

What's the  
future of the  
Mississippi  
River?

>> 5



## FAILED BY FAMILY COURT



VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

By TESHAM.  
CHRISTENSEN

*Kelsey Kruse fought to protect her children from abusive father, stepmother but they weren't held accountable until 8-year-old Autumn was murdered*

Helpless and hopeless. That's how Kelsey Kruse felt for years as she tried to co-parent with her ex and his wife, Brett and Sarah Hallow.

And then one day, she got the call she was scared of.

Eight-year-old Autumn was found dead in the bathtub at her dad's apartment in Elk River, Minn.

"I knew this was going to happen," Kelsey said to the police when they told her Autumn was dead. "I tried to get help."

### CONSTANTLY ACCUSED OF HARASSING THEM

Kelsey was 17 when she met Brett. They were both attending Ivan Sand ALC in Elk River. Brett was known as "the player," but Kelsey ignored what everyone said about him. He was unfaithful the four years they were together.

But he was charming. He could convince her that she was crazy, nothing happened, and he wasn't being unfaithful. He could cry instantly if he wanted to, she recalled.

"I feel bad for the person that was me when I was younger," Kelsey remarked. "I feel bad for the me that was pregnant and watching him walk out the door and not coming back for days."

She gave birth to Noah when she was



FAILED >>12

Autumn, Kelsey and Noah

## FIGHT AGAINST CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS



Jason Espinoza spray-paints a catalytic converter during an event on May 4 at Allianz Field. In the first four months of this year, over 1,204 catalytic converters have been reported stolen in St. Paul. Auto salvage companies are on the alert and will refuse to buy painted converters. >> More on page 2. (Photo by Terry Faust)

### HAMLIN MIDWAY LIBRARY

## Community split on library

*Surveys show some want to renovate, others demolish; option to combine with a rec center shot down by library staff*

By JANE McCLURE

A decision on the future of the Hamline Midway Branch Library will be announced by St. Paul Public Library administration this month.

If recent community forums and surveys are any indication, community members remain deeply split on options to demolish the historic structure or renovate it. The announcement is despite a request from Hamline Midway Coalition to delay the decision process.

One thing is clear: the neighborhood will not get a do-over, with the possibility of a combined facility at Hamline Elementary School and its attached, aging Hancock Recreation Center.

COMMUNITY SPLIT ON LIBRARY >> 11

## BLACK GARNET: SELF-EMPOWERMENT AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH

*Dionne Sims opens the first Black-owned bookstore in state*

By CHLOE PETER

Dionne Sims has loved books since before she could read, when her mom would read out loud to her. Once she could read, books were a consistent refuge whenever the world felt too overwhelming. They still are to this day.

Since then, Sims has started her own bookstore, Black Garnet Books. She began by operating through pop-ups and a temporary location at Merci Tattoo in Uptown. Books are currently available on BookShop.Org. A physical location is opening late this summer on the ground level of Hamline Station Apartments, 1305 University Ave. W. in Saint Paul.

Black Garnet Books is currently the only Black-owned bookstore in Minnesota.

In the months following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Sims was looking for comfort in the form of books and wanted to buy from a Black-owned bookstore, but the closest one was in Chicago. She tweeted about how Minnesota didn't have one, and that it would be her dream to start one on her own. It was then that community support and enthusiasm started rolling in. Within 48 hours, Sims' GoFundMe to raise money to open the store had reached its goal and within a week, it raised over \$100,000.

BLACK GARNET >> 11



Dionne  
Sims



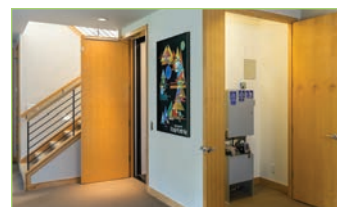
Ukraine, women-directed films highlighted in 41st MSP Film Festival

PAGE 3



REBUILD REPAIR RECYCLE The clown-colored house on the hill

PAGE 7



HOME & GARDEN Home renovations to age in place

PAGE 8-9



## FIGHT AGAINST CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS

>> from 1

On Wednesday, May 4, 2022 members of the Saint Paul Police Department, headed by Sr. Commander K. Hallstrom, organized three lines in Allianz Field's parking lot to help fight the rash of catalytic converter thefts. About 750 car owners registered for the event.

*Sr. Commander Hallstrom explains the operation to a news crew while a "pit crew" paints a converter and installs anti-theft license plate screws.*



Teams resembling race-way pit stop crews, spray-painted converters to make it much more difficult for thieves to sell stolen converters. Auto salvage companies are on the alert and will refuse to buy painted converters.

If a vehicle were high off the road, an SPPD stencil would be used to more clearly mark a converter. In addition, anti-theft screws were installed on license plates, making plate theft very difficult. This year between January and May, 1,204 converters have been stolen in St. Paul. For information on future SPPD converter painting events and how to register, check SPPD's Facebook site: <https://bit.ly/3wd7yEE>

*Tools of the event: SPPD stencils were placed against converters before painting when vehicles had high ground clearance. A variety of screw bits were used for the drills to replace existing license plate fasteners with anti-theft screws.*



*Bryan Giang (left) and Melissa Joly replace conventional license plate fasteners with anti-theft screws. For information on future SPPD converter painting events and how to register, check SPPD's Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/3wd7yEE>*



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# Ukraine, women-directed films highlighted in 41st MSP Film Festival

By JAN WILLMS

Welcoming its patrons back to a fresh look, the MSP Film Society opened the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) on May 5 at the theater on 115 SE. Main. Formerly the St. Anthony Main Theater, the refurbished location is now called MSP Film at the Main.

Running through May 19, the festival will present over 200 films from over 70 countries and cultures. Festival attendees will return to a space that has undergone a thorough clean-up and update.

"We painted the lobby, took up all the carpeting, changed all the lighting, took out the drop ceilings, completely refurbished the concession stand, adjusted the sound, redid the bathrooms and put in aisle lighting," said Susan Smoluchowski, MSP Film Society Executive Director.

"The seats were replaced just a few years ago, so we did not change them, but we will be doing a little bit of work on the headrests next week," she said.

A large chandelier that drops down from the second floor ceiling was provided by John and Julee Rimarcik, owners of the theater building and nearly the entire stretch of Main Street. "The owner has invested himself in a lot of the upgrades over the past four months," Smoluchowski noted. "The chandelier was discovered in one of his storage spaces."

In phase two of the refurbishment, an elevator will be installed in the theater. "We will always need to be doing some work to upgrade the equipment," Smoluchowski added.

But first, the 41st MSPIFF will take place, both onsite and virtually. Other venues for showing films will be the Landmark in St. Paul, the Capri Theater in Minneapolis and the Gray Duck Theater in



The concessions counter at the theater on 115 SE Main was remodeled. New carpeting was installed on the stair to the second floor, and the second-floor concession stand was removed. The old bulb-illuminated exterior "Main" sign remained, but the marquee below has been remodeled to include the MSP Film Society name. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Rochester.

This year's lineup includes five films by Ukrainian directors. "We wanted to speak to what is happening in that part of the world," Smoluchowski said.

The opening film May 5 was "The Phantom of the Open." It is a British Comedy, inspired by Maurice Flitcroft, who entered the British Open having never played a game of golf in his life. Mark Rylance and Sally Hawkins star. "Rylance had a long career at the Guthrie, and, of course, Sally Hawkins needs no introduction," Smoluchowski said. She said the Flitcrofts had twin sons who were competitive disco dancers. "Flitcroft gets into the Open, and the story continues from there," Smoluchowski said. "We wanted something uplifting to start the festival."

The closing film is called "Paulie Go!" and tells the story of a nerdy kid who studies in LA and wants to find the elusive professor who is an inspiration for him. "This film was shot almost entirely in Minnesota," Smoluchowski said. "Much of the cast and crew will be here."

Other highlights of MSPIFF include the screening of "Leadbelly," "The Learning Tree" and "Shaft" by famed director, artist, musician and photographer Gordon Parks. "Half Past Autumn," a documentary about Parks by filmmaker Craig Rice will also be screened.

"We are showing a number of films by women directors," Smoluchowski said. On May 6, there were four films by four visiting female directors. There was an event celebrating women in film afterwards.

She said that Ken Jacobson will be re-

cording a live podcast of his conversation with several visiting filmmakers on May 14. A Nextwave Youth Filmmaking Competition will be a part of the festival, also. During the two weeks, events and panels and parties will be sprinkled throughout the festivities.

The Film Society is now operating all five auditoriums at the former St. Anthony Main Theater location during the entire year, offering other festivals and international films on a daily basis.

"We are excited to show off our new theater and let people back in our fold, coming to see films every day of the year," Smoluchowski said. "We are calling it a festival all year 'round."

To find out more about MSPIFF, film descriptions, schedule and tickets go to [www.mspfilm.org](http://www.mspfilm.org)

## HAMLIN HEADLINES

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Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse and varied thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to [news@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:news@MonitorSaintPaul.com).

## Celebrating Jackie Robinson's leadership legacy

The Minnesota Twins recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's debut in Major League Baseball. Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute was represented during the celebrations. Special activities were held throughout the Twins' game against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Target Field.

The ceremonial first pitch was thrown by three of our local students, Nah'Lyiah Davis, Abigail Mutua, and Aniyah Stewart. They were winners of the team's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Writing Competition held in partnership with PPGJLI. The topic of the contest was: "What it truly means to be a drum major for justice."

Jackie Robinson exemplified the goals of the PPGJLI. We seek to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach. Jackie did the same by promoting these core nine values of courage, persistence, justice, determination, integrity, commitment, teamwork, citizenship, and excellence.

The Minnesota Twins recognized Jackie's lasting impact by celebrating youth

### PLANTING SEEDS

BY DR. ARTIKA TYNER,  
[dr.artikatyner@gmail.com](mailto:dr.artikatyner@gmail.com)



and future generations as they continue to break barriers, push for social equity, and serve as an inspiration for everyone. His impact on baseball, society, and history was monumental.

Jackie was the first African American to play in Major League Baseball and his contribution was immeasurable. He was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers on April 15, 1947, and that single act was a major milestone in the game and the country's history. That same year, he was honored with the inaugural "Rookie of the Year" award.

His signing marked the beginning of the end of racial segregation in profes-



Winners of the PPGJLI writing competition, Nah'Lyiah Davis, Abigail Mutua, and Aniyah Stewart, threw the first pitch at the Twins' game.

sional baseball. The son of a sharecropper, it was unfathomable at the time that an African American would reach the pinnacle of America's Pastime.

His uniform bore the No. 42 and in honor of his achievements, Jackie's uniform was retired across all major league teams, the first athlete to ever be honored in that way. On April 15, 2004, a new tradition was instituted called Jackie Rob-

inson Day. On that day each year, every player on every baseball team wears the No. 42 on their uniform.

Jackie received numerous accolades and awards during his renowned 10-year baseball career, but it was also a time when he suffered some of the worst of racism. He served his country proudly in World War II, and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

One of the greatest baseball players of all time, he died in 1972 at the age of 53.

Jackie's legacy lives on in the game of baseball and the many youths that dream of following in his footsteps. He leaves us all with a leadership challenge to take action when he stated: "Life is not a spectator sport. If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you're wasting your life."

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.

## Saving Hamline Midway Library embraces future while preserving our past

By Barbara Bezat, Tom Goldstein, Jackie Lannin, Roy Neal, Jonathan Oppenheimer and Bonnie Youngquist

Two weeks ago our community learned that St. Paul Public Library (SPPL) is considering two options regarding the future of the Hamline Midway Library: a renovation and expansion design that SPPL is calling Option A; or a demolition and new build termed Option B.

As neighbors, longtime library users, activists, and preservationists who believe that retaining history while embracing the future are key elements to a successful library upgrade, Renovate 1558 is grateful that LSE Architects has brought forward a creatively-designed expansion – Option A – that we believe can unite our neighborhood moving forward.

Our support for Option A takes into consideration the guidelines on preservation and sustainability laid out in the

city of St. Paul's comprehensive plan and our district council's neighborhood plan. Given that the release of embodied carbon which results during the demolition of historic buildings – such as the 91-year-old Henry Hale Memorial Library – is particularly detrimental to the environment, it is imperative that city officials respect the science on greenhouse gases and wherever possible choose preservation.

As noted by Carl Elefante, former president of the American Institute of Architects: "The greenest building is one that is already built." In the case of our library, preservation and expansion of the historic library building is both the greenest and most environmentally-sound choice.

While we would have preferred more time for the public to be engaged about different options for the library and a process that embraced all the potential solutions – including the possibility of repurposing the current building and relocating

a new library elsewhere – we now have the chance for a win-win outcome by rallying around the choice that both preserves and expands the existing library.

Preserving an iconic building that has helped anchor the surrounding community for the past 90 years is integral to maintaining the historic character of the Hamline Midway neighborhood. Public buildings, like the Hamline Midway Library, belong to the community, and demolition should never be on the table simply because a building in otherwise good condition has been neglected and is in need of repairs and upgrades. A thoughtful renovation and expansion will not only allow equity and access to be properly addressed, it will also enable future programming to meet the needs of historically-marginalized communities.

Renovate 1558 remains committed to doing what's best for our neighborhood, and we believe that there is widespread

support for Option A. Over the past year a majority of community members far and wide have spoken up in favor of renovation, as evidenced by the results of a city-led CIB survey in spring 2021, public comments to the CIB board, more than 2,000 people signing Change.org petitions to save the library from demolition, our own survey results from an April 19 community forum, and countless people in the neighborhood displaying our yard signs.

We urge SPPL to recognize Option A as the best choice for uniting rather than dividing the neighborhood, and look forward to working together with all interested parties to reimagine and preserve the Hamline Midway Library.

The authors of this op-ed are members of the group Renovate 1558, which is committed to reimagining the Hamline Midway Library building through renovation and expansion or repurposing. You can learn more at [renovate1558.org](http://renovate1558.org)

## Mental health and school shootings: a call for intervention

By Hannah Ericson, Kenzie Harstad, Savannah Lyytinen, Hannah Moore and Isabel Quevedo

The rise of school shootings and school shooting threats within the last five years in the United States has left school officials and law enforcement in a state of perplexity in attempting to address this issue. Recent findings show that 93% of school shootings are premeditated, meaning that perpetrators come up with a comprehensive plan for executing their shooting, according to Allison Paolini in her study, "School shootings and Student Mental Health." In 2021, the Center for Homeland Security reported

there were 240 incidents of non-active and active shooters in K-12 schools in the United States – this resulted in 18 individuals killed from school shootings in K-12 schools. Right here in Minnesota, a school shooting occurred on the grounds of District 287 in Richfield. Prior, a federally funded grant had been given to them to improve the mental health system within their school system, yet this deadly event still took place.

Intervention is needed at the individual and institutional level to reduce incidents like these from occurring. Successful intervention involves tailoring programs to the needs and development of adolescents. One holistic approach to solving

problems within schools is through the use of restorative practices.

Restorative practice is a process in which an individual acknowledges wrongdoing, takes needed steps to repair harm, and is then reintegrated into the appropriate environment. Such practices typically occur after the shooting or threat that consist of: victim-impact panels, retribution, and rehabilitation. These practices and more are effective for reducing recidivism in juvenile school shooters. Restorative justice allows the ability for the perpetrator and victim(s), as well as the school community, to address the harm that took place and to work towards taking responsibility and finding closure.

Mental illnesses go hand-in-hand with a greater risk of suicide, and the majority of those with mental illnesses are actually non-violent. Therefore, preventative mental health care is a step in the right direction, with policy recommendations promoting and addressing mental health and suicide awareness in schools. By acknowledging mental health and suicide awareness, students could attend educational mental health-oriented assemblies. This also means that school districts are provided more in-depth mental health services.

James Densley, a criminal justice professor at Metro State University and co-founder of The Violence Project, spoke on how Minnesota has some of the worst student-to-counselor ratios. To address

MENTAL HEALTH >> 5

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# Join us to explore the future of the Mississippi River

In the 20th century, we made major public investments to transform the metro Mississippi River for commercial and industrial purposes. However, some of that old infrastructure is no longer useful, presenting an opportunity to reimagine our relationship with the river.

We hope you'll be a part of this reimagining. Find more information below about free summer walking, biking, boat and kayak focus-group tours of the locks and dams. We'll ask big questions about the river's future, including should we remove some dams?

What we do with these old dams will affect water, wildlife and recreation here in the Twin Cities, as well as downstream and even beyond. Large-scale dam removal has never been done in a setting as urban as the Twin Cities. The Mississippi River's global prominence only adds to the significance of this potential opportunity and might inspire other communities to reconsider the future of their rivers, too.

There are three locks and dams in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The first two, Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls, are on either side of the Stone Arch Bridge in downtown Minneapolis. Eight miles further downstream is the Lock and Dam No. 1, also known as the Ford dam.

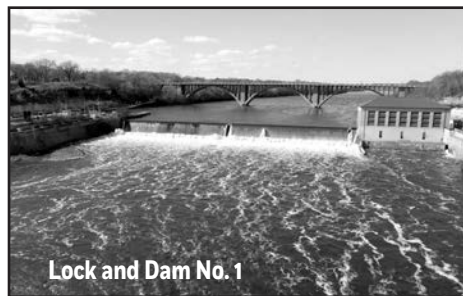
These three structures were initially built to facilitate commercial shipping, but these days barges no longer travel through these locks. The Corps is studying the future of these locks and dams be-

## GUEST COLUMN

BY COLLEEN O'CONNOR TOBERMAN,

ctoberman@fmr.org

Friends of the Mississippi River



Lock and Dam No. 1

cause they no longer fulfill their original purpose. They do provide some important functions, but they also fragment wildlife habitat and alter the river's natural flow.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) believes the Corps should continue owning, maintaining and managing the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock. This lock and dam still serves many essential functions. They manage the river's upstream water levels to provide reliable drinking water to 1 million Twin Cities residents, block the spread of invasive carp upstream and prevent the collapse of St. Anthony Falls.

However, the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and dam and Lock and Dam No. 1 are prospective candidates for removal, which could reap major benefits. Removing these two dams would reconnect 39 miles of the Mississippi River and could restore the types of rapids and floodplain habitats upon which many rare, threatened and endangered species rely. The river would also become shallower and have a faster flow, enhancing recreation-

al activities from whitewater paddling to shoreline fishing.

Dam removal does have potential drawbacks. Costs to remove the structures and restore the river bottom would be significant. While new recreational opportunities could draw many users, some current flatwater activities like rowing would need to move elsewhere. The Ford and Lower St. Anthony Falls dams also generate hydropower, though at modest levels that would not be difficult to replace with other renewable energy sources.

Each of the three locks is undergoing a disposition study to help the Army Corps assess whether the structures should remain in place and, if so, who should own, maintain and operate them. The Corps is now finalizing the study for the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock, with the study for the Lower St. Anthony Falls and Ford locks and dams anticipated to begin this fall. There will be multiple opportunities for the public to comment on the design and conclusions of that study.

These studies are just the early steps in what will likely be a long process. Congressional authorization would be required for any significant lock and dam ownership changes, modifications or removal. Any of these outcomes could be costly. And a big step like dam removal may require further study and community engagement after the Corps' initial study process. Should the dams be slated for removal, it could be 10 or even 20 years before structural work begins.

We're eager to see a robust scientific review and community engagement process regarding the future of these two locks and dams with plenty of time for community members and other stakeholders to raise questions, look at alternatives, examine evidence and seek solutions.

Join us to begin imagining the Mississippi River of the future, a river no longer bound by its industrial past. Together, we can chart a 21st-century course to protect and restore the Mississippi and all the communities and wildlife that depend on its health. Macalester College, FMR and many other partners are leading a series of focus-group tours open to all community members interested in exploring these questions. Biking, kayaking, boat and walking tours are available for various dates and times this summer at no cost.

To learn more or sign up, visit [fmr.org/lock-focus-group-tours](http://fmr.org/lock-focus-group-tours). We're also happy to give special presentations to community groups upon request.

Colleen O'Connor Toberman is the Land Use & Planning Director at Friends of the Mississippi River. She can be reached at [ctoberman@fmr.org](mailto:ctoberman@fmr.org) or 651.222.2193 x29.

## Mental health and school shootings

>> from 4

this issue, he explained that we need to provide more opportunities for students to feel connected in schools, other than just having a counselor. This leads to a need for a student to feel loved, seen, and heard in their school setting. If each student had a meaningful connection to an adult in their school, we would see a decrease in violence in schools. "Smaller class sizes are a step towards violence prevention," Densley stated. By using James Densley's philosophy as policy recommendation, the school districts should create smaller class sizes and create weekly meetings including all staff members to promote more changes and ideas to help improve mental health, along with a check in on how their students are doing.

We talked to another professional in the field, Robin Burge-Ross, who is a clinical social worker in Minnesota that has experience with at-risk youth, corrections, and public education. Most of her time is spent in alternative learning centers (ALC). She explained that in these settings, the class sizes are much smaller. This allows students to cope with their anxiety, and teachers can build more meaningful relationships with their students. Most ALC settings "prioritize mental health and basic needs," Burge-Ross states, and these resources are what students need. Many of the students she has worked with have turned to drugs as a means to self-medicate. Her strength-based approach with students and families is what students need to be able to learn more healthy coping mechanism strategies and overall identify their feelings. This includes listening to what their bodies are telling them, and providing tools to students to cope with big emotions that are being felt.

A great recommendation for not only Minnesota but nationally would be to require school districts to include behavioral health needs as a reason for an excused absence, alongside physical health problems. This approach and the many resources that alternative settings provide will allow youth to be successful in life and school.

The authors of this column are students at Hamline University.

## City paying \$300,000 bill for wire thefts from light poles

By JANE McCLURE

When Frogtown Farm and Park opened in 2015, one of many welcomed featured was lighting along paths and in other areas. Residents felt safer walking through the area at dusk.

But the park is one of several places in St. Paul where street and park lights have repeatedly had valuable copper wiring stolen. The theft and loss of park lighting prompted a Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) request and plea for help.

The south end of Como Lake, Merriam Park's namesake park, and the Jessamine-MacKubin area are other places hit by wire thieves. Some locations around St. Paul have been hit repeatedly, much to the consternation of public works and parks and recreation staff.

"(Wire theft) has always been kind of an ongoing issue in the city of St. Paul, but not to the extent it is now," said Joe Spah, traffic operations division manager for the St. Paul Department of Public Works. Theft of copper wire from street and park light poles cost the city more than \$300,000 in 2021. The stealing is on track to top that total in 2022. City council members in April heard an update on the wire theft issue. The city council wants to find ways to deter theft, rather than budgeting for it.

Favored areas for thieves are streets that are less traveled at night, outside of residential neighborhoods, said St. Paul Police Commander Kurt Hallstrom. "There's not a lot of eyes on those areas."

St. Paul City Council President Amy Brendmoen said that in areas where thieves strike repeatedly and take street lights out of commissions, places are left unlit and unsafe.

As copper becomes more valuable and scrap yards pay more, Spah said, lights are at risk. Copper prices hit a record \$4.95 per pound recently. Thefts usually subside in the winter but that wasn't the case this year.

Copper wire theft is a national problem. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates copper wire thefts at \$1 billion per year nationwide. Los Angeles sees thefts tallying \$3.9 million per year. While light poles are a focus in St. Paul, Spah said that air conditioners are actually the most popular target.

St. Paul has about 38,000 public lighting poles, in 16 different styles ranging from park walkway lights to tall cobra style poles. All are vulnerable to copper wire theft. The city uses marked tubing on wires but that is easily removed.

In 2020, public works losses from copy wire theft were at \$104,600. Parks and recreation sustained \$21,300 in losses. In 2021, those losses were estimated at \$294,500 for public works and \$18,700 for parks and recreation.

Those numbers indicate what was repaired and replaced during a year, so losses are likely higher. Replacing wiring means taking money out of other maintenance budgets as the city doesn't budget for such losses, Spah said.

Many ideas have been considered. Welding pole bases shut means not having access when repairs are needed. Also, some thieves will use a motor vehicle to break the metal pole. Aluminum wiring could be used, but Spah said aluminum is also prized by metal thieves.

Thieves typically use power tools, sledgehammers or vehicles to break into the base of light poles. Sometimes thieves quietly remove the doors at the posts' base, cut the wires, and then come back to pull the wires out. Removing the wires can be a quick process.

Public works has tried a variety of measures to quell wire theft, including use of theft-deterrent screws to close access doors, and using smaller strands of wire. Council members asked if different pole design, alarms or motion-activated lights could be used to deter thieves. Council members asked about solar lighting but that itself has design challenges, said Spah. Fixtures may be too heavy for the poles the city uses.

Parks and recreation has used pole designs that make it harder for thieves to steal wire and public works did that when new lights were installed along Ayd Mill Road. Public works could look at such options, but street light poles must be designed with motor vehicle crashes in mind.

Anyone seeing a theft in progress or suspicious activity around light poles should call 911. Someone who appears to be working on a light pole but isn't driving a city vehicle should be considered suspicious. Report non-working lights at [stpaul.gov/streetlights](http://stpaul.gov/streetlights), by filling out an online form.

## Vote for favorite city projects

Still hoping for those new brighter street lights, traffic circles, safer pedestrian crossings or wayfinding signage? Projects still in the running for 2023 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) dollars were released for public comment May 6.

The public can vote online for their favorite projects until June 3. Numerous projects were submitted from area neighborhoods. A public hearing on CIB projects is set for 3:30 p.m. Monday, June 20 at city hall as part of the regular committee meeting. The committee will make its recommendations to Mayor Melvin Carter later in June, with the mayor's picks becoming part of his proposed 2023 city budget.

Then the city council gets to weigh in. Decisions are made with budget adoption at year's end. Eighty-six projects were submitted earlier this year, and only about a dozen project will be funded out of the \$1 million available.

Only capital or "brick and mortar" projects on city property are eligible. Staff members in several city departments are wrapping up cost estimates for submissions in early May. District councils are also weighing in, with their scores due in early June. What will come out of the process is a project scoring sheet from the committee, informed by the public and district councils. That should be completed June 10, with initial ranking of projects based on CIB committee scores released June 13.

More than half of the ideas focus on improvements for traffic, bicyclist and pedestrian safety. Other asks are for lighting improvements in parks and along streets. More than a dozen requests center on crime prevention, including pleas for cameras and ShotSpotter technology. ShotSpotter requests have appeared in the capital budget process for more than two decades, but have never been funded.

While a handful of requests for dog parks and park improvements came in city-wide, most of the focus this year is on public safety, using the principles of CPTED or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

Read about projects and weigh in at <https://engagestpaul.org/>



# EXAMS, HONORS, ACTIVITIES AND CELEBRATIONS

**COMO PARK  
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



BY ERIC ERICKSON  
Social studies teacher

## AP EXAMS

Hundreds of Como students are taking Advanced Placement exams during the first two weeks of May. The national tests administered by the College Board allow students to show what they know about the subjects they've studied at the collegiate level during the school year. Students demonstrating proficiency can transfer their scores into college credits.

## NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FINALIST

Como senior Soren Sackreiter was recently named a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. According to the College Board, with over 4.5 million students annually eligible, finalists make up less than a fifth of one percent. Sackreiter will apply the National Merit Scholarship and his other scholarship awards to study at Gustavus Adolphus College.

## BRAIDED JOURNEYS

Students in the American Indian Education program at Como, which is called Braided Journeys and led by Ms. Angie



Students from Como's Braided Journeys program participated in an immersive experience at the Mdewakanton Sioux Community Culture Center.

Hernandez, participated in an immersive field trip to the Mdewakanton Sioux Community Culture Center.

Students visited the Hocokata Ti, a public exhibit showcasing Dakota history and culture. Como students also gathered with other native youth for interactive lessons including a nature walk, playing traditional games, and creating arts such as hand-stitched leather pouches.

## AVID

Juniors enrolled in Como's AVID class (Advancement via Individual Determination) were able to do another in-person college visit in April when they toured

the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. College tour guides helped the 11th graders understand the variety of colleges, majors, and student groups that the U of M offers. Another highlight was lunch in Coffman Memorial Union.

## JROTC

The 105 cadets at Como have been busy with many events including the annual inspection from the Marine Corps Regional Director. The demonstration of core knowledge, uniform and grooming standards, logistics and organized paperwork resulted in Como's cadets passing with flying colors.

Additionally, cadets have been thriving in Orienteering courses against other JROTC programs. Sophomore Cooper Westrum took first place and junior Ze Vang earned second place navigating the 2.8-mile course.

## CUPCAKE WARS

Students in Culinary Arts classes were happy to see the return of the cupcake baking competition and evaluations by Como teachers. This year's winners were sophomores Lisa Truong, Anthony Ososki, Elliot Larsen, Sam Koushik and Kiki Ruddy, juniors Sig Isaacson, Nalee Vang, Kayla James and Zhane Singer, and senior Tenia Childs.

## PROM AND GRADUATION

Como's junior-senior prom theme will be "Under the Stars" at the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul on May 20. Graduation for the class of 2022 will also take place downtown inside Roy Wilkins Auditorium on the evening of June 7.

## ATHENA AWARD

Senior Saylor Landrum was honored at the Annual Athena Awards Banquet as Como's 2022 recipient. Landrum was a captain and all-conference performer in cross country running, Nordic skiing, and track and field. Her academic class rank is No. 6. Aside from school activities, Landrum is ranked third nationally for her age group in the biathlon (Nordic skiing with rifle target shooting.) She will attend Paul Smith's College in upstate New York where she will be on both the biathlon and Nordic ski teams.

# D10 welcomes four new board members and new officers

**DISTRICT 10 COMO  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

BY SHEVEK MCKEE  
Executive director  
district10@  
district10comopark.org



The D10 Board held its annual meeting and election in April. We're excited to welcome new board members Lizzy Cantley (Subdistrict 3 Seat), Jeremy Rappaport (At-Large Renter Seat), Abby Gold, and Mark Machacek (At-Large Seat). Incumbent board members Alex McLane (Subdistrict 1), Dan Edgerton (Subdistrict 2), and Ben Kowalsky-Grahek (Subdistrict 4) were also re-elected for another 2-year term.

New officers were also appointed by the board for 1-year terms. Jenne Nelson, who served as secretary this past year, is the new D10 Board Chair. Dan Edgerton was appointed vice chair, Matt Keliher was appointed treasurer, and Chad Smith is serving as interim secretary.

Our outgoing officers, chair Jill Henriksen and vice chair Ben Kowalsky-Grahek, are continuing on the board in other roles. Outgoing treasurer Mike Ireland

ended his third term on the D10 board with a promise of continued support for some of the many hats he's worn over the last six years. Thank you all for your leadership and service through the last year and beyond! Bravo Zulu!

## COMO GARAGE SALE - MAY 12-15

D10 Como Park is once again coordinating a community sale weekend from Thursday, May 12 to Sunday, May 15. Over 30 sales were submitted. You can find them all here on our map: District10ComoPark.org/GarageSale.

## PICK UP & PARTY EVENT - JUNE 4

The Como Community Council will be hosting a Pick Up & Party event at Orchard Rec Center (875 W. Orchard Ave.) on Saturday, June 4 from 2-5 p.m. Whether you come with your neighbors or come to meet your neighbors, we would love to see you there! We'll kick off the event with a neighborhood clean up from Front to Como & Dale to the railroad tracks. Check in at the Rec Center between 2-3 p.m. for your supplies and the location to start the pick up. After the clean up, we'll meet up back at the rec center for live music, snacks, yard games and more! Everyone is invited to this free event - find out more at district10comopark.org/sd4e-

vent.

If you'd like to help us keep hosting events like this, please consider a donation to our Neighborhood Events Fund (givemn.org/story/D10events) or becoming a volunteer (district10comopark.org/volunteer).

## GET INVOLVED: COMO LAKE CLEAN-UP - MAY 21

THANK YOU to everyone who showed up, rain and all, to the April 23 Como Park Clean-Up event, we counted 150 amazing volunteers, that's huge!

D10 Como Park is planning our first 2022 Como LAKE Clean-Up for Saturday, May 21, 9 a.m.-noon. These events, in partnership with the Capitol Region Watershed District, focus on the shoreline and lake itself.

District 10 provides trash-grabbers, rakes, buckets, nets, trash bags, and nitrile gloves for those who need them. Or, feel free to provide your own gear. Registration (before May 20) is not required, but it helps us plan and communicate if changes come up. Register and find out more at District10ComoPark.org/Como-Clean-Up

## D10 AWARDED LAWNS TO LEGUMES GRANT

We are excited to announce that the Como Community Council was awarded the Lawns to Legume Demonstration

Neighborhood Grant through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)! A group of community members linked to the Environment Committee proposed a plan for pollinator habitats throughout the Como Sub-district 4 Community. The neighborhood between Como Ave., Front Ave., Lexington Pkwy. and the railroad tracks will receive up to five boulevard gardens, four bee lawns, a community pollinator garden, and a pocket prairie.

Funding is provided by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and is targeted in priority areas to benefit the rusty-patched bumblebee and other at-risk species. Find the latest updates at District10ComoPark.org/L2L

## ZOOM OR CALL INTO D10 MEETINGS

Renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to participate in District 10's board and committee meetings. You can find meeting details on our website at District10ComoPark.org.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- May 17, 7 p.m. - D10 Board Meeting
- June 1, 7 p.m. - Land Use Committee
- June 7, 7 p.m. - Neighborhood Relations Committee
- June 14, 7 p.m. - Environment Committee
- More upcoming events at district-10comopark.org/Events

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# THE CLOWN COLORED HOUSE ON THE HILL

By WILL NELSON

Perched on a hill overlooking the Como Park Golf Course is a two-story vivid spruce green and fuchsia pink cube made of steel and glass. Situated on a bend in Lexington Ave, it's impossible to miss it in its uniqueness. But this architectural oddity isn't a sculpture – it's a home, and a magnum opus for sustainable design.

Owned by Dave Crawford and Diane Peterson, this house is one of the two houses in the United States to be certified as Passive House Plus – a rigorous standard for energy efficient buildings based on insulation, heat recovery, and solar input.

The attention to sustainability worked into its construction is staggering. Eighteen-inch thick vapor barrier walls seal heat and air into the building six times better than city code requires. Mechanical ventilation systems exchange temperature for incoming and outgoing streams to maintain efficiency for heating and cooling. Completely free from natural gas usage, almost all household energy comes from rooftop solar panels, which produce enough electricity to sell back to Xcel on some summer days. The well-insulated windows were carefully placed to maximize natural lighting, and low-flush toilets ensure water conservation.

Despite living in one of the newest and most state-of-the-art buildings in the Como neighborhood, Dave and Diane still sleep on a handmade, rough-cut timber bed frame from 1978. Its raw and warped boards, which were salvaged from a dilapidated barn, somehow manage to look fashionable in the afternoon light streaming in from the thoughtfully placed European windows as I stand in the master bedroom.

"It's sturdy," says Diane, giving the frame a shake to illustrate her point. "Why would we need a new one?"

A sizable percentage of the house's sustainability can be attributed to the couple's dedication to reducing their personal energy consumption. All of their clothing (bought used) is air dried, and graywater from hand-washing in the sink is used to water vegetable and herb gardens. Dave even refuses to expend the energy that the microwave would take to warm up his leftovers, and prefers to eat them cold.

Dave is a mild and soft-spoken man whose salt-and-pepper beard, spectacles



and profoundly calming presence give him the air of a weathered and beloved librarian. For 40 years he worked as a park naturalist in the St. Croix river valley, and his knowledge about Minnesota prairie ecology is obvious, even from a brief conversation. He speaks about biodiversity and pollinators with the quiet and tender passion of a poet.

The yard is a dead giveaway that the place is home to a restoration ecologist. Every inch of the formerly bland Kentucky bluegrass lawn is now (or will be soon) a dazzling array of native Minnesota prairie grasses and wildflowers. The native plants, aside from being stylish, are a fantastic resource for pollinators. After only two years of planting, Dave has recorded over 90



The southern face of the passive house can be seen from Lexington Parkway, and the insulated windows of the living room offer a sweeping view of the Como Park Golf Course. Solar panels on the roof produce enough electricity to almost completely supply what's needed for the house, and there's even some extra to sell back to Xcel on summer days.

pollinator species as opposed to the first year's six. He plans to expand the garden to eventually cover the entire lawn.

Diane's passion projects itself differently. An environmental and political activist – who has worked on campaigns ranging from protesting the Prairie Island nuclear plant to advocating for universal healthcare – she's fiery and talkative, connecting each conversation with the social issues for which she cares so deeply.

As we continue down the hall from the master bedroom, Diane points out a built-in elevator. Having watched her aging grandmother be driven out of her home by inaccessible design and construction, she insisted that the house also be built with the idea of aging-in-place. With an elevator, wheelchair-accessible bathroom and kitchen, and a guest room for a potential live-in home aid, this goal is visibly apparent throughout the house.

"It turns out," says Dave, gripping an arthritis-friendly doorknob, "that all of the accessibility features for aging-in-place are also really comfortable for a fully able-bodied adult."

The house was also intended to be used as an opportunity for education. Once COVID-19 becomes less of an obstacle, Dave and Diane plan on having regular guided tours of the house.

"It's not possible for everyone to retrofit their house to Passive House certifications," says Dave. "But if people see the technology in use, they can look at certain parts of it and say, 'Hey, I could incorporate that in my home.'"

The color of the house itself is a nod to the couple's desire to educate. A mixture of natural green and attention-grabbing pink (the European company that manufactures the windows called the salesperson in Minnesota twice to confirm that they wanted fuchsia window frames), the color draws attention to the building and prompts questions from passers-by.

"I nicknamed it the clown-colored house. You can't miss it," says Diane.

Author Will Nelson is a student at Hamline University.



Dave Crawford and Diane Peterson stand in front of their entryway. (Photo by Will Nelson)



The pollinator garden in full bloom. (Photo by Dave Crawford)

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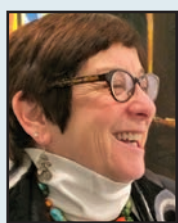
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## UNDER THE HOOD



BY SUSAN SCHAEFER

Something under the hood is not immediately apparent or obvious. This column will uncover stories that span the neighborhoods covered by TMC Publications.

### Planning for peace of mind

At age 69, I was a “silver sneaker” poster child – fit and healthy, living on my own, fiercely independent and proud of it. Ironically, my main fitness exercise, avid fast walking along the Twin Cities’ marvelous trails, system of lakes, and Mississippi River paths, contributed to significant wear and tear on my hips.

In 2019, after a year of pain, my Mayo Clinic orthopedic surgeon proclaimed that I needed new hips and was an ideal candidate for “bilateral hip replacement” surgery – both hips at once.

Being in great health, I assumed I’d heal like a champ and believed that coming home to my one-level condo in an elevator building would be a breeze. Ha! Preparing for my at-home rehabilitation was like facing a tsunami of details about safety and access. I was caught off guard about what I needed to successfully age in place. Things I always had taken for granted, like getting in and out of both the shower and my low-rise, Zen-inspired bed, were challenging. Before my in-patient physical therapy facility even would release me, I had to certify that I had “grab rails” installed in my shower! I had to hustle to find a reputable outfitter.

This episode was a rude awakening about the importance of considering the steps to take to successfully age in place. It’s best to plan well ahead of time.

Anyone Social Security age or older has a good chance of needing new hips, knees, or shoulders by their mid-60s. Surgeries like this are expected to become more frequent as life expectancy continues to increase. Why? Degenerative arthritis caused by wear-and-tear is one reason, coupled with multiple other realities of aging that cause decreased mobility with increased challenges of staying safe in our own homes.

**STAYING IN OUR OWN HOMES IS A GOOD OPTION**

# HOME RENOVATIONS TO AGE IN PLACE



Installing a small elevator and widening doorways made this lower level more accessible. (Photo by Andrea Rugg Photography)

According to St. Paul’s Wilder Research, Minnesota’s 65 and older adult population will more than double between 2010 and 2030 as the state’s 1.3 million baby boomers head into retirement. During the last decade, our hearty senior population was on track to increase by 41%, more than the national average.

Why? Residents here in the True North tend not to retire to other regions. Hearty and hail, greatly attached to their families, and social networks, Minnesotans stay put.

Notable in this effort to keep seniors happy and safe in their own homes is the design community, members of which often join forces with policy makers to offer ideas and services that improve and extend the lives of seniors who choose to live their lives out in their own homes.

#### SEEK CERTIFIED EXPERTS

Choosing a reputable remodeler is key. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), in collaboration with AARP and other experts, have developed the Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation, which remodelers earn through training and testing during a multicourse educational program. CAPS professionals focus on the unique needs

of the older adult population, examining common barriers and the appropriate aging-in-place home modifications to solve them.

According to NAHB, a CAPS professional can:

- Recommend updates that will help a person live independently in his or her own home
- Work with an occupational therapist to develop a home modification or build plan based on the safety and functional needs of an individual or household
- Collaborate with a licensed contractor or interior designer about building and design strategies and techniques for creating attractive, barrier-free living spaces
- Provide information about building codes and standards, useful products and resources, and the costs and time required for common remodeling projects

CAPS remodelers and design-build professionals are not medical or health care professionals. Some charge hourly or flat fees to consult. It is worthwhile to note that by earning this certification they have gone the extra mile to provide critical design aspects to safely age in place.

#### LOCALLY-BASED CAPS CERTIFIED REMODELER

Sylvestre Remodeling & Design’s

#### TICK LIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK

There are many resources for folks contemplating an aging-in-place adaptable remodel. One of the most trusted is AARP’s “HomeFit Guide” which among other helpful tips and ideas, begins with a checklist of questions designed to allow seniors to think wisely about how to live independently for longer. Here are a dozen of their considerations:

1. Is there a step-free entrance into your home?
2. Are there a bedroom, full bath, and kitchen on the main level?
3. Are the interior doorways at least 36” wide?
4. Does the kitchen have a work surface you can use while seated?
5. Are the kitchen cabinets and shelves easy for you to reach?
6. Are your exterior walkways and entrances well lit?
7. Do all your area rugs have non-slip grips to prevent tripping or slipping?
8. Are stairway light fixtures located at both the top and bottom of the stairs?
9. Do you have a shower with a step-free entry?
10. Are the bathroom cabinets and shelves easy for you to reach?
11. Does your bathroom have a lever, touch, or sensor-style faucet?
12. Are there nonslip strips or nonslip mats in the bathtub and/or shower?

owner and chief architect, John Sylvestre, has a lifetime of experience providing ways to make home modifications that allow people to stay in the homes they love, maneuvering not only safely, but also in style. A self-confessed “baby boomer,” Sylvestre takes seriously individuals’ desires to remain in their own homes as long as possible.

AGE IN PLACE >> 9

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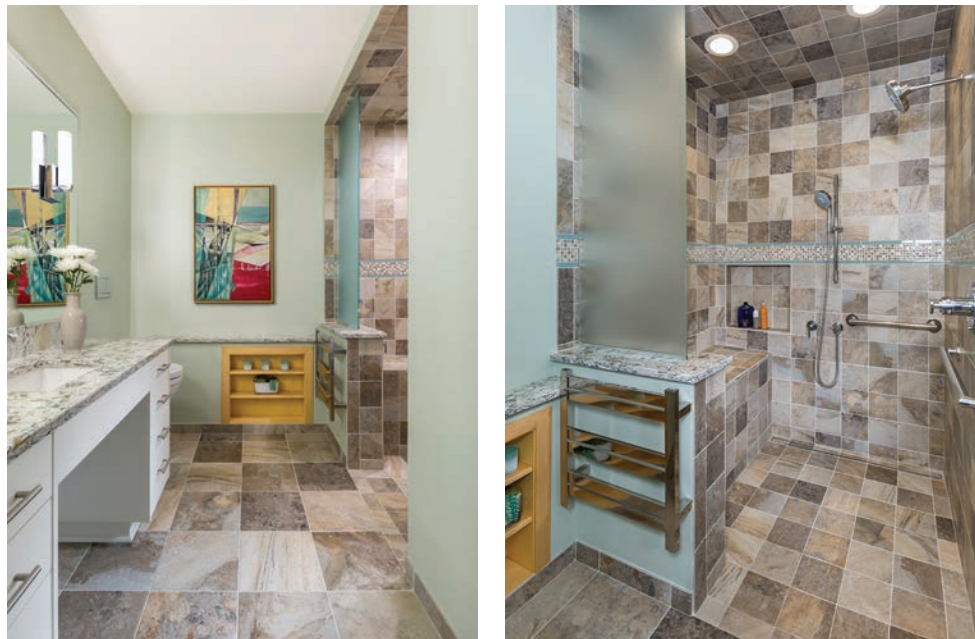
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This bathroom by Sylvestre Remodeling & Design features a shower without a curb as it aids in mobility. Dangerous throw rugs have been removed. (Photo by Andrea Rugg Photography)

AGE IN PLACE >> from 8

His firm is CAPS certified and his portfolio abounds with stylish remodeling examples of work with typical Minneapolis housing stock. For example, the elevator they installed in a 1920s home for one client perfectly matches the door to the existing hallway doors, seamlessly integrating the design into the character of the home.

Following well-established aging-in-place guidelines, Sylvestre emphasizes basic categories for consideration:

- One-level living is a prime factor once mobility is impacted. Sylvestre explains, "We have done a number of projects that make sure there is a full bathroom on the first floor, a possible sleeping room, and a laundry."

- Logically, the bathroom is a next critical area. It must be able to accommodate mobility aids, such as canes, walkers, or wheelchairs. Options include widening doors, replacing tubs with showers, removing curbs or step ups into showers, which also creates a more modern look, positioning shower controls in a practical

location, and investing in newer wall hung toilets that have adjustable heights.

- Kitchens are another essential mobility-friendly frontier. Sylvestre suggests, "taking a look at cabinets, doorways and islands, ensuring adequate room for tasks." Fully mobile individuals take for granted clearance space needed to open doors and drawers that would be greatly impacted when using a mobility aid like a walker or wheelchair.

Don't get caught off guard. Spring is a good time to assess our surroundings, inside and out. Minnesota Seniors provides a free resource for seniors and their family members, with links in the Aging in Place Directory to many resources, including home remodeling companies under such categories as "Accessibility/Lifts/Elevators/Ramps" and "Home/Bath Modifications."

*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.*

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# NO MOW MAY

By PATRICIA OHMANS

Let's face it – your lawn, with all the mowing, raking, fertilizing, weeding, chemical treatment and watering it requires – is pretty much useless.

At least that's what a lot of people seem to be thinking about the flat, green sweep of turf grass that fronts most American homes. An entire movement of folks who rethinking the American lawn is – pardon the pun – cropping up.

People are abandoning their formerly manicured lawns for lots of good reasons. Here are just a few:

- Lawns take a lot of work. (Summer in Minnesota is short. Wouldn't you rather hang out in a hammock than push a noisy lawnmower around?)

- Lawnmowers pollute our air. (Gas lawn mower emissions account for five percent of the nation's air pollution, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency)

- Lawns suck up water (Keeping the total acres of lawn in America green re-



What happens when you stop mowing and start planting native flowers around the edges of West Minnehaha Recreation Center in Frogtown? The bees return, including this endangered Rusty-Patched bumblebee (Minnesota's state bee), spotted and photographed last July. (Photo by Kathy Sidles)

quires three times as much water as irrigating all of the nation's corn!)

- Lawns are pollinator deserts (There's not much pollen for a foraging bumblebee in your typical turf lawn.)

People are giving up mowing in droves. The *New York Times* reported in March that entire city of Appleton, Wis. has declared May the month to put aside the polluter, and save some pollinators. At the urging of two college professors, Appleton became the first city in the United States to adopt No Mow May, with 435 homes promising to let the grass grow under their feet for the first four weeks of spring. The professors "studied the impacts of No Mow May on Appleton's bees," according to the *Times* article. "They found that No Mow May lawns had five

times the number of bees and three times the bee species than did mown parks. Armed with this information, they asked other communities to participate. By 2021, a dozen communities across Wisconsin had adopted No Mow May. It also spread to communities in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and Montana."

The city of St Paul has yet to formally adopt May as "no mow month" but as an avid (and lazy) St Paul gardener, I have personally embraced the concept with enthusiasm. Last year, I mowed my backyard exactly twice. The result? A soft, cushy lawn that felt like a meadow underfoot and that teemed with tiny bees going about their buzziness (!) In deference to my neighbors, I still mow the boulevard in

front of our house, but I am about to turn even more of that grassy strip into an easy-care garden full of native plants.

Does No Mow May sound good to you for a month, but not a whole summer? Do you want to keep some smooth grass for lawn games or an at-home putting green? No need to convert your entire lawn. Start small. Maybe just leave a little more time between mowings and set your mower height to three inches. This will actually improve the health of your lawn, by shading the soil surface, and making it harder for weeds to grow. When you do mow, leave the grass clippings right on the surface instead of bagging them up.

Ready for more? Consider a "low-mow lawn," grown from a blend of fine fescue grasses that are drought resistant and only need mowing in spring and fall. Want to make pollinating bees happy? Mix your low mow lawn with seed for early flowering, fragrant and pollen-laden flowers like self-heal and Dutch clover.

For resources and lots of information on rethinking your lawn and No Mow May, check out [beecityusa.org](http://beecityusa.org).

*Frogtown Green* is a resident-led and volunteer-powered environmental initiative in St Paul's most diverse and vibrant neighborhood. For more information, go to [frogtowngreen.com](http://frogtowngreen.com).

## Turbo Tim's opening second location in neighborhood

**THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE:** Lord, help me live from day to day in such a self-forgotten way that when I kneel to pray my prayer shall be for - OTHERS.

– Madame C. J. Walker


Mothing myself has become a way of listening to my deepest needs, and of responding to them while I respond to my inner child. – Melinda Burns

Hello Monitor readers,

Happy Mother's Day and Happy Asian American, native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage, Haitian Heritage, Jewish-American Heritage Month! The month of May has over 80 official celebrations, honors, acknowledgements, and recognitions. In a great way, it's a good start to kick-off our warm beautiful pre-sum-

**PEACE BUBBLES**

BY MELVIN GILES  
peacebubbles@q.com



mer. Flowers really begin to bloom and the returning birds greets us with morning songs that last throughout day while insects crawl, dance, and buzz their way back into our hopeful anticipated plans and dreams for a better summer of no masks, an end to the senseless wars, a stop to the madness of unprincipled lawmakers, and a halt to out-of-control rising inflation.

What will it take to heal from our last two to three years of confusion, frustration, and dreams deferred? How do we get back on track of breathing together, of listening and not just hearing each other? Will it take much longer to move out of our current fog of FEAR (false evidence appearing real)? I have no answers; however, I'm holding on to hope. Although, I have my moments and hours of waning faith, my days of feeling overwhelmed, my shocks and deep sorrows of how cruel and mean-spirited we can be to each other, I am always reminded that we can still rise and that each hour and day gives us another opportunity to keep hope alive! Every day will have something that we can celebrate, every week we have something we can dance for, every month we have something we can sing and shout joy for, and every minute we have something to breathe gratefully for! The sage, Sai Baba urged all humans to Be Good, Do Good, and to See Good, even in times like now. Likewise, I want to encourage us to embrace our goodness as we continue to struggle out of our outdated paradigms and short-sighted worldviews. Together we can rise. Together we can and must remember we are all related and, like a family, we will have strong disagreements and dislikes. However, we are one human family.

### TURBO TIM'S MOVES INTO NEIGHBORHOOD

This month I invited one of my adopted garden daughters to share of her exciting news of what she and her husband are birthing in our greater Midway area. I met Rachel as she was pursuing her post-degree studies. Please read and welcome Rachel to the community.

Greetings, Hamline-Midway community! My name is Rachel Grewell and my husband TurboTim Suggs and I are your new neighbors! We own Turbo Tim's Anything Automotive ([turbotims.com](http://turbotims.com)) at 2823 NE Central Ave., and have plans to open a second location at 1671 University Ave. W. as an automobile repair garage this spring. We plan to be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Fri-

day. The type of work we will offer includes maintenance services such as oil changes, brake repair, alignments, suspension work, transmission repair and flushes, engine repair and maintenance, vehicle inspections, hybrid and electric vehicle repairs.

We anticipate having 10 employees working in this location including service advisors, mechanics, an office support person, a manager and at least two shop kitties - see our affinity for felines here: [turbotims.com/turbo-cats/](http://turbotims.com/turbo-cats/)

We want to be good stewards to our business, as well as the community and the earth, and hope to incorporate some of our best community practices in St. Paul. Turbo Tim's contributes to many community causes, including highway cleanups, fundraising donations, hosting fun events, offering sliding scale pricing through our sister arm "Community Automotive," and serving on the board of directors at The Lift Garage (a nonprofit aimed to move people out of poverty and homelessness by providing low-cost car repair) [turbotims.com/community/](http://turbotims.com/community/)

We would love to hear from you about ways we could use this space that would benefit the Hamline Midway community. Our hope is that our existing relationships with the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance (Peace Bubbles woot!), the Hamline Midway Council, contacts at Hamline University, as well as friends who live in the neighborhood and YOU, can help us create the best possible use of this space. Please send any thoughts you have to [rachel@turbotims.com](mailto:rachel@turbotims.com) and we will get back to you!

Keep the positive vibrations flowing, stay optimistic, dream, and visualize the world you want to see and live in, now and in the future!

May Peace Be In the Rondo, Frogtown, Hamline/Midway, Como, and Surrounding Communities...

May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities...

May Peace Prevail On Earth (MPPOE)! BE SMART! DO YOUR PART! Get Your Vaccination Shots and Booster Shots if you feel comfortable doing so!!!

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# Black Garnet >> from 1

"There are many other Black readers who feel the same way [that books are a refuge], and we deserve spaces where we are the main focus and not an afterthought," Sims said.

Representation is important for young people to excel. A John Hopkins study found that Black students are 13 percent more likely to enter college if they had at least one Black teacher by the third grade. The same study found that the college enrollment of Black students more than doubled when they had two or more Black teachers in elementary school. Books can also be a way that students see themselves represented. A study done by Literacy Minnesota found that multicultural books can help students better understand current world issues while promoting unity and empathy.

One day, a group of high-school age friends came into a Black Garnet Books' pop-up. They kept squealing over the book covers on the YA section, according to Sims. They said things like, "This looks like you!" or "I want to do my hair like this!"

"It is such a sweet, joyful thing to hear," Sims said. "Black kids don't get to experience that enough, and if they do, it's usually because they searched high and low for it, versus it being the first thing they see."

Sims believes that representation and inclusion is important. She mentioned that reading stories about different ethnicities, cultures, and ways of life can open kids up to the expanse of the world and humanity.

"Allowing kids to read stories that are outside of their life experiences is one way we build collective acceptance, rather than just tolerance, or worse, intolerance," Sims said.

## DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: [ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp](http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp)

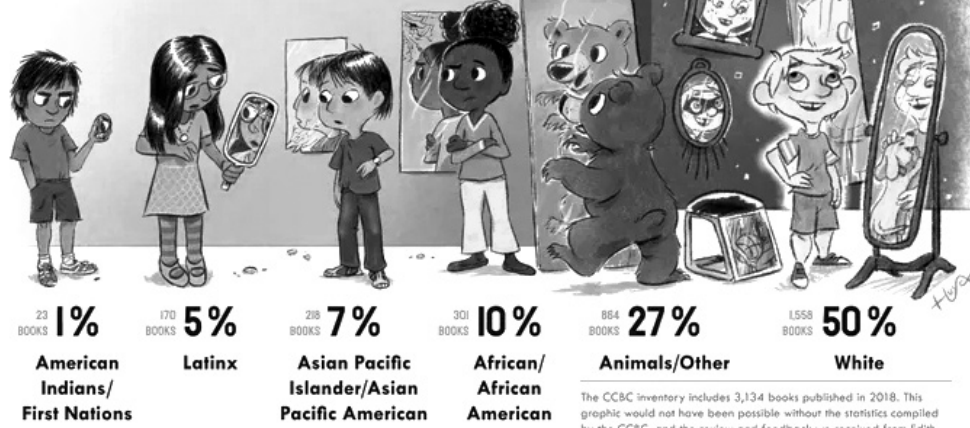


Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen. Released under a Creative Commons BY-SA license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

However, finding books that allow students to see representations of the BIPOC communities can be difficult. A study done by University of Wisconsin-Madison compiled statistics from publishers in 2018 and found that only 1 percent of children's books include characters who are American Indian/First Nation and 10 percent African/African American while 50 percent included White children. Sims' advice to parents trying to find stories about or written by the BIPOC community is to follow more authors of color and BIPOC-owned bookstores on social media.

"Check out initiatives like 'We Need Diverse Books' and The Free Little Library's 'Read in Color,'" Sims said. "If the same old places you get your book rec-

ommendations from aren't uplifting the words of marginalized authors, expand your circles."

Recently, Sims helped contribute to the 1619 Project book drive, an initiative to help provide access to access to Nikole Hannah-Jones' work around the lasting impact of slavery on the United States. She partnered with Bookshop.org to donate any copies obtained through the book drive to schools in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The response from community members was overwhelming as they ended up with 740 books that were donated to 13 different schools and educational groups.

Sims said that her favorite book right now is "The Blood Trials" by N.E. Davenport, which came out on April 5, 2022.

### LOCAL BLACK PUBLISHERS

**Planting People Growing Justice**  
PPGLI publishes books that focus on leadership development, cultural appreciation, and career exploration. Selections include: "Justice Makes a Difference," and "Gumbo Joy." It is operated by St. Thomas professor Dr. Artika Tyner. [www.ppglii.org](http://www.ppglii.org)

**Strive Publishing**  
Strive Publishing was founded to help solve two problems: the need for culturally relevant children's books; and the underrepresentation of Black authors in book publishing. We all have a stake in the critical work of uplifting Black voices in children's literature, and we can make the greatest impact through working together. Founded by Mary Taris, the office is located in the same building as Golden Thyme Coffee & Cafe. [www.strivepublishing.com](http://www.strivepublishing.com)

**In Black Ink**  
The mission of In Black Ink (IBI) is to create spaces where stories and voices of people of African heritage are celebrated, documented, and archived through publications, professional development trainings/opportunities, and public presentations. IBI fosters a strong culture of literacy via social enterprising and economic support of artists and professionals. IBI is located at 938 Selby Ave. Its executive director is Rekhel Si-Asar.

It's a Sci-fi/Fantasy about a young Black woman fighting the ways in which imperialism, bigotry, and racism are affecting her family and country, but with rich magic on her side.

"It's the kind of book that I finished and felt excited about the kinds of stories that are coming out for young Black folks to read," Sims said.

## Community split on library

That idea was again brought up at a Renovate 1558 forum April 19, and quickly shot down.

Four concepts were winnowed to two for an April 23 open house, one to expand the library and one to build new. With both options, exterior materials used would complement the existing building materials.

One proposal calls for expanding the building to the rear. The main public level would have 2,000 square feet more than the existing library, for a total of 6,200 square feet. Changes would allow everyone to enter through the front door. By replacing the rear portion of the building, the basement of the new addition could be built at the level of the existing community room. That would eliminate the need for a second lift and provide additional ceiling height to allow for mechanical ventilation. But this concept would require significant modification to the existing structure.

The second option calls for incorpo-

rating features of the existing building's elements from the existing building's front façade, with part of the building's front placed closer to Minnehaha. The main public level would have 9,400 square feet, which is 3,200 square feet more than the first option and 5,200 square feet more than the current building. It also would have single, accessible library entrance.

The materials for the new library could include reuse of existing materials such as the arched entry and salvaged brick and precast. The interior would be designed to have the staff work room and book drop on one level, to have a main level community room available for a wide variety of uses.

This option eliminates parking behind the building.

Library administration has worked with LSE architects on building concepts for Hamline Midway, as well as projects at Riverview, Hayden Heights and downtown. Hamline Midway is expected to be the first project as it already has \$8.1 million in Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIBV) dollars.

More than 60 people attended the Renovate 1558 meeting. They heard a his-

tory of the current library, built in 1930 with funding from the Henry Hale Trust.

Those at the April 19 meeting debated the library facilities planning process, and whether or not there had been adequate community input. One impediment was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced online meetings. Complaints were also made about closed "ambassador" advisory group meetings, which weren't open to the public.

Several proponents for renovating the existing building expressed frustration that the final decision as to whether to save or demolish the building is in the hands of library administration, not the public or the city council.

Jonathan Oppenheimer, who is among those active in Renovate 1558, said the neighborhood would lose one of its most architecturally beautiful buildings.

Four concepts were outlined, but surveys found there was no strong community consensus on concepts when all responses were considered. When their answers were split out, BIPOC respondents indicated varied support for the concepts. Youth indicated support for the idea of moving the current building closer to

Minnehaha Avenue and building behind it. But the building move option was set aside due to costs.

Other options called for an addition in front of the existing building, preserving the existing library façade and putting it on a new building, and reusing architectural materials and features in a new structure.

The online survey had 763 respondents, with more than 60 respondents for each of the two pop-up surveys.

When asked about which library features are important to the community, all survey respondents cited improved accessibility, community meeting and/or program spaces and study rooms, and a space that reflects the cultures of the community. BIPOC respondents were most interested in a space that reflects the cultures in the community. Younger respondents want to see sustainable and environmentally-friendly libraries.

See the designs and read more survey information at [https://sppl.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2022/04/ha\\_boards\\_complete.pdf](https://sppl.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2022/04/ha_boards_complete.pdf)

Read more about Renovate 1558 at <https://www.renovate1558.org/about>

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**Voting & Elected Officials**

**Almost 8 out of 10 newspaper readers vote in local elections**

	Minnesota Adults	Newspaper Readers	Newspaper Reach
Vote in state/national elections	81%	84%	88%
Vote in local/school board/city elections	74%	77%	91%

**Newspapers reach more than 9 out of 10 adults who contacted officials**

	Minnesota Adults	Newspaper Readers	Newspaper Reach
Contacted an elected official/community leader (past 2 years)	35%	39%	91%

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Source: The Minnesota Market Study, 2021; Conducted by Coda Ventures Base: Total adults



## FAILED BY FAMILY COURT >> from 1

19 on Sept. 20, 2010, and got pregnant again just three months after his birth with their daughter, Autumn. She was born Aug. 24, 2011. "It was never physical, just verbal," she remembered. "I was naive."

They split up in early 2013. At first, Brett had the two- and three-year-old every other weekend at his mom's house. Kelsey did all the transportation for visits and provided everything for them there, including beds, clothes and groceries. He wasn't paying child support, so she filed for it in the middle of 2013. He filed for custody at the end of 2013.

If he had custody, his child support would be reduced.

Kelsey was young, didn't have any money for an attorney, and had heard that the judge would give him 50/50 anyway. So, she agreed to joint physical and legal custody. They set up a parenting schedule where the two kids were with mom for one week, and with dad for one week. They exchanged the kids on Sundays.

Sarah came into the picture pretty early on, and she and Brett married in 2017. Sarah had a child of her own who was a little bit older than Noah, and a restraining order against the dad. "She was good at restraining orders," said Kelsey. "She had one against her parents, she threatened Brett's mom, and she had one against me."

There was an altercation between Kelsey and Sarah one day during drop-off. Kelsey brought Sarah's daughter a gift from Brett's mom, and during the exchange Kelsey allegedly shoved the gift into Sarah's shoulder. Sarah threw the gift at Kelsey and kicked her. A week later, Kelsey was served by a sheriff's deputy at home with a restraining order, alleging she had ripped the stitches in Sarah's shoulder from a recent surgery. "It was ridiculous. I couldn't believe they approved the restraining order without hearing from me," said Kelsey.

"I was constantly accused by Sarah of harassing them." In court, Sarah spoke for Brett. Tenth Judicial Court Judge Mary Yunker ordered that Kelsey could only contact Sarah because Brett had disabilities "and I caused him to have seizures frequently," recalled Kelsey. "I've never seen a seizure. She didn't show any proof."

Brett blocked Kelsey's number so he didn't get the messages she sent about the kids' education and medical care. "They said I never told him," said Kelsey. "It was very manipulative. They tried to make it seem like everything was my fault all the time. There was a lot of blaming. If something went wrong, it was always my fault or the kids' fault."

Sarah told Kelsey that she had just as much right to her kids as Kelsey did. "I don't know why she wanted my kids so much," remarked Kelsey.

"The step-parents are hard to get along with because they want your kids to be their kids. They're playing house."

She observed, "I think that's why she started abusing Noah. Because she hated me."

### CHARGED WITH CONTEMPT

One Sunday, Noah came home and the whole right side of his cheek was bruised and swollen.

Brett told Kelsey that Noah had fallen while playing with one of his two half-siblings and hit his face. Kelsey believed what Brett said until later that night. She was getting the kids ready for bed when Autumn told her: "Sarah hit Noah for having an accident in his pants." When Kelsey asked Noah, he told her that Sarah hit him, he fell backwards and hit the bed frame.

When confronted, Sarah admitted to "grazing his lips with two fingertips, he flinched, and fell."

Kelsey went to Elk River Police De-



Autumn holds her new baby sister, Delylah. (Photo courtesy of Kelsey Kruse)

partment, and they pulled in Sherburne County Child Protection Service (CPS), but it didn't go anywhere.

Noah came home with bruises again. He had bruises on his chin that looked like fingerprints, and a darkened eye that wasn't quite a black eye.

This time his school counselor reported the injuries to child protection.

CPS interviewed both kids at school and said it would be a good idea if Kelsey kept him a few extra days. Kelsey remembers feeling like it was a good thing they were involved, and she believed they would help.

But they closed the investigation within two weeks saying that Noah's story had changed, and told Kelsey he needed to resume visits with his dad. Noah was crying and said he didn't want to go, and they made Kelsey stay outside the apartment while they talked to Brett. She asked if she could say goodbye to Noah. They wouldn't let her.

Brett and Sarah brought Kelsey back to court to have her charged with contempt for not sending Noah to their house. Judge Yunker charged her and removed the kids from her care for five straight weeks, saying Brett was entitled to the make-up days.

When the kids were at their dad's, they wouldn't let her talk to them on the phone. Kelsey went to their school to have lunch with them as many days as she could, which Brett and Sarah tried to stop so she had no contact with them at all.

"I felt very helpless and hopeless," Kelsey recalled.

Neither Brett nor Sarah were working, and Kelsey was paying them child support.

She couldn't afford an attorney to argue against the accusations.

### ACCUSED OF COACHING SON TO REPORT ABUSE

In September 2019, Brett refused to let Kelsey pick the kids up for their regular Sunday exchange, saying he got extra days. Noah wasn't at school on Monday, and hadn't been there the Friday before either. She called the police and asked for a welfare check. The police officer talked to Brett and Sarah, saw Noah, and reported back to Kelsey that Noah was fine. Brett and Sarah agreed Kelsey could pick him up that afternoon.

When she did, she saw he had bruises all over his face, back, bellybutton and legs. The police officer had seen the marks firsthand, as well, and hadn't mentioned them to Kelsey.

Noah said a kid kicked him on the playground, and that's how he had the bruise on his temple. He said his foot was swollen because it got stuck in a hole. He said his stomach injury was because he fell off the playground. He said he didn't know how he got the rest of the bruises.

Kelsey reached out to a co-parenting support group she was part of online and asked for advice.

Then she took him to the Mercy Hospital emergency room. They made a report to CPS, who didn't call her back for a few days. She dropped Noah off at school and he went back to his dad's house. CPS interviewed him in front of Brett and Sarah.

"I think it's crazy they did that. You don't talk to a kid in front of the people that are being accused of abusing them," said Kelsey.

Again, CPS closed the investigation without any findings of abuse or charges against Brett or Sarah.

Instead, CPS accused Kelsey of coaching Noah and of using this as a tactic to get more custody in court.

"I trusted them to know how to do their job," said Kelsey.

People tell Kelsey they wouldn't have kept sending him to his dad's house.

"I was so terrified of losing custody. They already brought me in for contempt and won. I felt like I didn't have a choice but to keep sending him," explained Kelsey.

### 'A CORRUPT SYSTEM'

Things weren't getting better, but seemed to be escalating five years after Kelsey and Brett had split up. The post-separation abuse included the legal abuse and financial abuse directed at Kelsey, and the neglectful, abusive parenting and isolation directed at the kids. She felt like Brett and Sarah were fighting for control, while she was fighting for the safety of Noah.

Noah kept saying he was being abused at his dad's house. He told his school counselor at Lincoln Elementary that he was scared to go back there for the weekend. He said he was being forced

to stay up all night and clean, and then go to school the next day without having slept. He described being forced to swallow liquid dish soap and being confined to a bedroom for hours as punishment for not doing his chores. He said he was being forced to sleep on the floor without a pillow or blanket. He talked about being hit. He wasn't getting help with his homework. He wasn't allowed to read or color, and had to sit still all day. He couldn't play.

He said he was forced to stick his tongue out and then Sarah would push down on his head so that he bit his tongue.

He told CPS he didn't feel safe at his dad and stepmom's house.

"When Noah came to me, I had no reason not to believe him. I knew how Brett and Sarah treated me and I believed what Noah said," Kelsey stated.

But no one else was listening to him. Or, to her.

"To brush that off is unacceptable," she said.

She knows they aren't alone in this. Since Autumn's death, many people have reached out to tell her they've experienced the same thing with CPS, schools, Guardians ad Litem, parenting consultants, therapists, police officers, custody evaluators, and family court professionals who ignore the patterns of abuse, label the mother as a problem, insist she stop putting the kids in the middle, and tell her she needs to communicate better.

"It's so messed up and so corrupt. You think, how is it ever going to change?"

At first, Kelsey thought that having had CPS be involved would hold some weight in family court. It ended up being exactly opposite. Instead, the judge tossed it out because CPS had closed the case, even though they never did a complete investigation.

Kelsey decided she was never sending Noah back.

She negotiated a new custody arrangement with Brett, and agreed to give up time with Autumn in order to keep Noah safe. She would now spend three weeks with her dad and one with her mom. Noah was supposed to spend one week with his dad and three weeks with Autumn, but didn't end up going to his dad's again.

At the start, Kelsey wasn't worried about Autumn. "I had no reason to believe she was being abused. I thought Autumn was spoiled. That's how she made it seem," explained Kelsey. In contrast, Noah was the scapegoat in the family and constantly being punished.

They took a family trip at the end of December 2019, right before Kelsey and longtime boyfriend Justin Osterbauer welcomed a baby girl in January 2020. Autumn met her new baby sister, Delylah, the day she was born. Jan. 26, 2020 was the last time she was home.

### 'I TRIED SO HARD TO GET PEOPLE TO LISTEN'

In March 2020, Kelsey arrived to pick up Autumn but Brett cited concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and wouldn't exchange her.

As time went on and Brett continued to refuse to send Autumn back or let her speak to her mom on the phone, Kelsey got increasingly concerned. Brett also stopped responding to messages through their court-approved service, Our Family Wizard.

Kelsey heard from people who lived at the three-story apartment complex that they were hearing children screaming and crying in Brett's second-story apartment, and they were reporting it to the Elk River Police Department. A neighbor recorded the sound of a girl screaming multiple times, and shared it with the police department. Another called when they were woken up in the middle of the night by a child screaming, "Get off me." One heard an adult threaten to hit a kid. In all, reports show officers were called to the



## FAILED BY FAMILY COURT >> from 12

apartment over 30 times. Sometimes Brett or Sarah answered, and said the children were misbehaving or attributed the noise to a loud television and video games.

Kelsey tried to get help through the family court system in April, but Judge Mary Yunker (whose current term expires in 2025) declined to hear the case saying that Kruse failed to properly serve notice to Autumn's father and that Kruse "failed to demonstrate that the current circumstances constitute an emergency."

She called Sherburne County CPS on Mother's Day, but they told her if the cops couldn't get the couple to answer the door how did she expect them to. The woman who answered the phone said they'd look into it, but Kelsey never heard back from them.

"I tried so hard to get people to listen to me about helping Autumn," Kelsey said.

Kelsey continued going to Brett's apartment on Sundays to pick up Autumn for the exchange, but they never sent her outside.

"I'd sit out there for hours waiting," recalled Kelsey. Sometimes she'd see a curtain move. She called the police five times between May 10 and Aug. 2. The officers sometimes spoke to Brett or Sarah but didn't see Autumn up close. They saw Autumn from the balcony once in June. Often, the apartment lights were turned off when police arrived in the parking lot and no one answered.

"At first, they would come out to the apartment and meet me, try to make contact with Brett, and then eventually, they would stop even coming there," Kruse said. "The more that I called, the less help that I got."

People tell her they would have knocked the door down to get to their child. When she hears this, Kelsey knows they don't have experience with family court or with someone like Brett or Sarah who know how to manipulate the system for money. They don't know how the system works and how often mothers lose custody. They don't know that fear. They don't know how stuck you feel.

"When I really needed help, I couldn't get it," Kelsey said.

She had piles of documentation, of reports, of OFW messages. "It's so overwhelming," she remarked. "It's overwhelming to be in family court for so many years. It makes you feel helpless. You don't want to go through it."

### LOSING A CHILD

On Aug. 13, 2020, after six months of not seeing her daughter, Kelsey's phone rang. It was Sarah's father, and Kelsey almost didn't answer the call. He told Kelsey that Autumn was "unresponsive." Kelsey rushed to the apartment complex, and

### KAYDEN'S LAW

In August 2018, seven-year-old Kayden Mancuso was murdered by her biological father, Jeffrey Mancuso, on a court-ordered, unsupervised visit in Pennsylvania. Mancuso then committed suicide. He had a documented history of violent and erratic behavior and had been diagnosed with depression, but none of his past incidents involved his daughter, Kayden. In the year before her death, Kayden's mother, Kathryn Sherlock, had sought a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order for her daughter against Jeffrey.

Kayden's Law is currently making its way through the Pennsylvania legislature. It includes child safety first provisions such as:

- 1) Restricting family court judges from granting adjudicated abusers unsupervised parenting time with children if they present a risk.
- 2) Requiring private custody courts hold a hearing if a parent has been found by the child welfare system to have physically or sexually abused a child, so that the private custody court can hear the facts about that abuse when deciding custody and parenting time for a child.
- 3) Recommendation that Pennsylvania courts train family court judges and court personnel on the facts of domestic violence, child abuse and child sexual abuse.

found her mom already there. That's when she understood Autumn was dead. She collapsed.

One of the hardest things Kelsey had to do was tell Noah that his sister was gone.

The funeral home suggested they have a closed casket because of how emaciated the eight-year-old was, but Kelsey explained it was important for her loved ones to see her one last time because it had been so long since they had. She bought her little girl a wig to wear.

There were a lot of details Kelsey didn't know until the murder trial a year later.

At the time of her death, Autumn weighed only 33 pounds. "She weighed



It's overwhelming to be in family court for so many years. It makes you feel helpless.

You don't want to go through it."

**Kelsey Kruse**

### LAW PART OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

Portions of Kayden's Law have been included in the Violence Against Women's Act that Congress reauthorized earlier this year, including a provision aimed at making child safety the primary concern in custody disputes.

"No child should ever be court ordered to be left alone with a dangerous abuser, period. Kayden's Law in VAWA will help states to ensure that never happens again," said Danielle Pollack, the policy manager for the National Family Violence Law Center at GW (NFVLC). "By adding Kayden's Law to VAWA, for the first time since it was passed in 1994, states will be eligible for federal funding when they improve their state custody statutes and close loopholes which routinely jeopardize the safety of children," she added.

Actress, UN Special Envoy, and child rights advocate Angelina Jolie addressed Congress on Jan. 19, 2022, urging support for Kayden's Law.

The legislature is supported by the National Safe Parents Coalition (NSPC), which represents dozens of family court reform advocacy organizations and more than 100,000 survivor parents and concerned citizens in the United States advocating for evidence-based policies which put child safety and risks at the forefront of child custody decisions.

more than that at her four-year doctor appointment," said Kelsey. She should have been about 70 pounds.

"I think losing a child is the greatest loss you can endure," Kruse said in court. "I lay in bed and close my eyes and picture what she looked like before she died."

Brett and Sarah pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter. In September 2021, Judge Karen Schommer gave them both the maximum sentence of 40 years in prison. They both appealed the decision and were denied.

According to the Center for Judicial Excellence, 833 children have been murdered by a divorcing or separating parent since 2008. "It is estimated that each year in the U.S., tens of thousands of children are court-ordered into the custody of an abusive parent, frequently without supervision or other safeguards in place. Throughout the world, dangerous parents are using family court systems to harm children and former partners, continuing their post-separation abuse with little oversight and accountability," according to the National Safe Parents Coalition. "While these problems have been widely studied and documented, children contin-



Delylah visits the Autumn Blaze maple planted to honor her sister. (Photo courtesy of Kelsey Kruse)

ue to be sent into harm's way."

Kelsey has filed a \$30 million federal lawsuit against Elk River Police Department, Sherburne County, and Elk River School District to hold them accountable.

Kelsey has trouble sleeping still. "Every single day I worry about my other kids dying," she said. Noah worries about being kidnapped and taken from her. Kelsey, too, worries every day about her children being taken away.

### THEY PLANTED AN AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE

For now, the urn with Autumn's ashes is in her mother's room with a photo of the little girl. Delylah has a teddy bear with a recording of Autumn's voice and her laugh because her mom wants her to know her sister.

Kelsey and Justin got engaged last year, and still live in the area where Autumn lived and died. Kelsey home-schools Noah.

Kelsey is involved with Rivers of Hope, a domestic and family abuse prevention non-profit located in Monticello. She wishes she would have known about them earlier. They've advocated for her since Autumn's death.

On Autumn's ninth birthday, they planted an Autumn Blaze Maple tree in their front yard, so they can watch it grow.

On her 10th birthday, they gathered at the Elk River Boys and Girls Club where a memorial bench donated by the Elk River Lions was unveiled.

On April 28, 2022, Kelsey will be the keynote speaker at the Rivers of Hope annual gala.

Kelsey hopes that by telling her story, she can work to prevent this from happening to other families.

Mostly, she misses Autumn.

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2nd Half with Lyngblomsten community services is excited to be offering some in-person wellness and enrichment opportunities for older adults! Opportunities include:

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Check out our online catalog of opportunities and register at [lyngblomsten.org/2ndHalfRegister](http://lyngblomsten.org/2ndHalfRegister).



(651) 632-5330 | [2ndHalf@lyngblomsten.org](mailto:2ndHalf@lyngblomsten.org)



**PLAN IT**

**PAUL KOTZ TO SPEAK MAY 15**

Author Paul Kotz will be speaking at the Hamline Church United Methodist Women's Sunday at 10 a.m. Sunday, May 15 at the church at 1514 Englewood Ave. The service is open to the public and also feature's the church's women's choir. Kotz is a lifelong learner with education and business expertise. In 2014, he published "Personality, Gender and Learning Styles" for students and practitioners. Anyone with questions can contact hamlinewomen@gmail.com.

**LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MEETS MAY 16**

The Hamline Midway Library Association will hold its next meeting in person, open to all, in the auditorium of the Hamline Midway Library, 1558 West Minnehaha, on Wednesday, May 16 from 6:30-8 p.m. For more information, email hmlibraryassociation@gmail.com. Library and gardening enthusiasts are also invited to a Pollinator Garden Clean-Up Day at the Hamline Midway Library on Saturday, May 28, 10 a.m.-noon. Some gardening tools will be provided, but please bring trowels and gloves if you have them. Masks are encouraged, and training/orientation will be provided. No experience necessary to participate.

**PLANT SALE MAY 20-21**

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) is holding its 39th annual plant sale May 20-21 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at 1647 Laurel Ave. Brandywine, Prudence Purple, Old German, Golden Jubilee, Anna Russian, and Early Girl are just some of the heirloom and hybrid tomatoes available at the sale. There will be a variety of peppers and herbs on-hand, as well as a large variety of annuals and perennials for sun and shade. The sale is the main fundraiser for ANSR, a non-profit dedicated to reducing the harms of tobacco. For more information, contact ANSR at 651-646-3005 or check out the website at www.ansrmn.org/garagesale.

**FREE LIFEJACKETS MAY 21**

Abbey's Hope Charitable Foundation kicks off summer with a "Splash into Summer" Water Safety Event and Lifejacket Giveaway at Hidden Falls Regional Park, St. Paul on Saturday, May 21 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The highlight of the event is the 1,000 lifejackets Abbey's Hope is bringing to give away.

**TAP FESTIVAL MAY 28**

Each year, Keane Sense of Rhythm (KSR) engages the community by organizing an annual National Tap Dance Day festival. The event showcases the wide range of skills and styles of percussive dance in and around the Twin Cities. This year's festival is being held on Saturday, May 28 at the Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 Lexington Pkwy. N.

**HAMLIN MIDWAY ELDERS**

BY LAUREL COLLINS  
laurel@hmelders.org  
651-209-6542



- Jody's Documentary, last Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. (May 25, June 29). www.hmelders.org/events.
- Knitting/Crochet Group continues every Monday, 1-3 p.m., in-person and on Zoom
- 'Second Tuesday' Luncheon, second Tuesday of each month (June 14) 11:30 p.m.-1a.m. Reservations required, info@hmelders.org or 651-209-6542.
- Ice Cream Social, Thursday, June 30, 6-7:30 p.m. outdoors at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. The community is welcome to join us for root beer floats, music and fun. www.hmelders.org, 651-209-6542

**IN BRIEF**

**GREG RATHERT NEW VICE PRESIDENT**

Saint Paul College President Deidra Peaslee announces that Greg Rathert has been named the college's new vice president for academic and student affairs, effective immediately. Rathert has served in the interim position at Saint Paul College since July 2021.



**HAMLIN ADOPTS PERMANENT TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSION POLICY**

Hamline University continues to lead by becoming one of the first Minnesota universities to enact a permanent test-optional admission policy. The new policy will no longer require prospective students to submit standardized test scores during the admission process. Research has shown a 10-12% increase in first-time students from underrepresented backgrounds at private universities with test-optional admission policies. Those universities also show an average 6-8% increase in first-time enrollment of women.

**MINNESOTA CREDIT UNIONS BAND TOGETHER**

Four leading Minnesota-based credit unions have launched a new Credit Union Service Organization (CUSO) that opens the door for credit unions to collaborate on lending opportunities for public and private commercial and infrastructure projects throughout Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. Named United Financials Capital, its founding members include: Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union, Hiway Credit Union, SPIRE Credit Union and TopLine Federal Credit Union.

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