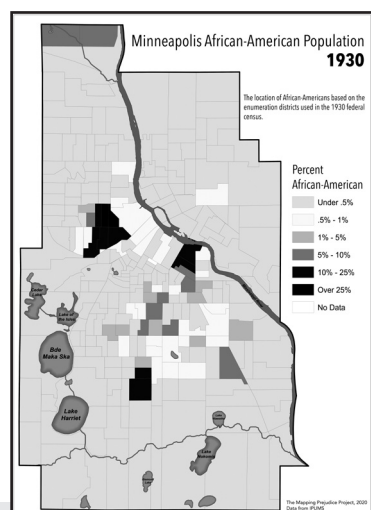
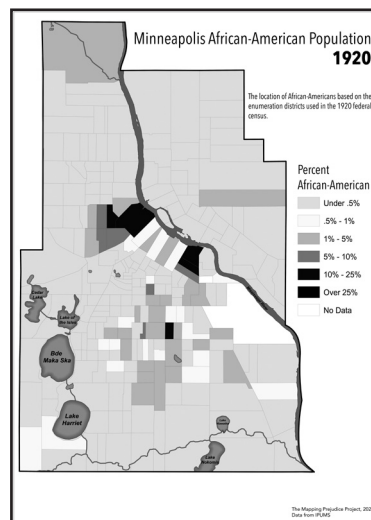
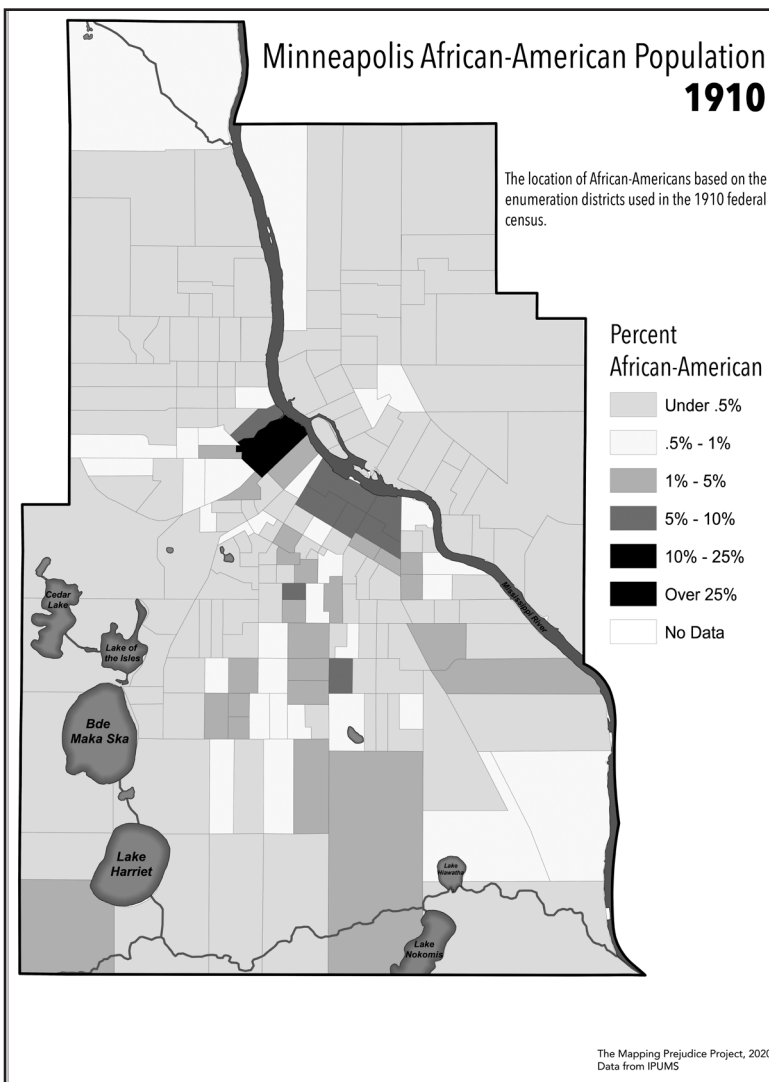
## Why covenants matter

Covenants divided cities by race. These residential segregation patterns persist today. And this physical segregation undergirds contemporary racial disparities. Covenants did more than steer people to certain neighborhoods.

Separate is not equal. In the United States, racial segregation channels the flow of resources. Where you live determines access to community assets. Majority white neighborhoods have more parks and more generous tree cover. Communities of color have more environmental hazards like landfills and highways. They have less access to medical care, which translates into higher rates of infant mortality and premature births. Schools in these neighborhoods usually have fewer experienced teachers and less challenging curriculum. Some institutions beat the odds. But most struggle to maintain the resources necessary to meet the needs of their communities.

They also determined who could buy property. J.T. Wardlaw wrote in a letter to the Minneapolis Star: These "are the tools used to depress homeownership among Negroes... These are also the practices which if endured for another decade will reap for Minneapolis a sorry harvest." Wardlaw's declaration was prophetic.

~ From [mappingprejudice.umn.edu](http://mappingprejudice.umn.edu)



**Today Minneapolis has the lowest African-American homeownership rate in the country.** And since most families amass wealth through property ownership, this homeownership gap continues to feed the contemporary racial wealth gap. Wealth is built through generations, with one generation passing resources to another. Thanks in part to the racial biases that have been baked into the real estate market over the last century, the average White household in the United States has 10 times as much wealth as the average Black household. The racial wealth gap makes it hard to erode residential segregation. And it contributes in every way to the racial disparities in education, health outcomes and employment facing our community today. ~ From [mappingprejudice.umn.edu](http://mappingprejudice.umn.edu)



# North Star Ski Touring Club embraces silent sports

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

To a cross country skier, there are few sounds more magical than the swoosh of their skis on a freshly groomed trail – and Minnesota has no shortage of these.

According to Gail Lundeen Brand, members of the North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) have joyfully skied every inch of the Midwest's trails and beyond. Brand is a board member of NSSTC, a ski club which started in 1967. Back then, skis were made of wood; the bottoms were treated with pine tar every fall, and scraped to a smooth finish before the season began. That was a long time ago.

These days, the equipment has changed but the attraction to the sport has not. For people who love being active in winter (in a quiet, un-motorized way), cross country skiing is still as good as it gets.

Brand said, "The health and wellness advantages of cross country skiing include improving coordination, heart health, muscle strength, endurance, and balance. In addition, it's a great way to visit places you've never been before – and there's the potential for making life-long friends."

NSSTC welcomes skate skiers and classic skiers of all ages and experience levels from beginning to expert. Two years ago, the volunteer-led club decided it was important to offer a mentoring program for beginning adult skiers who have completed at least one formal lesson somewhere.

There will be no mentoring meet-ups until COVID-19 lessens, but anyone interested can still go the website at [www.north-stars.org](http://www.north-stars.org) to get the process rolling. It's a good time to connect with a mentor, to talk about how to dress for warmth and comfort while skiing, to start to learn about waxing, and to get some tips on where to buy new or used equipment.



Linda Grieme (left) and Gregg Kelley (right) have been members of the NSSTC for decades. They're drawn to others who love and value silent sports. They bought their home, in part, because of its proximity to the Hiawatha Golf Course – where they've already skied a few times this year. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Once the ski season starts in earnest and it is safe to gather again, organized trips will resume. According to Brand, "Trip leaders are encouraged to take

club-sponsored safety and first aid training. We make sure there is a volunteer leader bringing up the rear on all of our outings, as well as up front. No one will be left behind on the trails. There's a supportive culture of how we lead trips. We encourage people to buddy up with others who are at the same level, and to ski in groups of at least three."

In the past, NSSTC has sponsored reasonably priced day,

weekend, and week-long trips to cross country skiing destinations near and far. Member-only trips venture to ski lodges in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ontario and points beyond. The forested trails of the Upper Midwest are considered some of the best skiing in the country.

Membership costs \$20 per year, per household, regardless of family size. At present, the only scheduled activities are month-

ly ZOOM meetings about cross country skiing technique and history – and about Minnesota's great outdoors. Brand said, "We are following the governor's recommendations carefully; the most important thing is to stay safe right now."

Cross country skiing may be the passion of the North Stars, but they find ways to have fun together all year. In the off-season, they can be found hiking and biking local trails, canoeing, kayaking, dancing, and picnicking.

They also roll up their sleeves every fall and brandish hand tools, rakes, and chain saws. Club members take their brush clearing responsibilities seriously, as they prepare cross country ski trails for the coming season. Through a formal grant program and organized volunteer activities, NSSTC contributes to developing and improving trails across the state.

While cross country skiing is a fairly inexpensive sport, remember that trail passes are required in most parks. The money they raise goes to improving and maintaining trail systems. There is no cost to ski at most public city golf courses. However, passes are required at Minneapolis city golf courses. The Loppet Foundation sells natural snow ski passes to access the natural snow trails of Hiawatha Golf Course, Columbia Golf Course, Theodore Wirth Park, and The Chain of Lakes.

Email North Star Ski Touring Club board member Gail Lundeen Brand with questions about club membership at [brand2132@gmail.com](mailto:brand2132@gmail.com).

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## Messenger Deadlines 2021

Publication typically fourth Thursday.	Deadlines typically third Monday.
Publication date	Deadline date
Dec. 29 (Tuesday)	Dec. 11 (Friday)
Jan. 28	Jan. 15 (Friday)
Feb. 25	Feb. 12 (Friday)
March 25	March 15
April 29	April 19
May 27	May 17
July 1	June 21
July 29	July 19
Sept. 2	Aug. 23
Sept. 30	Sept. 20
Oct. 28	Oct. 18
Nov. 30 (Tuesday)	Nov. 15
Dec. 28 (Tuesday)	Dec. 13



# What's your favorite neighborhood business? >> From 1

23 years ago, and we've talked all through this tough summer. After a community meeting in Longfellow Park in late May, I joined a group of neighbors dedicated to supporting small business owners. Several of us helped David and Mara put boards on their windows during the uprising. These experiences ratcheted up my sense of what it means to live in this neighborhood. That corner is always on my mind. It means a lot to me."

Cornell was formerly the advertising art director for *City Pages*, and has been on his own as a freelance creative for almost two decades. He thrives on what he calls, "hypothetical rigor and making connections."

Long after the boards were taken off the windows, he was still thinking about how to protect the Riverview Café and Wine Bar. There was the threat of physical damage this summer; now the challenges are economic.

He said, "With the Hiawatha Clinic closing permanently this month, Mother Earth Gardens slowing down after Christmas tree sales, and the Riverview Theater open only for popcorn a few days each week, there is real concern about how David and Mara are going to make it this winter. They count on people passing through the neighborhood."

## A neighborhood treasure

The weekend after the election, the Riverview hosted a pop-up event to celebrate: with \$5 glasses of wine and live music in the parking lot. Cornell and his wife put on their masks and walked over. They bumped into neighbors and friends they hadn't seen in ages. They talked and laughed; it was sort of, almost, like old times.

Cornell had noticed a note in the *Messenger* about sponsoring a business ad, and he mentioned it to a few neighbors that night. Cornell liked the idea of supporting the local newspaper and the Riverview at the same time. With his advertising



Ad sponsor Brian Cornell said, "The events of 2020 have brought many losses to our community. One of the positive outcomes is that residents are learning to connect with each other and with small businesses in new ways. I appreciate 'small town Longfellow' more than ever before. It's something I feel we can't take for granted. If there's a family-owned business that matters to you, spend your dollars there. They need your support." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

*"It's time to give back, to ensure that businesses like the Riverview Café and Wine Bar will be here when we can all go out again safely."*

~ Brian Cornell

background, he offered to design the ad himself. When the ad idea came up in conversation that night at the pop-up, other families asked if they could contribute to the cost. Cornell said, "Here we all were at this great, socially distanced gathering. Where else could we have come together safely like this?"



The Bernick family (left to right: Auguste, David, Anavie and Mara) has operated the Riverview Café and Wine Bar for more than two decades. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

## Time to give back

With a long winter looming, Cornell hopes residents will

think of creative ways to keep supporting the small businesses that define this neighborhood. Sponsoring an ad in the com-

## Facilitating connections

"It's clear our readers in Longfellow and Nokomis are aware of the plight of area businesses during COVID-19. They are ready to do what they can to make sure that their favorite neighborhood haunts will still be around after the pandemic is tamed by available vaccines. The Adopt-A-Business concept was created in response to our readers and neighbors who wanted to find a way to lend businesses a hand and show them that they are a valued component of our community," pointed out Longfellow Nokomis Messenger Sales Manager Denis Woulfe.

"When residents have expressed interest in contributing towards the cost of an ad for an area business, that's where the conversation began," he added. "I would ask them what types of businesses were most important to them in the neighborhood and whether there was a favorite business that they would like to help underwrite at least a portion of their advertising expenses. And after getting a sense of their favorites, I would approach one of the businesses with the offer. It's been heartening to know that our readers do get it. They definitely want to help out where they can."

"And the Messenger is delighted to help facilitate that connection between our readers and our advertisers."

munity newspaper is one way he chose to act. Ordering take-out is another way, especially when the café and wine bar are closed for in-person dining.

David and Mara Bernick have café and wine bar gift cards for sale, as well as bottles of their specialty "South Side Sauce." Buying one or both is an easy way to give the gift of food and drink during the holiday season and beyond.

Cornell said, "Anyone who has ever organized a school fundraiser or a silent auction for a community event knows that David and Mara have been extremely generous over the years. It's time to give back, to ensure that businesses like the Riverview Café and Wine Bar will be here when we can all go out again safely."



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# Community Bulletin Board

Supporting the neighborhood by supporting our local businesses



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## Rebuilding and Reopening

Welcome to the sixth and final edition of the ADX-Longfellow Business Association's **Community Bulletin Board**! With the financial support of Minneapolis-based ADX Foundation and the merchant community leadership of the Longfellow Business Association (LBA), the monthly **Community Bulletin Board** in the *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* serves as a guide to local business and highlights the rebuilding and reopening efforts of our community.

## A message of thanks from the ADX Foundation

Six months ago, we partnered with the Longfellow Business Association (LBA) to bring to you this Community Bulletin in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger because we wanted to spotlight the diverse small businesses in the area. We stand in admiration of the resilience these business owners have shown, and we are thankful for our partner in this series, the LBA, whose members pounded the pavement offering financial help to small businesses, made introductions and inspired connections between those with something to give or volunteer to those who needed help the most.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of the Longfellow, Cooper, Howe, and Hiawatha neighborhoods, providing vital goods and services of all kinds, providing jobs, the art and music for us to enjoy, and the food we eat. Over these past six months, local businesses and community members have shared their stories with us. These have at times been stories of struggle and frustration, stories about the rebuilding process, inspiring stories of resilience and support, stories of innovation and entrepreneurship, and the one constant in all these stories is that of community. The recovery and rebuilding efforts will continue for some time but thanks to heroic efforts, we are confident that this community will thrive.

From the Longfellow Business Association (LBA), to Rebuild Longfellow, to Longfellow Rising this community has shown support for one another in unparalleled ways. It is our turn to say thanks to them and to you for sharing your stories with us. We look forward to a stronger, safer, and more prosperous 2021.

-The ADX Foundation

## Rebuild Longfellow:

A grassroots community guide to our neighborhood

## REBUILD LONGFELLOW

The ADX Foundation thanks Rebuild Longfellow for their work in supporting businesses in need. Rebuilding and recovery will take time, but grassroots efforts like this provide a much-needed starting point.

Rebuild Longfellow is a grassroots team of Longfellow residents who partner with the Longfellow Business Association, Longfellow Community Council, and Seward Redesign to inform on practical ways to support local businesses. They assess both businesses in need and provide an opportunity for members of the community to share their professional skills with other businesses in need.

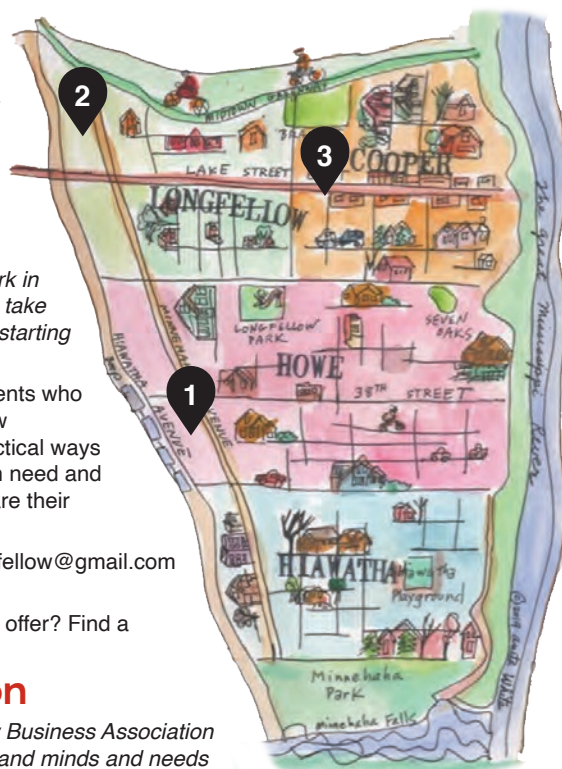
**Need assistance?** Businesses can reach out to [rebuildlongfellow@gmail.com](mailto:rebuildlongfellow@gmail.com) to update their need requests.

**What to help your community?** Have a skill or a service to offer? Find a business to help at [rebuildlongfellow.org](http://rebuildlongfellow.org).

## Longfellow Business Association



The ADX Foundation saw the Longfellow Business Association as the organization closest to the hearts and minds and needs of these small entrepreneurs. We donated to LBA knowing that in some way they were about trying to make right the great wrong that was done to these citizens. We know they have made a difference by providing resources, advocacy, and support to businesses in the community.



Anita White, Artist  
<https://www.mnartists.org/anita-white>



1 "Without the community, I wouldn't be where I am today."- Catiesha Pierson, owner, The Dripping Root



2 "The LBA was so helpful to small businesses like Diamonds. The LBA's [grant] was the turning point for us. In addition to financial support, Diamonds also received donations of PPE and we even received web development assistance from the community."- Diamonds Home Health Care Inc.

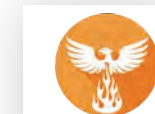


3 "Through [the LBA] we were connected to other individuals and business that offered pro bono website design. Thanks to community support, we'll now have a new logo, slogan, and website... There are a lot of good people in this community."- Shifa Restaurant.

Please consider joining the Longfellow Business Association. Email [info@longfellow-businessassociation.org](mailto:info@longfellow-businessassociation.org) or visit <https://www.longfellowbusinessassociation.org/> for more information.

## Community Stories

### Longfellow Rising



Longfellow Rising

In 2020, Downtown Longfellow suffered a great deal of loss. Over the course of two nights, Downtown Longfellow lost 19 of its 44 buildings to fire. Most of these were owner-occupied, and many belonged to people of color. In addition, 13 businesses were heavily damaged. ADX Spoke with one of the founders of

Longfellow Rising, Daniel Kennedy, about the reasons he and his fellow business owners started Longfellow Rising.

### ADX: How did Longfellow Rising come about?

Longfellow Rising: The killing of George Floyd and the destruction that followed are being countered by the constructive response of businesses and residents.

Residents helped clean debris during the daytime, then stood vigil overnight to protect the remaining businesses from destruction. The business community formed Longfellow Rising to help Downtown Longfellow rebuild in a way that carries forward our best aspects, addresses pre-existing problems, and adds new vitality.

Assistance is needed most by our BIPOC owners whose mortgages consumed most of their insurance payouts. Longfellow Rising is collaborating with the LCC, LBA, Lake Street Council, Seward Redesign, and others to bring a community vision to this unsolicited opportunity to remake our busiest commercial district.



### ADX: What is the vision behind Longfellow Rising?

Longfellow Rising: There is now an opportunity for the community to truly develop in ways it wouldn't have been able to before. Our vision is to rebuild their community in a way that is:

**Collaborative:** Combining narrow lots to create commercial spaces that would not have been not feasible before.

**Diverse:** Many of the destroyed buildings belonged to persons of color, who will reopen their businesses and continue to attract our diverse community to this district.

**Sustainable:** Achieving the highest standards of efficiency in energy, water, and land use.

**Mixed-Use:** Buildings that had one story will be rebuilt with residential units above, including affordable housing, bringing new vitality to this commercial district.

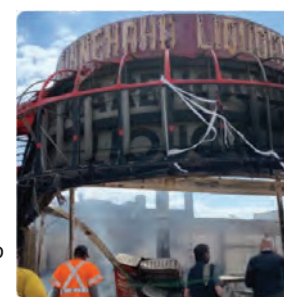
**Beautiful:** Intentionally artistic in its architecture.

### ADX: What else would you like to see for the community?

Longfellow Rising: In addition to building on our vision, we'd like to acquire and develop a new public plaza that will allow the community to gather for cultural celebrations and reflect on events of 2020 that led to this rebuilt commercial district. This will also serve as a place of recreation for our added residential community members.

### ADX: Any final thoughts you'd like to share?

Longfellow Rising: A year ago, most buildings and storefronts were occupied. We had great restaurants. A vibrant multicultural vibe. We have a long way to go to rebuild, but this community bond we have is so unique and truly inspiring. A few months ago, I drove an ice cream truck around the neighborhood handing out ice cream to our residents. The event was sponsored by the LBA, and it was a small way to say thanks to this community who stood with us.



Currently, Longfellow Rising is trying to raise money for this vision. For more information on Longfellow Rising go to <https://www.givern.org/organization/Longfellow-Rising>

## About ADX LABS

ADX Labs, Inc. (ADX) is a Minneapolis-headquartered global technology company focused on providing innovative products and services for individuals, home-based businesses, and the small to medium enterprise market. It is the core company in a global group of technology, entertainment and services brands and businesses. ADX independently funds the ADX Foundation, a registered non-profit philanthropic organization which has invested in children, communities, and social justice since 2013.

## About the Longfellow Business Association

The Longfellow Business Association (LBA) exists to ensure a vibrant business climate for the area by monitoring issues that impact our area businesses, facilitating communication between area businesses, providing business development resources, and supporting the greater Longfellow Community, which includes the Longfellow, Cooper, Howe, and Hiawatha neighborhoods. We are home to more than 22,000 residents and over 500 businesses, all of whom we strive to support and promote.



# Minneapolis wrestles with homelessness

>> From 1

As the days and nights grow colder, and dangers from fires and propane use in the encampments grow stronger, Minneapolis and Hennepin County and the state of Minnesota along with front line workers, nonprofits and community members, put forth effort to help alleviate the struggles.

"When we look at who experiences homelessness, one common factor is an extremely low income," said David Hewitt, director of the Office to End Homelessness, a joint project started in 2006 by the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. Hewitt said his area of work is three-fold: rare, which involves eviction prevention; brief, which focuses on crisis response and non-recurring, which has its emphasis on supportive housing. "Supportive housing is the biggest area," Hewitt observed. He said the goal of shelter outreach is to get people out of unsafe living conditions as quickly as possible.

## Heading Home Hennepin

Katie Topinka, housing policy director of the City Planning and Economic Development department (CPED), said the city and county have a formal partnership, Heading Home Hennepin (HHH), to prevent homelessness.

"HHH is a committee that provides some guidance to the Office to End Homelessness," she explained. "It is co-chaired by Mayor Jacob Frey and Commissioner Angela Conley of District 4." The committee includes government officials, members of the community, nonprofits, faith and business organizations, homeless and formerly homeless individuals. "We meet three times a year, and it brings us all together to talk through the things we are working on and get guidance to move forward," Topinka said.

"The city, county and some-



Tents are set up at various places in Minneapolis, including near a wooded park. Homelessness is prevalent throughout the state. According to Minnesota Homeless Coalition (MHC) Executive Director Rhonda Otteson, 80 out of 87 counties lack enough shelter beds. Half of the people experiencing homelessness are youth up to age 24. People of Color are 10 times more likely than their White counterparts to be homeless. (Photos by Terry Faust)

times the state have worked in partnership on homelessness before the pandemic," she continued, "but COVID-19 and the encampments have made the issue more visible. We have received some federal funding because of the pandemic, and that gives us an opportunity to think strategically and work with community participation."

## Homeward Bound shelter

An example of this is Homeward Bound, a 50-bed shelter developed by the American Indian Community Development Corporation, which opened Dec. 7. "The shelter is culturally designed for Native Americans, who represent a disproportionate number of unsheltered homeless individuals," Topinka said.

Just as minorities are more affected by the COVID-19 virus, so are they more affected by homelessness.

The 10-year plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County put out by HHH cites the following possible reasons for greater numbers of minorities facing homelessness. They are underemployed due to racial discrimination in the job market, lack of access to afford-

able housing due to racial discrimination in the housing market, overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system, and disparity in poverty rates.

## Indoor Villages tiny houses

Another of the many projects providing shelter for the homeless is Indoor Villages, a group of 100 tiny houses being administered by Avivo, an organization that assists in finding housing as well as providing other services to those in need.

"It was a new idea, brought from the community," Topinka said. "It's more responsive to barriers preventing people from staying in other shelters, a private space for them." The residents will also receive employment and substance abuse services if needed from Avivo.

"The city's focus is on trying to create more permanent, affordable housing," Topinka continued. "It needs to be affordable to low-income individuals, and that takes quite a bit of funding."

She said the biggest challenge facing the city is that it takes time to develop housing. "Incomes have not increased at the same rate as housing costs.

It's hard to keep up to the level of need we have."

She said there is also a need to make policy changes to address the level of need such as changing zoning codes. She said that single occupancy housing with a shared kitchen, for example, is currently not allowed. But that kind of housing is cheaper to build and cheaper to rent, and it would create another more affordable housing option.

## Rental assistance, eviction moratorium

Topinka said the biggest challenge for the homeless is the weather and COVID-19. "But there are a lot of resources to help people stay as safe as possible," she added. "Providing better ventilation in existing shelters, and keeping them open 24-7 helps. There's still a lot more that needs to be done, but I'm proud of the progress we have made."

As severe as the combination of the pandemic and homelessness is, 2020 has seen a decrease in families in shelters, according to Hewitt. "I think that is because of the eviction moratorium," he noted. "It raises the question as to what happens when that mor-

HOMELESSNESS >> 11

## New safe spaces

4 new emergency shelter locations

\$15.2 million total investment

200 total beds

- Homeward Bound, 50 beds for Native American adults, \$7.5 million total investment, opened Dec. 1
- Lerner Building, 100 separate units in an "indoor village" for people currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness, \$6 million total investment, planned opening end of December
- Salvation Army emergency shelter, 30 beds for women experiencing unsheltered homelessness, \$1.3 million total investment, opened Dec. 1
- Simpson Housing emergency shelter, 20 beds for women experiencing unsheltered homelessness on a separate floor of Simpson Housing's existing emergency shelter location, \$400,000 total investment, opened in October

670 additional units of affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness

- Catholic Charities Exodus 2.0 (construction beginning soon): 203 units for people experiencing chronic homelessness
- Park 7 (open now): 61 units
- Mino-Bimaadiziwin (opening December 2020): 17 units
- Maya Commons (opened July 2020): 12 units
- Penn Avenue Union (opened August 2020): 4 units
- Lake Street Phase 1 (opening late 2020): 6 units
- Franklin Avenue AICDC site (opened in December): 20 beds for Native American residents experiencing homelessness with chemical dependency
- Gateway NE (opening early 2021): 10 units
- Scattered site opportunities (opening soon): 200 new units for people experiencing homelessness, including 100 permanent and 100 time-limited, at various sites around the county with subsidies and support services
- Amber Apartments (construction underway along Hiawatha Ave.) – 17 units
- Lydia Apartments (construction beginning soon) – 80 units for people experiencing homelessness
- Anishinabe III (construction beginning soon) – 40 units
- Indoor Villages (just approved by Minneapolis City Council), 100 tiny houses within warehouses for people experiencing homelessness, administered by Avivo
- Projects and additional housing are continually being developed

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## HOMELESSNESS &gt;&gt; From 10

atorium ends."

He agreed with Topinka that a lot of new projects are going on, and although shelters are only temporary the focus is to get people into housing and removed from the winter elements.

Besides funding for shelters and permanent housing, however, Hennepin County and its partners also have provided a little over \$2 million in rental assistance on the private market. "We have rental support for permanent properties scattered across the county," he said.

In a project initiated two and a half years ago, Hewitt said 1,600 chronically homeless have been moved into their own housing. "Before this move, they had been homeless for three years," he added.

Hewitt said that in the first week of December, the 100th person of those at risk for medical complications from COVID-19 was placed into permanent housing.

"Between January and October, we moved 1,500 people into housing," he said.

## Street Voices of Change

"We have also invested a lot to improve shelters, working with Street Voices of Change," Hewitt continued. This is an organization of homeless or formerly homeless groups of individuals who come together to build community and make positive changes

in the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

"They have a bill of rights and make their voices known on issues of storage, space and culturally specific housing, for example," Hewitt said. "I think we have to engage and listen to the people who are and have been homeless in designing services and reviewing policy. When building supportive housing, we brought in folks who experienced chronic homelessness, asking them whether they preferred built-in laundry services, being closer to stores or medical facilities."

Hewitt said it has been a huge challenge to keep people safe during the pandemic, whether staff or homeless individuals.

"There have been so many crises at once, not just homelessness," he said. "It is a time of a lot of fear that impacts everyone and everything. Hennepin County and Minneapolis are fortunate that we have incredible nonprofits and faith and business communities who have supported us. The community has stepped up."

## Youthlink

"It is not only the pandemic and a lack of affordable housing, but a lack of affordable education, job opportunities and mental health services that all affect the homeless to a greater degree," said Jose Acuna. Acuna is a supervisor for outreach for Youthlink, an organization in Minneapolis that provides services for

homeless youth aged 16 to 24. "We have to provide services in a holistic way."

He said temporary housing in hotels or shelters helps for a few days, but is not a permanent solution. "There are so many barriers, and for people who are undocumented it is worse. For most of the programs, you need a social security number and if you don't have it, you can't get help."

He said some of the shelters and housing are cookie-cutter developments, and not everyone fits. "If you suffer from a mental illness, you might not fit in with that type of setting. And COVID-19 makes everything worse. There have to be wrap-around services."

Acuna cited an example. "With transportation, if people have no training, it's a problem. You can give me an airplane to use for transportation, but how do I pilot it? Where can I put the airplane when I'm not using it? I don't know how to land the plane. I might take the airplane and crash. I need classes on how to use it and how to maintain it."

He said the same thing applies to housing. "People have evictions and mental health issues." He said they need more than just the housing.

Acuna said there have been homeless encampments by the river for many years, but they are now more visible. And they represent community.

"People are very hungry for community, and they have a desire and need to belong," he said.

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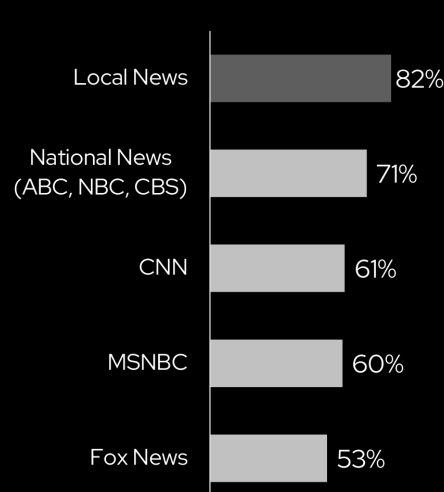
— Bernard Whitman, WINS

## Local News is the most trusted source across a range of measures

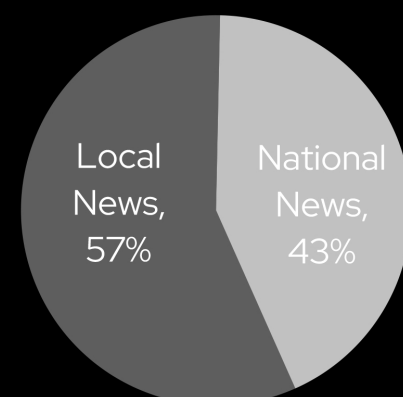
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\* Data from "The Covid-19 Societal Impact Study" by Whitman Insight Strategies Initiative and Creative Circle Media Solution, 2020.



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## Lake Street Council launches grant programs totaling \$1.5 million to encourage local ownership, development

### The nonprofit is now accepting acquisition and pre-development grant applications

The Lake Street Council announces two new grants that will provide a total of \$1.5 million to local entrepreneurs who rebuild and invest in property on Lake Street.

The grants are a part of the nonprofit's We Love Lake Street Fund, which raised more than \$11 million for Lake Street businesses following the civil uprising prompted by George Floyd's death.

"Small businesses are essential to the economic well-being and vitality of our region," said Lake Street Council Executive Director Allison Sharkey. "We are determined to help business owners and members of the community rebuild, reopen and invest in Lake Street."

The We Love Lake Street Acquisition Fund will provide a total of \$1 million in forgivable loans to encourage local entrepreneurs and nonprofits to purchase destroyed properties. Small

business owners who were displaced by social unrest can also use the funds to help purchase a building on the Lake Street corridor. The We Love Lake Street Pre-development Fund will provide a total of \$500,000 in grants for pre-development costs, such as feasibility studies, environmental reviews and architecture.

Both grant programs are competitive and will prioritize applicants that are led by or benefit Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, align with equitable development principles and pedestrian-oriented design guidelines, and/or were properties most impacted by the civil unrest this past summer.

"Lake Street has a long history of small businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) families, local entrepreneurs, and immigrant business owners. Many of these small businesses are currently ex-

periencing the most challenges in recovering and reopening," said Elena Gaarder, CEO of the Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers and chair of the We Love Lake Street Fund Oversight Committee.

"Our goal with these grants is to keep property in local hands, support wealth in BIPOC communities and retain the small businesses that make Lake Street that vibrant corridor that it is," Gaarder said.

More than 400 Lake Street businesses incurred hundreds of millions of dollars in damage following the civil uprising this past summer. To assist owners in rebuilding and reopening, the Lake Street Council created the We Love Lake Street Fund in May, which to-date has provided more than \$5 million in grants to 300 different small businesses along the Lake Street corridor.

The two new We Love Lake Street Fund grant programs are now open for applications. Grant applications will be reviewed starting on Jan. 4, 2021, and accepted on a rolling basis.

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## Book explores racism, social justice and George Floyd's killing

# ORIGIN OF RACISM

By JAN WILLMS

Floyd Williams describes himself as a student of life, a revolutionary on many different levels: mentally, spiritually and socially. "I am definitely a person who is about my roots, and bringing to fruition the vision of the ancestors, which I describe as liberation," he said.

With that in mind, and with the current atmosphere of concern about social justice, Williams has released a second edition of "The Origin of Racism," a book he first wrote in 2012. "The book has a new introduction and includes what is happening up here in Minnesota in 2020," he said. Williams has written four books. He is also the owner of Thought Healing, where he teaches kinetic yoga and reiki, and does aura photography.

Williams claims he is very much a reflection of his father, who was the first Black policeman in the Metropolitan Airports Commission. He served there from 1968 to 1998. "My father loved history, especially Black history," said Williams. "One of the things I remember him telling me was about the power of taking notes." That note-taking has led Williams to write books.

He said his father experienced racism from the beginning of his job and filed discrimination suits a couple of times during his career. "A sergeant on the force told him you have to send out a boogie to deal with a boogie," Williams recalled. "They would send him out to quell or calm down other Black people. He had to fight discrimination the whole time he was there."

### First-hand observer of prison

When his father died in 1999 from a heart attack, Williams was just 16. He left the Merriam Park neighborhood in St. Paul where he had grown up and headed for Little Rock, Ark., to live with an aunt.

The loss of his father left Williams traumatized, and he eventually got into trouble, ending up serving a sentence of nine years in a Mississippi prison. That experience gave him an opportunity to be a first-hand observer of the racial disparities in the penal system.

Williams compares prisons to plantations, a continuation of slavery. "The prison system was created simultaneously with the Emancipation Proclamation," he said. "It was used as a convict lease system. The prisons were filled with Blacks, the same as today, in cells for minor infractions. You could be arrested back then for congregating in groups of two or three, or for eyeballing a White or European. The convict lease system did not end until 1918."

When he was serving his sentence, Williams said the prison in Mississippi was called "the farm." Prisoners would work in different parts of the town. "They'd pick you up in the morning, pull you



Floyd Williams' father was the first Black police officer in the Metropolitan Airports Commission, where he worked from 1968-98. (Photo by Jan Willms)

out to a farm on a tractor bed that held about 40 people. You would be out there from sunrise to sunset." Williams said the prisoners would pick everything, from beans to corn to okra. "And it was scorching hot," he recalled. He said there were 40 deaths of prisoners in two to three months.

"Blacks are 14 percent of the general population, but almost 90 percent of the prison population," he added.

Williams also laments the education gap between White and Black students. "We still have many Black and Brown kids who can't read at a third grade level," he said.

"One thing that stands out and bothers me about Minnesota, and that should prick everyone's conscience, are the two institutions that stand side by side," Williams stated. "On Energy Parkway, you have the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Corrections right next to it, and they're not on the same team."

### No all-Black jury for a Black prisoner

According to Williams, systemic racism was an earmark of the Dred Scott Decision in March 1857. The enslaved Dred Scott sued for his freedom, since he had traveled with his owner to Illinois and Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was illegal. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled against Scott, claiming that an African American was not a citizen.

"They said no Black man has any rights that a White man should consider," Williams said. "There has been an imbalance and an indifference in the justice system ever since. There has never been an all-Black jury for a Black woman or man, but there have certainly been all-White juries for a White prisoner."

"Even today in 2020, Black people have to search for themselves, ask who they are. They have to painstakingly connect the dots about who they are," Williams continued.

### George Floyd: Modern-day lynching

Reflecting on the recent killing of George Floyd, he said the

tragedy unfortunately is nothing new for America. "It was definitely a modern-day lynching," Williams said. "There was no rationale for kneeling 8 minutes and 46 seconds on a person's neck, and no one helped."

He said the phrase "I can't breathe," should not exist. "It's the same mantra, the same chant, the same cry for different generations," Williams said.

Williams expressed hope that racism can be fought, and that each race has a role in dealing with it. "For Blacks, our means of dealing with racism is self-love, loving on each other, basking in the glory of who we are, operating collectively and aspiring towards liberation."

Williams said Blacks have to change the relationship, that a majority of them worked for the White man at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation and still do today. "We have to change the dynamics of the relationship or it's not going to stop."

He said the killings and injustice Blacks face globally will not change until they move like everybody else, putting race first. "Spend your money first with people who look like you," Williams said.

"But racism is not something Black people can fix," Williams continued, noting that Whites have a role to play. "Racism is not something Black people created or are perpetuating."

"Even before slavery ended, the Black man strived to co-exist with his master. There were slave revolts and insurrections, then reconstruction and the Civil Rights movement. We have not kept up the racism."

Williams said slavery was put into practice by Whites and Europeans who have been dead for centuries. "Their progeny have come into power, and we have not been able to strike a moral chord," he said. "We have been struggling to be a part of the American fabric. We've been fighting wars, coming home to be lynched."

The only way racism can end, according to Williams, is when the progeny admit that what happened under their ancestors was not right, and say "No more."

# MARKETPLACE

Want ads must be received by the Messenger by Jan. 15 for the Jan. 28 issue. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Messenger's website at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

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## CLUES

CLUE 1: "Round and around you go! A place to improve your proficiency before hitting the trail."

CLUE 2: "Is it Nokomis life? Or a dog's life?"

CLUE 3: "Gathering place for those in the Southeast of Our East."

CLUE 4: "This is the abode of a once lengthy guy."

CLUE 5: "Fir, pine, or spruce, this tree's aglow for the whole neighborhood's use."

CLUE 6: "Toy, miniature, or standard, this one tops them all! Always present to greet passersby."

CLUE 7: "Roger Federer might stop by here on his way to a walk around the lake."

CLUE 8: "Halfway to 100, from here you venture south or north ON our city's iron horse."

CLUE 9: "Boundary Waters best-known vessels need a place to rest."

CLUE 10: "Shh! Quiet! This beautiful neighborhood building is a real study!"

CLUE 11: "The canine companion bel-lowed as she gazed toward the heavens."

CLUE 12: "It seems the neighborhood waited forever to span this crossing as sparkling water passed."

CLUE 13: "The percussionist's perspective from the coast was toward points north."

CLUE 14: "Though a beloved group has moved on, good things are still raised in this once hallowed place."

ANSWERS: 1) Bike Skills Course on the Parkway; 2) Nokomis Life Mural (Nokomis Tattoo Building); 3) Morris Park Community Center; 4) Longfellow House; 5) Oxendale's Christmas Tree; 6) Poodle Statue Inside Wendy's Doghouse Window; 7) Tennis Courts at Nokomis Community center; 8) 50th Street Light Rail Station; 9) Canoe Racks on the North Side of the Lake; 10) Nokomis Library; 11) Baying at The Moon (dog sculpture - East Side of Lake Nokomis); 12) New 28th Avenue Bridge Over Minnehaha Creek; 13) Shoreview Triangle; 14) NENA's Community Garden at Saint James on the Parkway

## TREASURE HUNTERS

>> from 1

"We were both trying to look as fast as possible," recalled Gross. "I know from past hunts you don't move on until you clear the area. I was moving fast but being pretty thorough. If I was going to lose I wanted it to be because she got there first not that I missed it. I stopped at the shed and checked behind it first; saw nothing. I turned to look at the front of the shed and my face was right next to the medallion. The medallion was so beautiful. I saw the 'Nokomis' engraved on the front. I turned it over and saw the 'Congrats' and I am pretty sure this moment I will remember forever. I knew it just had to be it when I flipped it over to make sure. It took me a minute to form words and to get the medallion in my hand. I couldn't believe I had it."

"I screamed. I yelled, 'I have it! The woman I was looking with told me I can't believe I looked right at it! I feel like I had an advantage because I have hunted before. I was filled with emotion knowing I was going to cross my #1 bucket item off my list. It's an incredible feeling to think you have to now dream new dreams!'"

Gross has been hunting medallions since she was a child growing up at 42nd and Dight in Longfellow. Her dad brought Gross and her sister hunting for the St. Paul Winter Carnival when they were kids, and she's been hooked ever since. She continued the tradition with her children. Over the last 30 years, she has watched the medallion be found by others, but was never was the winner.

"I always wondered what it would be like when you pull it out and find it," said Gross, who noted that even finding the wrong dummy medallion is exciting. "I put my hands in some



Leatrice and Emmett Cox search near a bridge along Minnehaha Creek. (Photo submitted by Laura Cox)

sketchy places looking for it. Like in the cobwebs under the bridge rails. I am pretty sure I screamed before I could form words. I wanted to tell her 'I found it!' But pretty sure looking back I just screamed first – then I said, 'I have it.' There was also jumping involved. I felt lots of emotion. It was very exciting."

The next thing Gross did was drive straight to her dad's house to show him.

"I think it is so cool to finally find one – and the first one in the neighborhood I was raised in," said Gross. She feels a tie to the church where she found it, as well. Her oldest friends got married there 20 years ago.

Gross has lived in Powderhorn for the past 13 years, but she continues to shop in Nokomis, supporting local stores like Oxendale's, as she went to high school with owner Neil Oxendale. Gross is a familiar face to many herself as she's a longtime bartender and waitress with her sister at Cedar Inn.

"2020 has been a hard year and this was something positive we could focus on," remarked Gross. "This was so fun and I truly enjoyed the whole experience. Thanks for all the effort it takes to put this on. Volunteers are great!"

## 'What kid doesn't dream of finding treasure?'

Gross was serious about the hunt, but she wasn't the only one. She and a handful of others could be found in central locations throughout Nokomis, waiting for the clue to be released at 9 a.m. each day. They also searched at other times, turning over rocks, looking under mats, and browsing through shops to see if they'd chance upon the medallion.

Keewaydin resident Laura Cox, along with her husband Matt and three kids, started the hunt with the idea that it was a family event they would do if they had time. "But it grew on us with each clue, because what kid doesn't dream of finding treasure? It was also a good motivation to take a break and get outside again," said Cox. "We've all been feeling cabin fever as the days have gotten shorter and colder."

They went out hunting depending on their schedules and who was up for it.

"It was a great break from the doldrums of schooling and working from home right now. School starts at 9:30 a.m. and the clues were posted at 9 a.m., so there were multiple mornings where we got in the car just before the clue was posted and quickly went out to try to find it before school," said Cox. "A couple times we even went out over lunch or after school to check out some places where we thought it could possibly be hidden that weren't clue locations yet."

The morning the last clue was released, the kids deemed it too cold, so Cox headed out by herself. "It was fun being there to see Melissa find it as we had met at a previous clue location, and

TREASURE HUNTERS >> 15

## WINNERS

## FIRST PRIZE – MEDALLION (1 winner)

Melissa Gross (@magross25) found the medallion. She was also the person who embraced the #shopNokomis concept the most passionately – including going into our businesses, making purchases, and meeting the business owners. She was so excited when she found the medallion, she started crying. She's lived in the area for her whole life (went to Roosevelt High School) and raised her kids here. She couldn't wait to go show the medallion to her dad.

## SECOND PRIZE – SCAVENGER HUNT WINNER (1 winner)

Jennifer Prill (@jprill04) was the only treasure hunter to correctly identify each of our clue locations. She was hunting every day and posting her adventures on IG – she even made friends and helped the other treasure hunters she met along the way.

## THIRD PRIZE

- Laura Cox (@lovehomemade). Was on the hunt nearly every day with her kids, sharing fabulous and endearing posts on IG. Got one location wrong on her submission.

- Michael Torres (@mikebikempls). Affectionately referred to as "The Bike Guy" by the treasure hunters I met. Posted many of his treasure adventures on IG. Got 2 locations wrong.

- Karen Vetsch (@boodjv). Didn't submit any scavenger hunt guesses, but she was an enthusiastic poster on IG who shared excellent locations, from Oxendale's, Grande Sunrise, and Nokomis Shoes to the food shelf, post office, and Shoreview Triangle.

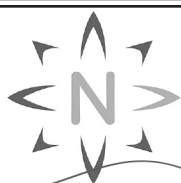
## PARTICIPATION PRIZES

- Keriann and her brother Brenden Cooper (4 wrong on the scavenger hunt)

- Erin Arifin (4 wrong on the scavenger hunt)

- Dan and Sheila Peterson (7 wrong on the scavenger hunt)

- Douglas Pittman (9 wrong on the scavenger hunt)



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## TREASURE HUNTERS

>> From 14

she had shared her story about doing the Winter Carnival Medallion Hunt for many years," said Cox.

Despite not finding the medallion themselves, the Cox family enjoyed the hunt and finding the fake treasures left scattered throughout Nokomis East.

"It was fun seeing the neighborhood all decorated for the holidays and interacting (at a safe distance) with a few other treasure hunters," said Cox. "At the canoe racks one morning another treasure hunter was kind enough to suggest my kids search again after he found a fake one they had missed. We explored a few new places, like making our first-ever visit to Morris Park – we had no clue there was a skate park there!"

She encourages other hunters to not give up, think outside the box, and phone a friend if you need a little help thinking through it.

"Thank you NEBA for organizing something to help rally the neighborhood spirits," said Cox. "We hope this becomes a much-loved neighborhood tradition!"

### 'Joy was infectious'

The morning the last clue was released, NEBA Co-President Heidi Van Heel stepped outside her house with her cup of coffee to watch the two women arrive at 9:03 a.m. She'd wondered if one of her own neighbors would start asking what she was doing at the garden plot in December and find the medallion early. She and fellow planners had initially intended to hide the medallion at the Shoreview Triangle, but when they got there they realized there was no place to hide a white medallion. So they switched gears



Melissa Gross holds the Nokomis East Business Association medallion near where she found it. She's been searching for medallions for 30 years, and is so excited that this dream came true in 2020. (Photo submitted by NEBA)

and found a new location.

Van Heel was part of the volunteer committee that organized the medallion hunt. She got into the spirit, too, browsing through the #ShopNokomis hashtags and getting to know the hunters over the 14-day event that started Nov. 28.

"I've gotten so many messages from people who said this is exactly what we needed. It's so great being outside," said Van Heel. She's delighted that the weather was unseasonably warm, which made it even more appealing to be outdoors. "It was infectious. I didn't expect to get that excited."

The goal for planners was to promote local businesses in a way that didn't drive shoppers

to the stores all at the same time, given the COVID-19 pandemic. So they decided to spread the event out and the idea for a medallion hunt was born.

Real estate agent Bob Albrecht wrote all the clues, Van Heel made the dummies, and Jenny Tang the Potter from The Workshop fashioned the medallion. She will be selling replicas as ornaments, as well.

"Nokomis is such a special community," said Van Heel. "Everybody seems to love it where we live and seems to value the sense of community."

They intended to do a smaller event for just the residents at Nokomis Square, but that was put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. In March,

they're planning to do a Pot of Gold event for St. Patrick's Day. Stay tuned for more details.

Folks could win by finding the medallion, correctly identifying all the locations, or using the hashtag #ShopNokomis.

"I think that people have really needed something to break things up," observed Van Heel, a self-employed content strategist and writer. "I don't think any of us expected to see quite the response that we did. It feels like everything came together perfectly and brought people so much joy."

Yes, they're planning to repeat the medallion hunt next year, although the time frame will likely be shorter.



Get your own medallion from maker Jenny the Potter at the Workshop. (Photo submitted)



Fake medallions were still fun to find by the treasure hunters.

### 'You gotta try it!'

"These treasure hunts are meant to get you outside in the winter and exploring new places," said Gross. "I bought gifts and gift cards at places I hadn't taken the time to visit before. I went inside and talked to owners and met wonderful people in our community. I learned about the food trucks that come to the Triangle. I met fellow treasure hunters while out looking and saw the excitement on the kids faces when they found the fake medallion at the lake."

"It's a fun way to get together as a family, get some exercise and try new places. It's a great tradition – you gotta try it!"

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MN350 can't reconcile building new carbon-dependent natural gas plant with Xcel's goal to be carbon-free

# 'Energy we can't afford'

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

MN350 wants people to question whether natural gas is really clean-burning, safe and abundant energy, and they are fighting Xcel's proposed new billion dollar fossil gas power plant in Becker, Minn.

Xcel has been in the news since last year, when environmentalists applauded their decision to close two coal burning plants in Minnesota, en route to providing carbon-free electricity by 2050.

A coalition of Twin Cities environmental organizations are working to stop the proposed fossil gas plant from being built in Becker. The name of their campaign is "Energy we can't afford." The coalition includes MN350, the North Star Sierra Club, Community Power, and the Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

Chelsea DeArmond, founder of the St. Paul MN350 chapter, is leading the campaign. She said, "Xcel has gotten a lot of positive publicity about their stated carbon-free goal. What's talked about much less is that Xcel, and other Minnesota utilities, are planning to build large natural gas plants to generate electricity in the short term. We feel that building new carbon-dependent power – to get to being carbon-free – just doesn't make sense."

According to DeArmond, "Natural gas should be referred to as fossil gas because it is one more outdated, non-renewable fossil fuel like coal and oil. It is dirty, dangerous, and expensive. It is bad for our climate, and it is bad for our pocket books."

"If the construction of new plants and accompanying in-



MN350 member Jean Comstock spoke at a recent Day of Action event at Xcel Headquarters in Downtown Minneapolis. The deadline for filing public comment in the "Energy We Can't Afford" campaign is Jan. 15. (Photos courtesy of MN350)



frastructure moves forward, Minnesotans will be stuck with the damage for years to come. Low-income communities and communities of color have the most to lose, since they spend more of their income on energy bills and tend to live closer to proposed fossil gas pipe lines, pumps, and power plants."

## 'Only natural when it is in the ground'

Xcel received special authority from the state legislature three years ago to build the natural gas plant in Becker, bypassing the traditional route of getting approval from state regulators. Public reaction to the plan has been

very critical. Environmentalists are pushing back against continued reliance on fossil fuels in the midst of a climate crisis.

DeArmond said, "At MN350, we see this plant proposal as a big step backwards. We have so many exciting technology options to get us to carbon free electricity. People don't understand how dirty fossil gas is, all along the pipeline. The only place fossil gas is natural is when it's buried in the ground."

Jay Lieberman is a Longfellow resident, and a new volunteer to MN350. He said, "We have to consider the impact of using fossil gas – from extraction, usually by hydraulic fracturing (or fracking), to transportation

through extensive pipelines to power plants and our homes. Fossil gas is mainly methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gasses there is, and methane is released into the atmosphere at every step of that process."

Clean energy advocates say using fossil gas as a bridge to a carbon-free future might have been acceptable 10 or 20 years ago, when renewable technologies were just getting off the ground. The cost of wind and solar have been dropping steadily though, making it unnecessary to continue relying on fossil fuels.

## Campaign to address fossil gas plant construction

## What does the 350 in MN350 mean?

"If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed, and to which life on Earth is adapted, atmospheric CO2 will need to be reduced from current levels to, at most, 350 parts per million," said Climatologist Dr. James Hansen.

## Submit a public comment

Xcel Energy is proposing to build a \$1 billion fossil gas plant in Becker, Minn. that would emit 3.6 million metric tons of carbon annually. The plant would exacerbate climate change and environmental racism and, in the long run, would be more expensive than clean, renewable energy, according to MN350. The organization is working to collect 10,000+ public comments on Xcel Energy's proposed plan. Visit [www.energywecantafford.org](http://www.energywecantafford.org) to leave a comment.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has agreed to receive public comments on this issue until Jan. 15. To submit a public comment to the PUC, go to [www.energywecantafford.org](http://www.energywecantafford.org). The site includes sample comments and links to talking points.

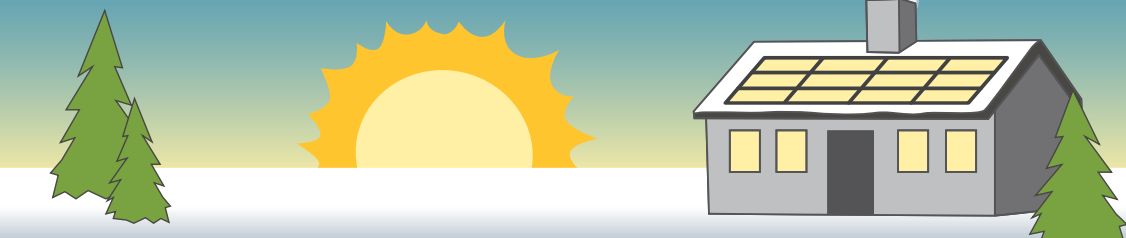
DeArmond said, "I was ready to act on principle in the beginning, but I think we have a chance at winning if we can mobilize enough support. We can create a healthier, more prosperous, and just future for our state by saying no to fossil gas during a climate crisis. It's energy that Minnesotans can't afford."

MN350 is part of 350.org, an international climate campaign active in 188 countries around the world. To learn more about local action teams and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.mn350.org](http://www.mn350.org).

In addition to clean energy, MN350 volunteers are working on transportation issues, pipe line resistance, education, and community outreach among other things.

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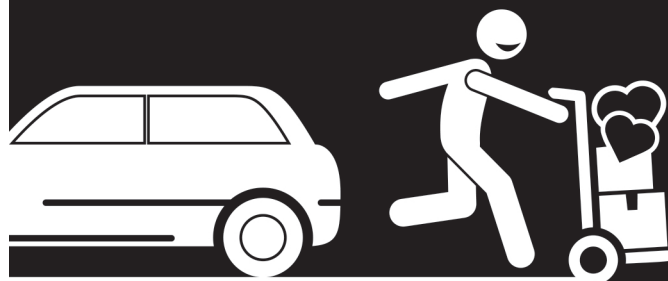
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