



*First Independence Bank to open second location in Hennepin County services building*



*"This is an opportunity for our local Black community to have its own institution; something that can be a source of pride for our people. But it can also be a point of pride for the broader community to know that we have First Independence right here in our midst," said Damon Jenkins of the First Independence Bank. (Photo by Terry Faust)*

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

### Should 3rd Precinct stay in Longfellow?

*Residents discuss repairing existing building, reusing it, and tearing it down*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Two years after the protests following the death of George Floyd, the 3rd Precinct building at E. Lake St. and Minnehaha Ave. is still surrounded by barbed wire and concrete bollards. Windows remain boarded after a fire and looting.

Two sessions were held in May 2022 to discuss what the community would like to see happen at the building. One was online on May 9, and the other in person at Squirrel Haus Arts on May 16. The events were sponsored by Longfellow Community Council, Seward Redesign, Lake Street Council, Longfellow Business Association and Longfellow Rising.

In small groups, residents shared their thoughts on whether they want a precinct in the neighborhood and how to address the trauma that remains. Then, they came

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## BLACK-OWNED BANK TO OPEN ON E. LAKE ST.

By IRIC NATHANSON

Damon Jenkins and his team at First Independence Bank know they face special challenges.

"We are the new guys on the block, a new bank in town, so we have to work extra hard to gain the trust of our potential customers," said Jenkins, First Independence' Senior Vice President/Regional Director and a former Wells Fargo executive who grew up in south Minneapolis.

Jenkins' bank may be a financial newcomer to the Twin Cities, but it has a unique attribute that none of its competitors can claim: it is Minnesota's first and only Black-owned financial institution.

The idea for a new Black-owned bank took shape in 2020 following the death of George Floyd, when the area's leading lenders came together to look at new ways of addressing Minnesota's deep-seated pattern of racial disparities. That group included top executives from

Bank of America, Bremer Bank, Huntington Bank, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo.

"We realized that in order for us to bridge the racial wealth gap, it would be better to have a Black-owned bank in our community in addition to all the rest of us," U.S. Bank's Tim Welsh told the *Star Tribune* earlier this year. "For a lot of historical reasons, many in the Black community don't have as much trust in traditional financial institutions as we would like."

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## LIVING ROOM CONVERSATIONS

*Chelsea Rowles talks about the guides and tips this non-profit offers to help people discuss race, politics, and more*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

How can people have hard conversations that will bring them together versus driving them apart?

In a city that is engaged in tough conversations about policing, race and more, Chelsea Rowles suggests people consider Living Room Conversations.

The South High School graduate and lifelong south Minneapolis resident got involved in the nonprofit through an internship four years ago after earning her master of arts in psychology at the Uni-

versity of Minnesota. She is now a managing partner.

### INTRODUCE US TO LIVING ROOM CONVERSATIONS.

Rowles: Living Room Conversations works to heal society by connecting people across divides – politics, age, gender, race, nationality, and more – through guided conversations proven to build understanding and transform communities. We are an essential first step in bridging divides in society. Our focus for this year is Belonging and Mental Health.

LIVING ROOM CONVERSATIONS » 16



*"We are committed to helping communities build connections through conversation and we will do our best to help however we are able," said Chelsea Rowles.*

## What's next for MPD?

*After Minnesota Department of Human Rights issues report on discriminatory, race-based policing, the city considers how to move forward*

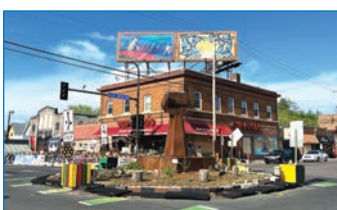
By CAM GORDON

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) issued its findings and began work on a consent decree, in response to their investigation into civil rights violations of the city of Minneapolis on April 27, 2022.

The investigation, started following the murder of George Floyd, found that "there is probable cause that the city and MPD engage in a pattern or practice of race discrimination in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act. This includes a pattern of discriminatory, race-based policing as evidenced by racial disparities in how police officers use force, stop, search, arrest, and cite people of color, particularly Black individuals."

The report concluded that discriminatory, race-based policing is caused primarily by an organizational culture which emphasizes a paramilitary approach to policing, as well as an inadequate accountability system.

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More questions than answers at George Floyd Square open house

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The Messenger is celebrating 40 years in the neighborhood

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AGING WELL: Cans for Sam, All Elders United for Justice & more

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# MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS AT GF SQUARE OPEN HOUSE

By JILL BOOGREN

Questions about community input, justice and preservation of the George Floyd memorial dominated feedback at a public works virtual meeting on future reconstruction of 38th and Chicago on April 26, 2022. It was one of two open houses – the other held in person at Phelps Park – that marked the start of a year-long process intended to redesign the intersection.

According to the city of Minneapolis, the streets were built in the 1960s and have “exceeded their useful life.” The project encompasses 38th St. from Park Ave. to 10th Ave., Chicago Ave. from 37th St. to 39th St., and sidewalks.

Minneapolis City Council President Andrea Jenkins and Council Member Jason Chavez, whose wards 8 and 9 include George Floyd Square, and project leaders vowed to involve the public throughout the process, something Minneapolis Public Works Director Margaret Anderson Kelliher acknowledged is not usual practice.

“Lots of times what happens is that we bring out pictures and drawings to communities and say, ‘Here’s what we have. React to it.’ Here we’re asking for your input from the beginning of the process,” she said.

Much of the meeting was devoted to explaining how the community could participate – a notion that was met with a fair amount of skepticism.

About 80 attended the virtual meeting. Many of those who submitted comments remained anonymous.

A couple participants suggested that the city has a history of ignoring community input, as with its 2021 postcard survey that was limited to two design options, neither of which reflected the wishes of



The city is gathering input on the future of George Floyd Square. (Photo above by Jill Boogren, below courtesy of Minneapolis)



community members who wanted to keep the intersection closed to vehicle traffic.

Project manager Alexander Kado commented that the postcards were regarding an “interim design,” implying it had no bearing on this project.

“This is the first time the city has comprehensively engaged the communi-

## LISTENING SESSION RECAP

Project desires:

- Support & hope
- Community influence
- Clear communications

Intersection design:

- George Floyd Square, a sacred place
- Rethink vehicle access
- Preserve public space

Additional needs:

- Trauma and healing
- Protect local businesses
- 24 Demands for Justice
- Public safety concerns

- Information from city of Minneapolis

of this intersection should be. We’re outlining a year-long process to do that,” he said, and encouraged people to share their opinions.

Deputy project manager Trey Joiner gave an overview of community involvement, which to date includes an online engagement survey and listening sessions with about 30 stakeholders. Focus groups and other public meetings will be held this summer, with preliminary concepts shared in the fall. The city also plans to establish a Co-Creation Team that would meet monthly to review information and recommend a preferred final concept to the project team. There were no details yet on the selection process.

Asked who would be the decision maker if there is a difference between what the community and other stakeholders want, Joiner said it would be up to the mayor and city council.

## JUSTICE

George Floyd Square continues to be a site of pilgrimage and protest against racial injustice. An attendee asked why justice wasn’t one of the design goals.

“I think justice could become one of the engagement goals if there’s enough support for that,” Kado replied.

Another asked what the city is doing to address the 24 demands in Justice Resolution 001, which Kado recognized as a recurring theme in listening sessions.

Asked to what extent the Square will be policed, Kado acknowledged the history of tensions between police and POC communities and said the murder by police of George Floyd – and more recently of Amir Locke – highlighted these problems. (This meeting was held one day before the Minnesota Department of Human Rights

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## 3RD PRECINCT >> from 1

together to share what was said with the larger group of about 75 people. About 90 attended the online session.

In person at the May 16 event were council members Jason Chavez and Robin Wonsley Worlobah, along with Minneapolis Interim City Coordinator Heather Johnston and a few other city staff. (Ward 12 council member Andrew Johnson was out on paternity leave.)

LCC Community Organizer Bennett Olupo observed that throughout the sessions, folks have mentioned the trauma associated with the Third Precinct building. "People felt abandoned by the police," he said.

Initially, police hunkered down around the Third Precinct building, aiming at the crowd that had gathered from positions above and on the ground. Later, they abandoned the building. People around the world watched on television and saw photos of the Third Precinct and surrounding buildings in the neighborhood looted and burned, including Minnehaha Lake Wine & Spirits, GM Tobacco, AutoZone, el Nuevo Rodeo building, Gandhi Mahal, MIGIZI, the Minnehaha Post Office, Wendy's and a multi-story housing complex. Residents woke up to smoke in the air and ash covering their houses.

Some want the Third Precinct building torn down and the lot leveled like those nearby. Others explored repairing it and reusing it, with and without the police presence.

"Half of us are for MPD not returning and half of us in support," reported Mollie O'Connor. As members of her small group discussed things further, they reached a middle ground, she said, and agreed there is a need for a precinct in the neighborhood "but it doesn't have to be in the precinct building."

The Third Precinct covers 58.4 square miles and is the city's largest. Its boundaries are I-94 to the Mississippi River, down to Highway 62 and over to 35W. About 103,000 people live in the area. Third Precinct officers were initially housed in the Minneapolis Convention Center and are currently based out of the downtown City of Lakes Building near city hall. Some residents are concerned that this means it takes officers too long to respond to calls in the area and the neighborhood isn't



Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley Worlobah asked, "What do we have to do to regain trust?" Next to her is Ward 9 Council member Jason Chavez. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

safe because of that. Others pointed out the squad cars do not need to stay downtown but can be on patrol in the Third Precinct during their shifts.

"Until I feel safe, it's not a safe neighborhood," remarked one person of color who fears how the Minneapolis Police treat people of color.

There is no requirement that a precinct must be located in the area it serves, according to Minneapolis Interim City Coordinator Heather Johnston. The city has been looking at various sites in the Third Precinct, but has not made a decision about the location.

Throughout the meeting, folks suggested that other entities either fill the entire building or share it with police. These might include mental health providers, county services, violence prevention units, services for survivors of sexual assault, support for the unhoused, and more. Some want the building preserved as a memorial.

"People come from out of town to see George Floyd Square," remarked Aaron Hosansky. They also come to the Third Precinct site. His son was three and a half when "he moved out of town for the weekend." Hosansky is considering how he will tell his son about what happened in his city and at the Third Precinct site. "How can we tell our story?" he asked.

Residents pointed out that the lot at Minnehaha and E. Lake St. is a prime one in the neighborhood. It might be better suited to a use that is more community-driven.

There was a suggestion that police share the Metro Transit facility nearby.

### TRAUMATIZED

Residents do not feel that their voices have been heard, and there hasn't been enough community engagement on this

issue. They want engagement that is equitable and empowering, not top down but rather bottom up. "Not enough people have been asked what this means to them," stated one speaker.

"Whatever happens won't go well unless we find a way to heal the trauma that has happened," said Doug Mork.

Ward 9 Council Member Jason Chavez (who took office in January 2022) believes that to address the trauma, "We need to listen to the people that live here." He added, "As a council member, we have fallen short." Chavez said that as a representative of the people, he will take action from what he hears. "We need to see structural change to the police department," he said.

The first time Robin Wonsley Worlobah was tear-gassed happened outside the Third Precinct. She was handing out food and supplies. Now as the Ward 2 council member, she is voting to pay out million of dollars to victims of police misconduct. "There is so much work we have to do," said Wonsley Worlobah. "I ran on it."

She envisions getting to a place "where that site is known for something else." She wants the world to be able to point and say, "Minneapolis got this right." She wants "us to show the world, we are committed to doing better."

Due to the misconduct, there is a distrust of police. "What do we have to do to regain trust?" asked Wonsley Worlobah. She supports doing restorative work, and proposed a resolution that would direct \$100,000 to hire a consultant to engage with community members more about the Third Precinct. It was passed on a 10-1 vote.

Powderhorn resident Duaba Unera pointed out that he and Sam Gould have been engaging with residents in conversa-

tion about the holistic development of the East Lake Street corridor since the summer of 2020. They started at Chicago and E. Lake, and moved to the outdoor space north of Moon Palace Books in March of 2021. They established Confluence Studio, An East Lake Studio for Community Design, and are based out of the studio's autonomous mobile media unit. Learn more at [confluence-studio.org](https://confluence-studio.org).

LCC will be sharing its final report from the meetings. To learn more about next steps, sign up for the newsletter at [longfellow.org](https://longfellow.org).

### FROM THE ONLINE SESSION

On the evening of May 9, roughly 90 people attended an online 3rd Precinct meeting hosted by the Longfellow Community Council (LCC). People broke out into smaller groups to share concerns and questions, and then met back to hear from each other and community leaders. Minneapolis City Coordinator Heather Johnston, who oversees the department responsible for finding and managing facilities for all city departments, assured the group that no decisions have been made about the future of the building and everyone's input was welcome. People at meeting shared a wide spectrum of concerns. Some were open to seeing a return of the police station in the building, and some were strongly opposed to reusing the building as a police station.

LCC Community Organizer Bennett Olupo, wrote in a follow-up email to attendees, "We hope you were able to leave the meeting with a positive feeling or a feeling that things will get better. The LCC appreciated hearing all of the thoughts, feelings, and reflections during the meeting. The conversation is one step towards making progress in improving the neighborhood."

LCC continues to collect questions to send to city officials or others who may be able to answer them, and is taking an online vote on whether the site should become an active 3rd precinct police station again. The vote is intended to gather information and not lead to immediate action. It can be found at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYAwT07p4Ckh-T08rVZJn9zkjH9beebJ9xBOJsyS-3R1t16N8w/viewform3rdPrecinctSurvey>

~ by Cam Gordon

## GF SQUARE >> from 2

released its finding that the Minneapolis Police Department engages in a pattern or practice of race discrimination, in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act. See related article starting on page 1).

### THE MEMORIAL

A number of people had questions about preserving the memorial and keeping the Square a sacred space – especially if the memorial is treated separately from road reconstruction.

Kado recalled an interviewee who said racism always seeks to erase history.

"As I've thought about this project and what a reconstruction project is, you're literally ripping up the pavement," said Kado. "It'll require further understanding around what a memorial looks like in that space and how we preserve and protect instead of erasing that memory."

One attendee asked if public works is coordinating with the George Floyd Global Memorial (GFGM) to ensure that the memorials are not disturbed and that guests can safely grieve and reflect.

According to Kado, the memorial process is still not defined and there are no plans to remove any items that are out there.

"This project won't be successful, nor will it ever be implemented without having more concrete plans in place around the memorial," he said.

There seemed to be a departure from the community-led approach when it came to "art" in the space, which GFGM considers offerings to the memorial. On the one hand, public arts administrator for Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) Mary Altman, praised the groundbreaking work of GFGM caretakers to conserve the pieces. On the other hand, Altman said it's likely the city will commission art as part of the process and

that the city would bring on an artist or artists "to help build the vision for public art at the site."

The Minneapolis Arts Commission would have a role, and, as Altman described, it's a "complicated" process engaging and contracting with artists and getting the necessary approvals.

An attendee commented, "It sounds as though when talking about the city commissioning artworks or art being approved by the arts commission, the city's planning on complete control, despite saying it's led by a community-led process."

### DESIGN

There were several calls to explore closing the intersection to vehicular traffic.

"We know a pedestrian plaza, pedestrian-only area, is very popular," said Kado.

Public works will also explore transit through the intersection. The D-Line was

originally slated to go through there, but according to Kado, those plans have been removed from the reconstruction and the D-Line is on detour routing. This is the same for the 5 and 23 buses which used to go through the intersection.

"This project will really determine if and how transit does come back to this space," said Kado.

There were a number of questions about other concerns – such as adjacent properties and businesses, faith-based organizations, air and water quality – that the project team said fell outside their purview.

About 50 questions still remained at the close of the two-hour meeting. According to Kado, no immediate changes are planned for the intersection this summer. Construction would begin in 2024.

For information and to subscribe to email updates visit [www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/38th-chicago-ave/](https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/38th-chicago-ave/)

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

BY IRIC NATHANSON



*"A newspaper to serve the people, institutions and business enterprises of the Longfellow neighborhood begins its circulation today."*

With that front page announcement, Bill Milbrath and his wife Maureen launched their monthly paper in March 1983. Newly retired from the staff of the University's Extension Service, Bill, with help from Maureen, had decided to make neighborhood journalism a post retirement career. "Back then, other city neighborhoods already had their own publications, but we didn't have one in our part of town," Bill would later recall. "That was a need Maureen and I thought we could fill, so we plunged ahead without much preparation. It was like jumping into a cold lake with both feet."

The Milbraths called their paper the *Longfellow Messenger*. "Our area was named for the 19th century poet who wrote the Song of Hiawatha," Bill noted. "But Longfellow was also the author of the Ride of Paul Revere. Revere was a messenger. A newspaper baring news and information is also a messenger. So that's it, Maureen and I decided, we will create a messenger for Longfellow – the *Longfellow Messenger*."

Two years after the Milbraths launched their new venture, my wife, Marlene, and I moved into the neighborhood. One day, during that second year in our new home, I was out for a walk when I came across a home-made lawn sign advertising the *Messenger*. Seeing the sign, the idea popped into my head for a new part-time career. As an occasional freelancer and with a long-standing interest in neighborhood development, I realized that a writing gig with the paper could be a good way to compliment my day job with the Minneapolis Community Development Agency.

When I knocked on the door of the house with the newspaper sign, Carola Bratt came out to meet me. Carola had been recruited by Bill and Maureen to write for the *Messenger*. But, by then, the Milbraths had sold their paper to two young Hamline University graduates, Tim Nelson and Cal deRuyter, who also published a St. Paul community paper, the *Midway Como Monitor*.

Carola introduced me to Cal and Tim's editor, Denis Woulfe. With Denis showing me the ropes, I filed my first story in March 1986. Nearly four decades later, Denis and I are still part of the *Messenger* team, now led by its new publisher, Tesha M. Christensen.

#### EMERGING STORIES

During those early years in the 1980s, we *Messenger* writers covered the emerging stories that were having an impact in our section of town. My beat included a new city initiative to preserve and upgrade Minneapolis neighborhoods. In Longfellow, the foundation for that effort was established in 1983 when local activists

## BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR 40 YEARS



Bill Milbrath holds a copy of the first *Longfellow Messenger* in 1983. He and his wife, Maureen, started the neighborhood newspaper. It was sold to deRuyter Nelson Publications in 1986, and to TMC Publications CO in 2019.



AT LEFT is Carola Bratt, who wrote and edited for the *Messenger* when it was owned by the Milbraths.

known as Greater Longfellow.

In 1988, following Longfellow's lead, the four neighborhoods east of Lake Nokomis formed their own organization, the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA). That same year, the *Messenger* expanded its circulation area to include the four Nokomis East neighborhoods, renaming itself the *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger*.

LCC and NENA, each serving a collection of four neighborhoods, were able to maximize their share of city funding when Minneapolis established its ambitious Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) in 1990. NRP promised to provide \$90 million a year over 20 years to the city's 83 neighborhood organizations to fund grassroots community improvements. While NRP never achieved its funding goals, LCC and NENA were able to receive a combined total of more than \$15 million to support their NRP action plans.

NRP would be criticized in later years for favoring White homeowners at the expense of people of color and renters, but the city-funded program did have a positive impact on Longfellow and Nokomis, particular during the program's most active years between 1990 and 2010. LCC and NENA used most of their NRP dollars to create revolving home improvements loan funds for their residents. The two organizations also funded a variety of special purpose projects including the shoreline and wetlands preservation at Lake Nokomis, renovation of the historic Longfellow House in Minnehaha Park, and gap funding to redevelop blighted commercial sites along Lake Street.

Through the 1990s and into the early 2000s, I also covered the final settlement of the decades-long Highway 55 controversy. For years, community members in south Minneapolis had been resisting effort by highway planners to convert Highway 55 to a four-lane depressed freeway modeled after Interstate 35W. Carola Bratt's husband, Wally, had been a leader of the community organization battling the highway department. But Wally and his group did more than protest. They came up with a plan for a new form of mass transit that could serve as an alternative to the highway department's ribbons of concrete. The community plan for a Light Rail Transit line along Highway 55 became a reality when the Blue Line LRT opened in 2004.

As our team's history buff, along with covering transit and neighborhood development, I got to write about Lost Longfellow – long-gone places like the Wonderland Amusement Park, Robert "Fish" Jones' zoo at Minnehaha Park and Lake Street's Minneapolis Moline plant. Those *Messenger* stories helped introduce a new generation of Longfellow and Nokomis residents to their neighborhood's history.

#### BUILDING COMMUNITY

Over the years, the *Messenger* has done more than chronicle life in south Minneapolis, past and present. The paper has helped create a sense of community for a group of neighborhoods that have attracted new young residents committed to an urban life style. For many of them, reading the *Messenger* each month has become a shared experience that strengthens community bonds.

The need for stronger community bonds is more important than ever now that we have all experienced the pandemic and the trauma following the death of George Floyd in 2020. During the past two years of COVID-19, the *Messenger* has been one of the few community institutions that has continued to function with reassuring normalcy.

During these past four decades, it has been a real privilege for me to serve as a link between those early days when Bill and Maureen's fledgling paper was making a name for itself, and today's *Messenger* where a new generation of community journalists are carrying forward the Milbraths' vision for a newspaper that can serve "people, institutions and business enterprises of the Longfellow neighborhood."

>> More photos @ [LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com).

# Messenger

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#### Story ideas always welcome.

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# Here's what we're working on

My name is Robin Wonsley Worlobah and I have the honor of representing Ward 2 on the Minneapolis City Council. I am an independent Democratic Socialist, and I'm proud to continue Ward 2's tradition of independent representation that was started by my predecessor Cam Gordon, a member of the Green Party, whom I greatly respect.

During my seven years living, working, and organizing in Minneapolis I've had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful people in Longfellow. For those of you I haven't had the chance to meet yet, I'd like to introduce myself and my staff, share what we're working on, and invite you to be part of it.

One of my office's top priorities is public safety beyond policing. Working class people all deserve a public safety system we can trust. As the recent report from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights confirmed, the Minneapolis Police Department is racist, misogynistic, and violent. The mayor is the sole legislative and executive authority over MPD, which means that he is solely responsible for working with MPD leadership to correct the department's course. That being said, I am trying to do everything within my authority to hold police accountable. Currently, I am working with our city attorney's office to create a database to strengthen our tracking of police misconduct.

Council does have jurisdiction in a number of other areas that can help raise the standard for public safety in our city. We have unarmed responders who are doing amazing work from fire and traffic control to group violence intervention. One great example is the Behavioral Crisis Response Teams, which is doing extremely well in a pilot program. Earlier this year, I created a proposal to centralize unarmed responses into one department in order to be more efficient, and better coordinated.

## GUEST COLUMN

BY ROBIN WONSLEY WORLOBAH, Ward 2



My colleagues voted this down, but I remain dedicated to finding ways to support and expand public safety options beyond policing.

Another top priority for my office is the recovery of East Lake Street. Last week, I worked with my colleagues to allocate \$700,000 of federal COVID-19 relief money that the mayor earmarked for big business downtown, and instead directed it to small business support in cultural corridors, including East Lake Street.

The future of the old Third Precinct building is a big part of East Lake Street conversation. I feel strongly that putting MPD back into the building would not be appropriate or effective. I attended the two community input sessions hosted by Longfellow-based community organizations, and heard many interesting ideas about what the future of that site could hold. Inspired by these conversations, I passed an amendment to allocate \$100,000 towards bringing in an external facilitator to help lead an community engagement process around the future of the Third Precinct that focuses on the needs and desires of local residents. I hope this can be an opportunity for local self-determination, community ownership, and healing conversations about public safety beyond policing.

My office is also focusing on Green New Deal policy initiatives like Municipal Snow Removal, the Twin Cities Boulevard, and the People's Climate and Equity Plan. Outside of Ward 2, I am supporting both the East Phillips Urban Farm and transit

## CELESTE ROBINSON, POLICY AIDE

Celeste met Robin in 2017 working on the campaign to raise the minimum wage. She has worked in restaurants and in labor organizing with unionized and non-union hospitality workers, as well as neighborhood organizing in Seward. Her focuses in the Ward 2 office are public health, public safety, and small business, community engagement, and communications.



## QANNANI OMAR, POLICY AIDE

Qannani is a first-generation Oromo who has lived and worked across the Twin Cities, focusing on housing and equitable transportation policies and anti-displacement organizing. Her focuses in the Ward 2 office are housing, transportation, zoning & planning, and infrastructure, as well as most constituent services.



projects like the Hennepin Avenue Redesign that have 24/7 bus lanes. In addition to the significant merits of each of these projects on their own, they would each help raise the standards for environmental and racial justice in our infrastructure going forward.

Housing is another priority. I successfully advocated to keep landlords with labor or housing code violations off the Rent Control Work Group, as well as added a public housing resident and directed the group to consider a regional approach. I still have serious concerns about the work group, namely that it includes a lobby organization that spent \$8 million trying to defeat rent control in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The University of Minnesota's economic analysis confirmed that a universal 3% policy with no vacancy decontrol will protect the most vulnerable renters, and I am concerned that the work group will try to muddy the economists' conclusions. While the work group carries out their process, I am exploring additional policies to protect renters, including Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Agreement (TOPA), a vacancy fee, and protecting and increasing stock of public housing.

I know that I cannot achieve any of these priorities alone. As a socialist, I be-

lieve that all victories for working class people are won through collective action. Community organizing outside city hall is the engine that makes any of our shared agenda possible.

To that end, my office is piloting new methods of community engagement, including a Ward 2 Resident Survey. This survey allows your opinions to help shape my policy and budget priorities. You can take the survey at [tinyurl.com/Ward2Survey](https://tinyurl.com/Ward2Survey). We are also doing Community Conversations where I will discuss my office's work, answer questions, and hear your thoughts. You can find the full schedule of those events at [tinyurl.com/Ward2Conversations](https://tinyurl.com/Ward2Conversations).

I hope to see you at a Community Conversation this summer. You can also reach out to my office any time at [ward2@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:ward2@minneapolismn.gov)

*Robin Wonsley Worlobah represents Ward 2 on the Minneapolis City Council. She is the first independent Democratic Socialist on the council. Originally from Chicago, Robin came to Minneapolis after attending Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. Robin has a decade of experience working in academic research around housing, criminal justice, and racial and wealth inequality. She has been active in community organizing work including the Fight for \$15 and Black Lives Matter.*

# 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](mailto:ctoberman@fmr.org)

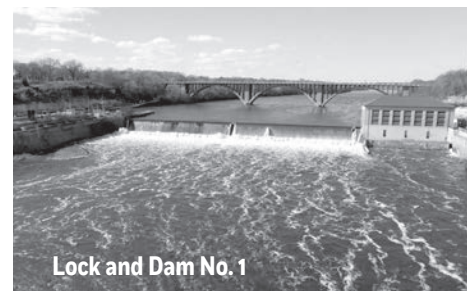
Friends of the Mississippi River



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](https://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.*

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Email letters, guest commentaries, press releases, notes and memories of the newspaper over the years to [tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](mailto:tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)





"When elders come together and build power, they can put pressure on decision-makers in the state to improve the lives of elders and their families," said Vic Rosenthal. (Photo submitted)

By CHLOE PETER

"Elders from diverse backgrounds are becoming more aware of the importance of working together to build power," said St. Paul resident Vic Rosenthal. "For many elders, because of race or lack of resources, there are significant inequities and that everyone must work together to change the status quo."

He is the facilitator of a new group, All Elders United for Justice (AEUJ). It is an organization that is working toward bringing elders education and discussing changes they can make with their vote. It also provides information on finances, housing, and opportunities for elders while focusing on bringing diverse voices in to play a role in decisions. They focus

## BUILDING POWER THROUGH UNITY

*All Elders United for Justice aims to bring power to elders through relationships and discussion*

on bringing power to the elderly by voting, bringing up issues to politicians, and starting conversations.

According to Minnesota Compass, an organization that aims to provide free and reliable data about the state of Minnesota, adults aged 65 and older make up 15 percent of the population. In fact, most Minnesota counties outside of the metro area have a higher population of older residents. In the near future, it is predicted that elderly Minnesotans will outnumber people ages five through 17. They also are the most likely out of any age group to vote.

Planning for All Elders started in 2018 when Rosenthal discussed the role of older people in Minnesota. While still in its formative stages and figuring out their mission, AEUJ aims to help elders of Minnesota to have a greater voice when it comes to issues such as affordable housing, transportation, and prescription drugs. They aim to bring in elders from rural, immigrant, and different cultural backgrounds in order to reflect as many people as possible.

"When elders come together and build power, they can put pressure on decision-makers in the state and demand changes to improve the lives of elders and their families," Rosenthal said.

All Elders aspires to create a community that relies on all different kinds of people to come together for justice in Minnesota. Communities of color, includ-

ing American Indian, Asian, Black, and Latinx, make up just two percent of the elder community in Minnesota. Longfellow resident Don Hammen, a member of AEUJ, mentioned that telling one's stories breaks down barriers that have been created by society in terms of age, race, and cultural differences. While being an elder may not have the same meaning for each of these differences, it can bring relationships closer together, including from different generations.

"What I've learned from the 'elder world' is that none of us are experts and we're all going to have to find a way to learn from each other," Hammen said.

Uptown resident Leif Grina, leader of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council and member of AEUJ, mentioned that the council has had difficulties not including voices from people of color, but wants to heavily pursue that with All Elders. He also mentioned thinking about how elders are represented in our culture and in media and wanting to move forward with, what he feels to be, a more realistic approach.

"I remember looking at a magazine from a senior organization about some movie star that was now elderly and the 'joys of aging', and it just struck me: that's not what elders look like," Grina said. "I think what's exciting about All Elders is that other communities are being brought in."

A study done by the University of



"I think what's exciting about All Elders United for Justice is that other communities are being brought in," said Leif Grina. (Photo submitted)

Southern California revealed that due to the climate crisis, fear of economic collapse, and wealth inequalities, younger generations tend to stereotype and have negative feelings toward older generations. However, AEUJ longs to mend some of that gap as well

by breaking down these stereotypes and building relationships with younger people, as well. Rosenthal mentioned that the climate crisis is something that they have addressed in discussion, and elders do care about making change for the planet that their children and children's children will be living on.

While there isn't a physical place to meet as of yet, elders interested in AEUJ may contact Rosenthal at vic.rosenthal@gmail.com.

"Building relationships by telling our stories and using the truth contained in those stories for the purpose of building power and using that power to shape public policy whenever and however possible will potentially result in a world of All Elders United for Justice," Hammen said. "And when that happens, we all benefit. We all do better when we all do better."

## Imagine along with me

Imagine all the people living in peace! Wait! Not just yet!

Imagine us walking exploring the yard surrounding my house. It's spring but feels like summer. We see tulips, dandelions, violets displaying bright colors. There's one of four double high raised garden beds. The neighbors cat is using it for a litter box. Green grass is starting to grow. Spring emerging from winter. I never know who or what is going to appear. It's about being at ease without knowing. It's about letting new life come to me. My curiosity is aroused.

Imagine! We are in my house. We see a wall calendar. It tells us May Day, the half way point between spring and summer, which is also International Labor

### STORIES AND JOURNEYS

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



Day. The start of Ramadan has come and gone. International Labor Day arouses my attention. I'm a union retiree.

We walk to my bedroom closet. We see my winter coat now in storage. We see my shorts now out of storage.

Imagine! My daily walk around the block. I have resumed walking outside triggered by warmer weather. You are still with me. I have adopted a new practice if see a *Messenger* newspaper. If I see it's not

placed at the front door of every house, I pick it up. I place it at the front door. Imagine the newspaper saying, here I am right outside your front door! Pick me up! Read me!

Imagine! Metro Transit bus #23. We are on it. The bus takes us on the Ford Parkway bridge over the Mississippi River. We are seeing/experiencing it. Our senses are taking in its calm peaceful appearance. Yet it continues to flow. Calm, peaceful and flowing is my inner experience as I allow the river into my awareness.

If you have read this far you have likely taken the plunge! You have joined me in the river of life experiences by reading Stories and Journeys. Welcome! Lets keep the energy flowing as we leave what I call *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* territory and make our way to *Southwest Connector* territory in Uptown.

Imagine! We are on city bus #6. The driver per our request lets us off at 22nd and Hennepin Ave. A destination location for me. First thing I do is say hello and hug my friend the oak tree in the front yard of the Uptown Natural Care Center.

Next we cross the street and go into Tao Organics. Keep in mind I have just declared that, for me, 2022 is the Year of the Woman. We make our way through the cafe toward the doorway that leads to what is officially called the Herbery. As I go through the entry way, I look to my left. There is a book out on display as if it's saying, buy me! So, I did! Have you ever imagined that a book or a newspaper was saying to you, pick me up, buy me, bring me into your awareness, read me? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at

news@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

Name on the book is "Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing" by Christiane Northrup, M.D. Out of sheer curiosity, I like to check out the inside and outside covers of books. I want to know who is endorsing the book and what they are saying about it. On the back cover are names familiar to me, but one in particular stands out for me.

The words of Deepak Chopra grab my attention. He states, "I recommend 'Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom' to all women and also all men who want to understand and nourish the women in their lives." I'm thinking now, what man doesn't want to understand and nourish the women in their lives? I'm all in! After all, I just declared 2022 as the Year of the Woman for me! I may have just found my primary resource along with "Reclaiming Our Health: Exploding the Medical Myth and Embracing the Source of True Healing" by John Robbins. Probably wouldn't hurt me to converse with some real life women as part of my Year of the Woman journey.

Imagine! It's time to bring this edition of Stories and Journeys to an end. Become aware of your breathing. Relax into to your breathing as you imagine all people, women and men, living in peace!

In gratitude! Stay tuned! Until next time! I am Ukraine!

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

## Food for Older Adults



**Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors offers a number of services to help older adults live healthy, independent and socially connected lives.**

- Healthy Seniors currently has grant funds available to purchase food for local seniors. If you're age 60+ and live in the Longfellow, Seward, Cooper, Howe or Hiawatha neighborhoods, contact us to apply. Lower income applicants may be given priority.

- We also deliver food from food shelves to area seniors. Please call 612-729-5799 or email info@LShealthyseiors.org for more information.



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**For no good reason, except to have fun,** Becketwood staged a parade on Saturday, May 21. The parade included a king, two queens, Schottische dancers and a marching kazoo band. (Photos by Terry Faust)



Becketwood royalty: (left to right) Micky Monsen, Leif Duus, and Nancy Schultz.



The kazoo band marches in front of Becketwood. AT RIGHT: Dancers (left to right) Anita Doyle, Vanji Bratt, Judy Bahn, and Carol Mockovak.



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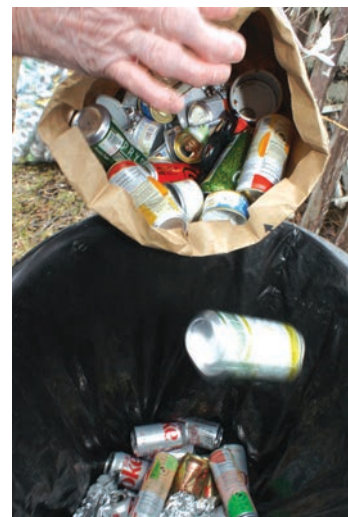
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Story and photos  
By TERRY FAUST

Longfellow residents Linda Featherstone and her husband Frank Forkins have helped neighborhood cats and dogs to have healthier and happier lives for the past 25 years. Working with pet owners who lack the means to cover vet fees, and using tips about feral animals, the team has voluntarily arranged to have 1,220 animals fixed over their 25 years of volunteer work. They have used the proceeds from collected cans and materials to develop creative financial alliances with local vets.

Named for Sam, the first rescued dog Linda took in, Cans for Sam has collected an estimated 51 tons of recyclable mate-



rials over the years and provided thousands of dollars in veterinarian services and medicine.

Seeing the value of Linda and Frank's work, neighbors have also contributed financially to round out the funds used for spaying and neutering animals and to cover the cost of other treatments. Cans for Sam is a neighborhood treasure, much appreciated by Longfellow animal-lovers and their four-legged friends.

To arrange a donation call: (612) 722-1886. Recyclable metal can be left at: 3608 38th Avenue S., Minneapolis. Please drop it around back in the alley space.



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# BLACK-OWNED BANK TO OPEN ON E. LAKE ST.

>> From 1

Welsh and his group reached out to Kenneth Kelly, CEO of Detroit-based First Independence, one of only 17 Black-owned banks now operating in the U.S. With a 50-year track record in its home town, Kelly's bank was looking for ways to expand its reach.

Initially, Minnesota was not on Kelly's radar screen as a potential expansion site, but outreach from the Twin Cities lenders encourage him to give this area a closer look. The lenders were able to form a partnership with the Michigan CEO by pledging to sell First Independence \$200 million in loans as a way of capitalizing the Detroit bank's expansion into the Twin Cities. In addition, Wells Fargo provided a site for the new venture by offering its closed facility at 3430 University Ave. S.E. as a fully equipped branch office, ready to re-open as is. Wells Fargo donated the site to the non-profit Project for Price in Living. PPL, in turn, is leasing the building to First Independence.

With the pieces coming together quicker than many had expected, First Independence was able to stage a grand opening at its new Twin Cities branch in April. Now that the University Avenue branch is up and running, a second office is in the works on East Lake Street.

As a full-service bank, First Independence offers traditional banking products and services including checking, savings and lines of credit, Damon Jenkins explained. "But we will have a special focus



First Independence Bank staff include (left to right) Vachel Hudson, Deqa Noor, Andrew Ndekwe, Auntymetta Colley, and Damon Jenkins. (Photo by Terry Faust)

on mortgage lending. One of our major objectives is to get more Black people and people of color into home ownership. And our key tool will be a program known as Operation Hope, which works to boost our folks' credit scores up to 700. That score will open a lot of doors that may have been closed to them in the past. We will also be giving our customers access to over 50,000 ATMs free of charge through

our partnerships with other lenders.

"The fact that we are the first Black-owned bank in Minnesota is huge. It is historic in itself. There are some 5,000 banks in the country but only 17 of them are minority owned. Having a Black-owned bank is a bold leap towards equity. What it means is that we are trying to go back and rewrite 400 years of marginalization and inequities in communities of



First Independence Bank opened its first branch in April in a former Wells Fargo building at 3430 University Ave. in Minneapolis. It will open its second one in the Hennepin County Services building at E. Lake St. and Hiawatha Ave. in July. (Photo by Terry Faust)

color, specifically Black people. With our bank being a beacon of hope, this is an opportunity for our local Black community to have its own institution; something that can be a source of pride for our people. But it can also be a point of pride for the broader community to know that we have First Independence right here in our midst.

"But it's true that people in our community haven't always trusted banks. So, it is up to us to earn the trust of the people we want to serve. And there is something to be said for just starting out – building a brand-new institution. That fresh start gives us an opportunity to make our own record – to do things differently from the way they have been done in the past."

Jenkins hopes to open his second office in mid-July. It will be housed in the Hennepin County services building at 22nd and East Lake.

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# Entrepreneur seeks to make moving easier and more eco-friendly

## Longfellow resident Mathias Frasch launches EasyMovingBoxRental

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

Opting to be a stay-at-home dad during the COVID-19 pandemic gave Longfellow resident Matthias Frasch the time to refine a business idea.

He has launched EasyMovingBoxRental, a company that offers reusable moving boxes with the goal of saving time, money and hassle for those moving. Plus, they're eco-friendly.

### TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.

Frasch: I grew up in Germany, in a small farming community in the Swabian Mountains and lived there until I was 25 years old. In 1997, I joined Up With People, a U.S. based organization, where I met my wife Lori. I officially immigrated in to the U.S. in 2001. I became a U.S. citizen in 2015. Lori and I have lived in the Longfellow neighborhood since 2002 and over the years were joined by our three children, Maxwell (13), Ellison (11) and Stella (7) along with our rescue dog Ollie, a two-year old Terrier mix. We are an active family with our kids being part of the South East Soccer Club, local dance studio Ballare Teatro, and the Twin Cities German Immersion School's cross country team. Most often, people will find me running along the river as I'm training for the 2022 Mexico Ultra X 250, or playing with my kiddos and the pooch over at Dowling Community School fields. We have been involved in our neighborhood church for many years, and continue to volunteer in school and sports activities throughout the year.

As a family, we are conscious about the importance of protecting our environment and do our part, often in small ways, to make responsible choices. We support local farmers, refrain from using harsh chemicals for cleaning and lawn care, and just simply cherish the natural resources right here in the neighborhood and around town.

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM BEING A STAY-AT-HOME DAD DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

Frasch: Just like anybody else, the pandemic caught us by surprise. Trying to juggle two full-time jobs along with the irregular and unpredictable school days for the children, we eventually decided for me to be a stay-at-home dad. I left my career as a director of digital marketing to focus on the well-being of the kids and family while Lori continued her professional work from home. This has proven to be the best solution for our family, and has helped us to keep a sense of normalcy during the crazy early COVID times. One



Longfellow resident Matthias Frasch came up with the concept of EasyMovingBoxRental when he became a stay-at-home dad during the COVID-19 pandemic.

of the most profound things I've learned is my appreciation of our teachers in our schools. Because of the shortage of substitute teaching staff, in late 2021, I decided to get the Minnesota substitute teacher license which enabled me to support our school if there was an urgent need for teaching staff.

Being a stay-at-home dad also has given me the opportunity to explore other career options and especially looking into possibly starting my own business. I eventually decided to make EasyMovingBoxRental a reality.

### WHAT SPARKED THIS BUSINESS IDEA?

Frasch: With EasyMovingBoxRental, I do exactly that. Renting sustainable boxes for people looking to move, remodel, or have any other short or long-term storage needs is another step in the right direction of [protecting our environment. It eliminates the need to spend a lot of time and money collecting and/or purchasing cardboard boxes. The service includes the boxes being delivered and picked up in the Twin Cities and its surrounding cit-

ies. After each use, every box is cleaned and disinfected with plant-based, environmentally responsible cleaning solvents.

### HOW DOES YOUR COMPANY MAKE MOVING EASIER?

Frasch: The core mission of this business is to simplify moving. Moving is generally a stressful event (even in the best of all situations), especially considering all decisions that need to be made along the way that lead up to the move in the first place. The same applies to home remodel and whatever else requires in the need to pack up your things for storage.

The need for boxes often ends up being missed until it becomes an urgent need. At that point, people go dumpster diving, engage friends and families, or just simply buy loads of cardboard boxes. All of this requires time and money. Even the seemingly quick and simple solution of

buying new cardboard boxes becomes a chore as they're awkward to schlep around and still require the need to be assembled.

EasyMovingBoxRental solves that issue. In less than two minutes, people can order our boxes and focus on more important things. Our boxes nest perfectly which means they require little space while they are empty. Once in use, they are easy to handle and stack perfectly on top of one another. This saves space in a moving truck and makes the move significantly faster which is critical, especially if people hire professional movers who charge by the hour.

So far, all our customers have been raving about the ease and simplicity of using our boxes. Once done with the boxes, there is no need to figure out ways to dispose of them. We pick them up and bring them back to a new-like condition.

### HOW DOES THIS BENEFIT THE PLANET?

Frasch: Clearly, our service addresses consumer convenience, but the underlying

effect is that we significantly reduce cardboard boxes being dumped in a landfill. Our boxes will be reused many times before they will be recycled again.

In addition, the entire business has been built with local assets. Our boxes were manufactured right here in the U.S., the truck chassis has been assembled in the U.S. while the container on the chassis has been manufactured right here in Bloomington, Minn. The wrap on the truck has also been designed and installed here in Minnesota. As a class II truck (lightweight), we use the most economic vehicle possible for our service. There is little to no air left in the container as our boxes fill out the space perfectly.

Everything about this business has been developed with the focus of the highest possible efficiency while utilizing local resources, reducing any unnecessary waste and lean processes. I think this business is a proof of concept to solve an issue with a more convenient solution at a reduced environmental impact.

### WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE STARTING A NEW BUSINESS DURING A PANDEMIC?

Frasch: Starting a business is always challenging and especially during uncertain times like the pandemic. However, because I stepped away from my career to be a stay-at-home dad, I took some time to develop a business plan. Once, I committed to the plan, I officially I started out as a tiny business, using the garage as storage and my minivan for deliveries/pickups. Because of my previous work experiences, I was able to develop this business pretty much on my own. The sound business plan soon caught the attention of some investors who saw the potential and shared the same vision.

### GOT ANY TIPS FOR OTHERS WHO ARE STARTING NEW BUSINESSES?

Frasch: I think the best way of starting a small business is to look for the smallest possible way of operating at a minimal investment. This could mean to focus on minimal inventory, the most simple and lean processes, or the most common use cases.

My business might sound pretty simple on paper, but there are countless variants within each order. The experience I gained during my first few months of operation as a tiny business helped me avoid many costly errors as I scaled up with investment funds. I think the initial reward should never be the paycheck, but the learning gained from operating small. The experience, in turn, will then become the driver for fine-tuning the business and its processes and essentially set it up for scale.

More at [www.EasyMovingBoxRental.com](http://www.EasyMovingBoxRental.com).

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# ART-A-WHIRL AND THE CREATIVE CLASS: *The Twin Cities arts and culture legacy*

## 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.*



### ART-A-WHIRL SPANS NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISCIPLINES

Whatever corner of the Twin Cities you live in, chances are you or someone close to you has participated as an artist or a guest in what Anna Becker, executive director of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) calls our “rite of spring” – Art-A-Whirl.

The three-day happening has been heralded as the biggest open studio tour in the United States with tens of thousands of visitors attending past events.

Shuttered for the past two years due to the pandemic, this year’s event took place on May 20-22, 2022, and the artists were primed and ready to throw out the welcome mats. Even with COVID-19 variations continuing to mutate and spike, many of NEMAA’s more than 1,000 members, housed in over 60 locations in a defined geographic area, were cautiously optimistic about this year’s turn out.

Past NEMAA president, Carmen Gutierrez-Bolger, who shares her studio in the Casket Arts Building with two fellow artists, said the artists she spoke to were enthusiastic about returning to an in-person event. “To be honest,” she stated, “almost everyone has had COVID. This year many are cautious about not serving food, but many, including my studio, are not masking.”

### ART-A-WHIRL’S ORIGINS

In 1995, a group of determined artists set up studios in Northeast Minneapolis’ neglected factory buildings. These art pioneers then decided it would be good for the public to see (excuse the Hamilton pun) “the room where it happens,” so they organized the first open studio tour. A few years later, the growing group formed NEMAA as a non-profit entity. Through diligent collaboration and savvy marketing, Art-A-Whirl, now marking its 27th year, grew in popularity, becoming a nationally recognized art phenomenon.

By 2002, under the leadership of then-president Gutierrez-Bolger, members of NEMAA joined together with the city of Minneapolis, the McKnight Foundation, and local businesses to establish the formal geographical area now known as the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. In



Former NEMAA president, Carmen Gutierrez-Bolger, readies her Casket Art studio for Art-A-Whirl 2022. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

fact, those efforts have been a model for many other Twin Cities’ neighborhood branding efforts, including those served by our community papers. Colorful flags on light posts now demark many communities.

### ASTONISHING ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ARTS

In the early 1990s, even before NEMAA formed, as chair of the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce’s respected Leadership Minneapolis Program™, I established the creative class sub-committee of the chamber’s public affairs group. We invited author Richard Florida as a guest speaker to discuss his groundbreaking book, “The Rise of the Creative Class.” Along with colleagues from the newly dubbed creative industries including architecture, public relations, advertising, design and landscaping, our sub-committee hosted guest speakers and special events, providing new perspectives and data about how significantly creativity impacted local economy. We understood how important it was to engage business leaders around the arts.

Our efforts can be linked to the adoption almost two dozen years later by the city of Minneapolis of the Creative Vitality Index (CVI), an economic measure developed by a Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), used to weigh in on the ever-increasing contribution of arts and culture to our population.

Minneapolis even developed a sort of “Culture Czar,” Gülgün Kayim, who is Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, and whose small but mighty staff helps to develop arts and culture policy, and to research the economics of the

creative sector.

Pre-pandemic, the economic impact of the creative arts in Minneapolis astonished. The 2018 CVI estimated that the arts contributed \$5 billion in sales, or 9.2 times that of Minneapolis’ sports sector, earning our region a lofty place as a national creative mecca. Post-pandemic, the news is grim. Statistics from the Minneapolis Creates website state: “A 2020 study by Americans for the Arts showed that 62% of artists and creative workers were fully unemployed, while 95% reported income losses. Also in 2020, the Minnesota Council for Nonprofits projected that up to 60% of the state’s nonprofits, many of them arts and cultural organizations, would close by the end of the year.”

Thankfully, culture, art and artists are resilient, and Art-A-Whirl bravely reopening its doors this year serves as a notable link to our region’s robust art and culture legacy.

### THE LEGACY AMENDMENT: GUARANTEEING 10,000 LAKES AND STUDIOS

What are the other factors for Minnesota and the metro area’s rarified arts and culture environment? Meet the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, aka the Legacy Amendment, passed in 2008 by Minnesota voters and enshrined in the Minnesota Constitution.

The full amendment concerns overall quality of life in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, protecting drinking water sources, wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat, lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater, supporting parks and trails, and preserving arts and cultural heritage. Yes, there was quite a lobby in place to get



Crowds flock the two-story Grain Belt Warehouse during Art-A-Whirl 2016. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

that included in the long list of natural habitat initiatives.

One leader of this arts lobby is Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, a super smart 901 (C) (4) umbrella lobbying organization that represents with verve, vim and vigor the highest interests of: 695 performing arts, 262 multipurpose arts, 232 history and historical preservation, 156 visual arts and architecture, 49 media and communications, 30 literary, 10 humanities, and 167 miscellaneous arts organizations that represent Minnesota’s 1601 recognized creative entities! They continue the good fight to ensure arts and culture has a “lifebuoy” amidst all that water.

The Legacy Amendment increased the state sales tax by 3/8 of 1% beginning July 1, 2009, continuing until 2034. The additional revenue is distributed into four funds: 33% to the clean water fund; 33% to the outdoor heritage fund; 19.75% to the arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25% to the parks and trails fund.

Based on current sales tax revenue, this means Minnesotans will invest more than \$1.2 billion in arts and cultural heritage fund projects and programs over the 25-year life of the tax with a portion made available through grant programs.

### WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

As a practicing artist, I have participated in diverse aspects of Minnesota’s arts and culture largesse. For example, in 2016, as a NEMAA member, I hosted a highly successful Art-A-Whirl photography exhibit in the Grain Belt Brewery Annex, interacting with hundreds of visitors over the three days of the event.

That year I was also accepted into the prestigious St. Catherine University Women’s Art Institute (WAI) Summer Studio Intensive. Like many arts programs, the WAI benefits from Minnesota’s support of the arts. Happily, my 10-panel collage, “Recollection: My Lost Yiddish Civilization,” incorporating archival family documents and photographs, ink drawings on fine art paper, and newsprint earned a nice spot on a wall in the University of Minnesota’s Regis Center for Art’s Quarter Gallery

ART-A-WHIRL >> 13



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Susan Schaefer's *Engineered to a Higher Standard* collage.

## ART-A-WHIRL >> from 12

where our group show was held. UMN also benefits from the state's arts funding.

More recently, working from a light-filled studio in the Thorpe Building, I produced my collage titled, "Engineered to a Higher Standard," in response to the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Each of these activities has a lifeline directly connected to Minnesota's commitment to the arts.

But I am more than a practicing visual artist. I am also a journalist dedicated to shining a light on how creativity contributes to human wellbeing.

It is worthwhile to remember that behind Minnesota's economic arts' statistics toil humans whose creativity and innovation fuel this so-called creative class. Frequently laboring for the sheer love of their craft, many visual and performing artists, directors, inventors and innovators produce from an inner creative core more likely fueled by passion than personal gain. These makers are marked by an almost holy drive to create – and when their artistry and intent collide, it often yields something extraordinary in its wake.

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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# It's time to plant your summer vegetable garden

## THE CITY GARDENER

BY LAUREN BETHKE,  
MASTER GARDENER



After a long, wet spring, the planting season is finally underway. The last week of May and first week of June are a great time to plant a summer vegetable garden – the days are getting long, risk of frost has passed, and the soil has finally warmed up. Although we generally don't have huge yards in our neighborhood, even the smallest garden can produce a good amount of tasty, healthy produce. It can be fun to get kids involved in growing, tending, and harvesting vegetables. And it doesn't get any more local than your own yard! Whether you're a seasoned vegetable gardener or new to the world of growing your own produce, here are some tips for making the most out of our short growing season.

Some cool-season veggies (like lettuce, kale, and peas) are happy with colder soil temperatures, but most vegetables will do better when planted into soil above 60 degrees. You can stick a kitchen thermometer in the ground to measure the temperature, or check out online soil temperature maps. As of the writing of this column, the soil temperature in Minneapolis was above 60 degrees on average, so we should be ready to plant.

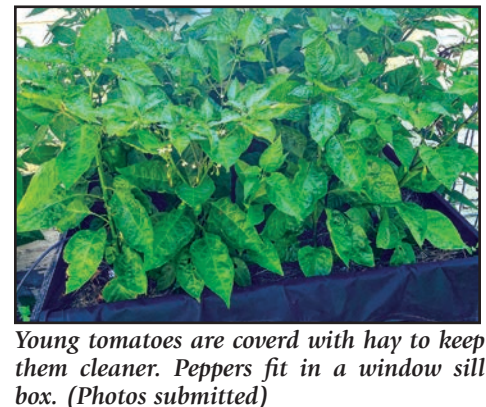
If you're creating a vegetable garden from scratch, there are several things to consider to make sure you give your plants the best conditions. First, place your garden bed in the sunniest spot in your yard. Most vegetables will do the best when



Cucumbers and mint grow in pots next to the foundation. (Photos submitted)

they have at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight per day. If you don't have a spot with that much light, don't worry – there are plenty of crops that will thrive in partial shade. If you have 4-6 hours of sunlight, try beans, beets, broccoli, radishes, or carrots. Leafy greens and many herbs will do well with as little as 2-3 hours of direct sunlight per day.

Another important consideration is how you will water the garden. Although we've had plenty of rain so far this year, you will almost certainly need to water with a hose at some point. So, make sure your hose spigot isn't too far from your vegetable garden! This seems like a minor detail, but you will be glad you thought



Young tomatoes are covered with hay to keep them cleaner. Peppers fit in a window sill box. (Photos submitted)

about it during our hot August days.

Now it's time to choose the vegetables to plant. There are so many different varieties. The best choices will depend on your goals. Heirloom varieties are beautiful and often have the best flavor, but they can be susceptible to diseases. Hybrid varieties are generally bred to be resistant to common plant diseases, but that may come with less exciting colors or flavors. You can check out online seed catalogs to read about the characteristics of different vegetable varieties before you head to the garden center to choose plants and seeds. Personally, I like to plant a combination of heirloom and hybrid vegetables. For example, I usually get some interesting

tomatoes like Cherokee Purple or Green Zebra, but also a few with excellent disease resistance like Early Girl or Juliet. This way, even if I lose some heirloom plants to wilt or blight, I usually have plenty of hybrid plants that are still doing well.

Another great source for recommended plant varieties is the Master Gardener Seed Trials. Since 1982, Master Gardener volunteers all over Minnesota have tested different varieties of vegetables, flowers, and herbs to determine which grow the best in our climate. Recommendations are based on flavor, disease and insect tolerance, productivity, and germination rate. The top performers in each trial are designated as "Minnesota Winners," and you can find a list on the University of Minnesota Extension website. Some recent Minnesota Winners include "Sweet Cayenne" peppers, "Purple King" and "Gold Rush" beans, and "4th of July" and "Valencia" tomatoes.

Finally, one tip for maximizing your yield in a small space is succession planting. This is a method of garden planning where you stagger plantings to ensure a continuous supply of produce, and plant new crops once others have passed their prime. This way, your whole garden space is continuously producing during the growing season, with no wasted space. For example, you could grow lettuce early in the spring, then after it's harvested, plant peppers in the same spot. Once you harvest the peppers in the late summer, you will likely be able to fit in a fall planting of lettuce or kale before the weather gets too cold. This method takes more planning, but it can significantly increase your garden yields!

For more information, check out the University of Minnesota Extension Yard and Garden website. Extension resources are written by experts and contain the latest and most reliable research-based information. Happy gardening!

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# Hennepin County Attorney forum: 6 candidates address racial inequities, police accountability

By JILL BOOGREN

One hundred guests tuned in on May 5, 2022 to an online forum of candidates vying for the Hennepin County Attorney seat being vacated by Mike Freeman.

Hosted by the Minnesota Justice Research Center and Minneapolis Foundation, the forum offered a glimpse into as how county attorney candidates would address racial inequities, police accountability, case backlog and other issues plaguing the criminal justice system in Hennepin County.

Six candidates participated, including former District Judge Martha Holton Dimick, former chief public defender Mary Moriarty, lawyer and former Minneapolis City Council member Paul Ostrow, Ramsey County prosecutor Saraswati Singh, lawyer and Richfield City Council member Simon Trautmann, and Minnesota House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler. A seventh candidate, lawyer Jarvis Jones, entered the race the same day as the forum and did not participate. On May 20, Trautmann announced he was leaving the race.

## RACIAL DISPARITIES

The first question asked about the county attorney's responsibility in mitigating racial disparities in the criminal justice and child protection systems.

"Those inequities, that's injustice. And the Hennepin County Attorney's job, the prosecutor's job, is to do justice. That is our one job," said Singh. She would hire people of different races, genders, socioeconomic classes and ability status from across the county. "It's important that the people working on these cases understand the people that we deal with in these cases. And understand that they're us. They're not other."

Dimick said cases are charged based on facts and law, not race, religion or sexual orientation. She acknowledged there are implicit biases and suggested educating all Hennepin County attorneys on implicit bias.

Moriarty pointed out that the county attorney's office already had implicit bias training and was there when they did it. She advocated for measuring and tracking implicit bias by reviewing the subjective decisions made by the county attorney – who to charge, who not to charge, whether to offer bail – collecting data and implementing policies to make sure White people aren't given better offers than Black people. She also shared her work as head of the Hennepin County public defender's office to put a stop to a downtown marijuana sting by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) that was unfairly targeting Black people and collected data on traffic stops that revealed similar disparities.

## ADDRESSING VIOLENT CRIME

Winkler said an all-hands-on-deck approach was needed to address violent crime and encouraged the type of collaboration seen with the Minnesota State Patrol and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to assist Minneapolis. He would also call on suburban police departments

to help investigate crime.

"The data shows the #1 deterrent for crime is not the severity of a sentence, it is the likelihood that a person will be arrested and face some consequence," he said. "The consequence needs to be proportionate, it needs to be geared towards rehabilitation, but there has to be a response to violent crime in the community."

Trautmann said it's important to acknowledge the current backlog in cases.

Speeding up the initial hearings and arraignments and getting young adults into services would help disrupt patterns of violence sooner, lessening the likelihood that they would become repeat offenders. Like most of the candidates, Trautmann said he would pull attorneys from less critical crimes – drug crimes – and put those resources toward handling violent crimes.

Ostrow called the sale of fentanyl a violent crime and urged passage of legislation that would make penalties for its sale the same as they are for heroin. He also said downtown business leaders and community members are tired of "catch and release" – the same people getting arrested over and over for committing serious crimes.

"This is a small number of people that are doing great damage," he said.

Dimick described herself as an African American woman with African American neighbors whom she talks to about what they'd like to see in their north Minneapolis neighborhood. She spoke of the increase in homicides there.

"We're talking about people who have seen their father, brother, sister, their nieces and nephews, their children and their babies caught in the crossfire and killed," she said. "In one weekend, several blocks from where I live, there were four homicides. These are serious crimes. This has got to stop."

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS FINDINGS

Candidates were asked about the role of the county attorney in addressing mistrust community members have with the Minneapolis Police Department. Singh said the report was consistent with her personal life, as well as her professional experience. She recalled being dismissed by her boss in the Attorney General's office when raising concerns about misconduct, then taking her concern to someone else only to see the police officer promoted. By contrast, when encountering a similar situation in Ramsey County, they held

the person accountable and changed the rules so the person was documented and monitored.

"These issues are so real. It's important for the top prosecutor of Hennepin County to talk about them to change the culture so whenever something like that happens it goes all the way to the top," said Singh.

Trautmann said it was important that the government is speaking in such clear

terms that race-based policing exists in Minneapolis, and that more than a dozen officers voluntarily participating was an "important transformation." He would establish an "office of procedural integrity" to help bring what he called "deep structural change."

Dimick described an incident when a police officer wanted to charge a person with felony assault. According to Dimick, the officer had a "scratch," but when she looked at the booking photo she saw that the officer "beat the daylights out of" the would-be defendant. Dimick wouldn't hear the case, but said she took "the chick-

en's way out" by telling the officer it was because his scratch would be gone by the time the case got to trial.

Moriarty said this was an example of looking the other way, and would instead show police leadership violations of the policy. Furthermore, she would not call as witnesses any police officers who have lied under oath or engaged in abusive behavior.

Because prosecutors work with police officers on a daily basis, Winkler called for an independent internal police accountability unit within Hennepin County and a process for referring charging decisions about police killings outside of the county.

"I think that it is too much of a conflict of interest for the county attorney to make those decisions internally," he said. A clear process that is followed would enable people to understand that "a referral to another county or to the attorney general is made according to a set process and not political reasons."

## ALTERNATIVES

Candidates generally agreed on expunging criminal records to minimize "collateral consequences" – barriers to

housing, employment, education – that can occur for people with criminal records.

Ostrow pushed for passage of the Clean Slate Act, which, if passed, would automate some expungements.

"The business community supports it very strongly. They see it as an issue of human capital," Ostrow said.

Winkler said untreated mental health and substance use disorders are often a product of unaddressed trauma, and moving them through the system only repeats the trauma. He said the criminal justice system, through diversion, restorative justice and harm reduction, can serve as an intervention to help people find a path out.

"The criminal justice system should be an opportunity for people to turn things around, not hold them back for the rest of their lives," said Winkler.

Moriarty referred to expungement as a "tail-end thing" that wouldn't stop violent crime. She would make restorative justice an option for youth between ages 16-26 for some violent offenses (not sexual or domestic assault). It would be used if the person who was harmed agreed to participate as a way to bring "meaningful accountability" – a means to repair damage done – instead of punishment.

Singh said restorative justice is the future of prosecution. She is also a big fan of pre-charge diversion, which can keep a criminal record off of someone. It works by identifying key areas they need to address, and they address them.

"If they don't, we can charge them," said Singh.

## UNDERUTILIZED

Candidates were asked about areas of work underutilized by the Hennepin County Attorney's Office (HCAO).

Winkler said the county can play a significant role in environmental protection by enforcing permits and backing up local units of government in their enforcement. He said the HCAO can also lead the way in enforcing laws on labor trafficking, wage theft, and other ways workers are exploited.

"We have people who are exploited daily across the county in many industries based on their inability to protect their own rights in the workplace," said Winkler.

Moriarty and Singh spoke of the need to consider the impacts on immigrants in decision making. Singh described a scenario where parents were deported, but their American kids, who are minors, were still here and now must be brought into the system.

Dimick felt building a more solid foundation with the police department so people could feel comfortable reporting crimes would be "an added plus."

Trautmann proposed a prison to labor pipeline.

"We have a labor shortage, and we have a surplus of labor that's sitting on the sidelines," said Trautmann. "It's good for public safety, it's good for economic development, and it's incredibly powerful for our state."

All candidates but Ostrow were seeking DFL endorsement, which Mary Moriarty earned at the convention on May 14. The non-partisan primary will be Aug. 9, 2022, after which just two candidates will advance to the November ballot.

More information on the Minnesota Justice Research Center is at mnjrc.org.



**CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**Martha Holton Dimick**  
marthaforhennepin.com

**Mary Moriarty**  
maryforhennepin.com

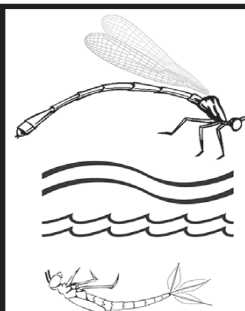
**Paul Ostrow**  
ostrowforhennepin.com

**Saraswati Singh**  
saraswatisingh.com

**Ryan Winkler**  
ryanwinkler.com

**Jarvis Jones**  
jarvisjonesforhennepin.com  
Jarvis entered the race shortly before the forum and did not participate.

**Simon Trautmann**  
Simonforcountyattorney.com  
Trautmann announced on May 20 that he is no longer running.



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## LIVING ROOM CONVERSATIONS >> from 1

Something that often gets missed in favor of direct action is just listening to others and suspending judgment, even if just for the conversation at hand. Everyone has different experiences, viewpoints, and opinions. Living Room Conversations offers over 150 conversation guides, complete with our six conversation agreements, that walk you, step by step, through topics like politics, race and ethnicity, hope, faith, and even food and fiber arts!

### WHY WAS LIVING ROOM CONVERSATIONS STARTED?

Rowles: In late 2010, Living Room Conversations was created to create a structured, intimate conversation format that would allow people to discuss important issues with friends of differing political affiliations and backgrounds. The hope was to empower participants to begin to reweave the fabric of our society by demonstrating that respectful conversation can enrich our lives and enable us to create better solutions to the challenges we face together.

I became involved with Living Room Conversations through a recommendation from a friend. Living Room Conversations was hiring interns about four years ago, I got involved and have been here ever since!

### WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF A CONVERSATION?

Rowles: I think that is best told by our participants. Common descriptions of experiences are “empowering,” “timely,” “a place I know I won’t be judged,” “validating,” and allowing them to feel “less alone.” It’s funny, in a way, one of our offerings is conversations that people can watch. We have had these conversations with people that we know have very different views. At the end of the conversation viewers will say that they wished the

participants had shown greater differences. Our guides really draw out connection and foster respect and understanding even amongst the most differing viewpoints. Not every conversation can go quite so smooth but, with the conversation agreements in place you can be assured that, as long as people follow them, the conversation will be respectful.

Here are a few quotes I pulled:

*“I was bullied for being conservative-minded in liberal circles. I see projects like this [Living Room Conversations] as very hopeful. It’s a place where I know I won’t be judged.”*

*“This conversation made me realize that I need to manage my own emotions before I can start any bridge building work. If I’m not coming in hot, I can actually engage in a conversation and not get defensive. I have to work on myself first.”*

*“We have seen folks who might not normally engage with one another come together to learn with and from each other. There’s validation in being able to share your experience and hear about the experiences of others.”*

*“I learned something about myself. I need to work on my own anger and disappointment so I can engage in a more meaningful conversations on race, politics and equality.”*

### HOW CAN A CONVERSATION HELP “LOWER THE TEMPERATURE” OF AN ISSUE AND HELP BUILD CONNECTION AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

Rowles: When we are able to see past the issue at hand and focus on understanding others, it helps us to build empathy and come to a place that we can listen to others openly. Living Room Conversations gets us started on finding the places we do connect.

An example I often use is that people from all different backgrounds can agree

that we want safe communities to live in, the problem is how we keep those communities safe. Some people want more police, some want no police, etc. What we don’t often consider in our viewpoints is what we DO agree on, in this example, community safety. When we can find what we agree on it is easier to see where others’ experiences and viewpoints connect with our own and that builds feelings of belonging and community.

### HOW CAN PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?

Rowles: Our 150+ guides and Host Toolkit are available freely, and open-source, on our website. Each guide has all the tools you need to walk you through having a conversation. We also have three training sessions offered each month: An Introduction to Living Room Conversations session, a How to Host and Organize Your own Living Room Conversations session, and a How to Host a Conversation About Race session. We have paid services for people, businesses, and organizations that need custom guides created, custom trainings, and more. People can also email me at [chelsea@livingroomconversations.org](mailto:chelsea@livingroomconversations.org) about any support they need for getting Living Room Conversations started in their community.

We are committed to helping communities build connections through conversation and we will do our best to help however we are able.

### WHAT ARE SOME TIPS YOU CAN OFFER FOLKS ON HOW TO HOST A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE?

Rowles: We actually have an entire resource page all about having conversations on race in addition to our monthly How to Host a Conversation About Race. Be mindful of who you are inviting into your conversation and what your goals are. Many people want really diverse groups and fail to recognize that many

people, particularly people of color, are burnt out about talking about race. We even offer guides that are for groups of people that are all one race (Being White in the Anti-Racism Movement, Being a Person of Color in the Racial Justice Movement, and Being Asian American are specific examples).

People have different experiences and we cannot take the word of one participant, no matter their race, as a truth for all people of that race. Goals can also be tricky. People really want to take action, but sometimes we need a conversation that is just that. A conversation. Lower the barriers of entry for people who are less willing to, or more stubborn about, talking race and what race means in the U.S. so that we can get the conversations going. Building trust and creating spaces without judgment give people confidence to open up and examine themselves and the world around them more clearly.

### WE’VE GOT A LOT OF BIG ISSUES IN MINNEAPOLIS, RELATED TO RACE, WAGES, POLICE, CRIME, CLIMATE, AND MORE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR PATH FORWARD INCLUDES?

Rowles: Clearly, one of my hopes is that we have more conversations. Let’s talk about these issues without trying to convince others about what needs to be done about them. I would love to see non-debate conversations, like Living Room Conversations, being used before communities make large decisions. Everyone has a voice that should be heard and that should help inform decisions.

### ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Rowles: Give it a try! The stakes are low and the reward is high. Living Room Conversations are for everyone! More at [livingroomconversations.org](http://livingroomconversations.org).

## WHAT’S NEXT FOR MPD?

>> from 1

MDHR Commissioner Rebecca Lucero, wrote, “Former and current city and MPD leaders have not collectively acted with the urgency, coordination, and intentionality necessary to address racial disparities in policing to improve public safety and increase community trust. Without fundamental organizational culture changes, reforming MPD’s policies, procedures, and trainings will be meaningless.”

“Race-based policing is unlawful” the report said, “and especially harms people of color and Indigenous individuals – sometimes costing community members their lives.”

“This news is not a surprise to the Black community,” said Minneapolis Director of Regulatory Services Saray Garnett-Hochuli. “What pains me in this is that we needed a report to validate what Black people have been saying for decades, years. I challenge all of us to do right by the city because this has to change.”

### CONCENT DECREE BY SEPT. 1?

The report calls for the creation of a consent decree to help correct these racist practices. Such a decree would be developed by the MDHR and city government and would result in a court-enforceable agreement of changes to be made. The court order would be issued by a judge and include the independent oversight of a monitor or monitoring team that reports to the court.

“MDHR will meet with community members, MPD officers, city staff, and other stakeholders to gather feedback on what should be included in a consent decree,” said Lucero.

“We need to take a different approach to addressing racial discrimination within MPD, and in the city of Minneapolis as a whole,” said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski. “Accountability starts with us. It starts with every leader serving with the city of Minneapolis – and it starts with a consent decree to address racial discrimination in policing in the city of Minneapolis,

and to do so in a way that our community can trust.”

Lucero is hoping that by the end of July the department will have met with city officials and negotiated the terms of the decree so that they can present something to the courts by Sept. 1. She said, “It is imperative to immediately address the state law violations identified by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and to submit a proposed consent decree to the court by September 1, 2022, to address the violations of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.”

### CUAPB, CAIR GATHER PUBLIC INPUT

Community members and organizations are also exploring options for the decree and MDHR has invited anyone to visit their website and submit ideas for potential changes that could be part of the court order.

One organization, Communities United Against Police Brutality (CUAPB), has held over two dozen meetings to gather community input and has had canvassers going door to door to educate people and gather their thoughts.

“We are right now exploring every consent decree that has happened in the country to see what has been successful,” said Center for American and Islamic Relations (CAIR) Executive Director Jaylani Hussein. He says they have looked at similar decrees in Baltimore, New Orleans and New York, and have a draft of roughly 30 ideas already that they plan to prioritize and refine before submitting them to MDHR.

“We are already seeing the mayor defend the police and working to combine the federal and state investigations and court orders,” he said. He believes that the scopes of the investigations are different, and that two court orders are preferred. To that end, in the weeks ahead, he will be working with CUAPB and others to “galvanize the community.”

He is calling for “an immediate review of all complaints that the office has failed to act on, to make sure that officers who are still on the force are held accountable.”

### PUBLIC SAFETY AUDIT TEAM

Koski agrees that the consent decree presents a promising opportunity. “What I’ll want reflected in the consent decree is the Minnesota Department of Human Rights’ suggestions, and recommendations, as far as action steps, that can be taken to remedy the problems that were identified in the report,” she said. “Beyond

“

It’s our responsibility to change the culture, and to make sure that the racial discrimination that has plagued the city of Minneapolis ends with us.”

Emily Koski

Audit Team in the internal audit division. She initially brought up the idea up after the police shooting of Amir Locke, because, she said, “instituting an audit team/auditor who oversaw the Minneapolis Police Department would create the proper checks and balances between the police department, mayor, and city council.”

“A Public Safety Audit Team would serve as a body that provides oversight of our public safety systems – their conduct, practices, and policies – to increase accountability and public trust,” she said recently. “The audit team will also be able to assist in the implementation of the consent decree.”

On April 28, Minneapolis Director of Internal Audit Ryan Patrick provided a presentation on the current recommendations for the Public Safety Audit Team. According to the charter, the internal audit office is one of the only city departments or divisions that is independent of the mayor’s office and the police department

and reports directly to the council.

According to Patrick, a public safety audit team could serve as a body that provides oversight to increase accountability and public trust. It would also be able to assist in the implementation of the consent decree.

Other jurisdictions Koski points to that have created Police Accountability Auditors or audit teams that are either the same, or similar, to what is being recommended include Aurora, Colo; King County, Wash.; Denver, Colo.; Portland, Ore.; and, San Jose, Calif.

According to Patrick, “Based on the amount of risk that exists in the public safety sphere, we think it’s important to add dedicated resources to the internal audit team,” he said. Because the city’s concept of public safety is evolving the extra monitoring could be especially valuable. “Internal audit remains the only oversight body outside of the executive reporting line,” he added. It also has the “free, full, and unrestricted access to information, and the structure to report non-public/confidential information.”

With both federal and state Investigations going on and court orders that may take years to complete, Patrick said, “Internal audit staff can provide and build institutional knowledge, relationships, and trust while maintaining independence.”

Whether or not it is required in a consent decree, Koski is committed to working on the establishment of a Public Safety Audit Team. “Creating a Public Safety Audit Team will allow us to create institutional checks and balances on our executive branch’s authority over all public safety functions in the city of Minneapolis,” she said.

“We need to take collective action, and act with urgency, coordination, and intentionality,” Koski wrote in a recent newsletter. “It’s our responsibility to change the culture, and to make sure that the racial discrimination that has plagued the city of Minneapolis ends with us.”

To learn more and share your ideas with MDHR, see <https://mn.gov/mdhr/mpd/>.



## MEET COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER ANDREA TRITSCHLER

I am the new communications manager at the Longfellow Community Council. I joined LCC in 2022 after working as an events and marketing manager for an independent bookstore in Greater Longfellow. Originally from Milwaukee, I have been a reporter and editor for several newspapers and magazines in Milwaukee, Denver and beyond. I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in journalism and has a graduate certificate in publishing from the University of Denver.

I have lived in the Kingfield neighborhood for a little over two years now. I moved back to Minneapolis after spending four years in Denver. I moved right before the pandemic, so I feel like I still have so much to explore, although I've loved taking long walks by the lakes and going up to the Washburn Park water tower in Tangletown. I love architecture and art, and the views from the water tower are magical, not to mention the air traffic.

While I don't live in Greater Longfellow, I've worked in the neighborhood for several years, so I feel very connected to the community. I'm often biking around the neighborhood or reading a book in a corner somewhere. I love movies and the Trylon is

### LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY ANDREA TRITSCHLER,  
communications  
andrea@longfellow.org



one of my favorite spots to catch a film – it's such a gem.

### WHAT DREW YOU TO LONGFELLOW AND THIS POSITION?

I worked in the neighborhood throughout the pandemic and the uprisings and watched a lot of the devastation to the neighborhood firsthand. I became invested in the vision and rebuilding of the neighborhood and wanted to be a meaningful contributor to the well-being of neighbors and businesses. My background in community reporting is foundational to my belief that we can do so much on a community and neighborhood level – our voices really matter, and being a part of LCC I have the opportunity to help amplify those voices

and work to create a stronger and more united community.

### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS ROLE?

I'm still getting acclimated to the neighborhood and organization, but one of my goals is to listen to the needs of residents and businesses and find the best ways to support them. I want to be an effective communicator and resource for people in the neighborhood and relate with them through languages and art and organizing. I'm excited to spread the word of what LCC does and make more people knowledgeable about our organization, while connecting with people and businesses in the neighborhood.

### WHAT VALUE DOES THE LCC BRING TO THE COMMUNITY?

LCC focuses on issues and needs that are specific to our community – things like housing, development, transportation and environment. We facilitate resident and business engagement to work for the betterment of the neighborhood and form relationships that foster a strong sense of community.

### BECKY TIMM'S NEW POSITION

Twin Cities Medical Society is pleased to announce that Becky Timm has been named as the organization's new CEO. Timm is a seasoned nonprofit executive, with 25 years of experience working in leadership roles for several local organizations, most recently the East Nokomis Neighborhood Association. Timm has a master's degree in Holistic Health Studies from St. Catherine's University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude. Timm and her family are originally from the Twin Cities and live currently in Minneapolis.



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## Garage sales, kickball tournament coming

### NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BY BRANDON LONG  
executive director  
Brandon@nokomiseast.org



### GARAGE SALE DAY RETURNS ON JUNE 4

The annual NENA garage sale brings buyers and sellers together for a neighborhood-wide event. Whether you're looking to clean out the basement or seeking reasonably priced hidden treasures, this is the event for you, your friends, and family.

Register your sale by June 1, 2022, at [www.nokomiseast.org/garage-sale/](http://www.nokomiseast.org/garage-sale/). NENA suggests a donation of \$10+, which will be used for NENA Neighborhood Projects.

On June 4, 2022, you can access a Downloadable Map or visit Oxendale's Market and Nokomis Beach Coffee after 9 a.m. for a printed map of sales.

### GREAT NENA KICKBALL TOURNAMENT AND FUNDRAISER JULY 23

Enjoy a family-friendly summer afternoon and raise money for neighborhood events and programs!

Vie for the title of best kickball team in Nokomis East! Get an 8-10 person co-ed team together for the mother of all tournaments on Saturday, July 23 (Rain Date: Sunday, July 24) at Keewaydin Park.

The team registration deadline is July 15 and includes a \$100 registration fee per team.

While at our payment site, which can be found at [www.nokomiseast.org/kickball/](http://www.nokomiseast.org/kickball/), please consider making an additional team donation. There is a minimum of eight players per team, but no cap on the maximum number for your co-ed team. Players must be 15 years or older. There are no Nokomis East residency requirements – all are welcome to play! Teams will play a minimum of three games. Ballpark classics and snacks will be available for sale during games for teams and their screaming fans.

We are also offering three ways for local businesses to be involved in this popular community event and raise funds.

Event sponsorships – there are sponsorship levels for all budgets. We are seeking online/check donations for the event. Raffle donations – We will be organizing a raffle during the event. We are seeking gift cards / certificates. The raffle theme is "Health and Active Living." Contact [nenan@nokomiseast.org](mailto:nenan@nokomiseast.org) with information on your donation, and



Volunteers build raised garden beds at the Giving Garden at Trinity Lutheran Church. Food grown will be donated to a food shelf.

we will arrange a pick-up time. Individual and groupings of businesses are strongly encouraged to field your own team. Start designing your team t-shirt and promote your business.

Questions? Contact NENA at 612-724-5652 or [nenan@nokomiseast.org](mailto:nenan@nokomiseast.org).

### START PLANNING YOUR SPRING PROJECTS

Check out the housing resources available through NENA for homeowners, renters, and residential property owners in the four Nokomis East neighborhoods of Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park, and Wenonah.

NENA offers up to \$500 in matching grants for curb appeal and home security projects. We offer up to \$7,500 through our Staying in Place grant program. And we also have a home improvement loan program with competitive rates and the home emergency repair forgivable home loans for income-qualified residents. Visit [www.nokomiseast.org](http://www.nokomiseast.org) for more information.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

6/4/2022: Nokomis East Garage Sale Day!

6/23/2022: NENA Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Morris Park Rec Center

7/23/2022: Great NENA Kickball Tournament and Fundraiser, 8 a.m. at Keewaydin Park

GARAGE SALE  
GARAGE SALE  
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GARAGE SALE  
GARAGE SALE

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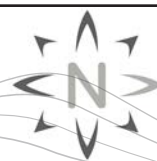
Maps and  
details will be  
available June  
10th

### Longfellow Community Council

Improving the well being of our diverse community through engagement, investment and empowerment!

[www.longfellow.org](http://www.longfellow.org)

612-722-4529



Nokomis East  
Neighborhood Association

## Nokomis East Garage Sale Day

[nokomiseast.org](http://nokomiseast.org)

@NokomisEast  
Facebook

Our annual NENA garage sale day brings  
buyers and sellers together for a  
neighborhood-wide event on June 4.

Register Your Sale by 6/1

Visit [www.nokomiseast.org/garage-sale/](http://www.nokomiseast.org/garage-sale/)



## PLAN IT

## SLIDESHOW BY ERIC DREGNI

Longfellow author Eric Dregni will be giving a slideshow presentation on his new book about roadside attractions at Moon Palace Books on May 31 at 7 p.m. Filled with color photography, entertaining site descriptions and histories, and five unique infographic map illustrations, "The Impossible Road Trip" is your ultimate look back at America's most famous – and quirkiest – roadside attractions, past and present.

## SOUL OF THE SOUTHSIDE - JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL

The Hook and Ladder Theater and Lounge will host the the Soul of the Southside Juneteenth Festival on Sunday, June 19 from 1-6 p.m. The free event will feature live music, speakers, poets, black owned business marketplace, live art, and food vendors.

## PEER SUPPORT GROUP

A monthly peer support group for music industry professionals meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. at the Mission Room at The Hook & Ladder. It offers a place outside of the music to share in the joys and the pains of this thing called life. Light refreshments and munchies served.

## SEE 'MISS ROBIN HOOD' IN JUNE

Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater Company is pleased to announce their outdoor summer production of "Miss Robin Hood and her Merry Band of Thieves," a new version of the classic British legend. Written by Noreen K. Brandt, the production is directed by Greg Bastien, with original music by Coral Bastien. It will be performed on Friday, June 17 and Saturday, June 18, as well as June 24 and June 25, at

Lake Nokomis Park in South Minneapolis. Performances are all at 7 p.m. Tickets are free.

## LOLA ART CRAWL RETURNS SEPT. 17-18

LoLa Art Crawl is back! The popular Longfellow Art Tour returns Sept. 17-18. The self-guided tour of local art at artists' homes and businesses winds throughout Greater Longfellow, bordered by the Midtown Greenway, Minnehaha Falls, Hiawatha Avenue and Mississippi River. Look for the yellow LoLa signs. It will run from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. both days. The League of Longfellow Artists (LoLa) is a nonprofit organization and voluntary association of artists who live or work in Longfellow. More at LoLaArt.org.

## 'AGE OF AGE' EXHIBIT JULY 2-31

No matter your age you probably think about age. Do you feel old one day and then young another? Are you treated differently because of your age or your "perceived age"? Art to Change the World will present a social justice art exhibit at Homewood Studios (2400 Plymouth Ave.) July 2-31 on the theme of ageism. This exhibit will include 10 teams of two artists that have a 20-year age difference. Artists range in age from 25 to 103.

## GRANT PROPOSALS BEING ACCEPTED

The Minneapolis Foundation, in partnership with LISC Twin Cities and Propel Nonprofits, announces the launch of a new grant opportunity to support small business recovery and rebuilding in three of the Minneapolis business corridors worst hit by the combined impact of COVID-19 and the destruction following the murder of George Floyd. Prospective applicants can review detailed grant guidelines and eligibility information by going to [www.minneapolisfoundation.org/main-street](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/main-street). Grant proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis.

## BRIEFS

## LAKE NOKOMIS AREA GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER EVALUATION

There will be a town hall meeting at 7 p.m. May 31 at the Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Parkway, to discuss findings of the Lake Nokomis Area Groundwater and Surface Water Evaluation. There will be a presentation and time for people to ask questions and provide comments. You can view the findings of the evaluation and learn more about Lake Nokomis area groundwater and surface water issues at <https://www.minneapolis.gov/nokomis-groundwater>.

## NO-KNOCK WARRANT REPORT

Minneapolis Civil Rights Police Conduct Review staff recently reviewed all the Minneapolis no-knock warrants between Sept. 1, 2021, through Jan. 31, 2022 and reported that all of the 29 no-knock warrants executed by Minneapolis police during that period were "targeting" people of color. They reported that 24 African Americans, three Native Americans, one Hispanic and one Asian American were targets of the raids.

## STATE POLICE INCREASE PRESENCE IN CITY

In April, the city council authorized agreements with the Minnesota State Patrol and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) that will add patrols and investigators in Minneapolis. There will be added patrols in a "North Focus Zone" that covers the West Broadway Business Corridor, and a "South Focus Zone" along Lake Street from Hiawatha Ave. to Interstate 35W and from Nicollet Ave. to Hennepin Ave. The State Patrol will have four officers work four hours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week. The city will pay the State Patrol \$400,000 based on an hourly rate. The BCA have will have

13 investigators working in the city police department helping investigate violent crimes. The BCA will be compensated up to \$300,000 during the term of the contract. The city or state may terminate the agreements at any time, with a 30-day notice, but they are not set to expire until Dec. 31, 2023.

## STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Jacob Frey gave his 2022 State of the City address via a video recording on April 26. In it, he highlighted changes within city government and his spending proposal for the \$43 million of remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The address was given a day before the release of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights findings of police civil rights violations. "This spring season has cast a new light across our city, bringing with it a palpable renewed sense of hope and optimism," he said. "From meetings in city hall to conversations at the many groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings, I'm struck by a newfound sense of purpose and focus, a resolve to attack the day with purpose." His spending plan includes funding for affordable housing, public safety, and economic recovery, as well as climate and public health. The council was expected to consider amendments and approve a final budget for the funds on May 26.

## COUNTY ZERO WASTE PLAN

Hennepin County is working on a new zero waste plan. The new plan will complement the county's newly adopted Climate Action Plan and provide the foundation for the 2024 Solid Waste Management Master Plan. To help develop the plan, people are invited to share their thoughts and experiences in recycling, composting, and reducing waste online. [hennepin.org/zero-waste-future](http://hennepin.org/zero-waste-future).

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon

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[www.bethlehemcov.org](http://www.bethlehemcov.org)

Pastor Colleen Nelson  
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Traditional Service – 9 AM  
Contemporary Service – 10:30 AM  
All sermons can be found online

**Epworth United Methodist**  
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232  
[www.epworthmpls.org](http://www.epworthmpls.org)

Rev. Elizabeth Macaulay  
Sundays, 9am - Faith Formation for All Ages;  
10am - Join Us for in-person worship, live-streaming on FB @ EpworthUMCMPLS

**Faith Ev. Lutheran Church**  
3430 East 51st St. • 612-729-5463  
[www.faithlutheranmpls.org](http://www.faithlutheranmpls.org)

Vacancy  
Sundays – Worship - 9 am  
(Communion 1st and 3rd Sundays)

**Minnehaha Communion Lutheran**  
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527  
[www.minnehahacommunion.org](http://www.minnehahacommunion.org)

Pastor Shawna Day  
9:45 am Sunday Worship in person & online. Info on church website  
12-step groups Tuesday thru Friday evenings

**Park Avenue United Methodist Church**  
3400 Park Ave. • 612-825-6863  
[www.parkavechurch.org](http://www.parkavechurch.org)  
Senior Pastor Gregg Taylor, Minister of Preaching Steven Belton  
Reaching & rebuilding in the Central Neighborhood. 100+ years of lively worship and diverse congregation.  
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**St. Albert the Great Catholic**  
E. 29th St. at 32nd Ave. S.  
612-724-3643  
[www.saintalbertthegreat.org](http://www.saintalbertthegreat.org)

Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.  
Weekend masses (masked & socially distanced) with attendance SUGGESTED by last name:  
Saturday 5:00 pm. A-G  
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Sunday 12 noon. N-Z  
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**Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls**  
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691  
[www.trinityfalls.org](http://www.trinityfalls.org)

Pastor Matt Oxendale  
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In person & online  
Call about July camp & Aug VBS  
AA Sun & Tues 7:00 p.m.

### PROJECT OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES

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## CONGRATS

to our winners in the  
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Contest



### ◆ CATEGORY X: Third Place –

5 stories written  
by Tesha M.  
Christensen,  
Margie O'Loughlin, and Chloe  
Peter on impacts of COVID-19

### ◆ SOCIAL ISSUES: Third place

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

### ◆ HARD NEWS: Second place –

"Redesign saves Coliseum"  
written by Iric Nathanson



**Messenger**  
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## HIRING

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## HIRING: CARRIERS FOR WALKING ROUTES

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## Home

### CRISIS HOTLINE

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

### HANDYMAN

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By PENNY FULLER

What thoughts or images come to mind when you hear "freshwater"? Do you see a sparkling lake, hear water lapping against the shoreline, feel it tickling your toes? Is it a gurgling creek winding through woods and meadows to an unseen destination?

The darker picture: Freshwater faces continual threat.

One huge threat comes from stormwater run-off. Salt laden roads and walkways increase the salinity of water more each year. Per the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: "Chloride from de-icing salt and water softener salt gets into lakes, streams and groundwater that supplies drinking water. One teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of water. Fifty lakes and streams have chloride levels too high to meet the standards designed to protect fish and other aquatic life; 75 more are nearing that level."

So, is there a bright side?

What thoughts or images emerge when you hear the term Minnesota Water Stewards? Oft an unseen force, they are growing network of neighbors in the community. But who are they and what do they do?

In 2013 Freshwater, a non-profit organization dedicated to protection, conservation and restoration of all freshwater, created a program called Minnesota Water Stewards (formerly Master Water Stewards) in partnership with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) to train citizen volunteers to be leaders in their community. The goal: protecting freshwater. Water Stewards act as leaders, educating on ways to prevent water pollution and showing community members ways to conserve and protect waterways. Freshwater Society Education and Program Coordinator Alex Van Loh reported they are 470 strong, and growing.

As part of her daily work with landscape clients, Standish resident Roxanne Stuhr said she is painfully aware of how natural resources, particularly water, are routinely compromised by human activities. Keen to make a difference in her community, she considered the Water Steward program as an opportunity. Stuhr was among the first group certified by the program. Stuhr said, "One of my biggest rewards comes from guiding people through the process of creating their own individual take on an effective system and seeing them be proud and excited of their contri-

# GUARDIANS of our FRESHWATER

Minnesota Water Stewards connect over clean water



Standish-Ericsson resident Roxanne Stuhr said, "One of my biggest rewards comes from guiding people through the process of creating their own individual take on an effective system and seeing them be proud and excited of their contribution." (Photo by Penny Fuller)

bution."

Former Freshwater Director of Programs, Peggy Knappb, explained the underlying program concept. "It starts with an assumption that everyone cares about clean water. Everything at every moment of every day depends on it, but most people don't know how to act on that idea. We wanted to teach people behaviors, actions they could apply individually. People are more apt to trust information from someone they know, like a neighbor, rather than an expert who's a stranger. So,

the idea was to educate a core group who would teach their neighbor. And then it spreads neighbor to neighbor, building relationships into a locally-based leadership."

Sue Nissen, of Edina, recounted growing up in the midwest with fond memories of summers spent at the lake. "The water is both energizing and calming," she said. "It's just part of me, and we are all made of water." Nissen became a Minnesota Water Steward. "The training itself was really great," she said, "not

just knowledge, but the forming of relationships with others...many permanent friendships."

Nissen completed a collaborative capstone project at Union Congregational Church in St Louis Park in 2015. "It was really a great experience and a wonderful success," she said. "It's funny," she added, "as a water steward I thought I'd just be digging holes, working on little projects, but it's become about educating and reaching out to others to help them understand how vital clean water is and how ridiculous it is to contaminate our fresh water." Nissen is also a founding member of StopOverSalting (SOS) in Minnesota, working to support legislation aimed at reducing oversalting practices within the private sector.

A Minnesota Water Steward's work is ongoing. They commit minimally 25 hours annually of outreach and educating their community about clean water practices. A steward represents just the tip of an iceberg, each connecting to many people in their own community, with effects far reaching. Knappb summarized: "From one small change you create over what you can control (like keeping storm water on your property) you see yourself differently, as a person who does things to protect water, and you feel inspired to take more steps...to want to share and it grows from there."

Van Loh described the program's ongoing focus: empowerment and engagement of the community to address local water pollution and increase public awareness, education and action on water quality issues. He explained that the program is evolving including a new branch called Water Conservation Advisor (WCA). And there is Art for Water, another way to reach the community. Following coursework completion, a public art installation furthers outreach and inspires yet more individuals to care for Minnesota's water.

You don't have to be certified as a water steward to make a difference. There are many ways that you can choose to be the difference, from simple to complex. Examples: keeping yard and pet waste off the street and out of storm drains, directing gutters to the yard instead of the street or adding a rain garden. Also, reduction or elimination of fertilizer and pesticides and switching from lead to non-toxic tackle. Their website provides a starting point to learning and considering your options. <https://minnesotawaterstewards.org>

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