

SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • FEBRUARY 17, 2022 • VOL. 1 • NO. 4



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'OUTRAGED'

Family, community demand justice in wake of fatal police shooting of Amir Locke

By Jill Boogren

When family members of Amir Locke and community members gathered in the rotunda of Minneapolis City Hall on Feb. 4, 2022, his mother, Karen Wells, said in no uncertain terms: "I believe that he was executed by the MPD and I want the police officer that murdered my son to be prosecuted and fired."

Officer Mark Hanneman killed Locke in the early morning of Feb. 2 when a Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) SWAT Team entered the apartment where he was sleeping and within nine seconds fatally shot him. The team was executing a search warrant in which Locke was not named as a suspect.

Wells described her son as a law-abiding citizen who did everything he was supposed to do, who was raised with morals and values and loved by so many.

"Everybody that came in contact with him, he had a beautiful spirit and a beautiful smile," she said. "Never would I have imagined that I would be standing up here talking about the execution of my son by the Minneapolis Police Department."

Locke's father, Andre Locke, asked members of the press how many have sons of their own. Seeing some hands raised, he said, "Put yourselves in our shoes... How does that feel, to know that your son is sleeping



Dozens gather at Minneapolis City Hall on Feb. 11 to hand deliver ethics complaints by 1,250 Minneapolis residents against Mayor Jacob Frey related to the killing by police of Amir Locke. "The Residents' Complaint" asserts that the mayor and interim police chief "intentionally and recklessly misrepresented the facts" when they repeatedly referred to Amir Locke as a suspect; the mayor violated his duty by not firing or disciplining the officer who fatally shot Locke; and it was a "massive failure to exercise judgment" for MPD to use a no-knock search warrant on behalf of the St. Paul Police Department when St. Paul hadn't asked for one. Kristin Ingall, a southwest Minneapolis resident and mom, told the crowd in the rotunda that for too long it has been the inactions of "ordinary people, like me," that has kept a harmful system running. "Amir Locke was executed by the Minneapolis Police Department and the negligence and inaction of Mayor Frey. And yet there has been no accountability. Why do we accept that as residents of Minneapolis?" she asked. Complaint forms are being sent to the city of Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board. Those filing complaints must be residents of Minneapolis and at least 18 years of age. More information is available on Instagram @TheResidentsComplaint. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

Long-hitched Twin Cities couples share secrets for success

LIFELONG VALENTINES

By Susan Schaefer
UNDER THE HOOD



With its mid-month Valentine's Day holiday, February is synonymous with love. And countless couples seal their love by entering committed relationships, whether marriage or domestic partnership.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Marriage as an institution goes all the way back to 2350 B.C., in Mesopotamia, where the first recorded evidence exists. Over the subsequent centuries, marriage evolved into a widespread practice embraced by ancient civilizations.

And while same sex marriage in Minnesota wasn't recognized until August 2013, it is documented that the Roman Emperor Nero took not one, but two hus-

bands in addition to his many wives!

Legal interracial union in the United States has a "loving" provenance. Richard and Mildred Loving wed in June 1958 but had to fight all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to keep their marriage legal. Now, each year on June 12, "Loving Day" celebrates the historic ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, which declared unconstitutional a Virginia law prohibiting mixed-race marriage – and legalized interracial marriage in every state.

BEATING THE ODDS – TWIN CITIES STYLE

Each year, 2.3 million couples wed in our country, but the average length of a marriage in the U.S. is only 8.2 years! To celebrate this month of love, we asked three couples from each corner of our TMC neighborhood paper coverage who have been in long-term, committed relationships just how they've managed to outperform this indicator.

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BRYN MAWR RESIDENT NEW PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Margaret Anderson Kelliher shares thoughts on Hennepin Avenue project and more

By Cam Gordon

Following a public hearing and unanimous support from the Public Works and Infrastructure committee, on Feb. 10, 2022, the Minneapolis City Council approved the appointment of Margaret Anderson Kelliher to a four-year term as the Minneapolis Public Works Department Director. She has resigned as Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Commissioner to take the position.

Anderson Kelliher's community ties were referenced since she was first nominated by the mayor in January. She has lived in Bryn Mawr since the early 1990s where she and her spouse raised their two children. She served on the Bryn Mawr

Neighborhood Association board, worked as a Neighborhood Revitalization Program community organizer, and was an aide to State Senator Alan Spear prior to being elected to office herself.

In elected office, Anderson Kelliher served as State Representative for the area (then District 60A) from 1999 to 2011, and as Speaker of the House from 2007 to 2011. She was later president and CEO of the Minnesota High Tech Association and has served as many volunteer boards, including the Governor Dayton's Broadband Task Force (which she chaired), the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Development Council, and Textile Center Board of Minnesota.

In the mayor's announcement of the nomination, Anderson Kelliher's expertise in transportation policy, finance, climate action, and organizational leadership were all highlighted. At the hearing, she was praised by Metropolitan Council member and Director of the Native American Community Development Institute, Robert Lilligren, for creat-

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When you support your local newspaper, you support your community.

LAWMAKERS RESPOND FOLLOWING POLICE KILLING OF AMIR LOCKE

By Cam Gordon

While people throughout Minneapolis continue to be devastated and shaken by the police killing of Amir Locke on Feb. 2, lawmakers have been working to respond.

The formal investigation of the shooting is being done by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The results of that investigation will be shared with Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman and State Attorney General Keith Ellison, who will determine if there will be any charges and prosecution of the officers involved, including officer Mark Hanneman who has been identified as the officer who shot Locke.

All this is happening while the police department is under ongoing investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, while three officers involved in the George Floyd murder are currently on trial in federal court, and there is a new leader at the Minneapolis Police Department.

Since Feb. 2, ethics complaints against the mayor have been filed and some, including Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley Worlobah, have called for his resignation. "I am standing with my constituents," she said at the last council meeting, "who are calling on the strong mayor who has sole authority over MPD to resign."

Locke's death occurred during an unannounced entry, or no-knock, search warrant and this took many by surprise because both the mayor and the state legislature had tried to impose stiffer restrictions on their use in 2020, following the death of Breonna Taylor in Atlanta, Ga., that also happened during such a search warrant.

Within days of Locke's death, Mayor Frey clarified that the officers in this case were following the policy that was updated in November 2020. That policy, despite being referred to as a "ban" on no-knock warrants on the mayor's campaign website, still allowed officers to request and execute the so-called no-knock warrants without knocking but did require them to announce their presence as they entered the threshold of a residence, which these officers appear to have done on the body camera video that has been released.

On Feb. 4, the mayor placed a moratorium on requesting or executing no-knock warrants unless there is "an imminent threat of harm to an individual or the public and then the warrant must be approved by the chief." During the moratorium, the mayor will work with DeRay McKesson of Campaign Zero and Dr. Pete Krasaka of Eastern Kentucky University to review and suggest revisions to the department's policy.

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the invitation of Ward 5 Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, chair of the Policy & Government Oversight Committee, St. Thomas associate professor Rachel Moran, and law student Sarah Murtada, along with attorneys Ben Crump, Jeff Storms, and Antonio Romanucci, as well as Mayor Frey, spoke before the committee.

"They are dangerous," said Moran, about the unannounced entry/ no-knock search warrants. "Between 2010 and 2016 at least 94 people were killed in the United States as a result of no-knock warrants." Thirteen of those were police officers.

Murtada informed the committee that St. Paul has not used these types of search warrants since 2016, and it did not seem to reduce arrest rates or police safety. "We're looking at these two cities - one that uses no knock warrants, one that doesn't - and we're not seeing any difference in officer's safety," she said. "And we're also not seeing that no-knock warrants create a higher clearance rate or solve more crimes." Several cities, she informed the committee, including Santa Fe, Indianapolis and Louisville have outright bans.

Council President Andrea Jenkins expressed her "commitment, at the bare min-



Protesters hold signs at a Feb. 5 rally. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

imum, in this conversation, on banning no knock warrants in the city of Minneapolis... We need to learn from these events so we can prevent them in the future."

STATE RESPONSE

Meanwhile, on Feb. 8, several DFL state legislatures announced that they were introducing legislation to add restrictions on the use of no-knock warrants. The bill's sponsor, Representative Athena Hollins from St. Paul, said, "No-knock warrants are a tool in a toolbox, but it's a tool that should only be used in the tiniest sliver of cases: kidnapping, hostage situations and human trafficking. No-knock warrants are bound to kill more innocent people, which is why we need to stop using them." The specific language is expected soon with a public hearing likely to be scheduled by the end of the month.

DFLers in the House have also introduced a \$100 million public safety plan that would fund local violence prevention efforts, community policing, crime investigations, opiate abuse and addiction prevention, police cameras and more.

CITY OVERSIGHT

At the city level, additional avenues for improving safety and policing have recently emerged.

On Feb. 10, the city council approved Ward 13 council member Linea Palmisano's motion to introduce ordinance amendments related to the police department and police oversight. Palmisano also said that she is working on the establishment of an Office of Independent Monitor to review policies and practices of the police department.

Abigail Cerra and Jordan Sparks, Chair and Vice Chair of the Minneapolis Police Conduct Oversight Commission, have recommended moving Police Oversight to the Independent City Auditor's Office. They wrote in a letter shared at the commission's last meeting, "In this way the council, acting under the authority of the newly passed Charter Amendment, can set up a police oversight system with the two essential elements of oversight: independence and access to non-public data." The commission is expected to continue discussion of the recommendation at its meeting on March 8.

During the most recent Audit Committee Council Ward 11 council member Emily Koski introduced the idea of creating a Police Accountability Auditor and team that could "create the proper checks and balances between the police department, mayor, and city council."

Finally, on Feb. 10, Ward 1 council member Elliot Payne gave notice that he will be introducing a new ordinance for the council to consider that would amend the charter and create a new Department of Public Safety. His intention is to pursue passage of the charter amendment by unanimous approval of the city council and mayor rather than put it before Minneapolis voters in November. "I will be working with my colleagues in city hall in the coming days to draft this ordinance and gain the unanimous support of all 13 city council members and the mayor," he wrote in a recent email, "in an effort to create a department of public safety as soon as possible." The council will vote on whether or not to refer this to a committee at their next meeting on Feb. 24.

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►1 'OUTRAGED'

comfortably, in a safe place, peacefully, and someone takes it upon themselves to choose who lives and who dies?"

"Amir was a bright light. He deserves to be able to shine," he said.

Nine seconds of body-worn camera footage shows officers using a key to enter the apartment. After the door opens, they begin shouting, "Police search warrant" and "Get on the ground" as they move through the unit. An officer kicks the couch, Locke begins to emerge from beneath his blanket, and he is fatally shot. A still image shows a gun, which Locke was licensed to own, in his hand. His index finger is extended along the barrel, not on the trigger.

Both of his parents knew their son as a deep sleeper.

"What we saw when the officer kicked the couch... [Amir] wasn't even moving before then. The officer startled him. When he kicked the couch, when he aggravated Amir, when he forced Amir to respond to protect himself, as any law-abiding citizen would do and has the right to do..." said Andre Locke. "We believe that [the police] executed him, our son Amir. We believe it. And we definitely want to prosecute to the fullest."

Family members spoke of being very close to one another, with several saying they were present at the hospital when Locke was born.

"You should be outraged," said his aunt, Linda Tyler. "Not because he's African American. You should be outraged just because one of your citizens died at the hands of another citizen."

She said they raise their kids with a certain creed when encountering police: "Do this. Put your hands on the wheel. Make sure you look at 'em eye to eye. Don't move too soon. Don't go into your pockets. Just sit still. We train our kids up like that because we want them to live just another day."

To the question of why Locke would have his gun by his side, Tyler said it's because at home you keep your gun near you, at your bedside.

"That's what I would do. And so if any intruder comes in, I'm gonna reach for my gun to protect my house and my home," she said. "Amir was at his cousin's house, in the sanctity of his house... of course he had his gun by his side, because where else is he gonna put it?"

Community member Marques Armstrong, a licensed gun owner, said Locke showed discipline in handling his gun.

"It took discipline to be startled out of your sleep, dead sleep, with screamin' and yellin' and lights and guns and men standing over you," he said. Armstrong demonstrated with his own hand to show how Locke's index finger, the trigger finger, was extended along the barrel, not on the trigger. It's how you draw your gun safely, he explained, until you assess the situation and acquire the target. And only then does the finger drop onto the trigger and squeeze.

"Amir wasn't in a position to shoot anybody," said Armstrong. "He was properly trained."

The Minnesota Gun Owners Caucus issued a statement on Feb. 4 about the incident.

"Mr. Locke did what many of us might do in the same confusing circumstances. He reached for a legal means of self-defense while he sought to understand what was happening," said Rob Doar, senior vice president of governmental affairs.

Nneka Constantino, Locke's cousin, called attention to the harm done when authorities advance a narrative that too often criminalizes Black victims. In this case, the initial press release put out by the MPD included a picture of a gun without mentioning that Locke was a licensed gun owner. He was also referred to as a "suspect" four times in the MPD press release, even though he was not named in the search warrant (see "The anatomy of a



Andre Locke, Amir Locke's father, said, "We believe that [the police] executed him... And we definitely want to prosecute to the fullest." To the left of him is Amir's mother, Karen Wells. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

coverup"). It has the effect of hardening the hearts of those who might be empathetic, said Constantino, but who might write a victim off as "just another thug," if reclining in the thought that police don't raid a house for no reason.

"But what we have to reconcile is the fact that no-knock warrants systematically impact Black families and Black people. They do not walk into the families of our White brothers and sisters this carelessly," said Constantino. "This is a systemic issue. It hits Black families in a different way than it hits the White community, and we all need to be outraged about that."

The hardest part, said Constantino, is that at press conferences like this, the first thing you hear a Black mother say is,

'THE ANATOMY OF A COVERUP'

Citizens dispute statements made by police department

By Jill Boogren

The day after Minneapolis Police Officer Mark Hanneman shot and killed Amir Locke while executing a search warrant raid of a downtown apartment on behalf of the St. Paul Police Department, mayor Jacob Frey and Interim Minneapolis Police Chief Amelia Huffman released the body-worn camera footage and held a press conference. Community members confronted the mayor and chief, exposing several contradictions between the press release that had been issued by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) the previous day, Chief Huffman's own statements and the body-worn camera video footage itself.

One of the questions asked was whether Locke was considered a suspect in any crime. Chief Huffman said she couldn't speak to the St. Paul investigation which led to the Minneapolis search warrant, in which Locke was not named. The MPD, however, referred to Locke as a "suspect" four times in its press release.

A voice off camera asked, "Why would you refer to him as a suspect in a press release if you didn't know?" This went unanswered.

Community members also took issue with MPD's account of how the police alerted the victim to their presence. The press release stated:

"Officers gained entry to the target apartment on the seventh floor, loudly and repeatedly announced their presence, crossed the threshold of the apartment, and advanced with continued loud announcements of their presence."

The implication is officers yelled first, entered next. But the footage shows a door that is open before officers are heard shouting. When asked to clarify, the chief replied, "Right, so in the video, they

"He was a good kid... He was this. He was that... Because we have to humanize him, and we have to overcome what the Minneapolis Police Department has deposited in you day one, day two."

Nekima Levy Armstrong of Racial Justice Network said the family's presence alone dismantles racial stereotypes.

"They always say, 'Where's the Black family'?" Gesturing to the extensive family gathered behind her, she said, "Here's the Black family."

PROTESTERS TAKE TO THE STREETS

Protesters took to the streets with a loud car caravan in downtown Minneapolis the evening of Feb. 4, horns blaring, people leaning out of car windows chant-

open the door with a key and announce 'police search warrant' before they enter the apartment." Voices off camera called, "That's not true," "It's just not true."

Likewise, the press release claimed: "Approximately 9 seconds into the entry, officers encountered a male who was armed with a handgun pointed in the direction of officers."

The claim was also made by Chief Huffman, who asserted that the involved officer was just outside the frame in the direction that the barrel is emerging from the blanket. A voice off camera said, "It looked to me as if that gun and Amir Locke's hand was pointed toward the floor."

Both of these points were heavily disputed by family members and activists, including licensed gun owners, after viewing the video.

Michelle Gross, president of Citizens United Against Police Brutality, asked repeatedly why the MPD released pictures of Locke's gun, even though he never fired his weapon, and not a picture of the gun used by the officer to kill him.

"It was sensationalistic demonization of a victim of police murder. Plain and simple," she said. "There was not one legitimate reason for releasing that picture. It was about associating a man with a gun to try to create a narrative to justify what the police did."

After many questions went unanswered, Nekima Levy Armstrong, of Racial Justice Network, walked to the podium.

"This is what I would call the anatomy of a coverup," she said. Levy Armstrong, who co-chairs the city's Community Safety Workgroup, said it was unacceptable to hide behind the St. Paul Police Department, "the deadliest police force in the State of Minnesota," and that the MPD had no business agreeing to carry out a warrant if they were going to claim they didn't know the details.

"We don't want to see coverups. We don't want to see whitewashing," she said. "People are asking very simple questions that are still not being answered."

ing for justice. The next day 1,000 people poured onto the plaza of the Hennepin County Government Center, many carrying signs that read "Frey Lied. Amir Died." Family members spoke to the tightly packed crowd who then marched through downtown streets. Some demonstrators were wrapped in blankets; one held a pillow that read: "Amir Locke Murdered Sleeping while Black."

Activists called for the officer and Minneapolis Interim Police Chief Amelia Huffman to be fired and for the mayor to resign.

On Feb. 6, a car caravan/funeral procession rolled up to Chief Huffman's residence, where demonstrators placed in the snowbanks small crosses bearing Amir Locke's name and small red hearts. Live video coverage showed headlights extending the full length of the street as more cars kept coming.

On Feb. 8 thousands of students in the Twin Cities took part in walkout, which included a march from St. Paul Central High School to the Governor's Residence.

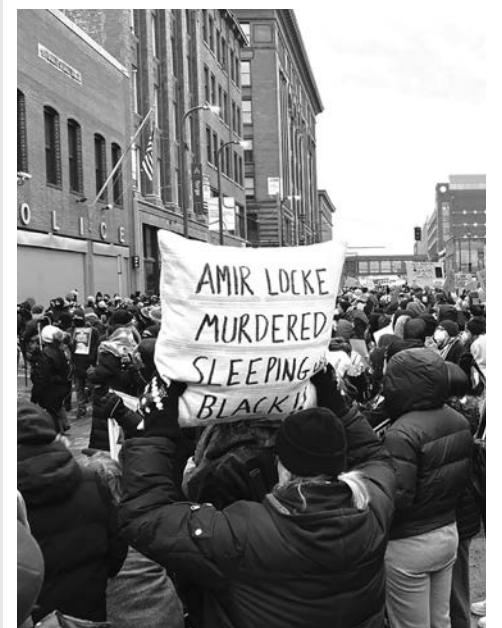
At George Floyd Square, each of the five fist sculptures at the center of and entrances to the intersection have been wrapped in white comforters. AMIR LOCKE WAS LYNCHED! JUSTICE NOW!! is spelled out on the marquee of the former Speedway; AMIR LOCKE is painted on blankets draped over the concrete barriers in front of the black and white "Icon of a Revolution" portrait of George Floyd.

The killing of Amir Locke happened in the midst of the federal trial of J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao, the former officers accused of violating Floyd's civil rights when they failed to intervene during George Floyd's murder.

"We're here again in a wholly avoidable situation," said attorney Jeff Storms, who along with Ben Crump is representing Amir Locke's family. "Once again, like we've seen before, George Floyd should not have been murdered. Daunte Wright should not have been killed by Kim Potter... Everyone knows about the dangers of no-knock warrants. From Breonna Taylor and so many others who have died that way. What's it gonna take for the lesson to be learned? How many more people have to die before we not only enforce policies but implement them?"

On Feb. 4, Mayor Frey placed a moratorium on no-knock warrants, though they would still be allowed in limited circumstances. He vowed to work with national experts DeRay McKesson and Dr. Pete Kraska of Eastern Kentucky University who helped shape Breonna's Law in Louisville.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension is investigating the case. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison is reviewing the case alongside Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman.



Some protesters attend the rally on Feb. 5 outside Police Precinct 1 wrapped in blankets. One holds up a pillow that read "Amir Locke / Murdered / Sleeping while / Black." (Photo by Jill Boogren)

HOW WE CAN HELP HEAL AND UPLIFT OUR COMMUNITY

Increase funding in community programming and give people the tools they need to succeed

When was the last time you were in Uptown? If it's been a while, you might not recognize the place anymore. Uptown, downtown and other parts of Minneapolis look more like ghost towns than the thriving business corridors they used to be. That's what a pandemic and two straight summers of violence will do.



By Eric Ortiz

The good news is that this year can be different. But we have to act fast. After the killing of Amir Locke by Minneapolis police on a no-knock warrant, many communities across the city are far beyond a tipping point.

This is a serious moment. People across Minneapolis are in deep suffering and pain. They are angry and hair-trigger ready to take offense and fight. Many of the people who feel this way are young people of color. They know their civil rights history. They know the struggles of civil rights icons like Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Sojourner Truth, W.E.B. Du Bois and Stokeley Carmichael. They know Martin Luther King and Malcolm X were killed fighting for justice.

Ever since the murder of George Floyd, Minneapolis has felt as if it is teetering on the brink of disaster. But violence and destruction are not the solutions. That type of response will only perpetuate more violence and trauma. We need to break this cycle of abuse. We need to help people - especially young people - channel all of their anger and rage into a positive force. We need to help transform

our violent culture.

How many more acts of brutality will it take? How many more carjackings, armed robberies and murders? How many more people have to get hurt or die before people wake up and realize what we are doing is not working? This is no way to live. Violence has become normalized, and we have been desensitized to it. People have become hardened by the pain and numb to the trauma.

There have to be consequences for wrongdoing, but we can't sentence our way out of this. We have to look at the underlying issues and get to the roots of the problems. We need to reframe our approach. The old path is not working. We need a new path forward.

We need a plan that increases funding in community programming to advance public safety and equal rights. We need to give all students and young adults in Minneapolis the tools they need to reduce violence, become leaders in the community and succeed in life.

We need to provide mental health services with culturally competent therapists to help people overcome historical barriers.

We need to show students how to control their emotions, resolve conflicts without violence, break cycles of trauma, build resilience and foster reconciliation.

We need to provide life skills training, including reading, writing, math, money management, cooking, grocery shopping, self-care, gardening, home/car/bike maintenance, parenting.

We need to provide work skills training, job and intern programs, career counseling, youth entrepreneurship opportunities, and workforce development.

We need to provide peacebuilding activities, including arts, music, after-school

programs, meditation, sports, mentoring and positive engagement with adults.

We need to provide intergenerational community mentorship from a diverse group of community members with decades of experience across industries.

We need to offer community gathering space, special peacebuilding events, and alternatives and employment to redirect lives.

We need to stand with the demonized so the demonizing will stop.

We need to stop throwing people away.

All of this takes money. Lots of money. And that money is available. Minnesota has a \$7.7 billion projected budget surplus, the largest in state history. The state's legislative leaders and Gov. Tim Walz will decide where that money goes, and they need to start investing in all people's aspirations toward wealth and all people's will to make a better future for their children or community. We are not talking about giving thousands of dollars. We are talking about millions.

People are sick and tired of being sick and tired. The time for talking about reform is over. We need actions that move toward transformation. We need to give the money to people in the community who can make a difference and make real change happen. And we need to start today.

To learn more or get involved, visit bit.ly/mplspublicsafety.



Eric Ortiz lives in the Wedge with his family. When he's not community building, he's the director of media for Granite Media and writes bilingual children's books with his kids. Their first book was "How the Zookalex Saved the Village," available in English and Spanish on Amazon.

GLAD YOU'RE PUBLISHING



LETTERS

As a community member deeply invested and involved in transformative and racial justice, thank you for your op-ed on "unbiased" journalism. I

appreciated the layering, the nuance, and the complexity involved but also the simplicity of simply uplifting the voices of the unheard, unempowered, and as equally important as anyone with a platform, funding, and "credentials." I've heard it be said before by a wise mentor, Susan Raffo, that a memory doesn't get to be a cultural memory until there are at least eight versions of it told. Many perspectives - diverse perspectives - are what allow us to more deeply understand each other - not only our differences but our similarities.

Thank you for uplifting voices on the margin and speaking truth to lies. Of course it is no easy feat nor is it meant to be... it's in the co-struggling (thank you, Jason Sole) that we emerge a stronger and more unified human community.

With respect,
Michelle Steffen Kingfield

AMIR LOCKE: 'WHEN A HEART STOPS'

STOP | THINK | FEEL

The door was locked.

It was always locked.

He laid there, blinds down blocking the world around him

Blocking a tiresome, exhausting world.

They didn't even knock.

The door flew open, hitting the back wall with a force that surely sent a shiver down his spine

Nine seconds; The world suddenly forcing itself into his house, unannounced

Everything that once was will no longer be

Everything he was no longer is

His future plans, endeavors, successes

Now floating silently like friendly ghosts amidst a reality void of him

Tears cannot wash away the stains the blue coats left

Their error after error after error, taking lives that were not theirs

When the day was done

A society would mourn

When the day was done

A heart had stopped



By Abha Karnick

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 365: NINE CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON CELEBRATING CULTURE AND HISTORY

Black History Month provides an enriching learning opportunity for children, families, and the community. The month of February can serve as a catalyst that sparks a daily leadership challenge to learn about the contributions of the many great African American heroes and heroes who shaped American history. Renowned historian and founder of Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH®), Dr. Carter G. Woodson had this vision in mind when he founded Negro History Week in 1926. The celebration was held in February since it was the birth month of two champions for racial justice, President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Lincoln was born on Feb. 12, and Douglass' birthday was celebrated on Feb. 14. Fifty years later, President Gerald Ford named February "Black History Month." He



By Artika Tyner



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SOUTHWEST Connector

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▶1 BRYN MAHR RESIDENT

ing the Office of Tribal Affairs as commissioner; and by Move MN Executive Director Sam Rockwell for establishing the Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council.

"Without a doubt Commissioner Anderson Kelliher has been one of the most progressive, thoughtful and responsive leaders at MnDOT that I have had the pleasure to work with," said State Senator Scott Dibble (District 61). "She understands that our built environment can either add to greater racial, social and economic justice and contribute to improving our environment and climate or can do the exact opposite."

"I am proud that the city has been able to recruit Margaret Anderson Kelliher to serve as our public works director," said Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman. "Her extensive background in leadership, management and all things public works will ensure she can step into the job seamlessly right away."

Anderson Kelliher will be entering the department at a time of high hopes, and some controversy. At the hearing and elsewhere, people stressed the importance of the department implementing policies that were passed under the leadership of the former director, Robin Hutchison, including the Complete Streets Policy, Vision Zero, the Transportations Action Plan, the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan and the Minneapolis 2040 Plan.

"Robin left big shoes to fill," said Risa Hustad, a Ward 11 Capital Long-range



Improvement Committee member. "The choices we make over the next year will set a precedent for how we orient our city's built environment over the next 20 years."

"I hope to hear a commitment to our plans, to the Transportation Action Plan, to our Minneapolis 2040 plan and to Vision Zero," said Elissa Schufman, chair of the city's Bicycle Advisory Committee. "I am excited and hopeful today that Margaret Anderson Kelliher will make a strong commitment to these plans and actions, including support for 24/7 bus lanes and protected bike lanes on Hennepin Avenue."

Following the hearing Anderson Kelliher voiced her commitment, and even excitement about working to implement these plans and policies and said that was one of



I like to puzzle through problems with people, and public works has lots of good problems to solve."

Margaret Anderson Kelliher

the reasons she accepted this position. "Cities like Minneapolis are leading," she said, "with a focus on the climate crisis which is our most important thing we can be working on."

She also answered questions from committee members about water investments, sidewalk snow and ice removal, the proposed East Phil-

ing the layout recommended by staff that includes protected bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes. Others shared concerns about the loss of on-street parking spaces.

In response to Ward 10 Council Member Aisha Chughtai's questions about her position on the design, Anderson Kelliher said, "I do believe there is a way to largely preserve the plan. If you are going to have a bike lane it needs to be protected. We have an opportunity to preserve and phase in a transit priority." Later she added, "I strongly support having 24/7 [dedicated bus] lanes, but I am not sure it will be needed on the day we open."

The design could be built as recommended, Anderson Kelliher suggested, but that, at least at first, some additional parking could be allowed on some portion of the bus lanes for some time periods of the day. She is most concerned with the portion closer to Franklin where parking is more limited, adding that there would have to be discussion with the Met Council about their projected needs and that the results of a soon to be released study might help inform those talks. "My commitment is to work on this issue," she said, "I am sure there are other ideas."

Anderson Kelliher admits that she does not shy away from problems and says that working on problems and trying to find solutions is one of her strengths. "I am excited to work with folks on the problem-solving piece," she said. "I like to puzzle through problems with people, and Public Works has lots of good problems to solve."

lips urban farm project, rethinking highways and more. When asked about the new facility that is planned to be built in East Phillips, where some residents had proposed an urban farm, she indicated an interest in helping to play a positive role in facilitating some use for farming. When asked about Rethinking Interstate 94 she indicated openness to studying all options, including "removal or parkway option."

HENNEPIN AVENUE PROJECT

The topic that was the most controversial was the proposed new design for South Hennepin Avenue, from Douglas Avenue to Lake Street, which is expected to go to the city council for approval this spring. Some people stressed the importance of follow-

▶4 BLACK HISTORY

challenged all Americans to honor the overlooked and neglected accomplishments of African Americans in shaping the course of history.

One of the best ways to teach children about the achievements of African Americans and inspire them to become leaders who make a difference is through reading books. Children's books that introduce youth to unsung Black heroes and sheroes like artist Emory Douglas, civil rights attorney Dovey Johnson Roundtree and educator Mary McCleod Bethune provide children with the inspiration to serve and lead in their communities. At Planting People Growing Justice Press and Bookstore (PPGJ), we have assembled a bookstore of children's books that celebrate the rich culture and history of the Black community.

One of our award-winning books, "Justice Makes a Difference: The Story of Miss Freedom Fighter, Esq.," teaches the valuable lesson that you are never too

young to make a difference. It's about a little girl that learns from her grandmother about the contributions of African American leaders who planted seeds of social change.

A young boy, Samuel, learns about his grandfather's homeland in "Ghana: A Place I Call Home." They experience the essence of Sankofa as his grandfather imparts lessons about his history, culture, and roots.

"Amazing Africa: A to Z" is an award-winning visual journey of images and facts about the African continent. Children learn about the rich cultural history of the African Diaspora.

"Kwame Votes" introduces children to the basics of civic engagement. Kwame learns that everyone plays a key role in building strong families and safe communities.

"Stand Up and Be Counted" is the first of its kind picture book that teaches children about the U.S. Census and serving their community through the story of Nia and her Aunt Geneva.

"Jaheem's First Kwanzaa" introduces

Kwanzaa as a family tradition of celebrating heritage and cultural roots.

I have written two books in "Gateway Biographies" series. These biographies highlight the accomplishments of two pioneering African American women, Stacey Abrams and Amanda Gorman.

"Gumbo Joy" celebrates the rich cultural history of the African Diaspora, from West Africa's shores to the bustling streets of New Orleans, Louisiana.

The books in our bookstore celebrate the culture, heritage, and accomplishments of African Americans not just during the month of February, but year-round. Our book collection invites readers of all ages to learn and grow each day. These books foster anti-racist education, encourage collective engagement, and aid

in building a more just and inclusive society. Learn more: bit.ly/PPGJBOOKS

Through her organization, Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute, Dr. Artika Tyner seeks to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach. Reach her at dr.artikatyner@gmail.com.

CORRECTIONS

In the Feb. 3 *Connector*, we incorrectly stated that MSP Film purchased the St. Anthony Main Theater. They actually have secured a long-term lease.

Also, in that same issue, we incorrectly referenced the "E. Hennepin Ave." project, when it should have said the South Hennepin Avenue project.

We apologize for the errors and any confusion they may have caused. We are grateful to the readers who brought them to our attention.

We want to hear from you.

news@SWconnector.com

CONGRATS

to our winners in the Minnesota Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest



▶ CATEGORY X: Third Place – 5 stories written by Tesha M. Christensen, Margie O'Loughlin, and Chloe Peter on impacts of COVID-19



▶ HARD NEWS: Second place – "Redesign saves Coliseum" written by Iric Nathanson

▶ SOCIAL ISSUES: Third place –

"She must have done something wrong" written by Tesha M. Christensen as part of our Voices Against Violence series

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1 Connie Osterbaan
Herman Milligan:
Longtime residents of South
Minneapolis, together 41 years

LIFELONG VALENTINES

1. How old were you, and where and how did you first meet?

Herman: I was approximately 25 years of age and was a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of MN-Twin Cities Campus. We met through a group of mutual sociology graduate student friends.

Connie: I was in my late 20s, working on my doctorate in social psychology at the University of Minnesota. Herman was working on his doctorate in criminology. We had offices next to each other and had a lot of friends in common.

2. When did you know you wanted to marry each other?

H: I had been divorced from my first marriage several years before we first met; Connie was recently widowed. We were very attracted to each other and felt that marriage would eventually be an important thing.

C: I can't name a specific time. We lived together for a while before deciding to get married and at some point, we both knew we wanted to be married.

3. Describe your wedding.

H: We decided to get married on Connie's birthday, July 3, 1980, and have been married 41 years. We decided to get married by a judge at the Hennepin Court House in downtown Minneapolis to simplify matters. We had about 14 friends attend the ceremony with a reception lunch held at the now closed St. Anthony Wharf restaurant located on Main Street in Minneapolis and held a wedding party at our apartment that night. My foremost memory was having our wedding day celebrated with all our closest friends who were able to attend.

C: We were married on July 3, 1980. It was my birthday. We have been married 41 years, married at the Hennepin County Courthouse, with about a dozen close friends present. The ceremony was followed by a luncheon reception at St. Anthony's Wharf and a larger party at our duplex. A foremost memory for me is our honeymoon in Cuba.

4. When you said, "Until death do us part," did you think you would have a lifelong relationship?

H: Yes, I believed that and still do to this day. We have had disagreements, etc. throughout the marriage, but at the end of the day, we still love each other and our daughter very much and enjoy a diversity of activity in life even though we don't have to share the same enthusiasm for it. I have learned quite a bit over the years from various projects Connie has managed throughout her work career and now in her retirement.

C: Yes, I did. I find it hard to understand why someone would enter marriage expecting anything short of that.

5. What do you believe are the keys to the success of your lifelong relationship?

H: Truly loving someone even when there are periods of disagreement about



life situations that are major and/or not as important. Learning to take the other person's point of view and feeling comfortable to raise an issue that should be discussed as opposed to internalizing it and not discussing it at all. Sharing as much time with relatives from both sides of the relationship is important to achieve a better understanding of your spouse's family/historical background. Lastly, taking trips, near-by and afar, helps bring diversity as to how we as individuals live and our place in the world.

C: Getting married does not mean that you are going to magically eliminate your individual personalities. I believe it is important to make a commitment to support each other and to respect each other's different interests and personalities. It also helps to share similar values. For example, Herman and I have always both placed a lot of importance on family, on finding ways to give back to the community through the arts or other volunteer activities, on embracing diversity, and on continuing to stay engaged with the world as we age. Finally, I think you must be willing to accept that both of you will, and should, change over the course of your marriage. This is an inevitable and desirable part of individual growth and



part of loving someone is being willing to support their growth.

6. What advice do you have for our readers who may be just getting started?

H: Remember the important reasons

why you love each other and why you decided to be with each other. Treat each other, your respective relatives, friends with respect and be prepared to make concessions for the common good of the relationship. Love each other even in the most difficult of times.

C: I think it is important to recognize that tension between independence and commitment is a natural part of loving someone, but that the commitment and sacrifices inherent in love are well worth it. You will experience a lot of things as individuals and as a couple over the course of your marriage. Just focus on what you have loved about your partner from the beginning, what you want to be as a couple, and let the day-to-day stuff go.

Herman J. Milligan, Jr., Ph.D.

Dr. Milligan is a managing partner with The Fulton Group, LLC, an independent consultant firm specializing in marketing research, competitive intelligence, non-profit organizational development, and culturally specific projects and initiatives, and is a retired Vice-President of Marketing Research/Competitive Intelligence within the Enterprise Marketing/Customer Insights and Analysis division for Wells Fargo and Company. Herman received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and his B.A. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was as a Ford Foundation Fellow in Music at the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College (Oakland, Calif.) and performed with the Cecil Taylor Black Music Ensemble at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Tenor Saxophone) where he also served as a music reviewer for the school's newspaper, *The Daily Cardinal*. Herman is a photographer and art curator.

Connie Osterbaan, Ph.D.

Dr. Osterbaan earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Minnesota. She and Herman stayed on at the university to conduct post-doctoral research on race relations in maximum-security prisons. Connie went on to pursue a 30-year career in criminology and public policy research at Hennepin County focusing on race disparities in criminal justice, violence against women and juvenile justice. She also served as the research manager for the Hennepin County Research, Planning and Development Department where her staff conducted research such issues as mental health courts, teen pregnancy, education disparities, homelessness, and the implications of an aging population. Osterbaan continued to teach for many years as an adjunct professor for the University of Minnesota Department of Sociology. Since retiring in 2013, Connie has been active in OLLI (the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) as a board member, board chair, and instructor of a course about research on police killings. She continues to write and present papers as a member of a women's study group called 'Peripatetics', belongs to a mystery book club, produces photography books on family history, and is an avid gardener, hiker, traveler. Connie and Herman have one daughter, who is a banking attorney in Chicago.

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7 VALENTINES

Julie O' Baoighill 
Giuliana Ciabo: 

Longtime residents of Longfellow, together 31 years

1. We met in the fall of 1990 when we were both in our late 20s on a camping trip with mutual friends in Wisconsin.

2. We fell in love right away and moved in together within two weeks, so almost immediately. We are each other's first girlfriend and neither of us had dated women before we met.

3. We have not gotten married and have been together for 31 years.

4. We fell in love so intensely that we both assumed that we would be together lifelong.

5. The keys to a successful lifelong relationship are: honest communication even when it's tough, kindness to each other even when you're annoyed, and a willingness to nurture each other's full expression of their true selves.

6. You are both going to grow and change. Let it happen. Be realistic, be compassionate, be excited. Keep the energy moving, try new things. Have spontaneous dance parties just the two of you.

Julie "JAO" O' Baoighill


Julie is a painter, performance artist and astrologer with a practice that combines modern and ancient techniques. She plays the banjo and enjoys bike-riding, badminton, and juggling. She grew up in Maine and still visits that rocky coast. Find her at www.jaoart.com or www.jaoart.com/astrology

Giuliana Ciabo

Giuliana grew up in Italy. She is a random artist and activist deeply committed to listening to the earth and becoming a worthy participant in the creative processes of nature. Giuliana desires to lessen her impact on the planet by using leftover materials and developing work that will gracefully decay. Community involvement is the heart of artmaking for Giuliana. She has participated in Barebones Halloween Extravaganza, Heart of the Beast Mayday, ArtCar parades and Center for Moving Cultures events. She has worked in puppetry, cement sculpture and clay, as well as movement and singing.



Something under the hood is not immediately apparent or obvious. This column will uncover stories that span the neighborhoods covered by TMC Publications. Susan Schaefer is a widely published independent journalist, creative writer, and poet. Her articles appear in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, PBS' online magazine, Next Avenue, Next Tribe, and beyond. She was columnist and features writer for Minneapolis' Southwest Journal and Minnesota Good Age magazine.

Carmen
Gutiérrez Bolger 
Richard (dik) Bolger:
Longtime Como residents, together 42 years

1. dik and I met in August of 1978 when I was hired as a receptionist at Bolger Publications/Creative Printing. I was 21 and he was 23 and in charge of production. At that time, Bolger Printing was run by his father, John Bolger and mother, Genevieve, and located on North Washington Avenue in Minneapolis. It was in the basement of Genevieve's father's lute-fisk business. I found out later that I got the job because they were trying to add diversity to their employee pool. You might say that it was love at first sight.

2. We started dating within a couple of months, and announced to John and Gen that we were going to be married the following year. That didn't sit well with Gen as they knew nothing about me, and employees were not supposed to date.

Almost immediately, the family (parents and two brothers), decided to take me out to dinner and "find out who she is!" Although it was uncomfortable, the family was really very sweet to me. Part of the reason for this is that I was born in Cuba and raised in southern Florida, so my immigrant background and lack of history in Minnesota must have been concerning.

3. We set the date 10 months into the future, for May 1979 and the location would be the Bolger family lake home, Meadowlawn, in Prior Lake. Because the house was at the end of a very long dirt road, Gen convinced me that we should change the date to June so that guests wouldn't have to deal with driving in the mud. My compromise was to set the date as June 2, 1979. I was 22 and dik was 24.

I was determined to have a private wedding, so the only guests were parents, siblings, their partners, my maid of honor and his best man. Tom Griffith, dik's cousin, crashed the wedding, which was great. We asked a local judge, Peter Albrecht, to marry us and wrote our own vows based loosely on the civil ceremony. The music was provided by Randy Davidson, a cellist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and his wife came and held the music for him. At our request, he played the Bach Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, Prelude for the entrance music.

We were married on the lawn in front of the house, facing the lake. I placed a white ribbon on the grass in the shape of a huge circle with an aisle for each set of parents to walk us up to the center. My mom made my dress, a white summer-weight wool suit with a sleeveless silk blouse and I carried white roses. dik wore a blue shirt also made by my mother, and white pants.

dik came from a large family on Gen's side, so we invited about 200 people to a dance party on the lawn afterwards. His cousin Jay Scoggin had a band and played under a white tent with a wooden dance floor. We served wedding cake, wine, and coffee.

My biggest memory is that part way through the dance I escaped and walked down a wooded path to the beach to be by myself for a bit. I was overwhelmed by the huge crowd of dik's family and friends. We've been married 42 years.

4. I don't think we had a clue as to how long we would be married, we just knew we were in love.

5. There isn't one thing that we would say is a key to a lifelong marriage, but there were a couple of ideas that we have passed on to newlyweds along the way. We made it a point early on to celebrate every holiday, birthday, and anniversary with cards and often with gifts. It allowed us to stop and connect in an intentional way. To say "I love you" as part of a celebration.

Additionally, a few times during our marriage, we created "retreats" complete with ground rules. Because we worked



together, we had training in brainstorming and working on issues. We stayed at resorts out of town, took large sheets of paper, markers and tape and asked each other questions like: "What does the future look like for you? What should our finances look like in five years? 10 years? What is working/not working in our relationship?" These were usually about a day and a half of work and then sauna or hot tub afterwards. They were important to the relationship.

We are both headstrong which can create some amazing sparks!

6. Biggest advice: communicate about everything and don't ever lie.

Carmen Gutiérrez Bolger

Cuban-born Carmen Gutiérrez Bolger is a visual artist and former operations manager in charge of prepress at Bolger Vision Beyond Print. Her 20-year graphic arts career includes her role as a board of director in the National Composition Association (NCA), Typographers International Association (TIA), the International Digital Imaging Association (IDIA) and Women Venture. Additionally, she was board chair of IDIA and most recently the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA). Carmen has participated in invitational and juried shows in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Washington including Katherine E. Nash Gallery and the Larson Art Gallery at the University of Minnesota, The Gorecki Gallery at the College of St.

Benedict, The Minnetonka Center for the Arts, The Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, The Phipps Center for the Arts, The Textile Center, Grove-land Gallery Annex, the MSP Airport, and the Arrowhead Biennial at the Duluth Art Center. In addition to working in oil and collage, Carmen creates site-specific installations. Her work is inspired by her Latina culture, her love of the graphic arts and the enjoyment she gets from collaborating with other artists. Carmen works in her studio in the Casket Arts Building in Northeast Minneapolis.

Richard Griffith Bolger

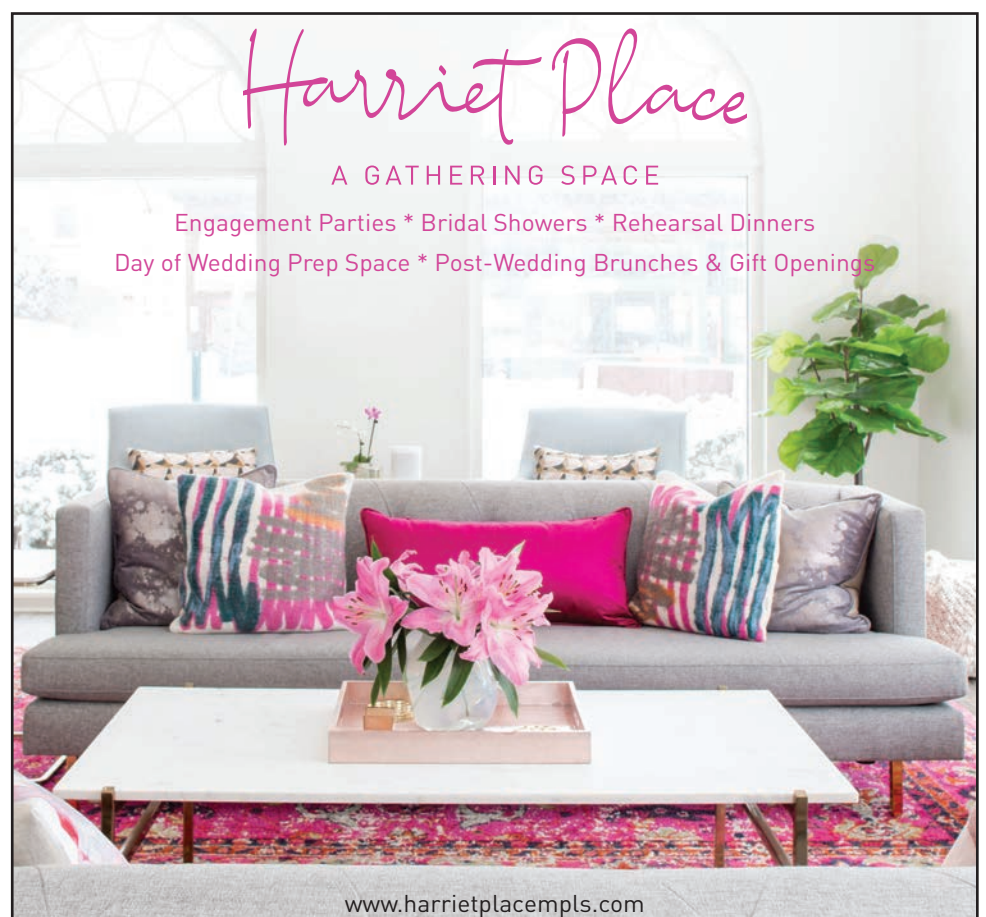
Richard was born in 1954 at St. Barnabus Hospital in Minneapolis. Raised in Richfield, he attended Richfield schools up until the 10th grade. Disillusioned with his schooling, he co-founded Inward Bound Free School based on the principles of the Southeast Alternatives organization, an early leader in redefining how children learn best. When Inward Bound could no longer pay its two teachers, dik enrolled and later graduated from Marshall University High School in Dinkytown, moving on to Evergreen College, another alternative school. There, he studied education with the modest goal of changing America's educational system. Shortly after beginning student teaching, he discovered that teaching a room full of little children terrified him, left college, and joined the family printing business back in Minneapolis. Early on, he struggled with the concept of being a capitalist and discussed his ideals with a mentor, Ken Meter. Ken, without hesitation told him that a business owner had more opportunity to improve the lives of employees and his community, than someone in another profession. That was 45 years ago. After the death of his older brother, Jack, dik took over the role of sales manager, eventually becoming CEO, growing the business from \$800,000 to \$35 million.

In his 20s, dik began his involvement in non-profit boards beginning with Fresh Air Radio. When his brother died of cancer, he was invited to join the University of Minnesota's Cancer Research Center Board. He was their board chair for four years. His next board chair position was with the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, MCBA. While there he helped to hire a new executive director and to move them into their current location on Washington Avenue. He continued his board leadership as chair of the Playwrights' Center where he was involved in hiring the current executive director. dik enjoys gardening, making stained glass, sailing, rowing, cross country skiing, swimming, and saunas.

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LIVING WELL IN STRESSFUL TIMES

FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

What a time of transformation we are living in. It feels scary and exciting and overwhelming and brimming with new possibilities all at once. How are you navigating your stress? How are you cultivating resilience?



By **Michele Rae**

In my years as a pharmacist and a health and wellness coach, I have learned skills and techniques to minimize my stress triggers, reduce my overreacting and cultivate choice. Sometimes I even successfully utilize them! Let's just say I practice them many times throughout my day.

Your stress response is innate survival gear built in your body and neuro pathways as you develop throughout your life. You are hard wired to stay safe and avoid danger. You are continuously assessing through your many senses your internal and external experiences. If you detect a threat, your system turns on the neurochemistry of the survival brain. You move into a mode of protect and defend, also known as fight, flight, or freeze. If you are in jeopardy (actually occurring in the pres-

ent moment OR imagining by ruminating or worrying), your body is flooded with many physical and chemical reactions including stress induced hormones and neurotransmitters. Your pupils dilate, digestion slows down, blood pressure and heart rate increase, and muscles become tense. This autonomic stress response is fantastic if you are running from a tiger. It is destabilizing and harmful if it becomes your ongoing experience.

How do you bring your body back to balance instead of being engulfed in ongoing stress?

First you have to notice.

What are your stress triggers? What sets you off? The news? Your teenager? The weather? Worrying about the future or past? You can experience a stress trigger that originates from your internal feelings and thoughts or an external event. Tracking what triggers you can be useful. Once you are aware of them, you can use strategies to reduce being triggered. You can monitor the input of social media or the news if those are a trigger. You can notice your negative thoughts and create action steps to deal with the issue or direct your attention back to the present moment. Noticing your stress triggers provides you freedom to choose how you respond rather than conditioned, automatic, and exaggerated reactivity.

gerated reactivity.

Next, increase noticing your stress symptoms.

- How do you behave when you are stressed? Do you lash out, withdraw, eat more, sleep less?

- What emotions do you notice when you are in a hyper vigilant condition? Are you more disgruntled, distracted, depressed, hostile, suspicious, pessimistic, or agitated?

- What happens in your body? Do you have headaches, stomach aches, tight shoulders, lethargy, or hold your breath?

- Do your thoughts change? Become more pessimistic, negative, blaming others, helpless, repetitive, or hopeless?

I had a spiritual teacher, Jan Adams, who was also a physician, and she had a compelling reason to notice stress responses, triggers, and symptoms. Metaphorically speaking, first they come as a whisper. Next a tap on the shoulder. Next a punch in the gut. Next a two by four across the head. Noticing at the whisper is the goal!

Practicing mindfulness – paying attention on purpose in the present moment with as little judgment as you can manage – is a practical tool to navigate stressful times with as much ease and flow and choice as possible.

When you are stressed, can you influence the situation or is it out of your control? It is easy to fall into the disempowered perspective of a victim of circumstances if you choose to get all worked up and exhausted about something or someone you cannot immediately impact. In this condition, you convince yourself you can only react. The goal is to be proactive. What small steps can you take to have a positive change on the stressful circumstance? How can you increase your circle of influence and decrease your circle of concern? Shifting your perspective is an effective tool in living well and reducing your stress.

Remember you are a powerful agent of positive change. The world needs you as we all co-create who we are becoming together during these stressful times of transformation.

Have comments, feedback, interested in more details on the research? Is there a holistic mind-body health or wellness topic you would like to see in this column?

Be in touch.

Michele@CenterWithin.com
612-465-9775



Michele Rae, RPh, MA, NBC-HWC is the founder of The Center Within, LLC and author of "Living From the Center Within: Co-Creating Who You Are Becoming." She provides holistic coaching designed to accelerate and support personal, professional, and organizational transformation.

SOMETIMES I'M AN ACTIVIST BECAUSE I MUST BE

STORIES & JOURNEYS

I feel gratitude for everyone who has taken the plunge as we navigate the uncertain waters of life experience through my new column, Stories and Journeys. This column is an article I wrote two years ago. I still stand by what I wrote.

It includes me remembering an experience that shaped my identity as a writer reflecting on "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost.



By **Donald L. Hammen**

REFLECTIONS ON MLK DAY 2020

*"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."
~ "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost*

In 1962-63, I was a freshman at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Somehow it had been determined that a major in philosophy and religion best suited me as opposed to my other considerations which were English (I did take English

Composition) – or history and political Science. (I was overwhelmed when I saw the reading list.)

I ended with an equivalent minor in history and political science with a stronger interest in political science. Dr. Koch, my freshman composition professor, said my being a good writer was not in question, but he had noticed that I was a reflective writer. He had presented one of my essays to Dr. Jack Padgett, head of the philosophy and religion department, with the observation that I would do well as a philosophy and religion major. The specific essay that got Dr. Koch's attention was the one I wrote on "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost.

Dr. Padgett told me he agreed with Dr. Koch that I would do well as a philosophy and religion major. It made sense to me at the time.

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Somehow word got out that I had declared myself to be a philosophy and religion major. I was approached by Jane, a freshman student, who explained to me that she was one of a small group of students meeting weekly as the Methodist Student Movement. They had decided it was time to go ecumenical and become the Student Christian Movement since there was nothing for non-Methodist stu-

dents as a place to gather. If I was willing to do it, they wanted me to be the first president of the Student Christian Movement. I consented.

CROSSING PATHS WITH NEW COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

As president of the Student Christian Movement it was inevitable that Chaplain James Allen and I would cross paths.

Chaplain Allen introduced our small leadership group to "The Miracle of Dialogue" by Reuel Howe for reading and studying. Chaplain Allen and I made a decision to explore taking the Student Christian Movement into direct engagement with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. As we became socially engaged and active, weekly participation in the Student Christian Movement more than doubled.

Personally, I remember many hours at the home of Jim and his wife Jan at the time, just hanging out or attending meetings. It was Jim who introduced me to the work of a new musician by the name of Bob Dylan, specifically a song called "The Times They Are a-Changing."

I am not an activist by nature. I tend to be introspective, a meditator, a writer of reflective words, but there are times when I am activist because I can't help myself. The need becomes too obvious and I am convinced I can contribute. The common

good requires that we do what we are able to do.

MESSAGE OF MLK

Now it is 2020. I find that the memory and message of Dr. Martin Luther King today is too whitewashed and watered down. The words of Dr. King that continue to stay with me are his observation that it doesn't do any good to be able to have a seat in the restaurant if you can't afford the meal. We focus too exclusively on his civil rights legacy and forget his leadership in the Poor People's Campaign in the last years of his life.

Dr. King was assassinated but the dream lives on in spite of the three evils he identified: racism, poverty, and war.

"What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't have enough money to buy a hamburger?" From a speech given by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Sanitation Workers Striking in Memphis, March 18, 1968.

What are your MLK Day reflections/remembrances? Share them with yourself, others or me by writing or emailing news@longfellownokomismessenger.com.

In gratitude. Stay tuned.



Donald L. Hammen is a longtime south Minneapolis resident, and serves on the All Elders United for Justice steering committee.

BRIEFS

SOUTHWEST LIGHT-RAIL PROJECT TRANSFER PROPOSED

State Senator Scott Dibble, announced that he will introduce a bill that would move responsibility of the Southwest Light Rail project from the Metropolitan Council to the Minnesota Department of Transportation by March 1. This would include all future planning, construction and oversight. Representative Frank Hornstein, chair of the House Transportation Committee, said that he will also introduce a companion bill in the House.

REDISTRICTING BOUNDARIES

State and local governments are working to meet deadlines for redistricting new boundaries for districts and wards this spring based on the 2020 census. That

state deadline for redistricting is February 15. If the legislature has not approved a new map of congressional and legislative districts by then, the courts will. Once approved, the City will then have until March 29 to approve a map that includes the new ward and park district boundaries. In Minneapolis, The Charter Commission is in charge of setting the boundaries and recently put forward recommended maps of ward and park district boundaries. On Feb.24 they will hold a public hearing on their redistricting plan. For more information see <https://www.minneapolis.gov/government/programs-initiatives/redistricting/>

ELECTRIC VEHICLE NETWORK

On Feb. 3, Saint Paul and Minneapolis started a new network of on-street electric vehicle charging stations, EV Spots, that can be used to charge electric vehicles. They will be used to park and charge pri-

vate vehicles as well as the new publicly operated Evie Carshare vehicles that will be operating as part of the new EV Spot Network. The network covers a 35-square-mile service area in St. Paul and Minneapolis that offer the public access to electric vehicle charging places and a new publicly operated community carshare service called Evie Carshare and operated by the local nonprofit HOURCAR. Each charging location will have two dedicated parking spaces for personal vehicles and two spaces for carshare vehicles. The first locations available for public use are at Sherburne & Dale Street (Saint Paul), Margaret Street & E 7th Street (Saint Paul), Colfax & Hennepin Avenue (Minneapolis), Chicago & Franklin Avenue (Minneapolis) and 13th Avenue SE & 4th Street SE (Minneapolis). They plan to add 65 more EV Spot Charging locations in the months ahead and be fully-operational by fall. Initially the Evie Carshare plans to operate with

101 cars and adding cars to eventually operate 171 vehicles. To learn more visit www.EVSpotNetwork.com.

PARK PLAN FOR CEDAR LAKE, LAKE OF THE ISLES

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is continuing efforts to create a new long-term plan for Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, Dean Parkway and the surrounding parkland and trails. Two concepts were released December and a virtual open house was held on Feb. 7 with staff. A first public comment period will close March 4, staff will evaluate feedback and develop one preferred concept for another round of public feedback this summer. To learn more and take an online survey visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/cedar-isles-initial-concepts>.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

SPOTIFY, NEIL, AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Many of you are following this story, but for those who aren't: A few weeks ago, the venerable and beloved rock icon Neil Young left Spotify in protest of COVID-19 disinformation promoted by Spotify's highly paid and enormously popular podcaster, Joe Rogan. (Fellow Canadian) Joni Mitchell soon joined Young, and since then, many others have joined this "movement" to hold the Spotify platform accountable for the damage it did by granting play to such damaging information.



By **Larry LaVercombe**



Roxane Gay said, "I'm trying to do the best I can, and take a stand when I think I can have an impact." (Photo courtesy RoxaneGay.com)

Predictably, cries of "censorship!" and "cancel culture!" swelled from the right. On the left, there were glimmers of hope: What if Bruce and Bob joined? Might this "protest" actually accomplish something?

I was discussing this issue with my 30-year-old son, a wise soul with progressive cred, and at one point, he shook his head as he referenced this quote from Neil that you've probably read: "They can have Rogan or Young. Not both." My son lamented what he saw as Neil's (and also my) naivete. "Joe Rogan has more listeners for a single average Spotify podcast than Neil Young has had for his most popular song," he said, adding that it was a no brainer for Spotify to let Neil go, given the money involved, and that if Neil Young thought that Spotify was going to choose him over Joe Rogan, it mostly shows that he is out of touch.

It saddened me, for I love Neil. And I believed my kid, because he's almost always right. And yet, this story continues to have legs. More people join the "protest" every day, including Crosby, Stills and Nash, India.Arie, and Nils Lofgren. Roxane Gay, who hosts a podcast called The Roxane Gay Agenda, recently published an op-ed in the *New York Times*, titled, "Why I've Decided to Take My Podcast Off Spotify."

Ms. Gay states that "engaging with the world with intellectual honesty and integrity is rarely simple." Most protests are "symbolic," she says. "Living in the world requires moral compromise.... I'm not looking for purity, it doesn't exist. Instead, I'm trying to do the best I can, and take a stand when I think I can have an impact."

It's hard to measure "impact." Something that starts you thinking one way may have more impact than the thing

which finally "breaks the camel's back" and moves you to action, but how often can you pinpoint or even remember what first initiated a change? As a businessman, I advertise, but it's almost impossible to measure its "impact." Roxane Gay's article in the *Times* will likely have more "impact" than her actual exit from Spotify.

And yet impact, or influence, is in fact something we all crave. We like to think that what we do matters. So here's a question: How many of us who have been rooting for Neil have actually gone ahead and cancelled our subscription to Spotify?

I haven't. Why? Partly because I'm intimidated by the technological hassle of "changing platforms" on my old computer. Partly that it would necessitate a decision on where else I should go. Fact is, I can't remember whether I contracted for the year, or if I pay month to month... It will take time and energy for me to make that change, and what good will it do? Who am I? I'm nobody to them.

What is the effective symbolism of one anonymous man singly quitting in protest? It almost reminds you of voting, doesn't it? And yet, we do vote. Most of you reading this paper DO vote. And we know that if enough people vote for a good cause, then the good cause wins. We have faith in that.

I highly recommend Ms. Gays' article, for it makes several other points about Rogan and our culture. It also makes an excellent distinction between "censorship" and "curation."

"When we are not free to express ourselves," she says, "when we can be thrown in jail or even lose our lives for speaking freely, that is censorship. When we say, as a society, that bigotry and misinformation are unacceptable, and that people who espouse those ideas don't deserve access

to significant platforms, that's curation."

I ran this quote by my son, and he forwarded to me a podcast by the well-known humanist philosopher, Sam Harris, who himself has a podcast titled Making Sense. Mr. Harris, interestingly, strongly defended Joe Rogan, stating that, while Rogan would be wise to take more care vetting his guests, and also be more prepared to push back against misinformation, "Joe Rogan can in no honest way be considered a racist." (If you want to listen to this, it's episode #273, Joe Rogan and the Ethics of Apology. Totally fascinating.)

I have to admit, I was floored by Harris's assertion, for by this time, I had swallowed the liberal talking points. So I listened to another podcast by another of my heroes, Jon Stewart, who essentially agreed with Harris. He also suggested that all this hullabaloo was making this more personal, more "about Joe Rogan," than it should be. The goal should be honesty, he says.

So where does this leave us? How has this controversy affected us? I must admit, I love how much dialogue this story has created. And I do believe this: When we are honest and courageous, we learn from each other, and that is good.

My continuing evolution around this particular story is still not over, and yet I still believe this conclusion that I wrote in my first draft... That as a culture, we must take more action to reclaim the goodness that this country once stood for. It's not lost on me that this protest was started by two Canadians. Taking action requires distinguishing between what is good and what is not good. We progressives have fallen into a moral relativism whereby we are afraid to judge lest we be called "judgmental." It's a set up. And it's one we fall for over and over again when we fail to name wrongness on the right.

And yet, on the contrary, we judge ourselves relentlessly on the left. We progressives expect purity in our ranks, and we butcher our own for the slightest imperfections. We are, in fact, judgmental toward ourselves.

Final thought: Symbolism affects thinking, and thinking affects action and change. Don't underestimate the power of a symbolic act.



Larry LaVercombe is a writer, filmmaker, and activist, born in Detroit and arrived in Minneapolis in 1975. He lived in a treehouse in San Diego before getting an MFA from the USC Film School. He writes most days, and as Team Larry he has been selling residential real estate in Minneapolis for 26 years..

FIRST CHIEF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OFFICER

The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) has selected Virajita Singh to serve as the museum's first Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer (CDIO). Singh will come to Mia from the University of Minnesota, where she has served in the Office for Equity & Diversity (OED) since



Virajita Singh

2015, first as the Assistant Vice Provost and, since 2019, as the Associate Vice Provost. Originally trained as an architect—a field in which she has practiced and taught since 1992, both in India and in the United States—Singh's more recent work has included collaborations with the 17 distinct colleges within the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities Campus, as well as supporting the University's system-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and policies. Mia's new CDIO position, which will join the museum's senior leadership team, is made possible through more than \$6.5 million in funding from former board chairs Nivin MacMillan and Hubert Joly, and trustee Sheila Morgan, to endow the position and support DEAIIB initiatives at the museum. Singh will begin her role at Mia in March.

MN350 NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MN350 is pleased to announce the hiring of Tee McClenty as executive director. "Decisions on climate change need to be transparent and accountable and participated in and led by BIPOC communities," said Tee McClenty. "We must move to a society where low-income, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color no longer suffer disproportionately from the irresponsible stewardship that we all contribute to."



Tee McClenty

"My experience will support MN350 in expanding our work and reaching even more BIPOC communities through deep engagement," McClenty said. "We will continue to work to create a robust organization that is inclusive of all communities of color."

MN350 has grown dramatically in the past three years, reflecting the importance more and more Minnesotans place on protecting the climate. MN350 is a statewide climate advocacy group with 30,000 supporters.

SOUTHWEST CONNECTOR DEADLINES

Publication typically 1st and 3rd Thursdays. * Some exceptions	Deadlines typically 2nd and 4th Mondays.		
Publication date	Deadline date		
Dec. 2	Nov. 19 (Friday)	June 2	May 23
Break	Break	June 16	June 6
Jan. 6	Dec. 20	July 7	June 20
Feb. 3	Jan. 24	July 21	July 11
Feb. 17	Feb. 7	Aug. 4	July 25
March 3	Feb. 18 (Friday)	Break	Break
March 17	March 7	Sept. 1	Aug. 8
April 7	March 28	Sept. 22	Sept. 12
April 21	April 11	Oct. 6	Sept. 26
May 5	April 25	Oct. 20	Oct. 10
May 19	May 9	Nov. 3	Oct. 24
		Nov. 17	Nov. 7
		Dec. 1	Nov. 21
		Dec. 15	Dec. 5
		Break	Break

SPECIAL SECTIONS CALENDAR

JANUARY
 Health & Wellness due Dec. 20
 School Guide due Dec. 20
FEBRUARY
 Summer Camp Guide due Jan. 24
 Wedding due Feb. 7
MARCH
 Home Improvement due Feb. 18
 CSA Guide due Mar 7
APRIL
 Home & Garden due Mar 28
 Drive & Ride due Apr 11
MAY
 Home & Garden due Apr 25
 Summer in the City due May 9
JUNE
 Summer in the City due May 23
 @ Lake & Hennepin due June 6

JULY
 Summer in the City due June 20
 Back to School due July 11
AUGUST
 Summer in the City due July 25
SEPTEMBER
 Back to School due Sept. 12
 - Health focus
OCTOBER
 Home Improvement due Sep. 26
 Domestic Violence due Oct. 10
 Awareness Month
NOVEMBER
 Food & Drink due Oct. 24
 Shop Small/Buy Local due Nov. 7
DECEMBER
 Shop Small/Buy Local due Nov. 21
 Paws and Claws due Dec. 5

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JOIN OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Lyndale Neighborhood Association's education program has provided Adult Basic Education programming in the form of English as a Second Language classes for the last 11 years and digital literacy instruction for the last three years. During this time, classes could be found at Zion Lutheran Church and Wells Fargo bank and now are currently held at the Charles Horn Towers and Blaisdell YMCA. Our program aims to provide instruction in community spaces that are easily accessible for those who live in and around the Lyndale neighborhood.

Like all schools and educational organizations, our program has had to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and make decisions on how to keep students, volunteers and teachers safe. Last year we transitioned from remote instruction that included both synchronous online Zoom classes and one-on-one tutoring via standard telephone and What'sApp calls. Once this became well-established, it was



time to return to in-person English and digital literacy instruction. And in many ways, the program had to be rebuilt. This included contacting former students, alerting potential students in the community that in-person classes would be resuming and making, in many ways, fresh connections for volunteer support.

Instruction is provided by highly trained instructors who create curriculum and plan lessons that include standards that define the academic content of ABE. Volunteer support is key to implementing the curriculum and helping students

to meet their goals of English for work, improved employment, continuing education, providing support to their families among other aims. LNA has been able to provide high-quality instruction in very large part to the support and dedication of our volunteer base. Volunteers, we thank you!

Again, we are in need of volunteers for our classes. Volunteers assist the main teacher, lead small groups, tutor learners one-on-one, conduct registration and testing and help with class set-up. LNA's Education Program is currently looking to fill vacancies for Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.; Tuesday afternoons from 1:30-4:15 p.m.; and Thursday evenings from 5:30-8:15 p.m. Looking ahead, we will also be staffing for summer programming; more to come on that!

To volunteer or sign up for classes, please contact me at nicki@lyndale.org or visit our website at www.lyndale.org. Please note, our website is currently under construction to provide easier navigation, but will be available to the general public later this week.

NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

LHENA ORAL HISTORY MARCH 16

Oral historian Dr. Kim Heikkila of Spotlight Oral History will be joining the LHENA board meeting on Wednesday, March 16 to present the Lowry Hill East Oral History Project. This grant-funded project was conceived by Wedge neighborhood historian Kathy Kullberg in 2020. Kullberg wanted to add to the history of Lowry Hill East by interviewing residents and former residents who played pivotal roles in the neighborhood during the 1960s and 1970s, a transitional period during which struggles over zoning, housing, transportation, safety, and neighborhood identity rose to the fore. This was also the era that saw the establishment of LHENA and The Wedge community newspaper. Dr. Heikkila and interviewees will join us for a moderated discussion about their experiences in the neighborhood. All are welcome to attend this virtual presentation.

CLEAN UP STEVENS SQUARE-LORING HEIGHTS

Join an earth-minded walking group in Stevens Square Park (1801 Stevens Ave) every Sunday from 1-2 p.m. to lend a hand in keeping the community sparkling clean. Meet at the pergola in the park. All supplies will be provided. This event is eligible for Rental Discount Hours. In event of cancellation, organizers will update social media, and change the listings on stevenssquare.org/events, as well as the SSCO Google calendar.

'TO HAVE NEVER KNOWN' EXHIBIT

The Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery (MAAHMG) preserves, documents and highlights the achievements, contributions and experiences of African Americans in Minnesota. Its current exhibit, "to have never known," can be viewed Tuesday-Friday, 1-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1256 Penn Avenue N.

Kehayr Brown-Ransaw's exhibit, "to have never known," is a presentation of quilts created by Brown-Ransaw based on his research about the trans-Atlantic slave trade that revealed the names of 43,191 children abducted and illegally sold into slavery from 1807-1870. During enslavement, Black and African communities in the United States largely documented themselves through quilting and various folk art crafts. As communities assimilated to Whiteness these traditions transformed into necessary means for survival. Interpreting census research into visual language, this work uses the life cycle of a quilt as a meditation on its historical context, both from its use as currency by enslaved women to gain access to White society, and its use as a shroud for children in both life and death.

STREETCAR MUSEUM LOOKING FOR DRIVERS

The Minnesota Streetcar Museum, one of the few "living history" museums in the Twin Cities, needs volunteers to operate the historic Minnesota streetcars at its two streetcar lines: the Excelsior Streetcar Line is located in downtown Excelsior, and the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line is in the Linden Hills neighborhood near the Lake Harriet Band shell in Minneapolis. In addition to operators, they are also looking for volunteers to become station agents, and recruiting people interested in maintaining the fleet of streetcars and the track. There will be informational meetings in late March. Operator training starts the following week. During training, which is scheduled on a flexible basis, people will learn how to operate the streetcar as well as a little history about Twin City's streetcars. For more information, please visit the museum's website, TrolleyRide.org or contact Pat Cosgrove at volunteer@trolleyride.org or 952-953-6559.

ITS TAX SEASON AGAIN: ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR PROPERTY TAXES?

Most of us are familiar with income tax season, as tax returns are due by the 15th of April each year. However, for people who own a house or other real estate, there is another tax that becomes relevant this time of year: Property tax.



Thanks to the pandemic, people have been overpaying for houses. While this may not seem to matter to you if you already owned your house before it started, it does. The increased market value of houses could raise your property tax 20 to 30 percent this year!

Property taxes for 2023 are due in 2022 and based on a study of sales prices between Oct. 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2021. To defend yourself against excessive property tax increases, you should know the following things:

- The assessor establishes the value of your property for tax purposes, and
- The tax rate is set by local governments which levy a property tax, such as the county, cities, school boards, the Metropolitan Council, and other special boards and commissions.
- While there is little you can do about your tax rate other than to vote at the next election for local politicians who will lower your taxes (and government services at the same time), you can appeal the assessed valuation of your property if you feel it is unfair.

The keys to an effective appeal of your assessed valuation are as follows:

- Using logic will get you better results than yelling and screaming at the assessor.

- You need to provide evidence that your property is worth less than the assessed value.

- Start the process as soon as you get your tax bill, which comes in March.

Also be aware:

- You have the right to ask the assessor what comparable properties were used to determine the value of your property.

- If your house needs repair, the cost of any needed repairs can be used as an example of why its assessed value is too high. The best way to gather evidence of this is to have it professionally inspected. However, during the pandemic, the assessor may accept photos or videos taken by you personally in lieu of a formal inspection. It doesn't hurt to ask!

- Kitchen and bathroom fixtures which are severely outdated, even if fully functional, can be used as examples of overvaluation. For example, if your kitchen or bath is all in Eisenhower pink or 1970s avocado, it could need updating for you to get a good sale price on your home.

- Features of your house may appear usable but be functionally obsolete. For example, if the Fire Marshal determines that your fireplace doesn't meet safety standards, it doesn't have the same value as if you could use it safely.

- Merely painting your basement walls doesn't make it a finished basement. There must be plaster/wallboard on the walls for it to be officially considered a finished basement.

Other sources of evidence for your house's value include getting a Realtor to

do a market analysis (usually free), or having your house formally appraised by a member of the Appraisal Institute in Saint Paul. It is best to ask for an appraiser who is familiar with your neighborhood. They may claim it doesn't matter, but neighborhoods have nuances that are best understood by people with specific experience there. A bank appraisal might work if it was done in the last six months, but it also could be ignored because a bank is motivated to appraise your property for lending purposes, whereas tax authorities have a different motive.

The protocol for appealing your valuation is as follows:

- When you receive your valuation notice, there will be information about a public hearing you can attend in your city to begin your appeal. In Minneapolis, this is called the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization. Be sure to get the date, time, and place right!

- If you disagree with the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization, you can bring your case to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

- If you still get no satisfaction, you can file a case with the Minnesota Tax Court. This makes sense if the tax on the disputed amount exceeds the filing fee. Be sure to have all your evidence with you, as the decision of the Tax Court is final.

Thanks for this information to my roommate who works as a tax assessor for a private firm which contracts with a few western suburbs of Minneapolis, and to the websites of the Minneapolis Assessor's Office and the Minnesota Tax Court.

KENNEDY RANCE AND JAKE WESSON NAMED NEW STUDENT BOARD REPS

For the first time ever, two Minneapolis Public Schools students have been selected to sit on the Board. The Minneapolis Board of Education has announced Patrick Henry High School junior Kennedy Rance and Washburn High School sophomore Jake Wesson will serve as the new Student Board Representatives. Kennedy and Jake replace outgoing Student Representative Mary Ghebremeskal from South High School.

Rance leads at Henry with a passion for journalism and youth advocacy. She values truth, storytelling and curiosity and knows the importance of gathering facts and conducting adequate research before making an informed decision. She believes sharing stories helps individuals connect with one another.

"As a student representative, I will bridge the communication gap between

students and administration by actively listening to student voices and advocating on their behalf to the Board of Education. When students are given the opportunity to effectively impact their education, I believe they have a greater appreciation for it," said Rance.

Henry staff describe Rance as a highly disciplined and ambitious student. "Kennedy has a pattern of pursuing high level opportunities and of setting ambitious standards for herself. She expresses her opinion constructively in a manner that does not alienate others," said Shawn Crenshaw, Rance's academic school counselor.

Wesson was a freshman during the start of the pandemic. He says through distance learning and other COVID restrictions, he was able to practice his patience and learn how to overcome challenging circumstances. He believes he excels at

working with details but is also able to see the big picture.

"Decisions made at the district level affect every MPS students' education on varying levels. As student representative, my goal is to provide students with substantial opportunities to have their voice heard and provide collaborative possibilities for all MPS schools," Wesson said.

Washburn teacher Jason Jirsa oversaw Wesson as he took part in launching a virtual Model United Nations club during the 2020-2021 school year. Throughout this project, Jirsa said he got to see Wesson shine. "He made speeches, worked the break-out rooms to find like-minded delegates and wrote resolutions to solve world issues. He did all of this with students from other schools who he had just met. It's easy to imagine him thriving as a member of the school board," Jirsa said.

HOME

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Call the Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline at 1-866-223-1111 if you or someone you know is seeking shelter due to a dangerous relationship or needs to create a safety plan.

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NOT SURE HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT RACE?

Dianne Haulcy shares tips on how to raise race conscious children

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Minnesotans don't know how to talk about race. But Dianne Haulcy is working to change that.

Haulcy, who was born and raised in Minnesota and spent her formative years in Eagan, has a podcast through Minnesota Public Radio and Little Moments Count called, "Early Risers: Waking up to Racial Equity in Early Childhood."

"It never fails. I can be in a room taking to elected officials, and the moment I say anything about race, all of a sudden no one has anything to say. It shuts down a room," observed Haulcy during a recent workshop on Raising Race Conscious Youth.

She was speaking to a virtual group assembled by the Bethel Frogtown-Summit-University Partnership, but the information is part of a regular workshop she offers.

"We're developing people into adults that don't know how to have this conversation," remarked Haulcy. She is focused on starting with children to help both adults and kids become race conscious.

WHEN SHOULD PARENTS AND EDUCATORS TALK TO KIDS ABOUT RACE?

No child is too young to talk about race, according to Haulcy, who specializes in early childhood. "As soon as children know their colors, they can categorize people into different colors," she said. "If a child asks you about race, it is time to talk to them about it."

Children begin to recognize cultural and ethnic differences by the time they are two. Children of color begin to suffer from racialized treatment at about seven years old.



Look at this as a journey. It's ok to make mistakes as long as you continue to have the conversations."

Dianne Haulcy

Implicit bias begins at between three to five years of age, said Haulcy, and children as young as six months old can recognize a race different from their caregiver.

"Eighty percent of brain development happens by the time a child is about five years old. During that time, a child is absorbing everything in their environment, including the implicit biases of their parents and caregivers," she said.

What is implicit bias? The assumptions, attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner, according to the Ohio State University - Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.

These develop over the course of a lifetime through direct and indirect messages, which means that developing children's cultural identity in early childhood is important, said Haulcy.

"White privilege affects all children - including White children," she said. While people don't usually say that White bodies are more important than those of color, children are like sponges and are absorbing what they see others act out. "They don't have the language to articulate that," remarked Haulcy, but the knowledge about White body supremacy has profound effects on verbal and non-verbal language.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T TALK ABOUT RACE?

When people don't talk about race, children are left to learn only through non-verbal implicit bias lodged in body language.

When children are shushed when they ask a question related to race, "children learn that it is not okay to talk about race." But children continue to get messages about race from television, social media, friends and family members, pointed out Haulcy.

Say, for example that a White person goes to the grocery store and has the implicit belief that a Black body is something to fear. When the White person stands next to the Black person, they tense up. A child won't miss that.

But, if a White person regularly interacts with a Black person and is at ease in their interactions, the child will pick up on that.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DO TALK ABOUT RACE?

In contrast, when we do talk about race, children learn to form language to talk about it with their peers. They learn they can ask questions. They are able to combat racist images and conversation with the language they have developed.

"Some say, 'children don't see color,'" said Haulcy. "Children learn to see color and categorize their world. We need to help give them language for it."

Haulcy pointed out that children are likely to point out a person's color or race when they're telling a story or asking about someone in a room. "There's nothing wrong with saying that," she said. "Adults do everything else but that."

She recommends engaging in conversations about differences so they know it is okay to talk about it. "It is good to emphasize that differences in the way people look is a good thing. That includes skin color, hair texture, shape of our eyes, lips, etc.," she said.

Tell children that people are different but everyone is equal.

Haulcy appreciates the Native American perspective on race from the medicine wheel. Split into four colors, the wheel illustrates Mitákuye Oyás 'in, which is Lakota for "we are all related." The yellow section illustrates Asian relatives, Black is for African relatives, White for European relatives and Red for Native and Mexican relatives.

She recommends the book, "What If All The Kids Are White?" by Louise Derman-Sparks and Patricia Ramsey as a good resource. "All children develop a cultural awareness. White children need to be taught an equity framework," she stressed.

It is also important to note that all language is not for all people. Some words are okay when said by an African American to another African American, but not okay if said by a White person as it means something completely different - even if that person is a family member. "Have conversations with your children about the language they are learning - and what they're seeing on social media. They are seeing and hearing a lot of derogatory language on social media," said Haulcy.

Hearing a word in a rap song may present a teachable moment. It may not necessarily be a comfortable moment. "Being able to have a conversation about this is important," stated Haulcy.

WHAT ABOUT 'WRONG ANSWERS'?

Adults may be worried about giving the "wrong" answers. "Do not worry about that," advised Haulcy. "What's important is you open up the conversation. It is perfectly ok to say, 'I don't know.' Maybe get curious about it. I don't know, but we can find out. Then the child knows they have entered into a conversation with you that is ongoing."

Haulcy hopes people have a "journey mentality," one that is coming to terms with White supremacy, becoming anti-racist, and raising children in a racist environment.

"It is not a destination, but a long-term journey," she said. "Continue to be curious about your journey."

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