

SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • NOVEMBER 17, 2022 • VOL. 1 • NO. 21



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CUAPB President Michelle Gross concerned about how Minneapolis is responding to mental health crises with force

By Jan Willms

When five people in the throes of a mental health crisis were killed in incidents with police, Michelle Gross said she knew Communities United Against Police Brutality (CUAPB) had to act.



CUAPB was created 22 years ago following the shooting death of Charles "Abuka" Sanders by Minneapolis police.

'THIS IS TOO MUCH'

As CUAPB has grown from its first meeting at Hosmer Library in Minneapolis, so have the tasks it has undertaken.

"When it got to the end of the year and there were five in a row in the state in the midst of a mental health crisis whose lives were lost, I just said this is too much," stated Gross, who is president of CUAPB.

CUAPB is made up of all volunteers

who meet each Saturday. Work groups meet throughout the week. They are located at 4200 Cedar Ave. S.

TRAVIS' LAW

One of the volunteers, Bill Czech, had been working on the issue of co-response for mental health calls for quite some time, according to Gross. "He had been working with counties and municipalities

for a while. We started to put together this white paper, and we spent several months researching.

"We learned we have terrific resources already," Gross said. "All southern counties had access to mobile mental health crisis responders. We have this resource, but people aren't using it."

She said that if people wanted mental health crisis responders to come to their house, they had to know the "secret magic phone number." She added that the number was listed in a corner on one of the webpages for the Minnesota Department of Health. "It

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ELECTION BRINGS MANY FIRSTS

By Chloe Peter

The 2022 midterm election provided many firsts for Hennepin County and Minnesota as a whole. Black women will serve in the Minnesota Senate for the first time with the election of Zaynab Mohamed, Erin Maye Quad, and Clare Oumou Verbeten. Dawanna Witt was the first Black person and woman to be elected as Hennepin County Sheriff. Leigh Finke was the first transgender lawmaker elected to serve in the state House. Mary Moriarty was the first openly LGBTQ+ woman to be elected as Hennepin County Attorney. Both candidates, Collin Beachy and Sonya Emerick, elected for the Minneapolis school board at large positions are members of the LGBTQ+ community.

FIRST BLACK WOMEN IN SENATE

Zaynab Mohamed in District 63, Erin Maye Quad in District 56, and Clare Oumou Verbeten in District 66 are the first three

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Tammy Ortegon, owner of ColorWheel Gallery at 46th and Grand, shows pictures of mushrooms and other fungi during a community pop-up event along Nicollet Ave. to inspire art-makers in the community. (Photo by Chloe Peter)

ART FOR EVERYONE

Local art gallery creates space where art for and by the people can take place.

By Chloe Peter

Tammy Ortegon considers herself a folk artist, and she believes folk art is created by and for the people. A part of making this a reality is by creating a space where community members can gather to learn and express themselves. For 19 years Ortegon, a Kingfield resident, has run the ColorWheel Gallery (46th and Grand) that features her own art along with many other local artists. With art exhibits, special events, classes, and inspiration, the ColorWheel Gallery aims to make art accessible to everyone by focusing on community building, diverse voices, and social change.

"My vision for the ColorWheel Gallery is to be a community space that supports artists, neighbors, and ideas. I want to attract customers that want to make a difference and a statement in what they choose to buy," Ortegon said

WHAT KINDS OF ART DO YOU OFFER?

Ortegon: The gift shop carries an always changing, variety of locally made, hand craft-

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This community holds incredible hope for you and this department.

Lisa Goodman



No one person can undo centuries worth of harm, but it does take people who are willing to authentically and deeply engage with everyone.

Aisha Chughtai



EYES ON NEW POLICE CHIEF

By Cam Gordon

With words of praise and hope, the city council unanimously approved Mayor Jacob Frey's nomination of Brian O'Hara to be the next Minneapolis Police Chief on Nov. 2, 2022. He was officially sworn in on Nov. 7 to serve a term ending January 2026.

Brian O'Hara, age 43, is from Kearny, N.J. and graduated from Kearny High School in 1997. In 2001, he joined the Newark Police Department and became a captain in 2016. From 2017-2020 he

led the department's consent decree and planning division and worked on implementing a court-ordered consent decree between the Department of Justice and the City of Newark.

In 2021, he was appointed as the public safety director. This July, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka appointed him to be a deputy mayor. At the time he became deputy mayor, Steve Strunsky, of Advance Media/NJ.com, wrote, "Following an uptick in crime, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka has removed the city's public safety director, placing him in a newly-created deputy mayor position while the city hunts for a

Council members share hopes as Brian O'Hara named as new police chief

new head of the public safety department."

As deputy mayor, O'Hara applied for the police chief positions of both St. Paul and Minneapolis.

During the appointment process in Minneapolis, several Newark organizations sent letters praising O'Hara's work, including the Newark Interfaith Alliance, Newark Community Street Team, and the All Stars Project of New Jersey.

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COMMUNITY DIVIDED OVER BETTER BIKE LANES ON SUMMIT AVENUE

Presentation of the city's draft of the master plan for Summit Avenue bike lanes sparks controversy.

By **Chloe Peter**

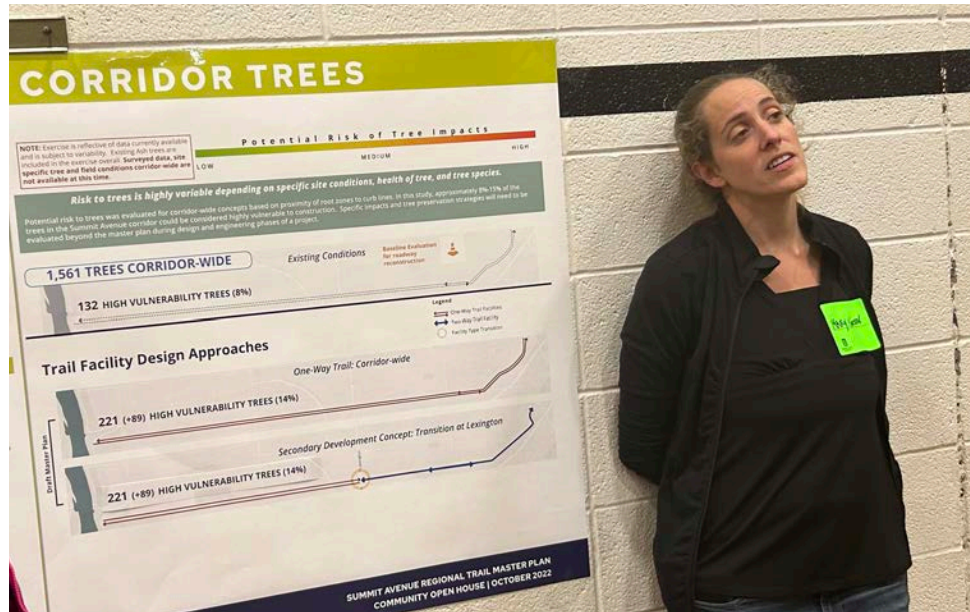
The city's proposal to remove mature trees and parking along Summit Avenue to create a bike trail is creating controversy throughout the Twin Cities. More than 150 people attended an open house at Hidden River Middle School (1700 Summit Ave.) on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022, to discuss the Summit Avenue Regional Trail master plan. Some attendees stressed making sure the historical aspects of Summit Avenue are protected, while others are concerned over tree loss, landscaping and the 150 driveways along the route. Other attendees are looking forward to a better bike route.

Comments were written on brightly covered post-it notes and stuck to a map of the master plan. They included concerns such as "I still don't know what the plan is," and "Why is preference being given to bikers?" Others expressed support: "Big fan of off-street lanes, I don't want to be in the way!" and "Exciting! We use Summit for E/W connection - this will be great!"

Summit Avenue provides a link between the river and downtown St. Paul. The city has proposed different options for a new bike lane along with restructuring of the road. One option is a two-way separated trail going one direction that would replace the parking lane. Another is a one-way separated trail on both sides of the road.

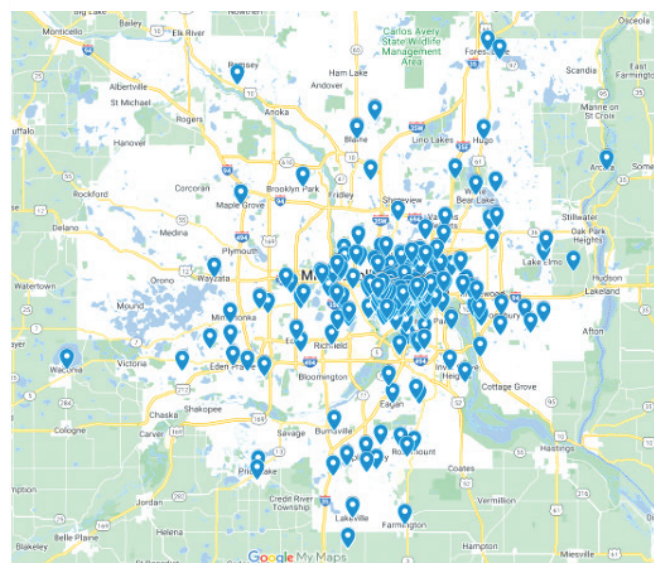
"Summit Avenue has been an integral part of the St. Paul community since the mid 1800s and remains one of the most iconic and historic areas of the city," according to the city's draft master plan. "Over time, the purpose and use of this corridor has evolved with the needs of the community. This master plan aims to anticipate future needs of the corridor and plan implementation strategies that will maintain and preserve the iconic elements of Summit Avenue."

The open house was a part of the master plan schedule phase three, slated from summer of 2022 to winter of 2023, which includes refining the plan and gaining approval. As of now, the plan for the Summit Avenue Regional trail is only 60 percent of the way done. The approval process will require the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), Saint Paul Transportation Commission, Saint Paul Parks Commission, Saint Paul City Council, and Metropolitan Council Parks and



City Landscape Architect Mary Norton (at right) explains the city's findings about tree loss that would happen when constructing the bike lanes. The city is working with the Forestry Department of St. Paul and will continue throughout the process. (Photo by Chloe Peter)

REGIONAL MAP OF SOS SAVE OUR STREET PETITION SIGNATORIES OPPOSING THE CITY'S PROPOSED PLAN



Of the 1100 signatories that provided their address, 76% do not live on Summit Avenue. Total collected to date: 1,978 signatures.

Signatures have been collected primarily online at www.savesummitavenue.org. Paper petitions have also been collected at information tables set up in parks and at community events.

Open Space Commission to sign off on the project.

INPUT FROM BIKERS

Bikers have expressed concerns about safety with on-road bike lanes, and some believe that this new design will help with that.

"I am excited for better bike lanes and bike infrastructure in Summit Avenue," said Susan Socehacki. "It would be a great improvement and make things a lot safer for folks who don't want to be car owners."

Another attendee, Kathy Ebiertz, said, "I'd love to see it safer, and the proposal is good for that. I use the bike lane a lot."

HISTORICAL CONCERNS

The Summit Avenue Regional Trail

corridor runs through several historic districts and is next to many historical buildings and sites. The trail corridor provides access to other historical areas, particularly those within downtown St. Paul and near the Mississippi River. The historic districts and sites within the corridor have different requirements and recommendations. In general, some of the significant historical elements along Summit Avenue include the historic architecture, general pervious and impervious rhythm, and other character defining features, unique to individual segments of the corridor.

Cultural Resources Project Manager and Architectural Historian Renee Barnes of Bolton and Menk, the civil engineering company helping the city with this project, was at the open house to answer questions about historical preservation of

the Summit Avenue project.

"The overall goal is that the city will be able to recreate Summit Avenue with no negative impacts to the history," Barnes said.

However, some attendees were still worried that the master plan lacked the steps in place for protecting Summit Avenue's history.

"Summit Avenue is a historic street, and I think it should be preserved as is," said Carolyn McClay. "I think this is liberal progressives trying to tell us what's right. I feel like they are very patronizing, and I don't need them to tell me if I should ride my bike or drive my car."

A citizen group, "Save Our Streets," argues that the existing bike lane along Summit Avenue is adequate, although it should be repainted, and buffers added where possible without reducing parking or green space.

"We request that the historical characteristics be preserved, the features which make Summit Avenue a distinct and nationally known street," said Bonnie Alton, a member of "Save Our Streets."

CONCERNS OVER TREE LOSS

An inventory of trees and greenspace along Summit Avenue was completed by the city as part of the planning process for this master plan. Different aspects of the parkway canopy were mapped including all tree locations, structural and critical root zones, landmark trees, and ash trees within the corridor. The structural and critical root zones are a starting point when considering a trail location and the potential impact on mature trees.

City landscape architect Mary Norton explained the process the city has used to preserve trees. Project designers worked with the city's forestry department to pinpoint specific tree preservation strategies, which will continue to be evaluated during the design and engineering phases of the project, said Norton. The city estimates that there are 221 trees that will be vulnerable to construction. However, "Save Our Streets" argues that more than 300 trees are at risk.

One member mentioned not supporting the project until tree protections were put into place by the city. However, Mary Norton pointed out that the master plan has not given out the dimensions of the boulevard as these numbers have not yet been set in stone, and that this is not the first time this citizen group has given out possible misleading information about the regional trail.

A draft of the master plan is available on the city's website, and public comments will be open through the end of November. Learn more about the Summit Avenue Regional Trail at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/summit-avenue-regional-trail>.

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UPHOLDING CIVIL LIBERTIES, RIGHTS ACROSS THE TWIN CITIES

George Floyd, the ACLU, and Guthrie Theater's 'Sally & Tom'

By **Susan Schaefer**
UNDER THE HOOD



WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS...*

Sometimes coincidence sparks a column. During the second week of October my volunteer work with the ACLU and attending a Guthrie Theater play coincided with what would have been George Floyd's 49th birthday providing a unique opportunity to introduce how the work of two mainstay Twin Cities institutions supports our civil rights. (*Preamble of the United States Constitution)

THE LEGACY OF GEORGE FLOYD'S MURDER

Residents across the metro area know better than most that the 2020 killing of George Floyd in south Minneapolis changed history. Sparking protests across the United States and around the globe, Floyd's death fittingly raised the tenor of public discourse about structural racism and its devastating impact on the lives of our citizens.

On Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, Floyd's birthday, the National Urban League issued a press release stating that, "civil rights leaders called on the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act – a critical step to holding law enforcement accountable for unconstitutional and unethical conduct." Passage of this act is overdue.

According to Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., "The killing of George Floyd held a mirror up to a truth about the American legal system." Civil rights leaders were moved to action by watching Derek Chauvin's sneer as he bore down on Floyd's neck, "believing that nothing was going to happen to him, that he would face neither criminal penalty nor civil liability," Ifill said.

Although Chauvin has been found accountable, more safeguards of our civil liberties are needed, as is more public dialogue. During the second week of October, the anniversary of Floyd's birthday, our regional American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU of MN) and the Guthrie Theater held events that promoted public discourse about our civil liberties and civil rights.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

In 1787, in my hometown of Philadelphia, "one of the most remarkable blueprints of self-government" was born when 13 delegates produced the first draft of our United States Constitution. However, many of these envoys felt that the draft was deeply flawed by not specifying individual rights. They believed that the document explained what the government could do, but not what it couldn't. This absence of a delineated "bill of rights" obstructed its ratification for four years. In the end, the framers heeded Thomas Jefferson who had argued:

A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference.

Inspired by Jefferson, drafted by James Madison, the American Bill of Rights was adopted in 1791 as the Constitution's first 10 amendments. They constitute our civil liberties and are the law of the land. Yet, Jefferson himself openly vio-



The audience pays rapt attention at ACLUMN breakfast. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

lated those civil liberties as a slaveholder. More on that below.

CIVIL LIBERTIES VS CIVIL RIGHTS: A BRIEF PRIMER

While most Americans use the terms "civil rights" and "civil liberties" interchangeably, they are, in fact, distinct terms. Civil liberties are freedoms guaranteed to us by those Constitutional amendments to protect us from tyranny. They include:

- The right to free speech
- The right to privacy
- The right to remain silent in a police interrogation
- The right to be free from unreasonable searches of your home
- The right to a fair court trial
- The right to marry
- The right to vote

Civil rights are where law and legislation come in. Our civil liberties are protected against misuse by civil rights laws established through the federal government via federal legislation or case law. Our civil rights entitle us to the basic right to be free from unequal treatment based on certain protected characteristics, such as race, gender, disability, and more, in settings such as employment, education, housing, and access to public facilities.

For example, the right to marry is a civil liberty, while gay marriage is a civil rights matter. So, if a same-sex or opposite-sex couple is denied a marriage license because the court clerk has decided not to issue any licenses, their civil liberties have been violated. But if the clerk denied marriage licenses only to LGBTQ+ couples, it's a civil rights violation.

Unlike civil liberties, which guarantee individuals certain broad-based rights, civil rights imply protection based on certain characteristics.

THE BIRTH OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

In 1791, when our civil liberties were enshrined in the Constitution, most citizens had no way to uphold them. Over 100 years passed when "most common constitutional violations went unchallenged because the people whose rights were most often denied were precisely those members of society who were least aware of their rights and least able to afford a lawyer. They had no access to those impenetrable bulwarks of liberty – the courts. The Bill of Rights was like an engine no one knew how to start."

In the early 20th century, all that changed. A small group of visionaries that included the world-renowned author, Helen Keller, "dedicated themselves to holding the government to the Bill of Rights' promises." In 1920, they founded the American Civil Liberties Union and joining forces with the already established National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, "began



George Floyd Square (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

to challenge constitutional violations in court on behalf of those who had been previously shut out. This was the beginning of what has come to be known as public interest law," providing the missing ingredient that made the constitutional system and Bill of Rights finally work.

THE ACLU OF MINNESOTA

Founded in 1952, the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, which became the ACLU of Minnesota, carries on this important work of "promoting, protecting, and extending the civil liberties and civil rights of people in Minnesota through litigation, lobbying, and community engagement." It is the pre-eminent civil liberties organization in our state, and a nationally admired leader among all the national ACLU affiliates.

Because of its fervent mission, and the organization's continual delivery on its promise to undo "the pervasive unfairness that leaves our communities less equal, less safe, and less free," I became a member, supporter and active volunteer.

On Wednesday morning, Oct. 12, after years of pandemic quarantining, I gratefully found myself once again as an in-person volunteer for the 2022 ACLU of MN Annual Fundraising Breakfast, held in the soaring, light-filled McNamara Alumni Center of the University of Minnesota. Well over a thousand hearty Minnesotans packed the auditorium to support its mission, vision, values and continued successes.

At this first in-person event since Floyd's murder, the ACLU's program paid homage to the ramifications of this tragic incident. "It is hard to overstate the galvanizing effect of Mr. Floyd's death on public discourse..." a recent New York Times article commented. A video segment of the breakfast program that graphically depicted the attacks by the Minneapolis police on members of press covering the

Floyd protests validated the Times sentiment.

Under the "Values" section of the ACLU of MN website are the following principles: "We value civil rights and civil liberties for everyone, especially the most vulnerable members of our community who have been historically and systematically deprived of them. We value equity for all people, and equal justice under the law. We value the inherent dignity of all people."

THE GUTHRIE THEATER AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Echoing these proclamations, let's pivot to the work and mission of the Guthrie Theater. Following the years-long quarantine and the social unrest after Floyd's death, the Guthrie emerged with a renewed commitment to "the creation of theater that wrestles with urgent questions and inspires dialogue with audiences; expands the diversity of voices, visions and styles onstage; and engages community members currently underserved by the Guthrie."

In that spirit, we circle back to Thomas Jefferson, the founding father credited with the creation of civil liberties and to the new production, "Sally & Tom," by Pulitzer Prize winner, Suzan-Lori Parks that runs through Nov. 6, 2022. The night before the ACLU breakfast, I sat front row center for this landmark production.

This work is a play-within-a-play that amplifies "the galvanizing effect of Mr. Floyd's death on public discourse," not solely by questioning the nature of Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemmings, sister of his enslaved valet, but significantly for his lifelong refusal to release his hundreds of enslaved workers. Using a modern theatrical framing device to set this story, Parks brings into sharp relief "the parallels between 1790 and today."

While a major premise of the work rests on the controversy about whether Jefferson had intimate relations with and fathered children with Hemmings, Parks cleverly raises other critical questions about the sheer hypocrisy of this founding father who conceptualized the civil liberties that comprise the central laws of our country, and the unbearable legacy of inequality slavery has left. In a searing monologue, the character of Sally Hemmings' brother James tears apart the inhumanity and lack of dignity all of Jefferson's slaves suffered from this man who wrote of unalienable rights.

THE DISGRACE AND THE GRACE

The Twin Cities are forever disgraced by George Floyd's murder at the hands of Minneapolis police. However, our metro area is graced by two institutions, the ACLU of Minnesota located in St. Paul, and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, that in their respective ways battle the violation of the civil liberties through legal and legislative avenues and the arts.

There are many ways to support the ACLU of Minnesota. The Guthrie offers many advantageous ways to afford performances and plays. Here's a direct link about ways to save: <https://www.guthrietheater.org/shows-and-tickets/discounts/>

Whether by activism or the arts, supporting these institutions honors the memory of George Floyd and fosters continuing dialogue about our civil liberties and our civil rights.



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

CARRYING ON A TRADITION, ONE DOORSTEP AT A TIME

Musings on the demise of the Daily's print edition and switch to digital

It was the summer before my junior year at Hamline University in 1977. I had already been named the editor of the Hamline Oracle, Hamline's student newspaper, for my junior year, and I decided that I wanted to take a class at the University of Minnesota that summer before the rigors of my year as editor began. After reviewing a number of course descriptions at the University of Minnesota, I decided to enroll in an introductory class in Humanities taught by Richard Leppert.

The class was a delight, and I have since learned that Richard Leppert later became a Regents Professor Emeritus at the U of M. Humanities was a subject not offered at Hamline and I found it to be fascinating. Leppert was an excellent teacher and I found myself, once again, to be that student that was continually raising his hand and asking questions during class. I had worried, coming from a smaller private college, whether being on the U of M campus would be intimidating, not



By Denis Woulfe

to mention the much larger classes, but somehow after a few days went by I was so thoroughly engaged in the subject matter that the foreignness of the setting seemed to fade away.

We read "The Social Contract" by Rousseau and "The Sorrows of Young Werther" by Goethe, and much more. I absolutely loved my short stint as a U of M student. I didn't spend a lot of time on campus after my class was over, having to get to my job as a waiter at the White Bear Yacht Club in White Bear Lake immediately following, but while I was on campus twice a week, I always managed to find a copy of the Minnesota Daily to take home with me to read.

As a student journalist, I always admired the big stories that the Daily tackled and followed the Daily closely, picking up copies in later years when I was on the campus for dental work at the U of M Dental School. I knew that some of the talented journalists at the U of M later started the Twin Cities Reader and other area newspapers. And I also marveled at the Daily's ability to churn out a newspaper each day. At Hamline, while I was editor, we were scheduled to produce 27 issues during the course of the school year and one special edition during the January interim. But a daily paper produced by college students? It seemed like an impressive feat.

While it's been some time since I have been on the U of M campus, I was

saddened to learn recently that the Daily published its last issue in March of 2020. While initially the publication of the Daily was suspended during the pandemic as classes went virtual, intending to restart publication once in-person classes resumed, recently the staff at the Daily decided not to resume regular print publication, as reported in the Star Tribune.

While the Daily has pivoted to its online presence exclusively, and reportedly is enjoying an upward trend in terms of the growth of its digital audience, it is sad to note the passing of one of the U of M's legacies. When I was editor of the Monitor years back, I remember one community activist recounting how when she and her husband were considering the Midway as a place to live, they were debating the merits of the neighborhood and decided that the presence of a newspaper like the Monitor was a definite plus. Like many readers, they were one of the readers outside the official boundaries who just happened to pick up copies of the Monitor when they visited the Midway, just like when I visited the U of M campus. In both cases, that serendipitous readership doesn't occur with an online subscription. For that you have to sign up and don't just bump into a print copy in a coffee shop. A loss, I would say, for the reader, the community, and the institutions the media outlet represents.

While our industry has changed over the years, and reading habits alike, there is some comfort to know that our readers

at TMC Publications are still finding the Messenger, the Monitor, and the Southwest Connector at their doorsteps each month. While other media outlets have moved to only bulk drop deliveries or to digital only, TMC Publications still believes that our readers want a real newspaper that they can touch and feel each month. And they appreciate having one that is dropped at their front door. They want to know what's happening in their neighborhoods, what their neighborhood organizations are working on, and how their neighborhood officials are representing them. They want what's Relevant, Local and Trustworthy.

Bottom line is that we know from the Circulation Verification Council that our readers are reading us and using our newspapers to make purchasing decisions, get engaged with their communities, and help them make decisions on who to elect to represent them and how to live better lives. That's what community newspapers do best. And we plan to continue doing it.



Denis Woulfe has been working with community newspapers of one sort or another since he became editor of the Zephyr Lines, his high school newspaper, back in 1974, and he still considers the work that they do as important in building community. When he's not assisting his clients at TMC Publications with their marketing campaigns, you can probably find him on the tennis court somewhere as he is a captain for Senior Tennis Players Club of Minnesota. You can reach him at Denis@Monitor-SaintPaul.com

OUR MIDTERM ELECTIONS AND THE TYRANNY OF THE COMFORTABLE

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

It's Monday the 7th, and I'm writing the first section of this column the day before The Election. I'll write the second half on Nov. 9...



By Larry LaVercombe

PART ONE

I've finally quit reading the horserace predictions. Many of you probably quit long ago. It's demoralizing, hearing one poll after another predicting what seems unimaginable to me... That despite the hypocrisy and disingenuousness running rampant at all levels, the party that's not only embracing a senate candidate who is known to have put a gun to his girlfriend's head is also "favored" in most other races, as well. Election deniers, climate change deniers, Putin supporters, and instigators of absurd rumors like the one about Paul Pelosi's attacker seem on the verge of 'owning the libs' again. Rage and disinformation have become the weapons of choice for many - and to our dismay, it's looking like that could turn out to be the winning strategy.

And yet - here on Monday, I refuse to believe it. I contend that we are better than this. I remain ever the optimist - yet I must admit, the last few days have made me wonder whether I am a realistic person

or not.

I'm hoping to write a happy column on Wednesday, (which of course will be 10 days old by the time you read it.) I so hope to say that Democrats have held the House and picked up seats in the Senate, and that we might now get a chance to pass the Voting Rights Act. It would be nice to feel that we live in a "moral universe," one that's finally bending toward justice...

PART TWO

Tuesday night, my wife Diane and I decided not to subject ourselves to the "one percent reporting" flurry. Instead, we'd simply wake up and read the news.

In the morning, I awoke to this text, apparently sent to 19 people whose numbers are not in my phone:

"im bout to murder you all"

I thought to myself, "Well this could be a good sign." Maybe there wasn't a red wave after all!

And sure enough, the news was pretty mixed. Fetterman beat Dr. Oz. Yay. Tim Ryan lost to J.D. Vance. Boo. Can't tell who won the Senate, yet. Can't tell yet who won the House, either. Has anything changed?

Maybe not. And suddenly it dawned on me: comfortable people don't want change.

Quoting FiveThirtyEight: "One of the most ironclad rules in American politics is that the president's party loses ground

in midterm elections... Since the end of World War II, the president's party has consistently gotten a lower share of the national House popular vote in the midterm than in the prior presidential election. Indeed, in the 19 midterm elections between 1946 and 2018, the president's party has improved upon its share of the House popular vote just once."

Why? I propose this: While 90% of regular voters are highly engaged and committed to one party or the other, the "Unaffiliated Swing Voters" are the ones that determine virtually every outcome. And what makes these voters "unaffiliated" is that they are comfortable with the way things are. They are disengaged from politics, and they don't want whoever is president to be able to accomplish anything.

They say they don't like all the "partisan bickering," but that doesn't bother them as much as the prospect of something disturbing their comfort.

(And don't get me started on the nauseating implications of the word "bickering..." - as if we're talking about two siblings in the back seat rather than life and death issues like abortion, climate change, and democracy.)

I think it is clear to all of us that if you are committed to your party, you're not voting for the other one, no matter what the candidate does or stands for. We accept the fact that the party dominated by the Christian Right would prefer to

elect a Republican with several abortions and secret children rather than a Democrat who's a bonafide Christian pastor. On the flip side, I don't see any committed Democrats voting Republican anytime soon, either. There is no convincing the already convinced.

So, the only hope in a competitive election (beyond "getting out the vote"), is to reach the "comfortably disengaged."

How do we do this? You can't force people to care about matters of justice if they don't feel the injustice in their hearts. You can't force consciousness on someone who would rather simply "not notice."

Threats to democracy didn't seem to awaken them... A Supreme Court that finally has become activist didn't seem to do it. In a universe already bent toward justice, this election would have been a landslide, but no...

This Tyranny of the Comfortable has gripped us for years, and my question is this: Must it always be so?

PS - If I end up getting murdered someday, do to tell the cops about the text.



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

SOUTHWEST Connector

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The Connector is for profit and for a purpose

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

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WE DON'T NEED TO LIVE IN SUFFERING ANYMORE

Everyone deserves the opportunity to have a good quality of life.

Pain is a terrible thing. Whether it's physical, emotional, or mental — pain hurts. I was in a lot of pain for many years. It was my right ankle. The pain was chronic and had become so bad in the last 18 months that I could not walk without pain.



By Eric Ortiz

Every step I took hurt. I could not put weight on the ball of my foot. The more walking I did, whether it was to the store or mowing the lawn, the more my foot hurt. Simple exercises, like jumping jacks or jumping rope, now hurt. Going up and down stairs hurt. Even just standing became uncomfortable at times. Some days were worse than others and left me hobbling around like a rickety old man. Some days, the pain was so bad I had to crawl on the floor to move around.

I was born in 1973. I am 49 today. Even though my 10-year-old daughter says I'm old, I never felt old. Two winters ago, I was jogging around our neighborhood in the snow. I was a former Division 1 athlete who played baseball in college. I dunked basketballs in high school on an 11-foot hoop. This was way too early in my life to feel like this.

I broke my right ankle in 1992 when I was 19. I had surgery to fix it and learned to live with a screw in my ankle. Thirty years of wear and tear, and active living, got



Eric Ortiz, the author, resting at home after total ankle replacement surgery. (Photo by Maria Burns Ortiz)

me here. I have seen lots of doctors over the years. Gotten multiple opinions. I needed another one.

I found one of the best foot and ankle doctors in the world, Dr. J. Chris Coetzee. He's based in Minneapolis and part of Twin Cities Orthopedics (TCO). He's also one of the team doctors for the Minnesota Vikings and a member of the NFL Physicians Society. He is the best of the best.

When I called to make an appointment in the summer of 2021, they said Dr. Coetzee was booked until 2022. I needed relief before then. They recommended I see another sports medicine physician in their group. If surgical consultation was needed,

their team would let Dr. Coetzee's team know.

The medical conclusion: Severe osteoarthritic and/or posttraumatic changes of the tibiotalar joint. Chronic appearing sprain injuries of the lateral ligamentous complex and deltoid complex. Tendinosis of the posterior tibialis, peroneus longus and peroneus brevis. Tenosynovitis of the flexor hallucis longus tendon sheath can be seen.

Translation:

Your ankle is shot.

It's about the size of a softball. You have bone spurs, bone fragments, and no cartilage. Every step you take is bone on bone. Bone. Hitting. Bone. That's why every step feels like you're being hit with a sledgehammer.

They recommended I see Dr. Coetzee. He and his team reviewed the X-rays and ankle.

That looks like it hurts.

I had two options. Deal with the pain or total ankle replacement surgery. They usually don't start with ankle replacement surgery until a person is 50. I was a good candidate based on the condition of my ankle. Full recovery after surgery takes six to 12 months.

I needed to think about it.

I had dealt with pain before. I broke my neck as a freshman in high school, playing football and making a tackle. I had to wear a halo with four screws drilled into my skull for three months. A screw got loose and had to be moved. Then, it got infected. I had to stay five days in the hospital. The screw had to be moved again. Screwed into another spot in my skull.

The halo wasn't much fun. Most medieval torture devices aren't. The physical pain left scars but was temporary. The emotional wound took longer to heal. I could not play football anymore after that injury. A dream died. The whole experience made me stronger. Nothing could be worse than this.

I decided to get the ankle replacement surgery and scheduled it for April 2022. Then, life happened. I had to postpone the surgery. My wife thought I would never reschedule it. We took a family trip to Lake Louise, Canada, in August. After I walked/hobbled/gritted through miles of hikes, it was time.

I had surgery with Dr. Coetzee on Oct. 19. The procedure lasted 30 minutes. Everything went great. The care coordinator, nursing staff, anesthesiologist, physician assistant and surgeon are all outstanding. They are the A-team in every way.

I am now in a walking boot (50 percent weight-bearing with crutches) and will start physical therapy in December. I don't feel pain in my ankle anymore. I look forward to a healthy quality of life.

And not just for me. Everyone deserves a future without suffering.



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

I AM INVITING YOU TO MY COMMITAL SERVICE

STORIES & JOURNEYS

As far as I can tell I haven't died. I am writing this column. The service will take place at Lakewood Cemetery, the site of my internment. Details to follow. The theme of the service will be coming from my life experience — it's be still and know.



By Donald L. Hammen

I value stillness, especially when it comes to writing this column and making deadline. Ha!

I fantasize there will be an ALL SOULS GATHERING. I intend to invite Paul Wellstone, Hubert Humphrey, a former Walker United Methodist Church pastor, Amy's mom, all eternally resting at Lakewood and my deceased brother. I've never met either of them except my brother. I have reason to admire them. Hopefully their eternal rest won't be disturbed when they get this invite. But when you become a soul, for real, it doesn't matter. Does it?

Will you be there? I hope so! If you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river of life experiences, human and otherwise, that is Stories and

Journeys. It's your decision to read beyond this point. You may find yourself disturbed by what you are about to read. It has been disturbing for me to write it. Just be still and know!

Recently a *Messenger* reader asked me if I was done with my 2021 tax return. My answer is totally. My focus now is on Medicare Open Enrollment, the current election cycle, leaf raking and bagging.

I AM INVITING YOU TO NOT ENROLL IN AN ADVANTAGE PLAN IF YOU CARE ABOUT MEDICARE.

Come Dec. 26, I will have completed my sixth year of retirement. Here are some of what I have learned and am clear about with respect to Medicare and Social Security.

1. Medicare is Medicare, not original Medicare. Just Medicare.

2. Advantage Plans are Advantage Plans bearing the name Medicare. Currently there is a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would prohibit advantage plans from bearing the name Medicare. It's called the Save Medicare Act.

3. Many of the so-called advantages offered by Advantage Plans (like the cost of vision, hearing and dental services) were supposed to be offered by Medicare. I wonder why that hasn't happened?

4. I would like to think I am not so

gullible as to base my open enrollment decisions on Advantage Plan ads. I often wonder why are there no ads for Medicare?

5. I have learned that originally Medicare was supposed to become Medicare for everyone. I wonder why that hasn't happened?

6. Some people would have me believe Social Security and Medicare are entitlements. Wrong! They are mine and your earned benefits.

7. I have also learned that there are powerful members of Congress and corporate special interests working to destroy the stability and future of Social Security and Medicare.

So, here is my plan for Open Enrollment. I'm going to keep wearing my Medicare for All t-shirt. I'm going to stick with my Medicare plus Supplement plan with Part D plan for drugs unless advised otherwise by my broker. And I'm tuning out all the noise from Advantage Plan ads. I'm just going to be still and know.

If any of this pertains to you, dear reader, what has your life experience taught you about Social Security and Medicare? What is your plan for Open Enrollment? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at news@longfellownokomismessenger.com.

I AM INVITING YOU TO CONSIDER WHAT YOU BASE YOUR VOTING DECISIONS ON.

What captures for me the importance

of any election cycle these days are the big picture words from the preface of a book by Thom Hartmann entitled "The Hidden History of American Oligarchy: Reclaiming Our Democracy from The Ruling Class."

"America is at a turning point, and whether we continue our slide into oligarchy and tyranny or pull back to small d-democratic values will depend in no small part, on the planning and work we do now, and the candidates and policies we support and put forward two and four years from now."

There's that notion of ruling class. I wonder if that might be a clue to answering some of my "I wonder why" questions.

In the meantime, I hope I'm not so gullible as to base my voting decisions on campaign ads.

So, on what do you base your voting decisions? What grounds you? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at news@longfellownokomismessenger.com

In gratitude! Just be still and you will know what you need to do. Cause of inflation? Consider corporate price gauging as the key cause.



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

NEWSPAPER ADS WORK.

6 out of **10** newspaper readers who read a **dental services ad** took action after seeing the ad.*

*Source: Coda Ventures Newspaper Ad Effectiveness Service

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ELECTION 2022

1 ELECTION FIRSTS

Black women in the Minnesota Senate after 164 years of statehood. Mohamed is also the youngest woman elected to state Senate at 25 years old.

"I'm honored that the people of south Minneapolis have placed their trust in me to serve as their next state senator," Zaynab said Tuesday night to the Sahan Journal. "I'm incredibly grateful to my friends, family, campaign staff, and volunteers who made this historic night possible and for the unwavering belief they had in me throughout this campaign. There's important work ahead and I can't wait to get to work improving the lives of working Minnesotans."



"I am honored to serve as the next Hennepin County Attorney," said Mary Moriarty. (Photo submitted)

FIRST BLACK, FEMALE SHERIFF

Dawanna Witt posed by the photos of Hennepin County Sheriffs from 1852 through the present. Her photo will be the first Person of Color and woman to don the wall after 28 White men. In a statement released on her Instagram, Witt expressed gratitude and excitement for her coming term. Witt was in charge of the two largest divisions at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Court Security and Adult Detention, before being elected. She also is an adjunct professor at Inver Hills Community College teaching Juvenile Justice and American Corrections.

"Thank you to every single person who helped me on this journey. I am so lucky to have a team that believed in me, supported me, and elevated me," Witt wrote. "The next few months will be busy as I prepare to take office as the 29th Sheriff of Hennepin County. I plan to build a team that will help me build a stronger, safer Hennepin."

FIRST OPENING LGBTQ+ COUNTY ATTORNEY

Mary Moriarty was a public defender in Hennepin County for 31 years before being elected as the county attorney. In 2014, she was appointed as Hennepin County's first female Chief Public Defender. Studies conducted by her office in 2018 and 2020 found that Black residents were more likely to be stopped by police officers in traffic stops and that Black drivers are searched at a higher rate.

"We built our coalition, and our coalition showed up," she wrote in a Facebook

post. "I am honored to serve as the next Hennepin County Attorney."

AT-LARGE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Collin Beachy and Sonya Emerick are both members of the LGBTQ+ community and have been elected to the Minneapolis school board at large positions. Beachy has been a public school educator for 19 years. His position before being elected included equity lead at Transition Plus Services.

"I have worked very hard to get here. My team has worked hard, my friends and family have worked hard. There are just no words I can say to thank everyone for their support and their votes," Beachy wrote on his website. "Let's go into this with our heads held high and with big goals and dreams. This is where the real work begins. Thank you."

Sonya Emerick is a parent of a student enrolled in Minneapolis Public Schools. Emerick works as a youth case manager, and has decades of community organizing experience including work with homeless and at-risk youth and organizing food distribution. They serve on the MPS Special Education Advisory Council and is on the Board of Directors for the Autism Society of Minnesota.

"All Minneapolis precincts are in, and I'm thrilled to say that we've done it," Emerick wrote on Facebook. "Thank you, voters, supporters, volunteers, donors, mentors, and everyone else who helped us get here. I'm so grateful. Together."



Dawanna Witt stands next to photos of the 28 White men who preceded her as Hennepin County Sheriff. (Photo via Facebook)

View election results
breakdown @
SWCONNECTOR.COM

**NEWSPAPERS:
YOUR BEST ROUTE
TO VICTORY**

"We like to say voters read and readers vote."

▶ THIS IS TOO MUCH

wasn't realistic," she said. "And 911 was not flipping those calls."

She said CUAPB went to the legislature and, in the 2021 session, was able to get Travis' Law passed. "The law requires 911 to pass calls to mental health as the prime responders for mental health crisis calls, unless there is a weapon or a threat," Gross explained. "Even if there is a weapon or a threat, we want a co-response so the police can secure the area and then back away and let the mental health responders take care of the situation."

Travis' Law was named for Travis Jordan, a young man experiencing a mental health crisis in Minneapolis in 2019. According to Gross, he had a knife and was suicidal. "The police came and started screaming at him," Gross related. "One cop called his supervisor while the other one kept screaming. Travis shut the window and tried to ignore him. Travis then emerged from the front door holding the knife, and was shot and killed."

Gross said his mother is suing the police. "Her testimony was powerful and heartbreaking," she said. "It's sad to hear people say Travis' Law doesn't matter. It is about a new fight to expect the correct response."

Gross stated that the good thing about Minnesota is that not only are there good resources, but there are already good laws in place so that mental health responders have to be practitioners. Psychologists run the team, with other practitioners in place, and also peer counselors. "I like that they have to be quality teams," she added. "They can stabilize a person in their home, or get people to a program right away. There are times when someone does need to be hospitalized."

"The way to address this in the community is with people who can help as opposed to cops, whose main thing is to wrestle a person into submission and then take him or her to the hospital. We are wasting ambulances, and the person is not getting the optimal care. We need to improve that, and we need to get the police out of the picture because those encounters can be deadly," she said. Once Travis' Law was passed, Gross said CUAPB held workshops bringing in professional experts from around the country.

CANOPY BEHAVIOR CRISIS RESPONSE CAME

AFTER TRAVIS' LAW

Travis' Law was passed prior to the Canopy Behavioral Crisis Response being put together in Minneapolis, according to Gross. She said Canopy was in some ways a response to Cope, the Hennepin County mental health crisis program.

"Unfortunately, we have some problems with Cope that we need to fix if we can," she noted.

Gross said embedded social workers in the process are well and good, but they are actually follow-up and not going out with the primary responders.

"For us, that's a problem," she said. "Less than 1 percent of mental health calls involve weapons or a threat. So in 99.1 percent of these calls, there is no need for police to be involved. The mental health crisis responders should be the primary responders. They can always call the police later if they are needed."

CLAUDIA'S STORY

Claudia Sago's son, Jomari, is 43, and he has been functioning in society with a family and was employed until COVID-19 ended his job. The loss of his job, separation from his wife and homelessness has taken a toll on him, according to Sago. He had been diagnosed as bipolar.

"He had a mental breakdown on June 6," she said. "He was seeking help to get his child to safety, because he knew he was in trouble." She said she had been unable to get a complete police report, but she was told he was seeking help and a paramedic showed up. Her son changed his mind and said he did not want to go to the hospital. He did not want to be away from his child.

"He had told them he was suicidal, and there was an altercation between him and one of the paramedics," Sago related. "The police came, and they said my son was struggling and they tased him. He fell and hit his head and suffered a traumatic brain injury. They did emergency surgery for the bleeding in his brain, and he was in a coma for 30 days."

Sago said the family was not notified until two days after the incident. He is still in the hospital, being moved from ICU to recovery to a psychiatric ward. She said he is waiting to be released for traumatic brain damage rehabilitation.

Sago was referred by a social worker to CUAPB to try and help her get the



Jomari Sago

complete police report. She was also trying to get video and body cam footage so she could see what happened to her son.

"We hooked Claudia up to an attorney for her son, and he was finally able to access the police report," said Michelle Gross of CUAPB. "That is when we learned the behavioral response unit showed up and either brought the MPD with them or called them. It

is unclear as to why."

Sago said she has pictures of her son from the time he was in ICU up until now. She said her son is being charged with fourth degree assault upon the paramedic. "There was no injury, some bruises to his face," she stated. She has sent a letter and the documentation she has been able to get to Attorney General Keith Ellison's office.

"They want my son in court next month, but he is in no condition to do that. This whole thing has just been heart-wrenching."

"All of this because her son called for assistance," said Michelle Gross of CUAPB. "Claudia came to us to primarily help her get the police report. But this is bigger than the police report."

"How dare they not treat him correctly? This was a functional person in our society, and they took this away from him. I am just furious. He was not armed and was not threatening anyone but himself."

to come through," Gross said, "and that may be Claudia's case." (See sidebar story)

GAPS IN MINNEAPOLIS SYSTEM

Regarding CUAPB's concerns with responses to mental health crisis calls, Czech said he and his sister had engaged with Minneapolis and St. Paul, and for a while Brooklyn Park, to promote co-responders back in 2015. He said that if there was no alternative response to the police, they at least wanted a co-response with mental health professionals. "That got a start, which was good, and it evolved to alternative responses in the cities," Czech said.

"The public does not understand what co-response is," Czech continued. "When they go together, one of the responders does not go a day later or four hours later, they show up at the same time. Some public officials have tried to redefine it."

"There's a second problem, and I wish the media would key on some of this stuff," Czech continued. "When there is a push to get alternative responses, the focus is on how many calls are taken. The focus should be on the most important calls that need professional experience the most, not welfare checks."

Czech said Minneapolis is very much about how many calls are taken away from

the police, but he feels if these are welfare checks and the police are going to the important calls, the priorities are off base.

"People with expertise are being hired and should be used," he said. "It will save lives, and it will save money, as well. What is important to me is that they understand these calls are not just to take away from the police, but part of the mental health system now."

Gross said she likes to think of it as an expanded response, not an alternative response. "We need to have a panel with a button not just for police or the fire department or the ambulance, but we need to expand those buttons to cover other issues. The police do not need to deal with mental health crises or drugs or homelessness."

Czech said that Los Angeles, Houston and other cities understand the situation. "We would like to see a multi-layered response system, with social workers and forensic psychiatric teams. It works better if you have an accounting system that includes all these services, so people can be helped and not have so many problems they have to come back."

"That's why we like Ramsey County; they have layers of response teams. The emphasis is getting people the best care and responses they need. And they end up saving money," Gross stated.

"We want to go to the legislature and get more funding for mental health teams," Gross continued. She mentioned Secure Transport, which instead of an ambulance, is "kind of like a taxi, with the driver trained in mental health and first aid. It's very inexpensive, and you would save a ton of money," she said. She said a person suffering a mental health crisis could be stabilized and transported, if necessary, without the need for police intervention. "This kind of seamless network is what is needed," she said. "Minneapolis made a stab at it, but it's not 24-7 and connecting with the rest of county services. This one little team is not connected to the rest, and that's our complaint."

Czech added his concern that Minneapolis has not done a good job of collaborating with Hennepin County. He cited a story from the New Yorker entitled, "Million Dollar Murray." Czech said the story was about all the disconnected services a fellow named Murray received, ending up with spending of a million dollars. Murray was one of the 10 percent who used 80 percent of services. In the end, Czech said, New York could have paid for an apartment and care for Murray at far less expense. Czech emphasized providing services in a smart way that would improve the care and ultimately result in less costs.

Czech related that he and some others visited Duluth, the first place in Minnesota that had co-responders. The city had been told it couldn't be done, that there would be danger in putting clinicians in harm's way on these responses.

"We knew, and we found out through more research, that concern was bogus," one of the Duluth police responded. "Many programs going back to the 70s and 80s never had a fatality or injury. That's a cop-out. The officers secure a scene before co-responders are put anywhere near a person."

Czech said that looking at similar programs throughout this country and in Europe, it hurts to hear how easily it could be done and how easily it is dismissed.



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THIS COULD BE YOUR BEST HOLIDAY SEASON

FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

With the November and December holidays arriving soon, how do you intend to remain balanced and mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy? As a holistic health coach, this topic comes up often in my client sessions this time of year. Through knowing yourself and making mindful, empowered, authentic choices, this could be your best holiday season ever!



By Michele Rae

Embrace opportunities to be authentic. Avoiding being put in a box by people who knew an earlier version of you can be so liberating. Likewise, listen deeply with curiosity as others share their various points of view. Be kind and respectful to yourself and others. Mindset matters. When you give yourself permission to be your best self, you invite others to do the same.

PACE YOURSELF

Take care of yourself. This includes making time to be alone, setting good boundaries, moving your body, healthy eating and drinking, and getting enough rest and sleep. Be mindful of how you spend your resources of time, energy, and money. Avoid overspending and overwhelm. Expect the unexpected and remain flexible. Keep the parts of your routine that matter the most to you. Be open to spontaneity. If your inner critic comes up and judges yourself or another harshly, notice and take a few deep breaths. Is this an old tape playing in your thoughts that is outdated and needs to be released? Do you need to slow down, say no to some invitations? Taking time to reflect during

your workout, a conversation with a friend, a walk around the lake, or sitting quietly at home can be priceless. You got this!

ENJOY YOURSELF

Know your priorities and what counts the most to you. Is one of your delights buying the perfect gift? Go for it. If not, a gift card, cash or sharing an experience works, too. Is cooking a way you say I love you during the holidays? Fantastic, your friends and family say thank you. Is connecting and quality time your favorite? Create events to satisfy your heart's desire. If giving of your time and service lights you up, volunteer away. There are many opportunities in our amazing community. Enjoy sharing your feelings of appreciation? Sending a card, text, email, or making a phone call can enhance your holiday activities. If cuddling is your thing, be sure to give an extra squeeze to those furry friends, little ones and loved ones in your life. Be mindful of your preferences, gifts, talents, and passions. Honor the diversity of these same qualities among your family and friends.

GIFT YOURSELF

Practicing gratitude can positively contribute to your health and well-being throughout the year. Spend a bit of extra time during these often busy days to focus on what you are grateful for. Take a few minutes in the morning or evening to focus on aspects of your life that bring you joy. Linger for a few extra seconds in appreciation throughout the day as you notice random acts of kindness you observe, receive, or offer. Spend one minute a day simply noticing the beauty around you with all five senses: what you are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. When you find yourself disappointed or discouraged, tend to what needs attention and remind yourself of all the gifts in your life. Only you can choose what you focus on and how you respond to life's circumstances. Set an intention that you flow through the opportunities that present themselves to you during this holiday season with confidence and ease.



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

▶ 1 EYES ON POLICE CHIEF

"Deputy Mayor O'Hara represents the absolute best in law enforcement," wrote Executive Director Daamin X Durden, Aqeela Sherrills, and Elizabeth "E" Ruebman, of the Newark Community Street Team. "He loves the communities he serves. From the streets to the suites, Deputy Mayor O'Hara shows up with humility, professionalism, kindness, and compassion."

Local news outlets also wrote about him and his work in Newark including Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) which found many willing to praise his work. They reported that, "The city of Newark denied a request from MPR News for O'Hara's personnel and disciplinary records."

At the public hearing held on Oct 26, 10 people spoke to the council committee. Those from the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Council and a few individuals spoke in favor of the appointment. A few others came to express concerns about policing and police oversight in general and some to share regrets that the city was not hiring someone from within the department, like interim chief Amelia Huffman who O'Hara's has now named to be the acting assistant chief.

Following the hearing, O'Hara talked about his record in Newark that included a time of fewer arrests, recovering more firearms, and a year when no officer fired their gun while on duty.

When asked about next steps, during the lengthy questioning session with council members that followed, he said, "I have to start now to be present as much as possible in community to get to know as many people as I can, to listen, to hear what community expectations



Brian O'Hara is sworn in as Minneapolis Police Department's 54th Chief of Police (Photo via Facebook)

are throughout the city, but to also to be present among the rank and file officers to hear what their concerns are and give some validation to the trauma they have been experiencing.

"It is absolutely imperative that a police chief be present in community," he said.

He committed to holding officers accountable with consequences quickly following misconduct. When asked about discipline records and the need to review them before making promotions, he said, "The best practices in policing is that we should be reviewing the discipline record of any member before they are promoted but especially when they are in sensitive positions in the agency."

On retention and recruitment he shared his belief that "the officers that remained are more likely to be committed to reform," and that recruitment might improve as prospective officers see working for Minneapolis as a chance to be "part of the solution right now."

Before casting her vote at the full council meeting on the Nov. 3, Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman said, "I've been skeptical of outsiders coming into

the department because I did not believe it was right to not promote, if it was possible, from within. I have been a very strong supporter of interim Chief Huffman who is a friend, colleague and constituent. I think that she stood up when she had to when she was thrust into this position and that she did an admirable, not perfect job. However, the moment is different now and everyone can feel that, and bringing in someone from the outside, I believe, makes a lot of sense."

For council members, their meetings with O'Hara appeared to make a difference.

"Over the past few weeks, I was able to connect with Brian O'Hara one-on-one, and at several community meetings, and I was able to build a relationship with him and see him build relationships with community members across the City of Minneapolis," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski.

O'Hara will be joining Koski at the next Ward 11 Public Safety Meeting on Dec. 13, from 7-8:30 p.m. at Pearl Park Recreation Center (414 E. Diamond Lake Road). "I look forward to introducing him to Ward 11, and Ward 11 community

members," she said.

"I have been able to have several conversations with him and am impressed with his vision for the Minneapolis Police Department," wrote Ward 13 Council Member Linea Palmisano after the vote. "His experience implementing a consent decree in Newark, N.J. makes him uniquely qualified to do the same here in Minneapolis. The top qualities that I feel are the most important for our new chief are a proven ability to lead a department that is building trust within and accountable to the community, and that can also reduce crime at the same time. I believe Mr. O'Hara has demonstrated that he can do both and I look forward to working with him here as our next chief."

Goodman said that if she hadn't met with O'Hara and heard about his observations and the culture change he felt was required, he may not have earned her support.

Before casting her vote, Ward 10 Council Member Aisha Chughtai talked about the two-hour walk and conversation she had with O'Hara. Speaking directly to him at the meeting she said, "I see you truly and deeply prioritize matching your words with your actions."

Jenkins said that her vote was based on his support for "alternatives to policing as a part of a broad and comprehensive public safety continuum."

"This community holds incredible hope for you and this department," said Goodman to O'Hara from the council dais. "The moment is heavy, not celebratory."

"No one person can change an institution. No one person can undo centuries worth of harm," said Chughtai, "but it does take people who are willing to authentically and deeply engage with everyone."

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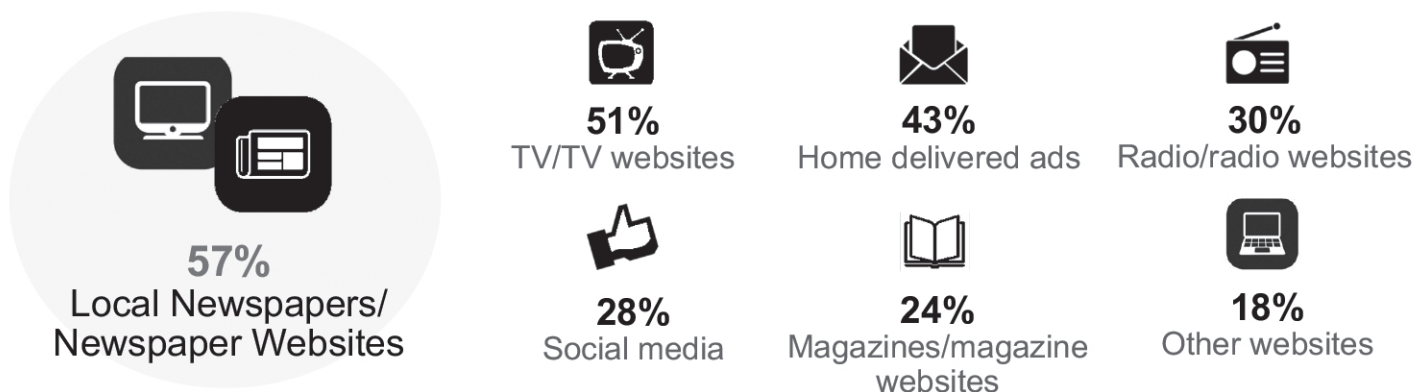
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INTERSECTION NEAR BDE MAKA SKA HOSTS CITY'S FIRST BARNES DANCE CROSSING



City crews have installed the first pedestrian friendly "Barnes Dance" crossing in Minneapolis at one of the city's busiest intersections at Richfield Road and William Berry Parkway near Bde Maka Ska.

The Barnes Dance crossing is named after traffic engineer Henry Barnes who worked in several large American cities and was a proponent of the crossing.

This type of signal treatment has been used in other cities throughout the world, including in Denver and New York City in this country, but not in Minneapolis, or possibly anywhere in the state, until now.

NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

GARDEN DESIGN PREVIEW PARTY NOV. 17

Join the Kingfield Neighborhood Association for baked goods from Butter Bakery and a preview of the Nicollet Avenue Pollinator Pathway Project (P3) community site garden designs.

LIVABILITY COMMUNITY MEETING NOV. 21

The Livability Committee in East Bde Maka Ska focuses on ensuring and enhancing a consistent, strong quality of life for East Bde Maka Ska residents.

WHITTIER FREE MARKET DEC. 3

Join Whittier community members in a second-hand market. Bring items you no longer need, and find some new treasures from your neighbors.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE AND PUBLIC POLICY DEC. 5

Depolarizing Conversations About Race is a Fulton skills workshop for difficult but necessary conversations between White Americans about race and public policy.

SIGN UP FOR HOLIDAY LIGHT TOUR DEC. 6

If you live in Armatage or Kenny and love to decorate the outside of your house for the holidays, sign up to be a part of the Holiday Light Tour.

BRYN MAWR CRAFT FAIR DEC. 8

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association invites people to participate in the Bryn Mawr Craft Fair from 5-8 p.m. on Dec. 8 just in time to attract holiday shoppers.

WINDOM SENIOR ASSISTANCE YEAR-ROUND

In partnership with Senior Community Services, Windom offers assistance to the elderly throughout the year with handyman tasks, housekeeping, outdoor tasks such as snow removal, and volunteer help.

BEYOND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FEB. 9

At this event at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 9, Tangletown will consider how organizations focus almost entirely on land acknowledgment verbiage, rather than the all-important action steps for supporting Indigenous communities.

METRO TRANSIT WEAKENING OUR CONNECTION - CUTS COMING

The bus driver shortage is doing serious damage to Metro Transit service in southwest Minneapolis as elsewhere. Route 27 (26th/28th Streets between Hiawatha and I-35W) was suspended in October 2022, and we are getting other bus service cuts as of Dec. 3, 2022.



By John Wilson

Route 133, which is currently suspended, will be permanently canceled due to the only good news this season: it will be replaced by the new D Line, which is a Bus Rapid Transit line with limited stops.

Speaking of Bus Rapid Transit, the southwest area will eventually get the B and E Lines, which will supplement Routes 21 and six, providing a faster alternative. BRT has less stops than local routes, and stations with more amenities than a traditional bus stop.

Metro Transit is hiring drivers. Right now, they are paying hiring bonuses of up to \$5,000, and I have information that wages are being raised significantly next year.



CITY BRIEFS

FRANCE AVE. DESIGN

The city's pedestrian advisory committee voted to not support the proposed design for the France Ave. "This project does not meet county and city transportation and climate policies and goals, nor does it improve safety or comfort for people walking, rolling, and biking."

FIRST AVE. S. RECONSTRUCTION

The Minneapolis city council has approved the layout for the 1st Ave. S. reconstruction between Lake St. and Grant St. and including the bridge over the Midtown Greenway.

between Lake St. to 28th St. and I-94 to Grant St. The city will evaluate the feasibility of adding raised crossings streets at the intersections at 28th Street, 26th Street, and 16th Street during the final design.

NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY APPOINTMENT

On Nov. 9 a city council committee voted to appoint Lisa Pogoff to the ward 7 seat on the public health advisory committee. Pogoff lives in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood and has over 30 years of experience working in public health.

BARRET LANE REAPPOINTED

In October, the city council voted to reappoint former Ward 13 council member, Barret Lane, as the director of the office of emergency management.

CITY BUDGET HEARING ON 6.5% LEVY INCREASE

On Nov. 9, a city council committee voted to appoint Lisa Pogoff to the ward 7 seat on the public health advisory committee. Pogoff lives in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood and has over 30 years of experience working in public health.

CITY BUDGET HEARING ON 6.5% LEVY INCREASE

The third public hearing on the city budget is scheduled to take place in city hall (350 S 5th St) on Dec. 6 at 6:05 p.m. in the council chambers, room 317.

Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

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believes in buying local and shopping local. She has held various positions over the years that promote local artists and tourism, including as an art buyer for Love from Minnesota Company, artisan manager at St. Croix Promotions and Retail, and docent at MIA. She is the owner of Everett & Charlie, a Linden Hills art gallery where art meets experience. It features only Minnesota artists. She is a TMC Publications marketing specialist, and can help you develop a comprehensive marketing plan that fits your budget and needs.

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HOW DO YOU HELP PROMOTE LOCAL ARTISTS?

Ortegon: I love giving an opportunity and encouragement to artists. Being an artist myself, I believe that we need to uplift each other. Inspiration and talent grow in a creative community. I believe that it's important for art to be accessible to everyone because so often art has been kept separate, considered something for only privileged people. Everyone in my family are artists and they never thought they were "real artists" and believed "people like us" are not the kind of people who go to galleries or museums. My insecurities kept me back for a while, believing I wasn't "good enough."

When I opened the ColorWheel Gallery, I made sure that everyone felt welcome. I have worked with many artists that were just starting out, mentoring them, and sharing what I have learned as a self-taught artist, as well as exhibiting many well-established artists. For many years, I curated an "Artist under 18" show, working with young artists. One of the main themes of the ColorWheel is art is for and by the people, and that art should always disrupt the system of what we've been told to believe. Being able to exhibit my mother's art in my gallery was a way to break some of those classist ideas my family believed about themselves.

An annual exhibition at the ColorWheel is on Mother's Day weekend called "Fight Like a Mother!" features 20 artists in all mediums who are mothers. Their art has to be inspired by the question "What does it mean to fight like a mother?". I am thankful that I have been able to host many diverse voices and ideas at the ColorWheel. The artists I have worked with have been women, POC, LGBTQ+, and people in the social justice community.

HOW ARE YOU MAKING ART ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE?

Ortegon: I love interacting with customers and talking about the art and artists I carry in the shop. I especially want to



UPCOMING @ COLORWHEEL GALLERY

Nov. 26, 1-5 p.m. Support Small Business Saturday

Amy Sundby - Multi-media artist, vibrant, fluid, watercolorist and photographer will be selling original art, prints, cards and more.

Dec. 3, 1-5 p.m. Jennifer Kunin and Pamela Forrest - Multi-media artists will have a display of their original paintings, art prints, cards, ceramic art, jewelry and more.

Dec. 10, 1-5 p.m. Donyelle Headington Folkways Practitioner - Multi-media artist, community healer.

Dec. 17, 1-5 p.m. Lina Gaitan and Fernanda Sequeiros Hart - Multi-media artists, folk art from Colombia and Argentina.

be a safe and inspiring space for neighborhood youth. I really love inspiring people to create, to find their artist within. I have held hundreds of community interactive art events, classes, and workshops for all ages. People from ages one to 91 have created art at the ColorWheel Gallery, and I have exhibited and highlighted over 800 local artists, musicians, poets, writers, designers, and small business creators in the last 19 years open.

Adam Johnson's portraits are available to educators for free in order to make art and inspiration accessible. Portraits include those that inspire Johnson such as Amanda Gorman, Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Maya Angelou, and more. (Photo submitted)



ColorWheel Gallery at 46th and Grand features mixed-media creations from artists in the Minneapolis community. (Photo by Chloe Peter)

I am so thankful to have curated and organized many fantastic events, art exhibits, community, social justice meetings, book and poetry readings, workshops, art demos, fashion shows, pop-ups, live music, street festivals and more! I always want to be focusing on progressive ideas, reusing, and recycling, creating art to-

UP CLOSE WITH MR. JOHNSON PAINTS

One of the artists featured at ColorWheel Gallery is Adam Johnson, a math teacher who goes by "Mr. Johnson Paints." His portraits include many leaders, speakers, and individuals at the forefront of social activism. He has done paintings of Martin Luther King Jr., Anne Frank, Chadwick Boseman, Suni Lee, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and more. All of his prints are available to educators for free - an aim to make art and inspiration accessible to educators and their students.

"Equity is one of the main reasons I paint," Johnson said. "Traditional curricula have not highlighted many of the figures I paint." Johnson paints to amplify an individual's story, and those that inspire him. His works are available through the ColorWheel Gallery or on his website at mrjohnsonpaints.com.

gether, diverse voices, and social change. Please come and support, enjoy and celebrate local artists, makers, and independent entrepreneurs at ColorWheel Gallery guest artist pop-ups held two Saturdays a month. Stop by, meet the artists, and enjoy local brilliance, creativity, and community.

More information about events and ColorWheel Gallery can be found at <https://colorwheel-gallery.square.site/>.

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