

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • MARCH 3, 2022 • VOL. 1 • NO. 5

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## MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILDING



Melo founder and principal architect, Damaris Hollingsworth, is working to design a space at 3030 Nicollet that incorporates community input. People have stated they are concerned about the long-term impacts and how it will affect both nearby neighbors and those who live in the new building. "We kept hearing that people wanted a space that makes them feel welcome," said Hollingsworth. (Photo by Terry Faust)

### Wells Fargo site project at 3030 Nicollet will include affordable housing and commercial space that entrepreneurs will own

By **Iric Nathanson**

An ambitious plan to redevelop a vacant block at Lake and Nicollet received a major boost from the city of Minneapolis earlier this year when the city allocated \$3.3 million for an affordable housing development on the former Wells Fargo Bank site.

The project, a joint effort of Wells Fargo, Project for Pride in Living and the Cultural Wellness Center, will provide 110 units of affordable housing on the Lake Street block caught up in the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd in 2020.

The 3030 Nicollet project will serve individuals and families with a range of incomes. Twenty-four of the 110 units will be affordable for people making up to 30% of the median income or \$25,200 for a two-person household. The remaining units will be available to individuals and families making up to 50% of the median income, or \$42,000 for a two-person

family. The project will include a mix of two-, three- and four-bedroom units.

PPL had the option of increasing its income limit to 60% of area median, but chose to keep the cap at 50%, according to Senior Vice President Mike LaFave. "We wanted to make sure that 3030 Nicollet will serve large, low-income families whose housing options are very limited in today's market," LaFave said.

#### WOMAN, BIPOC-OWNED PARTNER

PPL is partnering with a local architectural firm, Design by Melo, to build the 110-unit project. Melo's founder and principal architect, Damaris Hollingsworth, said the partnership was a good fit for her minority and women-owned firm. "We knew that PPL shared our values. That was an important plus for us," Hollingsworth said.

Before the firm began its design work, Hollingsworth was part of a six-month community engagement process facilitated by the Cultural Wellness Center. "All three of our agencies recognized that the traditional model of engagement did not always work," LaFave said. "We needed to hear from people who are not able to come to evening meetings. So, the Wellness Center used its staff to move through the community talking informally with people who live in the area in order to get their input."

"Our aim was to expand the scope of

the 3030 Nicollet project beyond physical development to include enhancement of human capital," said the Wellness Center's Anthony Tayler. "Through our engagement process, community members told us that they wanted more than just another affordable housing building on the Wells site. They wanted a broader effort to that could reach people and families living in surrounding neighborhoods."

"Community members told us they were not all that concerned about the color of the bricks and other design specifics," Hollingsworth added. "They were more concerned about the long-term impact of the project and how it could affect nearby neighbors as well as the people who will live in the 3030 building. We kept hearing that people wanted a space that made them feel welcome, so the design of the community spaces was an important part of the project."



Ownership is important for these emerging entrepreneurs because it will help them create intergenerational wealth for their families while they are growing their businesses."

**Anthony Tayler**

## AFFECTS OF REDISTRICTING

Representative Hornstein will move instead of running against Representative Long, and Representative Agbaje will move to follow her district

By **Cam Gordon**

Thousands of Southwest residents will be in new legislative districts for this year's elections, including two sitting state representatives in the area.

Because the state legislature was unable to agree on new boundaries for state and federal legislative districts by the required date of Feb. 15, that responsibility fell to the five judges appointed by the state supreme court, whose map includes new boundaries for all state and federal legislative districts in the state.

The new boundaries will be in effect until the next census, in 2030, including for this year's election where every state legislative seat will be on the ballot. This includes all 67 districts for the State Senate and all 134 seats for the House of Representatives. These boundaries also helped refine the Minneapolis ward, park district and voting precinct boundaries and precincts that will be finalized in March.

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## CLINIC HELPS CLIENTS NOT JUST LIVE, BUT THRIVE

First free PrEP clinic opens in Minnesota at Aliveness Project

By **Chloe Peter**

The Aliveness Project Thrive Clinic (3808 Nicollet Ave.) recently opened to help stop the spread of HIV through PrEP, a pre-exposure preventive measure.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, there is currently a HIV outbreak in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Although cases trended downward in 2020, the five-year average is still at the higher end and has been continued to be classified as an outbreak. Eighty-four percent of these cases are people who are assigned male sex at birth, and 69 percent are communities of color.

"We find that people who are most at risk for HIV already have an intersection of barriers to care," said Dylan Boyer, events and com-



Dylan Boyer

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# 1,250 MINNEAPOLIS RESIDENTS FILE ETHICS COMPLAINTS AGAINST MAYOR FREY

By **Jill Boogren**

On the inside steps of Minneapolis City Hall in front of a huge banner that read "FREY LIED AMIR DIED," community members announced that more than 1,250 Minneapolis residents had signed ethics complaints against Mayor Jacob Frey related to the police killing of Amir Locke. These were hand delivered to a city staff person after a press conference on Feb. 11, 2022.

Three ethics code violations are cited in "The Residents' Complaint:" first, that the mayor and Interim Minneapolis Police Chief Amelia Huffman "intentionally and recklessly misrepresented the facts" to the public and press when they erroneously referred to Amir Locke as a suspect four times in a press release and failed to correct the record; next, that the mayor, who has authority over the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), has violated his duty by "allowing this murder to go without discipline and discharge;" and last, that "there was a massive failure to exercise judgment" when the MPD requested a no-knock warrant on behalf of the Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD), which the SPPD did not request.

"We, the residents, of Minneapolis deserve better. We deserve to feel safe in our homes and in our streets. We deserve leadership that is trustworthy, fair and accountable," said Jeanelle Austin, a neighbor and community member of George Floyd Square. "Many of us as residents have reviewed the body camera footage and followed the official statements by the city in the wake of Amir's death. We continue to be deeply concerned and outraged with the lies, immoral decisions and actions we have witnessed from our local officials that violate our city's code of ethics."

Community outreach on the complaints is being undertaken by a loosely aligned group of residents, not any organization. As they began the process, Austin said, one resident asked how many complaints they were seeking to collect.

"The answer was one. It should only take one complaint of our mayor violating the code of ethics for the Ethical Practices Board to open and complete a thorough investigation," she said. But in 48 hours they collected more than 1,250 uniquely signed complaints, with some signed on the spot during the press conference.

Valentina McKenzie, a Black woman with Black kids and community member of George Floyd Square, said the mayor has allowed MPD to abuse their power



Rev. Jia Starr Brown carries the bin of signed ethics complaints to the upstairs offices at Minneapolis City Hall on Feb. 11, 2022. Following a press conference, demonstrators marched upstairs chanting Amir Locke's name and "Frey Lied, Amir Died" and singing in the hallway until the signed complaint forms could be hand-delivered to a city staff person. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

while refusing to use any of his own.

"Jacob's lies and failure has caused our city even deeper trauma by allowing his cops to do what they want and murder us freely. How can we heal as a city when every time we look up it's happening again and again and again," said McKenzie. "Not in some other city. Right here in Minneapolis. We're tired of being continuously lied to about everything from if [Mr. Locke] was a suspect or not to are the no-knock warrants banned or not."

The mayor has come under fire for allowing no-knock warrants despite having claimed during his reelection campaign last year to have already banned them. At a Feb. 7 City Council Policy & Government Oversight Committee meeting discussion, committee chair Jeremiah Ellison asked the mayor what accounts for the gulf between what people believed the policy (which was modified but not banned in November 2020) did, versus what it actually did. The mayor responded, "Throughout a campaign, certainly

as more and more people and outside groups began weighing in, language became more casual, including my own, which did not reflect the necessary precision or nuance, and I own that."

Following Locke's death, the mayor announced a moratorium on requesting and executing no-knock warrants, although they are still allowed in limited circumstances.

Youth organizer Semhar Solomon said the citizens of Minneapolis, through The Residents' Complaint, are asking for transparency, accountability and safety.

"These ethics violations – these 'mistakes' – are costing lives, and the community of Minneapolis has continued to say, 'Enough is enough,'" said Solomon, who urged youth to raise the importance of doing their part to the adult coaches, teachers and mentors in their lives. "Each and every one of us has power – when you speak up for what is right – to make change. And right now, the citizens of Minneapolis and the families of all stolen

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We continue to be deeply concerned and outraged with the lies, immoral decisions and actions we have witnessed from our local officials that violate our city's code of ethics."

**Jeanelle Austin**

lives are asking all of us as our duty to stand up and use our voices. So, will you?"

Southwest Minneapolis resident and mom Kristin Ingall told the crowd assembled in the rotunda that for too long it has been the inactions of "ordinary people, like me," that has kept a harmful system running. She called for all

residents of Minneapolis to hold city leaders accountable.

"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. "This is not outside agitation. This is local aggravation. Enough is enough."

Resident Rod Adams said he lives directly across the street from where Locke was killed and can't get the image out of his mind from the body-worn camera video of that key going in that door.

"They snuck in on this brother. They woke him. He didn't even have an opportunity to know where he was at," said Adams. "And now his life is gone, and our lives are forever changed."

He said the city needs to heal but cannot do so without transparency, banning no-knock warrants and transforming what public safety looks like in the city.

In addition to residents' remarks, those in attendance heard violin music by Racurt Johnson and song by Jayanthi Kyle. After a full reading of the ethics code violations, the group marched upstairs, chanting and singing, and delivered the complaints to a city staff person. Rev. Jia Starr Brown, who carried the box of complaint forms, handed it to the employee with assurances they would be given to the proper city officials.

The effort to gather complaint forms is ongoing, with more information available @TheResidentsComplaint on Instagram. To bring a complaint before the Ethical Practices Board, complainants must be residents of Minneapolis and 18 years of age or older.

## Welcome to the NEIGHBORHOOD



### Our philosophy is simple.

- Be honest and respectful, and work hard.
- Don't take short cuts; don't go for the quick buck.

### • Do the right thing.

- Be knowledgeable and informed, and share that knowledge with the people you meet.

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## 1 REDISTRICTING

The state was required to redraw the boundaries of its voting districts to reflect population changes latest based on the results of the 2020 Census with each district having roughly the same number of people. According to the census, Minnesota's total population is 5,706,494, making "ideal population" of the Senate districts 85,172, and 42,586 for the House districts. Because population growth was not uniform across the state, the boundaries of most legislative districts had to change.

In the order the panel wrote, "We start with the existing districts, changing them as necessary to remedy the constitutional defect by applying politically neutral redistricting principles. Still, this restrained approach does not necessarily yield little change. When one district changes, so must its neighbors – a cascading effect that means even a district drawn 10 years ago that remains within appropriate population deviation will need to change along with the rest of the state."

While the numbers and general areas for all the primarily Minneapolis senate districts (59, 60, 61, 62, and 63), remained the same, all the borders were shifted to accommodate changes in population. Some of the most significant changes occurred in Southwest districts as adjustments were required to meet growing areas of population in the city and nearby suburbs. District 63B, for example, moved north and west, and no longer includes any of Richfield but includes more of South Minneapolis as far west as Xerxes.

### HORNSTEIN AND AGBAJE TO MOVE

Perhaps the most noteworthy change occurred when the panel approved moving District 61 to the North and the current 61A representative, Frank Hornstein, ended up living in the new District 61B, along with its current representative, Jamie Long. The new 61B now includes West Bde Maka Ska, Linden Hills and the Fulton neighborhoods, and 61A has shifted to the north and east to pick up parts of the downtown, Bryn Mawr, Harrison, and Elliot Park. Currently, much of that area is part of District 59B which also shifted to the north. This change meant that the current 59B representative, Esther Agbaje no longer lives in 59B.

Within a day of the release of the new maps, however, Agbaje announced that she intended to move and seek reelection as Representative for 59B. "The maps may have shifted, but my commitment to the people of this district remains," she wrote. "I'm excited to welcome more of our Northside and Northeast neighbors into the district."

Representatives and Senators must have



Rep. Frank Hornstein



Rep. Jamie Long



Rep. Esther Agbaje

lived for six months preceding the election in the district from which they are elected. Since election day is Nov. 8 this year, folks must live in their districts by April 8.

When Hornstein saw the new boundaries, and that Agbaje was moving, he too determined to move and run in what was largely still the area he has been representing since 2003. He was not interested in running against the incumbent in the newly formed district (61B) and said, "I have great respect for Representative Long." He added, "Two thirds of district I represent now still lives in the district, and for me to continue to represent them requires a move." About the new neighborhoods being added to the

district he said, "I am excited for the opportunity to represent these wonderful communities. I look forward to continuing my work in the legislature to expand economic opportunities for all, racial and climate justice, public safety, and protecting our democracy."

Since the new maps have been approved, most Southwest legislators have announced they will be running for reelection, including Scott Dibble in Senate District 61; Emma Greenman for State Representative in 63A, Jamie Long in 61B; Omar Fetah in Senate District 62; and Representatives Hodan Hassan in 62A and Aisha Gomez in 62B. Senator Torres-Ray (63) and Representative Jim Davnie (63A) announced that they would not be running for reelection well before the maps were released.

Candidates for State Senator and State Representative, as well as for judicial and statewide offices, have until between May 17 and 31 to file for office, so it is likely that many more candidates will be stepping forward in the weeks ahead.

When announcing her decision to run for reelection Representative Greenman said, "I will miss representing eastern Richfield folks but am happy to continue representing my longtime home of south Min-

neapolis, and new constituents in Diamond Lake, Page, Kenny, Windom, Tangle-town and Armatage."

Representative Mike Howard, with several blocks along the southern edge of Minneapolis being added to the district he represents, said, "I am excited and honored to be running for re-election in the newly formed House District 51A, which includes all of Richfield – my home and the community I love – as well as some new con-

### REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR LAKE AND HENNEPIN

Northpond Partners, the owner of the 7-Points Mall, has submitted plans to renovate the existing building (formerly called Calhoun Square) and add a new, 7-story apartment building, 231 structured parking spaces, and ground floor commercial space that will include a grocery store. They announced in a press release in February that they are partnering with Doran Company on the design and development of the new 264-unit apartment building that would be located on the northeast corner of Hennepin and 31st Street. They hope to start construction this year. Northpond also has a memorandum

# BREAKDOWN BY THE DISTRICT

By **Cam Gordon**

The Minneapolis Charter Commission approved new ward and park district boundaries on March 2, and the city council is scheduled to approve the voting precincts boundaries based on the new map well before the March 29 deadline. Once approved, those same precincts will be used for all elections, state, local and federal until the next redistricting that will follow the 2030 census.

Charter Commission Chair Barry Clegg said that some "technical corrections" were made after the new state districts were announced in February "to avoid precincts that are too small." Precincts that are too large or too small decrease the efficiency of elections.

Redistricting is important to people, Clegg said, because "it is going to affect who the neighborhood's council member is, whether their neighborhood will be split and who will be in the same ward with for the next 10 years."

One of the commission's goals was to work to keep communities of interest, like neighborhoods, in the same ward. Communities of interest may also include social, geographic, political, cultural, ethnic, race and economic factors. Racial and language minorities, in particular and in accord with the Voting Rights Act, were given careful consideration. According to Clegg, ward 5 is the only ward with a majority of Black voters. Wards 6, 8 and 9 have a majority of nonwhite, or BIPOC, voters.

Generally speaking, at the city level, there was not a great deal of controversy about the changes. Because of shifts in population, wards 1, 6, 8, 9, and 11 had to get larger, to include more people, while wards 2 and 3 had to get smaller geographically to reduce population. Concerns that did come up centered around very specific locations and neighborhoods that were shifted to new wards, especially about adding Eliot Park to ward 6.

Based on the total population of the

city, the target population for each wards was 33,073, and one of the commission's charges was to keep each ward within 5% of the target. General changes to the Southwest wards are as follows.

**Ward 7** was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and in the interest of putting communities of interest together, Elliot Park was moved into ward 6, thus making ward 7 too small. To grow, the West Maka Ska neighborhood and a few blocks of Downtown West were moved into ward 7.

**Ward 8** needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, a portion of the Central neighborhood was removed from ward 9 and added to ward 8.

**Ward 10** was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and in the interest of putting communities of interest together, the portion of the East Harriet neighborhood in ward 10 was moved so that the entire neighborhood is now in ward 13.

**Ward 11** needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population. To accomplish this, portions of Keewaydin and Ericsson were moved from ward 12 into ward 11. This was done because ward 12 needed to shrink after the addition of Cooper.

**Ward 13** was already within 5% of the target population. However, in response to public feedback and to help ward 7 grow after losing Elliot Park, the West Maka Ska neighborhood was removed from this ward. Having lost this neighborhood, the ward 10 portion of the East Harriet neighborhood was moved into this ward.

**Park District 6**, the southwest park district, needed to grow to be within 5% of the target population and so the East Bde Maka Ska and Cedar Isles Dean neighborhoods were added to this district.

Learn more about the city's redistricting process at <https://www.minneapolis.gov/government/programs-initiatives/redistricting/>

And see the maps at <https://portal.minneapolis-mapping.org/submission/p7885>

stituents I look forward to meeting in Minneapolis."

Senator Dibble said, "I will miss amazing people of Kenny, Windom, Tangle-town, and Hale-Page-Diamond Lake. I am excited to again represent north Bryn Mawr, Downtown West and Elliot Park – and so happy the southerly part of Harrison is now in the mighty SD61."

## BRIEFS

### OFFICE OF POLICE CONDUCT REVIEW TO EXAMINE NO-KNOCK SEARCH WARRANT POLICIES

Interim Minneapolis Civil Rights Director Alberder Gillespie has announced that the department's Office of Police Conduct Review will conduct a special review of the city's no-knock search warrant policy. Gillespie said that "they will have the authority to request unrestricted access to the records of the Minneapolis Police Department for that purpose, to the extent authorized by law." The special review will focus on identifying and recommending specific changes and improvements to current policy and procedures.

### BEHAVIORAL CRISIS TEAMS INCREASE HOURS

The city of Minneapolis has announced that Behavioral Crisis Response teams are now operating 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday. These teams are being provided by an outside organization, Canopy Roots, as a pilot project managed by the City Coordinator's Office of Performance and Innovation. Two mobile teams have been operating since last December, but have only been operating

of understanding with a nonprofit developer to build affordable housing on an adjacent site on Lake Street. Construction of that development is expected to begin in 2024. Tenants include Chase Bank, Curioso's Cafe and True North Collaborative. For plan details see <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Board/Agenda/CPC-COW/3056>

### SW LRT AUDIT BILL

State Senator Scott Dibble, and Representative Frank Hornstein's proposal to appropriate \$200,000 for the Legislative Auditor to complete a special review of the Southwest light rail transit project is moving forward in the legislature. It has gathered several co-authors, was approved unanimously by the Senate and House Transportation Committees and in the Senate's State Government Finance and Policy and Elections Committee, where it was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. If approved, the funds could be used to hire additional staff or contract with a third party. The same two legislators have introduced separate legislation that would transfer responsibility for the project from the Metropolitan Council to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

### FRANCE 50 MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT GETS FINAL LAND USE APPROVAL

After months of review, and appeal to the city council that was denied, the France 50 Project, along France Avenue at the southeast corner of 49th St in the Fulton neighborhood, is moving forward. On Feb. 22, it received its approval from the Minneapolis Planning Commission to combine the seven parcels it owns into one lot. The applicant, France 50 LLC, plans to demolish the houses there to make way for a new 45-unit apartment building with 15,878 square feet of retail space for four new commercial tenants on the first floor. All the other land use applications, including a rezoning, conditional use permits, site plan review, preliminary plat, and administrative height increase for the proposed project were approved by the city council on January 27. Now the proposed new five-story building is ready to move into the demolition and construction phases this spring and summer.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.



# MEET OUR CARRIERS, WHO COME TO YOUR DOORSTEPS

They believe in the value of neighborhood news and their role in bringing it to you

There is something to be said for having the news delivered to your doorstep; local, community-focused news that is happening in your neighborhood. And while the paper is also available online – so you can get the news on your computer or your phone – holding an actual, printed newspaper in your hand with that morning cup of coffee or for an afternoon read just has its own rewarding feeling of comfort.

That is in part why it is exciting to work for the *Southwest Connector* – to connect to people and the community through news and stories. It is nice to know that you in the community share that same value of newspapers that we do. In fact, many of our carriers live within the community and understand the value of focused, local journalism delivered to your doorstep.

### MEET LYLE, ROSE, DAVID AND ISABELLE

So, to that end, we asked some of our carriers for their thoughts about the about the *Southwest Connector* and their role in bringing it to you.

Lyle James delivers the *Connector* in the Lyndale and CARAG neighborhoods. You may have seen him around Uptown when he's on his route. Having delivered previous neighborhood papers, Lyle has a strong connection to local news. "I find local papers provide information that is relevant to my life," he said.

Rose Shetka and David Megarry deliver the *Connector* in the Lynnhurst area. "Dave and I were so sad when the *Southwest Journal* went out of business," Rose

said. "We were delighted when we found the *Southwest Connector* on our doorstep. I read the paper from cover to cover, including the call for newspaper delivery people."

While there are bigger papers in the cities, it is important to get more of a focused neighborhood perspective. "A local newspaper gives us the perspectives we need to form community and be an informed good neighbor. Our democracy depends on our active participation in the events and news immediately around us," said Rose.

Delivering the paper is also a way for families to explore their neighborhood together. Isabelle Chappellaz-Mullins delivers the paper with her mom in East Harriet. Isabelle enjoys delivering papers on her route and says, "It's fun to see cool houses and bump into neighbors, friends and schoolmates."

Not only is it fun for Isabelle to see what's happening in her neighborhood, but she has another reason to enjoy delivering the paper. "I'm excited because this is my first job!"

### CARRIERS ARE VITAL

Hopefully you're enjoying reading this paper as much as we enjoy putting it together. From every part of the process – brainstorming story ideas, to interviewing and writing, and finally to printing, distribution and delivery. It's also important for you to know that our carriers are a vital part of this process. They get the news delivered to your doorstep. Lately, these last few issues of the *Connector* may have been delivered to your house in near below zero temperatures or on snowy days. So with that in mind, it is nice to know that warmer days are ahead. And I think that is something we can all look forward to, as a



Carrier Lyle James has a strong connection to local news. "I find local papers provide information that is relevant to my life," he said.

community, as a paper, and as carriers.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in becoming a carrier, please contact me at [delivery@swconnector.com](mailto:delivery@swconnector.com).

## ROSE & DAVID

Here's a little more from Rose Shetka and David Megarry, East Harriet Farmstead neighborhood residents.

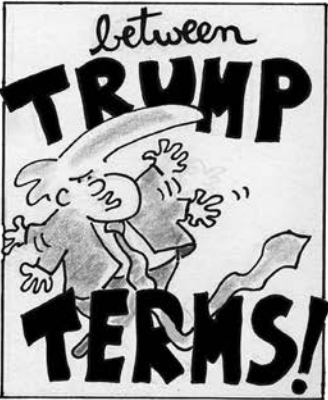
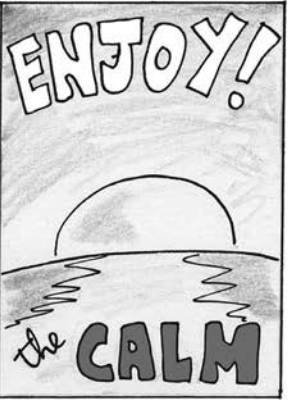
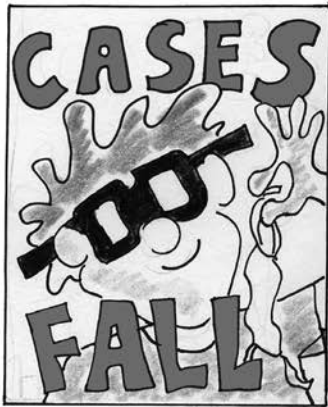
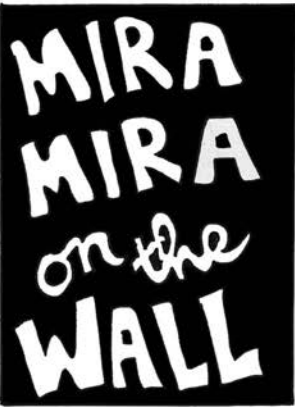
### What interested you in delivering the *Southwest Connector* newspaper?

Rose: In the past Dave has delivered papers and packages so has experience with how to be organized and get the job completed in a timely fashion. Together we have been looking for a way during the pandemic to serve and connect with the community we live in. The newspaper delivery was a task we both found very appealing. As a team we can easily do a paper route. The benefits to us is a nice walk in our beautiful neighborhood that we love, exercise, and bringing much needed local news to help keep our neighbors connected. I hope to be able to greet neighbors along the way.

### What is the value of local journalism/local news to you?

Rose: While we can get an overall view of Minneapolis from the Star Tribune and the internet, it is extremely difficult to understand the events of our neighborhood. A local newspaper gives us the perspectives we need to form community and be an informed good neighbor. Our democracy depends on our active participation in the events and news immediately around us. We cannot be aware of important information unless it is reported in a timely manner and has been presented in an orderly way without being hijacked by narrow points of view. The *Southwest Connector* has the opportunity to fill this need and we feel it necessary to support its ongoing creation in anyway we can.

## Anthropoidea



By Stewart Huntington

## In Newspapers, We Trust

"When looking for general news and information, how much would you trust each type of source for general news and information?"

In the latest Edelman Trust Barometer, **61% answered traditional media.**

You can't get a more traditional than newspapers.

**Trust is Our Relevance.**

BTW  
Who finished last?  
Social media

Source: [www.edelman.com](http://www.edelman.com), where you can download the 2020 report. The report shows that trust in traditional media is high, while trust in social media is low. This is likely due to the fact that traditional media is seen as more reliable and trustworthy than social media, which is often seen as a source of misinformation and fake news.

We want to hear from you.

[news@SWconnector.com](mailto:news@SWconnector.com)

## SOUTHWEST Connector

The *Southwest Connector* is a twice monthly community publication in Southwest Minneapolis, owned and operated by TMC Publications, CO. Visit our website for our calendar and publication dates.

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Member of Minnesota Newspaper Association and Midwest Community Free Papers.

The *Connector* is for profit and for a purpose – and we don't sacrifice one for the other. We consider ourselves a zebra company, one that is both black and white, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH HOLDS KEY TO THE FUTURE

It's not too late to build unity, peace and prosperity in the city

A growing percentage of youth in the United States live with major depression. According to Mental Health America, 15.08 percent of youth (age 12-17) experienced a major depressive episode in 2021, a 1.24 percent increase from 2020. In Minnesota, it's almost 16 percent of youth, or 70,000. Over 2.5 million youth in the U.S. have severe depression, and multiracial youth are at the greatest risk.

Childhood depression is more likely to persist into adulthood if gone untreated, but only half of the children with pediatric major depression are diagnosed before adulthood. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that about 11 percent of U.S. adults had symptoms of depression or anxiety. In 2020, that rose to 40 percent.

Depression is hard for anyone to understand that doesn't have it. And it's a lot harder to understand if you have it. Depression is an invisible enemy. We need to keep a better eye on those that are struggling with depression and mental illness. We are so busy. We take our eyes off the important things until it is too late.



By Eric Ortiz

A major challenge is getting BIPOC youth to engage around mental health. There is a disconnect in the BIPOC community between youth and the community. Many youth have undiagnosed mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, PTSD and mood disorders. Many have experienced neglect, violence, trauma, and abject poverty.

The challenges don't end there. Some won't graduate from high school. Minnesota has one of the worst high school graduation rates for Black and Latino students in the country at 70 percent each. And youth in low-income communities and communities of color experience unemployment at four to six times higher than the Minnesota statewide average unemployment rate, which was at 3.1 percent at the end of 2021. When you've never held a job nor completed any formal training, finding financial stability through employment becomes even more difficult.

Can we, as a community, offer an "exit ramp" for youth stuck in a cycle of violence and trauma, and help them develop the strength and skills to transform their lives?

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association has assembled a team of collaborative partners to create a program that can provide income, therapeutic services, education, and employment

through a community of acceptance and growth. We want to help prevent and stop the violence in Minneapolis with a youth-centered community approach. We will do this by building the capacity of young people to seize and live opportunities for a better future. Our Unity, Peace and Prosperity Plan (UPPP) will provide BIPOC youth (ages 18-24) with low-barrier access to engagement activities designed to build self-advocacy for mental health, reconciliation, healing and intergenerational mentorship.

We will recruit BIPOC youth in Minneapolis who want or need help. We will start through a partnership with 846s, an organization that focuses on youth-led initiatives for violence prevention, safety and mental health. With youth and the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, Soo Visual Arts Center and Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation — our other collaborative partners — we will co-create the UPPP plan. We will add more partners along the way and work together to provide hope.

We will develop a strong support system to do this work. That starts by creating a safe and nurturing environment to promote mental health and wellness among BIPOC youth. This approach will help us destigmatize mental health therapy among youth, educate and help youth overcome barriers associated with access to mental healthcare, increase youth access to culturally competent therapists, and engage in intergenerational dialogues with healthcare providers to find youth-led in-

novative strategies to deliver mental health care in BIPOC communities and Minnesota in general.

By providing youth with mental health support, we can help youth break cycles of trauma and violence and build resilience. This support will help them when challenges arise that in the past may have been insurmountable obstacles and perpetuated cycles of violence and trauma. Now, youth will be equipped and have support systems in place to overcome roadblocks or inequities. The mental health services we will provide, along with strategies for dealing with trauma and building resilience, will give youth the tools (and hope) they need to deal with adversity and overcome historical barriers.

By focusing on mental health first, youth can mitigate feelings of hopelessness and reconnect with the community. Then we can provide ongoing guidance, support and resources to develop youth leaders in the community, break cycles of disconnect that result in harm and create opportunities for a better future.

That's how we bring unity, peace and prosperity to the city.

If you want to join us, get in touch at [bit.ly/mplspublicsafety](https://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.

## 1 THRIVE CLINIC

munications manager at the Aliveness project. "We know that people in the Black and queer communities face many barriers to accessing healthcare for themselves."

The Aliveness Project has been serving people living with HIV for over 30 years. They offer free HIV testing, meal programs, medical nutrition therapy, housing support, mental health support, and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), a preventive medicine that should be taken right away if one has possibly been exposed to HIV. In September 2021, they opened Thrive, a clinic that offers free access to once-a-day medication that can prevent HIV from sexual transmission by more than 99 percent.

Normally, PrEP medications could cost \$2,000 to \$4,000 a month, but Thrive is offering them at no cost. Once a prescription is set up, the client will come in every three months for a wellness check to make sure that the medicine is still working for them and continues to be the right fit.

"We are in the middle of two HIV outbreaks, so clearly, in some shape or form, we are failing those populations [LGBTQ and those who use injection drugs] and we have to take accountability for that," said Aliveness Outreach and Syringe Exchange Manager Brad Bryan.

However, it is not always easy to get people to come in to get the care that they need from the Aliveness Project or Thrive. Stigmas surrounding those living with or exposed to HIV are still strong in the com-



The Aliveness Project is working to ease the HIV outbreak in Ramsey and Hennepin counties.

munity. The Mobile Syringe Exchange Unit, where they provide mobile syringe exchange and disposal services to lower the spread of HIV through injection drug equipment, is a big way the community center reaches out. According to Bryan, being able to actually drive to members of the community and hand out clean syringes is helpful in showing community members that they are there to help.

"We want to meet people where they're at; we're out there as a part of the community and that's where folks see us as a member of the community instead of just an asset," Boyer said.

Although Boyer mentioned that Minnesota is progressive in some ways, both

Bryan and Boyer believe that there is still a long way to go when it comes to stigma and laws surrounding HIV. According to the FDA, gay and bisexual men still cannot give blood unless they have been abstinent for three months even though the American Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in more than a decade and has requested the FDA change this rule. According to a study done by Wilder Research in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health, breaking down stigmas that surround HIV is a large part of lowering HIV cases and providing proper care to those living with HIV.

"To me, working at Aliveness and the Thrive Clinic, we're really stepping up in a

### ABOUT PrEP

Daily PrEP use can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV from sex by more than 99%. Among people who inject drugs, PrEP reduces the risk of acquiring HIV by more than 74%.

The Aliveness Project's THRIVE Clinical Services offers confidential testing, counseling services, and PrEP prescriptions for individuals at high-risk for exposure to HIV.

way that we want other organizations and community leaders to step up," Boyer said.

The Aliveness Project accepts donations and has volunteer information found on their website at <https://aliveness.org/volunteering/>. Upcoming events include Dining Out For Life on April 28. Proceeds from participating restaurants will be donated to the Aliveness Project. The Red Ribbon Ride, Aug. 19-21, is a 150-mile bike ride that raises funds for HIV services, treatment, prevention, and awareness in Minnesota. Find information on these and other opportunities to help Thrive and the Aliveness Project via [aliveness.org/](https://aliveness.org/).

"Seeing people who aren't only living with HIV, but thriving, gives hope for folks and inspires them when they may have never had someone to look up to before," Bryan said.



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# PREPARE AND PROSPER

By Jan Willms

Finances and tax preparation can be challenging for even the most experienced. For many families and individuals who are also living on a low to moderate income, the challenges can be enormous.

Enter Prepare and Prosper (P&P), a nonprofit dedicated to providing free tax preparation and financial coaching and mentoring to bring financial wellness to everyone. Minneapolis locations include Hope Community (611 E Franklin Ave.) and Sabathani Community Center (310 E 38th St., Ste 200).

"P&P started decades ago," said David Langley, the organization's engagement director. It was founded in 1971 by a group of accountants. "The past 15 years P&P has become more than just a tax preparer," Langley said. "We have ascended into the realm of critical financial programming. We offer coaching programs and creative sponsorships with other partners, giving people opportunities for accessible banking."

Langley said P&P helps participants get bank accounts and avoid overdrafts, having to use money orders and relying on check cashing businesses.

According to Pew Research, 70% of households in the United States are constrained by income, have limited savings and/or are challenged by debt. About 1 in 4 households are excluded from the financial mainstream. As cited by the FDIC, this amounts to more than 194,432 households in the Twin Cities. When broken down by race, statistics show that this af-



ABOVE Prepare and Prosper volunteers meet with individuals on low to moderate incomes to provide free tax preparation. AT RIGHT David Langley points out that Prepare and Prosper has become more than just a tax preparer. (Photos submitted)

fects 1 in 7 White households compared to 1 in 2 Black and Latino households.

P&P has a small number of staff and a very large number of volunteers, who do tax preparation or serve as mentors to participants.

"In a typical year, on the tax side of things, which is the program we most work with, our volunteers work with 11,000 to 12,000 people, coming to get their taxes done for free," Langley said. But like almost every business, organiza-



tion or nonprofit struggling to be effective during the pandemic, P&P has had to be adaptable. "COVID has affected our delivery model, and has cut that number to about half," Langley noted. He said mentors, who provide one-on-one coaching on the banking side, are working with about

## Nonprofit offers free tax preparation, financial mentoring and more



To get people more interested in financial coaching or banking is a lot harder. There are many reasons for that. There is a lot of generational trauma around money."

David Langley

200 individuals.

"Many things, including working with FAIR products, such as checking and savings accounts and a credit builder, have been happening online the past year and a half," Langley said. "But there are a few things where a personal meeting is better." P&P offers participants

the opportunity to get more control over their financial needs by working with FAIR products, backed up by Sunrise Bank, N.A.

The nonprofit has been as flexible as possible during the pandemic. There have been pop-up sessions, where P&P will go to some of their partners' locations and have 30- to 40-minute tax sessions.

But there are also tax drop-off opportunities, where people can make an appointment and then drop off their documents, get them copied for the IRS-approved volunteers to work on, and later pick them up. Documents can be sent online, as well. Participants can have a combination of hybrid and virtual services if they wish, according to Langley.

He said P&P offers many options for getting tax returns done. "People need the confidence to get over their fear of filing," Langley stated.



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6 PREPARE

The organization also sends representatives out to nonprofits in the community to teach basic financial literacy to their clients. This can be done virtually or in person.

To qualify for free tax preparation with P&P, participants must have an income of less than \$35,000 per year as an individual. A family with an annual income of \$55,000 or less qualifies.

Langley said that most people want to get free help with their taxes, especially when they may get a refund. "That provides a natural incentive to come in," he said. "But to get people more interested in financial coaching or banking is a lot harder.

"There are many reasons for that," he continued. "There is a lot of generational trauma around money. Human nature being what it is, they are less inclined to talk about their finances or work on them."

He stressed the importance of people getting banking information. "Working with those who have financial problems is challenging, but also most rewarding," Langley said. He said he has always been happy working with people and creating community and relationships, something he is able to do in his job at Prepare and Prosper.

As well as volunteers working with taxes and as coaches and mentors, Prepare and Prosper has ambassadors, people who have gotten back into banking and are hired on a temporary basis to help spread the word about P & P's services to their friends and neighbors.

"We want to build our relationship with the community," Langley reiterated. He said that anyone who wants to help spread the word or volunteer or have their organization or business be a partner in some way can contact him at david@prepaareandprosper.org.

1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Community engagement encouraged PPL and its partners to add an entrepreneurship feature to the affordable housing development. That component will apply to the 9,000 square feet of commercial space adjacent to a new Wells Fargo branch on the site. In a conventional real estate development, the 9,000 square feet would have been leased to commercial tenants. But, rather than leasing the space, PPL will develop a series of commercial condos for community businesses that will own rather than rent the space they will occupy in the 3030 Nicollet building.

"Ownership is important for these emerging entrepreneurs because it will help them create intergenerational wealth for their families while they are growing their businesses," Taylor noted. The Wellness Center's community engagement facilitator said that 3030 Nicollet will also include a workforce development component aimed at providing jobs with family support wages for people living within a mile of the Nicollet and Lake site.

Linking affordable housing to entrepreneurial development received high marks from the Lake Street Council Executive Director Allison Sharkey. "What is really exciting is that PPL and the Wellness Center are trying something new, a way for small businesses to build equity through real estate ownership. This is a forward-thinking model that might provide some inspiration for the even bigger redevelopment across the street at the Kmart site," Sharkey said.

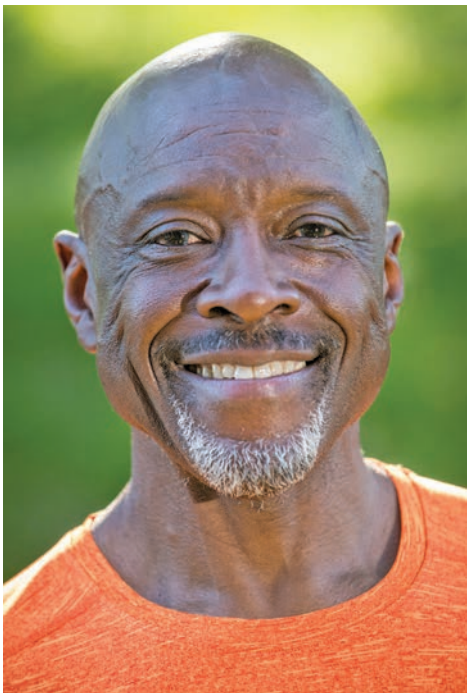
Laurie Nordquist, Wells Fargo Central Lead Region President, echoed Sharkey's views about 3030 project's innovative features. "PPL and the team they assembled brought creativity and commitment to this process that will allow Wells Fargo to continue serving the banking needs of our customers, while also putting the site to more uses that directly benefit our neighbors," Nordquist noted.



After the Wells Fargo building at 3030 Nicollet was burned in the city unrest following the death of George Floyd, local community groups began envisioning what could replace it. Anthony Tayler of the Cultural Wellness Center (at right) said the site will include a workforce development component aimed at providing jobs for those who live nearby. (Photos submitted)

Ward 7 Minneapolis City Council member Lisa Goodman commented on the project's significance as part of a broader initiative to rebuild Lake Street. "The leadership provided by PPL's team is particularly important now, when we need to move ahead with rebuilding in a way that is transparent and equitable to those who have been displaced. The city, through our Affordable Housing Trust Fund, is proud to assist with financing for this important effort," Goodman said.

PPL hopes to begin construction in November of this year, but the start date could slip into 2023, LaFave said.





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# Q&A WITH KRISTI ABBOTT

## THE ART OF...

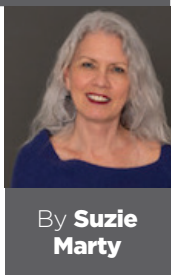
Was there a defining moment when in your life when you knew you wanted to be an artist?

Kristi Abbott: If you've ever met me, you'll know that I talk with a funny accent. I was born in Australia to an Aussie mum and a Minnesotan dad. I spent my early Christmases traveling to Lake Johanna to visit my dad's family and build snowmen and roast marshmallows by the fire. They were magic memories! My schooling and early career took place in Australia, however, and I originally went into the corporate world, working in the family training and development business. This wasn't for me, though, and after a decade I pulled the plug and quit my job, sold my house and most of my belongings, and moved to Minnesota with my dog to pursue my dream of being an artist. Minnesota was a lot cheaper than Sydney, and I needed a change of scenery. I loved rediscovering the Twin Cities as an adult.

My work is definitely influenced by my time in both Australia and America, with references to nature and popular culture a focus in many of my series.

As a five-year-old I wanted to be an artist, and after nine years now living in the U.S. I look back and realize how lucky I've been to pursue my dream career and turn it into a great, rewarding and creative living.

How have you developed your career since coming to Minnesota?



By Suzie Marty



Each piece is the product of several weeks, and may be longer depending on how many images are hidden within. (Photo submitted)

I had no artistic career before I moved to Minnesota, so it really is the birth place of my art! The biggest growth spurts occurred after showing my work to the public, first during the St. Paul Art Crawls and then during juried art fairs across the Midwest. It was during these occasions that I received feedback from people about my work, what they were vibing on, the subject matters they enjoyed, and even size and price points. Every opportunity I got I would put new ideas and concepts out to my audience to help guide and develop my work. It's been a wonderful process and, due to this, I've developed some amazing relationships with my collectors who feel like they've been part of my journey.

What motivates you to create?

My work is unique due to the technique and materials I use to create it, as well as the imagery I embed in my works.



Kristi Abbott is motivated by life, art, fashion, music and Hollywood. She aims to connect and delight the viewer. (Photo submitted)

My technique has become very technical throughout the years, with many of my artworks taking months to create. Each piece is created in layers of hand cut papers, with some artworks containing over 4,000 pieces. I thrive to create pieces of art that bring together color, pattern and texture in ways that excite and intrigue the viewer. I also love story telling and want to create a rich tapestry of visual interest in each piece, whether it be about a person, a place or a theme. I am motivated by life, art, music, fashion and Hollywood, and want to create artwork that brings those elements to life in a way that connects and delights the viewer!

How is your art important to society?

Art is a very personal thing, and it can offer us many things – a sense of beauty, a connection to an image or a scene, tell a story about a place or a person, provide

## FUN FACTS

**How many different kinds of paper do you use?** As many as I can get my hands on! I have an incredible selection of hand-made papers, crafting papers, vintage wallpapers, glitter papers... the list goes on. What's important to me is to bring papers together in a way that makes the artwork pop, even change as you move across the artwork or the lighting changes throughout the day.

**How much glue do you go through in a month?** Gallons! I now buy my Mod Podge in gallon containers, and always have at least one extra on hand just in case.

**How many knives are in your tool kit?** Just one! I use the most amazing blade from Fiskars that is designed to be worn on your finger and allows for detailed precision work. 90% of my paper is cut with this blade, the other 10% I will use my scissors to cut.

**How many hours go into an average piece?** It really depends on the size of the piece and how many images I have hidden within it. Normally I work on each of my portraits for several weeks. Some of my larger pieces can take months to create.

a sense of status, complete a room, become an heirloom, be an investment, or potentially be all these things. Through my artwork I aim to evoke emotion, create a connection between the viewer and the subject matter, tell a story, bring joy when viewed, and (for my higher priced items) be a good financial investment. When creating



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# HOW A FILMMAKER BECAME A REAL ESTATE AGENT

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Thirty years ago, when I moved back to Minneapolis from Los Angeles, it was not only for family, but career-wise. It was to be a bigger fish in a smaller pond. I was a filmmaker, and at the time, Minnesota was an epicenter for independent film-making, as well as for large-scale Hollywood production. I got a job as membership director of the non-profit film organization Independent Feature Project, now called Film North, and in 1997, I wrote, produced and directed a feature film titled "Café Donna." We sold out the Oak Street Theater for the film's premier, and then I took it to the Independent Feature Film Market in New York – where it found absolutely no audience. I spent a year marketing the film, and in the end, I could not find a distributor, and the film died.

Like many other filmmakers of the time, I had run up tens of thousands of dollars on credit cards, rolling the dice and losing on my one big picture. I filed bankruptcy: a single dad with a four-year-old son.

Meanwhile, a good friend had started a business making Fire & Life Safety videos, the ones that instruct you on safety procedures, and on how to get out of a building in case of an emergency. But after producing hundreds of these safety



By **Larry LaVercombe**

**‘HOME’ BY EDGAR GUEST**

It takes a heap o’ livin’ in a house t’ make it home / A heap o’ sun an’ shadder, an’ ye sometimes have t’ roam / Afore ye really ‘preciate the things ye lef’ behind / An’ hunger fer ‘em somehow, with ‘em allus on yer mind.

videos, he had decided to change course. His father was one of the most well-like and highly regarded real estate brokers in Minnesota, and he decided to follow his father into the real estate business. On one of my friend’s final video projects, he hired me to assist him, and as we drove to Chicago together to make videos in three different skyscrapers, we talked extensively about real estate. I decided to follow him into it, and we both became realtors. In 2001, when the Twin Towers went down, I was proud to know that my friend had produced the Twin Towers Safety Videos that helped thousands of people get out of the buildings before they collapsed.

In the beginning, real estate felt like a consolation prize; my identity as an Artist was replaced by “salesman.” I felt like an overpaid chauffeur sometimes, waiting for my buyer to like a house enough to make an offer on it. Real estate is a relatively easy field to get into; the licensing and training can be completed in a matter of months. That said, there is hardly a field with more turnover. People come, people go. I often joke, “If you don’t know three Realtors, you don’t get out enough.” Getting a job, finding a client, was often

harder than doing the job once you had earned someone’s faith.

But now, after 23 years, I’ve come to love this work. As an artist and writer, I’ve always valued the meaning of “house and home.” In fact, my somewhat famous great, great uncle, the everyman poet Edgar A. Guest, years ago penned a famous line that still lives on in our culture: “It takes a heap o’ livin’, to make a house a home.” I now see being a realtor as good, honest work; we help people with the biggest decisions of their lives, and I’ve come to be quite proud of it.

I’ve been blogging about real estate for years, and I plan on writing occasional real estate columns here for the *Connector*. Real estate is a dynamic topic, one that straddles the fields of economics and sociology and culture, and one constantly influenced by what’s happening in the world.

For instance, in Minneapolis, years of census data predicted a rising city population. The city responded with the 2040 plan to house the oncoming influx of people by encouraging developers to construct tall rental buildings, and by rezoning all single-family lots to allow for a triplex on each one. This rezoning was met with resistance, for many people feared that thousands of houses would immediately be torn down and replaced by triplexes. What was not always understood was that the building codes regarding size, both height and square footage, remained in place. So on a 40-foot-wide city lot, you can build one 2,100-square-foot house, or three 700-square-foot units. The house will be more valuable, so the

market still encourages the single-family home.


We are heading into spring, and as the temperature rises, the market temperature will get even hotter. Inventory is extraordinarily low, and COVID-19 amped up people’s desire to get out of large rentals buildings. Meanwhile, remote-working created new housing demand; people started trading up to larger homes, with enough separate rooms for their kids and for one or two adults to office at home.

I’m looking forward to this spring market, because in fact, I love both competing and cooperating – and that’s what it takes to be successful in an imbalanced market like this. Many people think Realtors are getting rich these days, but what they don’t realize is that for every Realtor who helps someone buy a house, there are 20 who just lost a multiple offer. The number of Realtors who have a single listing these days far outnumber those with several buyers...

That said, agents with a balance of both buyers and sellers will be “entertaining” multiple offers about as often as they’re competing in them this season. In both cases, my opinion is that the job of the agent, now more than ever, is not only to develop our own methods and tips for handling multiples, but to develop our ability to “Team Up” with our own clients, as well as with others in the market.



**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.

 **THE ART OF...**

each artwork, I pay attention to ensuring that the finished product will be archival and remain in great condition for many generations. I think my art is important as it reflects the times we live in, and the people we are influenced and inspired by. It brings beauty to a sometimes trying and difficult world.

**Tell me your thoughts on art collecting and to cultivate a collector base?**

I love collecting the work of other artists, and thrill in the knowledge that people are collecting my work! As I mentioned above, art is very personal, and when art speaks to you, it is a very special experience. To have that art in your home where it makes you feel good is a wonderful thing. I try to cultivate my collectors by sharing my life and process with them, inviting them into my studio to see where and how I work, send-

ing regular newsletters, hosting events and exhibitions, and, more recently, running workshops where people can learn the basics of my technique.

**You do a lot of series. Explain the idea behind that.**

I love to work in series as it allows me to delve deep into themes and explore a host of topics all at once. With my Icon series, I loving adding new portraits over the years as requests come in or various people have a significant impact on the world. With my God’s Creatures series, I loved how it kept me focused over the 91 days of creation, and I was able to hone my skills each day as I worked on the animal portraits. With each day I got better as I learned the intricacies of the papers, and how to create fur and feathers. I wouldn’t have made the artworks I created at the end of the series at the beginning. The process of the daily practice made them possible.

**What’s your next series or your dream project?**

I have so many ideas it is hard to pick one! I really want to create large artworks for my Mythical Creatures series. I started to work on it last year, but was unable to proceed with it as I didn’t have the time to give it the energy and focus it needed. I can visualize a large, almost life size, dragon created from thousands of pieces of exotic papers, glistening and shimmering so that it looks like it is alive. How fun would that be!

**Do you ever have creative blocks, and how do you overcome them ?**

Sometimes I find myself stuck, or tired, and I know I am best not to try to create those days. Instead I take some time out to clean my studio or go for long walks with my dogs. I find clearing my head and being out in nature really helps.

**Who are some artists you admire,**

**follow, or have been inspiration?**

I am part of an amazing collective of female artists who are called the Creative Badasses. Each of those ladies inspires me, and we offer each other a fantastic support system that really helps inspire, encourage and challenge each other. Apart from that I find myself admiring the work of artists that are challenging the status quo, creating work in non-traditional ways, or raising important messages in their work.

**Where do you see your art in 10 years?**

I have no idea, but I’m really excited to see!

Learn more at [www.kristiabbott.com](http://www.kristiabbott.com).



**Suzie Marty** is an artist and curator at Everett & Charlie art gallery in Linden Hills. She is also an avid supporter of buying local, and a sales representative for the *Southwest Connector*. Contact her at [ads@swconnector.com](mailto:ads@swconnector.com).

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)
Break	Break
Jan. 6	Dec. 20
Feb. 3	Jan. 24
Feb. 17	Feb. 7
March 3	Feb. 18 (Friday)
March 17	March 7
April 7	March 28
April 21	April 11
May 5	April 25
May 19	May 9

June 2	May 23
June 16	June 6
July 7	June 20
July 21	July 11
Aug. 4	July 25
Break	Break
Sept. 1	Aug. 8
Sept. 22	Sept. 12
Oct. 6	Sept. 26
Oct. 20	Oct. 10
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

QUARTERLY

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March - Housing | June - Activities

Sept. - Medical | Dec. - Money

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# MEET ANDREW DEGERSTROM

## Neighborhood coordinator for East Bde Maka Ska, Lynnhurst and Fulton

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Longtime neighborhood organization volunteer, Andrew Degerstrom, is now working for three neighborhood groups.

He's served on the board of his own neighborhood organization, the East Isle Neighborhood Association, since 2014. Last summer, he was hired as the coordinator for East Bde Maka Ska, and a few months ago, he added Fulton and Lynnhurst.

Degerstrom shared thoughts about his multiple roles with the *Connector*.

### TELL OUR READERS A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

Degerstrom: I grew up in Rochester, and moved to Minneapolis in 2009 to attend the University of Minnesota. I have a bachelor's degree in urban studies and a master's degree in urban and regional planning, both from the U. When I moved to Minneapolis, I lived in the Stadium Village part of Prospect Park for one year, Linden Hills for two years, and have been living in East Isles since 2012.

Some of the things I like to do include going for walks around Lake of the Isles, riding my bike, and attending Minnesota Lynx games. (I'm a season ticket holder).

### WHAT IS YOUR PAST EXPERIENCE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS?

Degerstrom: I first got involved in my own neighborhood organization, the East Isles Neighborhood Association, back in 2014. I was recruited while attending my precinct caucus. I was elected to the board that year and with the exception of a man-



Andrew Degerstrom is a resident of East Isles. (Photo submitted)

datory 1-year gap from 2018-2019 to satisfy term limits, I have been on the board ever since. I served as treasurer my first year, president the next two years, and have served as treasurer for the past three years. Being around for so long has allowed me to develop an institutional memory, which is really important on boards that can have frequent turnover.

### WHAT DREW YOU TO WORKING AT NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS?

Degerstrom: Working with neighborhood organizations was not a planned career path for me. This past summer I was unemployed when I saw that Monica Smith, East Bde Maka Ska's longtime coordinator, was retiring. I knew I could do the job based on my experience with my own neighborhood organization and that I would enjoy the work, so I applied. Several months later, I got connected with Fulton and Lynnhurst through networking.

Their longtime coordinator, Ruth Olson, was leaving to work in Council Vice President Linea Palmisano's office. She knew I was looking to pick up additional neighborhoods, so she recommended me as her replacement. Finding a neighborhood coordinator is not as easy as one would assume. Unless a neighborhood can find someone who already knows the Minneapolis neighborhood system and the intricacies of city funding, onboarding a new coordinator can take a long time.

### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACING NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS RIGHT NOW?

Degerstrom: I'd say the biggest challenge facing neighborhood organizations right now is the decrease in city funding. It is making neighborhood organizations either find alternative sources of funding, be more diligent with fundraising, make tough cuts to their programming, or a combination of all three.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR IMMEDIATE GOALS AS YOU TAKE ON FULTON AND LYNNHURST? WHAT GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR EAST BDE MAKASKA?

Degerstrom: I have only been with Fulton and Lynnhurst since Jan. 3. With Lynnhurst, I started with all cylinders firing as I had to immediately start planning for its annual meeting and coordinating the winter newsletter. Fulton's schedule was a little more forgiving. But for Fulton and Lynnhurst in general, my immediate goals include transitioning both neighborhoods over to QuickBooks and familiarizing myself more with each neighborhood by going through all of the files.

In East Bde Maka Ska, things are a little bit calmer. This past year, especially the last quarter, was really hectic for most neighborhood organizations preparing for the transition to Neighborhoods 2020 and making sure they meet all of the city's requirements.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY COMMUNITY DINNER

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at LNA and Zion Church's monthly community dinner on Wednesday, March 16 from 6-7 p.m. at 128 W 33rd St. For the second year in a row, there will be hand pies and St. Patrick's Day cookies from Butter Bakery that can be taken to go or eaten around outdoor fire pits at Zion Church, weather permitting. Pay as you can. More information: [organizer@lyndale.org](mailto:organizer@lyndale.org) or 608-224-9998.

### TOWN HALL ON GREEN LINE EXTENSION

The Green Line Extension LRT project is hosting a series of virtual Town Halls on March 9, 10, 14, 16 and 22 from 6-7 p.m. These events are opportunities for community members to learn about upcoming construction activities planned for 2022. Construction and outreach staff will lead a presentation, followed by time for questions and answers. More at [GreenLineExt.org](http://GreenLineExt.org).

### E-LINE UPDATE

Metro Transit was expected to present the Metro E Line Recommended Corridor Plan to the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council on March 1. In fall 2021, Metro Transit collected public feedback on the initial draft of this line. Project staff compiled and reviewed the feedback and will soon release the Recommended Corridor Plan for another round of public comment. The METRO E Line is an arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) line that will upgrade and substantially replace Route 6. The new E Line will have four BRT station platforms in Linden Hills.

### FREEWRITERS PERFORM ONLINE

FreeWriters, an organization founded in the Hennepin County Jail to provide daily creative writing opportunities for county jail inmates, is featured in a new online performance by Ten Thousand Things Theater Company (TTT), which seeks to highlight the creative voices of Minnesotans living in correctional facilities and individuals within the disabilities community. The Ten Thousand Voices reading is available to watch and includes pieces written by FreeWriters participants, as well as individuals from Minnesota Correctional Facility Faribault; Minnesota Correctional Facility Shakopee; and Minnesota Correctional Facility Stillwater, as well as MSS-Supporting People with Disabilities. The recording is free with donations encouraged to support this program. Go to [tenthousandthings.org/season/tenthousand-voices-live](http://tenthousandthings.org/season/tenthousand-voices-live).

### CLIMATE CHANGE SERIES

The Westminster Town Hall Forum is presenting a series of programs on one of the most pressing issues facing humanity: climate change. Five women on the forefront of climate science and policy will speak at the forum. The series is presented in partnership with the McKnight Foundation.

- Online Now: Dr. Katharine Hayhoe of The Nature Conservancy: The Case for Climate Hope

- March 11 (7 p.m.): Dr. Danielle Wood of M.I.T.: Using Space Technology to Improve Life

- March 25, noon: Dr. Lisa Schulte Moore, MacArthur Genius Fellow: Climate Solutions Rooted in the Soil

- April 6, noon: Elizabeth Kolbert, Pulitzer-Prize winning author: The Nature of the Future

- April 27, noon: Colette Pinchon-Battle of the Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy: Advancing Equity Through Ethical Climate Adaptations

All forums will be in-person at Westminster Presbyterian in Downtown Minneapolis and also live-streamed at [www.WestminsterForum.org](http://www.WestminsterForum.org). They will remain there to view after the initial program.



## FREE SELF CARE KITS

Inspired by the heroic but often unsung work of the people who have kept local emergency housing shelters running throughout the pandemic, Minneapolis resident Joan Vorderbruggen launched a grassroots "Self-Care Kit Supply Drive" that culminated with the delivery of 200 kits on Friday, Feb. 11, 2022.

Nearly 70 community members participated in the drive to create the kits, which were styled as gift baskets loaded with donated self-care items such as scented soaps and lotions, bath salts, candles, chocolates, and more. Each basket included a handwritten thank you card. Workers from the Harbor Light Center, Bethesda Shelter, and Haven Housing received baskets.

Vorderbruggen serves as a volunteer co-chair of the Salvation Army Harbor Light Advisory Council and is a regular volunteer for Haven Housing, but the Self-Care Kit Supply Drive is a personal, grassroots



effort. "Time and time again, I have watched these shelter workers give so much of themselves for our communities' most vulnerable people," she said. "Because of the dire needs of the people they serve, shelter staff are often overlooked. I wanted to do something to show how much we appreciate these unsung heroes within our frontline healthcare and housing systems."

Send in events, press releases, letters and neighborhood news.  
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## JOBS

## CSA DELIVERY

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By Penny Fuller

Longtime Feline Rescue volunteer Nancy Miller writes monthly newsletters and works as a shift lead. "I love this work because I see first-hand the difference that volunteering makes in the lives of so many cats," said Miller.

She and other leads oversee and coordinate daily shifts of volunteers that help with feeding, cleaning and enrichment activities. There are special adoption rooms set aside for interacting with the cats outside of the kennels. The shelter allows for easy access during open hours where visitors may meet a variety of individuals. Visiting hours (currently only by appointment) are posted on the website where there is an interactive scheduling process listing available times and dates. "The cats do enjoy having visitors!" said Miller.

Feline Rescue is staffed with individuals at all levels including a veterinarian that provides on-site care. Much of the day-to-day tasks are completed by volunteers. There are also many other ways to get involved.

According to Miller, volunteers and staff have a having real passion for their work and for the cats in their care. She also noted how the organization has expanded to work alongside numerous animal welfare organizations and individuals, even participating in national initiatives such as Shelter Animals Count. She is fond of this saying: "Saving one cat won't change the world, but it will surely change the world for that cat."

Gail Frethem is a newer volunteer. Although she is more of a "dog person," Frethem said she greatly enjoys her role and connects with the cats. "It's relaxing," she said, "without the challenges of working with people and politics."

#### EVERY CAT IS WANTED

Founded in 1997 by 23 people who wanted to continue shelter services from a predecessor organization, Feline Rescue has been operating out of its present location at 593 Fairview Avenue North since

## FELINES FIND 'FOREVER' HOMES



Volunteer Gail Frethem plays with Tupelo at the Feline Rescue shelter. (Photo by Penny Fuller)

2006, remarked Feline Rescue Executive Director Phil Manz. They are a limited admission, no-kill organization providing safe shelter, veterinary care and socialization for stray, abandoned or abused cats. Feline Rescue has also provided outreach services for people helping cats in their neighborhood. This past year the Coolers4Cats program retrofitted and distributed over 150 coolers for sheltering homeless cats throughout Minnesota.

"Our vision guides our efforts," commented Manz. "A community where every cat is wanted."

#### FINDING THE RIGHT HOME

Jenni Charrier began her work with Feline Rescue 20 years ago as a donor because she loved the premise of a positive organization that puts cats first. "It's about finding the right home for each cat and

it's essential to rise above human issues to make that happen," she said.

Charrier is involved in many aspects of Feline Rescue, most recently joining their board in January 2022. She helps to connect Feline Rescue with the public through her media skills including videography, Facebook management and start-up initiatives such as Coolers4Cats, the Cat Claw Clipping Clinic in Wayzata and many shelter improvements. She is also a foster mom.

Charrier said, "Foster caregivers are very important to the organization. The private setting provides tailored care, particularly for cats with special needs. Pregnant cats or those with kittens prior to being weaned, as well as those in need of socialization or special medical care are included in this array. When a cat is ready for adoption, Feline Rescue arranges an opportunity for potential adopters to meet



Feline Rescue volunteers (left to right) Gail Frethem, Nancy Miller, Shelley Pecha, Diane Martin, and Vicki Persons. (Photo by Penny Fuller)

at the foster cat home or the Feline Rescue administration building."

#### WORKING FROM HOME

Stephanie Carver, a foster mom since 2020, realized that working from home during the pandemic provided an ideal opportunity for this role. "Making observations on each cat's personality and preferences is key to ultimately matching them to the right home," she explained. She pointed out that food and medical care is supplied for fosters so those with a limited budget or who can't have a long-term pet commitment may find fostering provides an ideal opportunity to enjoy feline companionship.

"Feline Rescue also provides training for individuals, if needed," she said. "I never imagined I could administer subcutaneous fluids to a cat, but I did and I'm very proud of myself for going outside of my comfort zone. It allowed me to care for a cat with special needs."

She described the role of foster as being flexible and well supported, and added, "Volunteers are very helpful with one another."

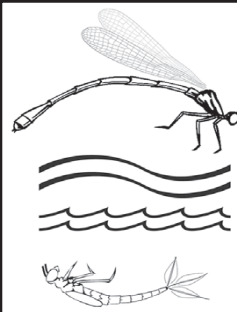
She is impressed in general with Feline Rescue's leadership and vision. "As a lawyer I am very fussy about what charities I give support to. They really get my stamp of approval!" said Carver. "I'm impressed, too, that their employee assistance program is available to volunteers."

For more, visit [www.felinerescue.org](http://www.felinerescue.org).

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