



## City's plan to buy Peoples' Way met with apprehension

By JILL BOOGREN

At a neighborhood meeting at Sabathani Community Center on October 24, Minneapolis' Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) agency announced plans to purchase the former Speedway gas station, now known as the Peoples' Way, at 38th and Chicago. The city wants to secure the site – and assume liability – for a future use determined by the community.

"We do not have any intention of being the long-term owner here, unless it is determined that it makes the most sense for community-informed use," said CPED director Andrea Brennan.

Director of Economic Development Erik Hansen said negotiations began in September and the property owner, California-based Realty Income, is interested in selling. A purchase could take place as soon as December.

Many residents were skeptical.

Jeanelle Austin, resident and executive director of the George Floyd Global Memorial, pointed out that what was first presented in the meeting as a "possible" acquisition sounded more like an intended one, and she questioned the swift timeline.

"Just to have one community feedback meeting feels like it's being done to us as opposed to including us," she said.

Bobby Hull asked, "Why should we trust Minneapolis?" He reminded city officials that the people took over the space after George Floyd was murdered. The property is across the street from where he

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Marcie Rendon's latest book is dedicated to murdered and missing Indigenous women. In addition to the Cash books, Rendon is working on a writing and healing project at Little Earth called *Unconquered Nations*. (Photo by Jaida Grey Eagle)

## Standish author's latest thriller chills

*It was the right time to tell the story 'Sinister Graves,' says White Earth Nation member Marcie Rendon*

By JILL BOOGREN

In a blog post for Barnes & Noble, local author Marcie Rendon writes of the stories that lurk at the edge of our consciousness, waiting to be told. Stories that are "too disturbing, too hard to bear, secretive" that are waiting for "the right time, the right place, and the right way to be told."

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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.



Zaynab Mohamed, Dist. 63

### 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 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

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Suzy Messerole (left) and Tana Hargest of the Subversive Sirens practice at the Phillips Aquatic Center. "We do a lot more than just spread joy," Messerole stated. "Community is a very big part of our strategy." The group practices on Saturdays. (Photo by Terry Faust)

## SUBVERSIVE SIRENS IMAGINE A BETTER WORLD

*Non-binary synchronized swimming team advocates for Black liberation, equity in aquatics and body autonomy*

By JAN WILLMS

The world of queer synchronized swimming is very small. But the Subversive Sirens, a non-binary synchronized

swimming team out of Minnesota, is making a big splash. (Forgive the pun.)

Advocating for Black liberation, queer visibility, equity in aquatics and radical body acceptance, the swimming team had its beginnings in 2016 when Signe Harri-day, an activist and Black leader in Minneapolis and St. Paul, attended the Gay Games and decided she wanted to participate.

"She asked me if I wanted to compete with her, and it sounded like fun, so I said yes," said Longfellow resident Suzy Messerole, a member of the Subversive Sirens. "I thought we would be engaging in self-care, and it would be a good thing."

Messerole said they looked through the menu of competition. "We wanted nothing with a ball and nothing where we had to run. We saw synchronized swimming and we thought, 'We can totally do this!'"



It is not lost on us who does and doesn't have access to water, a connection to the land, or who is most affected by the Supreme Court decision on abortion rights."

Suzy Messerole

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40 YEARS: Columnist Tom Gilsenan reflects on neighborhood stories

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Divided on restructure; new police chief, Brian O'Hara, sworn in

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**38TH AND CHICAGO PROJECT UPDATE**

A third monthly Learning Table, which took place on Oct. 24, was focused on the city's plans to purchase the former Speedway property. The 38th and Chicago project managers, though, have been clear that anything related to an adjacent property or a memorial does not fall within the purview of the road reconstruction project. What is not clear is how the city intends to separate the two. The largest memorial, to George Floyd, spills onto the street in front of CUP Foods, where he was killed. But the site holds other memorials as well, including to Daunte Wright, Imez Wright, Murphy Ranks and the 165+ lives lost at the hands of police whose names were painted on the surface of Chicago Ave. as part of the Mourning Passage that extends nearly the full block from 38th to 37th street.

The Community Co-creation Team, who is tasked with making recommendations to the project team including ultimately a final design concept for the 38th and Chicago project area, has been formed and has begun meeting monthly, first on Oct. 20 and again on Nov. 19. Listed among "key opportunities and influences" for the team to consider is "accommodation of multiple modes and functions – walking and rolling, biking, taking transit, operating vehicles including freight, commerce, gathering and community space, and green stormwater infrastructure."

It is yet to be determined how the project team will accommodate all of the above modes of transportation or which they will prioritize over others. The intersection continues to draw people from across the country and around the globe who visit the site to see the memorials, leave their own offerings, pay their respects and support the movement for justice. Visitors often walk on the streets, as well as on sidewalks and through the Peoples' Way. The City's Complete Streets policy places an emphasis on pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, then vehicles – in that order.



*Brass Solidarity leads friends, family and community members in music and song at the Peoples' Way, George Floyd Square, to celebrate Tekle Sundberg on what would have been his 21st birthday Nov. 16, 2022. Sundberg was killed by Minneapolis police on July 14, 2022. (Photo by Jill Boogren)*

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was killed and has been the site of countless gatherings, including twice daily community meetings, for more than 900 days.

Other attendees echoed similar sentiments throughout the course of the evening, during which they broke into small workgroups by table and discussed prepared questions. Following the format of other monthly Learning Tables focused on road reconstruction at 38th and Chicago, a spokesperson shared thoughts and ideas from each group.

"I do agree that right now people should be apprehensive about the city owning the property without firm understanding of who the beneficiaries will be moving forward," said Alexander Bourne. He suggested building up from the gas station instead, commenting that gas stations provide great entry level jobs. He felt that building up would still allow inclusion of the types of neighborhood services people were talking about; culturally relevant trauma resources, workforce development, a museum could all be added as additional stories above the station.

"It's very expensive to knock down a gas station, dig it up and rebuild," he said. "If the city has the money to do that, and they're willing to allocate that money to that particular site, then they can repurpose those dollars and essentially build up."

Dave Bicking reiterated that many do not trust the city to control this spot.

"You never asked us whether the city should buy it. That wasn't one of the three questions. Obviously, that's been decid-

ed," he said.

The three questions small groups were asked to address were whether this was the right track, how community is defined, and what the city needs to know about the current site.

**ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

A number of attendees mentioned the fact that the site has become a mutual aid hub for neighbors and visitors.

"People come here for food, they come here for clothes and warmth, hydration in the summer... for books and vegetables," said one speaker. "This is really important, and we'd like to see that preserved."

Other speakers added that the memorial isn't just for George Floyd, it's for all stolen lives. In addition to Floyd, the Peoples' Way alone holds memorials for Harrel Sherrell, Paul Castaway, Fong Lee, Winston Smith and Amir Locke.

Agreeing with the location as memorial, another speaker wanted it to remain a place of racial healing where people could have a sense of community while honoring the ongoing movement. He suggested modeling the space after the Lorraine Motel in Tennessee, where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968 and which is now a National Civil Rights Museum.

Referring to both the process and purchase, Tim Lunning said simply, "I do not consent."

"When you start from a position of 'You can't please everyone' [paraphrased from a sentiment expressed by the meeting facilitator], it means someone is going

**BUS ROUTES**

At least one of those modes remains on hold at the intersection: public transit. With the Metro D Line rapid bus transit to begin service along Chicago Ave. on Dec. 3, buses will continue to be re-routed around 38th and Chicago. According to Metro Transit spokesperson Laura Baenen, future transit operations at 38th & Chicago are being discussed as part of the ongoing re-envisioning process for the intersection. "The timeline for that process is not being set by Metro Transit. We can say, however, that buses will not move through this intersection as the re-envisioning process continues," said Baenen by email.

There are currently two bus detours, on Routes 5 and 23. Route 23 detours off 38th Street to 42nd Street between Bloomington Ave. and Park/Portland avenues. Route 5 currently detours off Chicago Ave. to Park/Portland avenues between 35th/36th streets and 42nd St. One Oct. 24 Learning Table participant said the re-routing of public transportation has added 10 minutes to his walk time.

Starting when it opens on Dec. 3, the D Line will also detour to Park/Portland, with a modified routing. Southbound, the D Line and Route 5 will detour off Chicago Ave. via 35th St., Portland Ave., and 42nd Street, as the Route 5 does today. Northbound, the D Line and Route 5 will detour via 39th St., Park Ave., and 36th St. Temporary stations will be located at Park/Portland avenues and 38th St.

Learning Tables are held for neighbors to discuss the 38th and Chicago reconstruction project, with different topics addressed monthly. They take place every fourth Monday of each month at Sabathani Community Center, from 6-8 pm, with dinner provided. The next will be held Nov. 28. An open house was also held on Oct. 22. Using paper illustrations, attendees designed the intersection the way they'd like to see it. According to project manager Alexander Kado, these and other materials will be posted on the project web page. For information, including public input, from all public meetings and open houses visit [www.minneapolis.gov/government/projects/38th-chicago-ave/](http://www.minneapolis.gov/government/projects/38th-chicago-ave/)

to be excluded," he said. "I'm worried about who is displaced from this process."

CPED plans to take the action through the City Council's Business Inspections Housing and Zoning Committee on Nov. 29. Then the full City Council will review it on Dec. 8. According to Hansen, they are on the timeline of the seller, who would like to close before the end of the year. Costs were still being finalized.

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throughout this campaign. There's important work ahead and I can't wait to get to work improving the lives of working Minnesotans."

**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 Sher-

iff 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 poses by the photos of Hennepin County Sheriffs from 1852 to the present – all white men. (Photo from Facebook)*



# SO MANY STORIES IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS



BY TOM GILSENAN



Our neighborhoods are full of wonderful stories. And for more than a dozen years, I got to tell those stories right here in the Messenger. It was grand.

Minnehaha Falls is full of stories. It has been celebrated in stories and songs in so many different ways. Longfellow got it all started with his 'Song of Hiawatha.' Since then, the falls and the story have been celebrated in books, plays, school pageants and Broadway musicals. But in my mind, nothing could top a musical version of 'Song of Hiawatha' sung in Yiddish. You can find this story and more in the book 'Shades of Hiawatha.'

Maria Sanford's legacy is kept alive at the middle school in our neighborhood. She was one of the first women professors at a public university in the US and an extraordinary gift to Minnesota. I visited Sanford school as part of my research on the column and found that the school library had check stubs from Sanford's bank account. Wow.



## Hiawatha Notebook

By TOM GILSENAN

**'We've done a lot of reminiscing'**

Tom Gilson's column ran as the Hiawatha Notebook starting in 1997. >> More images online at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

Minneapolis Moline is long gone. But once upon a time it was a major employer in the area. The tractor company was located at Minnehaha and Lake. I wrote several columns about MM and people from all over contacted me with stories about the company.

But nothing could top the column I wrote which connected the children and grandchildren of Minneapolis Moline employees with a New York author writing a book about pensions. You see, when Minneapolis Moline was sold, its buyer said it wasn't going to pay the pensions of workers. It was awful and readers were in tears telling me their family stories.

These stories and the aftermath were the subject of the book. A pension guaranty agency was established as a result of what happened to the MM workers, thanks to the late Senator Walter Mondale and others. But it turns out that some companies have figured out ways to rig

this system.

Mitchell Charnley was the most widely published author living in our area (until Lorna Landvik came along). He was a journalism professor at the University of Minnesota for years and wrote several journalism textbooks.

Lorna Landvik is our 'most published' author now. She started with 'Patty Jane's House of Curl' and has been turning out novel after novel ever since. Her first book is full of places around our community. When I interviewed her for a column, she told me she wrote that first book during sessions at the Nokomis public library.

And then there was Casey Jones, host of a long gone children's TV show. No column I ever have written has gotten more responses. I received 85 letters and phone calls. Readers shared wonderful memories; people stopped me in the store to talk about Casey and readers called to sing me the Casey birthday song.

It was grand. As much as I enjoyed telling stories, I enjoyed even more the responses from readers. Like Casey Jones. Or when I wrote a column about Dayton's and readers responded with memories going back years.

Or the giant clock which once stood on Lake street near Minnehaha. After I wrote a column wondering whatever happened to it, a number of readers became detectives searching for clues. That went on for months with clues coming in from various places. We never did find out what happened to the clock. Best speculation is it is in a barn somewhere.

I once wrote a column about the decline of polka music on local radio. A few days after that issue was published, I got a call from a reader saying he was listening to a polka program on a station somewhere south of the Twin Cities. It's on right now, he said.

Most years, I wrote a holiday story for the December issue. The original spark for the first story came from daughter Molly. It was a frightfully cold year and after looking for a Christmas tree at a couple of lots, we decided to get an artificial one at Target. Molly's reaction: 'How could you? You're ruining my childhood.'

Thanks to readers and advertisers for supporting the Messenger. You made it possible for me to share neighborhood stories. I am ever so grateful. Good wishes.

Tom Gilson wrote a column for the Messenger for more than a dozen years starting in 1997. He is a writer, teacher and social worker. He is the parent of three: Molly, Shannon and Tom.

## MUSINGS ON \$20

### STORIES AND JOURNEYS

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



Each day since writing the last Stories and Journeys column, I have been checking the obituaries in the newspapers I read. None of them are mine. So, here I go again.

Before starting to write this column I put a \$20 bill beside my computer keyboard. Now I understand there are people in our society who believe that money is speech. I think they might be people with a lot of money with which to speak. Certainly not me. All I have is this \$20 bill. For each of the last five days I picked up my \$20 bill. I would ask it to speak to me. Each day I got no response. I started imagining that 'money-is-speech' people are delusional. Who are these people?

I did a Duck Duck Go search engine search. Under 'billionaires political influence' I found an article at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) headlined, "With 'Stealth Politics', Billionaires Make Sure Their Money Talks." Is that what money is speech means? Influencing elections!

What about you dear reader? Do you have money like a \$20 bill that speaks to



## THOUGHTS

"The person delivering Meals on Wheels to my house made it a point to tell me she reads Stories and Journeys in the Messenger every month. We briefly discussed the column I had just submitted. She laughed when I told her about my \$20 bill. She offered her own response to what kindness means to her. Recently I was going through a check-out line at Seward Co-op Friendship Store. The person checking me out made it a point to tell me she enjoyed the column she read in the Southwest Connector which was the "I'm Scared....." column.

"I believe the local paper is important. Right now it is important because I never know what articles, columns or ads are going to inspire me to see things differently or do things differently in my local community life. I am prepared to be surprised by what I find in the local paper – be it the Messenger or Connector." ~ Donald L. Hammen

you? What does money is speech mean to you? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at [news@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:news@longfellownokomisemessenger.com)

Here's some of what I experienced on Election Day:

I show up at my polling place with my sample ballot and my \$20 bill. Maybe I will see an opportunity to influence some one's vote with my \$20 bill. Ooops! I'm thinking that's illegal. I could get carted off to who knows where.

I voted. I always vote. Voting to me feels like a sacred right and a sacred duty. I wish Election Day was a holiday. It would make voting easier to do for a lot of people. I left my polling place feeling scared and relieved.

My neighbor, Gary, stopped by my house to visit on his way home from voting. He suggested that this notion of 'money is speech' might be coming from something called Citizens United. I'm thinking shouldn't it be called Citizens Divided? That's just me. Money is speech, Citizens United, buying political influence is all connected.

I wipe the dust off a civics workbook I find in one of my book piles. I read that civics is the study of what it means to be a citizen. The first chapter is called, 'We the People.' Not 'We the Billionaires.' Maybe Ruhel Islam, the owner of Gandhi Mahal, is right when he states the food is true wealth. Maybe Hippocrates was right when he allegedly said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine by thy food."

For me IF 'money is speech' my money was speaking this season at the farmer's markets I patronized. I always showed up with a \$20 bill to spend on food/produce/merchandise/services plus \$5 to donate for market administration. A shout out to Mo (market manager) and Ocean (market spe-

cialist) at Midtown Farmers Market. There were the Neighborhood Roots markets of Fulton and Kingsfield. A shout out to Erica, the market manager at those markets. I love the music, the sense of community, the produce and merchandise options at farmer markets.

A shout out to the vendors that I patronized among which were Kabomelette, Krishna's Delights, Havlicek's Orchard, Hmong Eggrolls and Carolyn's Hats at Midtown. At Fultons, there was Havlicek's Orchard and Peter's Pumpkins. And at Kingsfield, there was Krishna's Delight and terra forge sharpening. There were a few others that I am not remembering

By the way, dear reader, I want to wish everyone a belated, Happy World Kindness Day (11-13-22). Here is the best definition of kindness I have heard to date: Doing something kind for or saying something kind to someone without expecting any thing in return.

What does kindness mean to you? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at [news@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:news@longfellownokomisemessenger.com)

So, out of the kindness of my heart, thank you for reading this far and taking the plunge into the river of life of experiences which is Stories and Journeys. Thank you for making your money speak when you advertise in or subscribe to TMC Publications.

In gratitude. None of this matters if we don't have a planet that sustains our existence. That's just me.

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

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# DIVIDED ON RESTRUCTURE

*City council members and residents disagree on new 'strong mayor' government structure*

By CAM GORDON

The city council and mayor approved the "executive mayor - legislative council government structure" ordinance amendments on Oct. 20, 2022.

The approval repeals and replaces several chapters of the Minneapolis code of ordinances, adding seven new chapters relating to the city's administration, including sections on the new offices of public service and community safety, and changes to those on the city attorney, internal auditor, and the city coordinator.

The ordinance was authored by Ward 13 Council Member Linea Palmisano, although the city's press release called it "Mayor Jacob Frey's government structure omnibus ordinance." Its framework closely follows the recommendations of Frey's Government Structure Workgroup that consolidated several city departments in to two mega departments, or offices, thus reducing the number of direct reports to the mayor to four from the 10 found in the city's organizational chart prior to this term.

The four reporting to the mayor includes two new positions, the City Operations Officer and community safety commissioner, as well as the mayor's chief of staff and the city attorney. The city attorney continues to report to both the council and the mayor just as she, and all the other major departments aside from the police, did before the charter amendment.

The two new consolidated divisions are the office of public service (which includes all the operational departments under the leadership of a chief operations officer) and the office of community safety (which includes the departments of Police, Fire, 911, Emergency Management and a new neighborhood safety department).

The only city departments that will now report directly to the city council have gone down from 12 last term to only three – the city clerk, auditor and the city attorney.

Support for the ordinance was not unanimous at the public hearing or at the council vote where it passed on a 9-4 vote.

Some of those supporting it praised it after it passed. "This is a historic moment for our city," said Frey. "Minneapolis voters chose this form of government for our city, and it was up to us to create a responsive structure that is effective, efficient, and equitable in delivering city services to all residents."

"After 10 months of working together as a council and with the mayor, we have carried out the will of the residents of Minneapolis," said Council President Andrea Jenkins. "We are setting forth a new direction in the city of Minneapolis - it's a new day and I am proud to be a part of it."

## AMENDMENTS PASS, FAIL

Prior to final passage and the public hearing, some amendments were proposed at a committee meeting on the 18th.

An amendment that would have removed the requirement for the mayor to submit a comprehensive policy to the council failed. Amendments that would have elevated the race, equity, inclusion, and belonging department to same level as the offices of safety and public service, as well as one that would allow the council an ability to vote on all department heads, failed.

An amendment to establish a performance management and innovation department authored was approved with a vote of 7-6.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

At the public hearing eight people spoke. The proposal won the support of Colleen Moriarty, from League of Women Voters; Barry Clegg, the Charter Commission Chair; Kathleen O'Brien, past council member and co-chair of the Mayor's Government Structure Workgroup; Lee Munich; Steve Cramer, President of the Minneapolis Downtown Council; and Clarence Shallbetter.

O'Brien, who lives in greater Longfellow, said, "The ordinance that you have before you today is consistent with what we [the workgroup] learned and our recommendations." She said the mayor would be "responsible for the direction of the city's future and assembling departments to provide for city services with a city council that is responsible to define city services through legislative action and ensure consistent quality through its audit oversight."

Kristen Ingle, from the Southwest Al-

ing transformative change."

Jerome Evans works in marketing and communications for a program of public, nonprofit Minnesota Service Cooperatives, and he is the executive producer and host of Bottomless Coffee with Jerome on MCN6. He earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2006. Evans served on the Board of the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA) from 2017 to 2021. In 2018, Evans joined the Public Health Advisory Committee for the City of Minneapolis (PHAC), where he continues to serve.

More information can be found at <https://www.jerometevans.com>.

## ELECTIONS

### 2023 CITY CAMPAIGNS KICK OFF

Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley announced that she will be seeking reelection next year and held a campaign kickoff on Nov 14 at the Caspian Bistro in Prospect Park. Tiger Worku announced that he will be running for the Ward 6 council seat currently held by Jamal Osman and held a kickoff event on Nov. 15 at the Brian Coyle Center in the Cedar Riverside.



Brian O'Hara is sworn in as Minneapolis Police Department's 54th Chief of Police.

>> Read story online at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com) (Photo via Facebook)

liance for Equity, and Rachael "Ray" Klahr, spoke in opposition.

Ingle, a Fulton resident, called the proposal "a power grab by affluent White elites dressed up in the language of good government."

"The current restructure will not allow our government to function more equitably and will make the city enterprise much less accountable and responsive to the community," said Ingle.

## COUNCIL DIVIDED

The city council was also divided.

Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson joined his southside colleagues, (Palmisano, Ward 11's Emily Koski, Ward 8's Andrea Jenkins and Ward's 7's Lisa Goodman) in supporting the change. "I think this was a reasonable approach to addressing the new boundaries between the executive and legislative branch, and more specifically for allowing the Mayor's office to streamline management. Having spent what will be most of my time on this body under the old structure, it is not without some wistfulness to move through this transition; however, I am personally withholding most of my judgment until we've had a chance to see it fully functioning for a while, at which point we'll have a clearer understanding of all the trade-offs from this charter change and the new structure," said Johnson in an email update he sent after the meeting.

Four council members – Eliot Payne, Robin Wonsley, Jason Chavez and Aisha Chughtai – voted against the amendment.

"I voted no on this because we did not need an ordinance for the new government structure to be implemented. The mayor has authority to do much of this via executive order, as he did with establishing the duties and responsibilities of

the Community Safety Commissioner," said Ward 10's Chughtai. "The ordinance in its current iteration gives too much legislative power to the mayor."

"It was up to the Minneapolis City Council to make changes to the Mayor's proposed structure. Yet, hardly any dents were made to change it," explained Ward 9's Chavez explained. "Under this new approved government structure, the Mayor will submit a comprehensive policy to the Minneapolis City Council. This gives the Mayor executive and legislative power, which is not what voters approved last fall... This needs to be sent back to Minneapolis voters to approve through a charter change, which is why I ultimately voted no."

"This new restructure directly undermines question one by intentionally blurring the lines of authority and responsibility of the legislative body," said Ward 2's Wonsley.

Confusion was evident even at the meeting where it passed. At that meeting, even before it was signed by the mayor and officially enacted, council members started questioning their own authority to pass a staff directive regarding the forced closures of homeless encampments.

"I remain concerned about the weaponization of 'council authority' in today's discussion," Chughtai wrote in an email after the meeting. "Government structure is not a ploy the mayor's office and the Frey administration get to play every time the council is considering an action they do not like."

The impact of the ordinance change is certain to be debated and discussed in the weeks ahead, including as part next year's budget that is set to be approved in December.

## Jerome Evans announces bid for City Council Ward 12

Jerome Evans announces his bid for Minneapolis City Council in the 12th Ward. Current Ward 12 Council Member Andrew Johnson is not seeking reelection.



"In Minneapolis we work hard and our values are in the right place. We're committed to creating a stable future for our families and our community, and every day we get up and do our part to create that brighter future," says Evans. "We deserve a city that reflects our commitment to justice, safety, liberation, and sustainability. I'm running to make sure that the decisions made at our City Hall align with our values."

Evans extends an invitation to his official campaign kickoff at Venn Brewing at 11 a.m. on Dec. 3, where he will discuss his vision for "a Minneapolis that's committed to justice and safety, protecting our health and environment, supporting local business, eliminating racism, and inspir-

## CORRECTION

Since we first started working on the article about neighborhood funding in summer 2022 and when it printed in the November Messenger, Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association has gone through a number of changes. Candace Miller Lopez left the organization effective Aug. 31, and SENA moved out of its office at 4557 34th Ave S. Kate Gens is the sole employee of the organization, as its administrative coordinator; she has been working for the organization for a year. With the reduction in staffing, SENA has not sent out a newsletter since July 2022, has not made a social media post about the changes, and has not posted an update on its website about the changes. We apologize for the error in our print edition when we referred to Miller Lopez as executive director.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?** Email letters, guest commentaries, press releases and notes to [Tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](mailto:Tesha@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

## Messenger expands home delivery into Standish

The Longfellow Nokomis Messenger has expanded home delivery into the Standish neighborhood, and now covers all of the area served by the Standish-Ericsson neighborhood association.

The expanded territory adds 2,000 households between Cedar Ave. and Hiawatha Ave., 38th St. and 42nd St. This brings the total home delivery of the Messenger to 20,500 with an additional 1,500 in bulk drops at high-traffic local businesses. While other local papers have cut their home delivery and moved entirely to subscription or bulk stacks at local businesses, the Messenger continues to be delivered to the front steps of local homes.

"We're committed to reaching people at their home with news about their neighborhood, so we can all stay informed about the issues that affect us," said Messenger owner Tesha M. Christensen. "We hear from readers all the time about how much they appreciate reading stories about the people who live in their community."

She added, "Read a paper, pass it along, and then reuse it."



# FOSTER THE FAMILY

*Support group helps foster parents and adoptive families navigate through grey areas*

By JAN WILLMS

What do you do when a foster child you have raised for several years is suddenly going home to her birth parents?

How do you react the first time the school principal calls you in to discuss a behavior problem with your foster child?

Visits are being arranged with your foster child's birth mother. How does this make you feel?

The chances are, if you belong to a Foster the Family group, another foster parent may be going through these same challenges or already has and can offer some advice.

The important thing is, you can share the struggles, the challenges and the triumphs of being a foster parent with someone who knows exactly what you are going through. That is the primary goal of Foster the Family.

The nation-wide program that offers support to foster families and adoptive mothers was founded in New Jersey by Alan and Jamie Finn. Foster mom Jessica Willman found out about it through Instagram.

"I saw this post about this woman who had fostered a child in her home for three years who was now going to be reunited with her biological family. I was so impressed how Jamie went through that and how we can encourage the birth families," Willman said. She started following Jamie's posts on Instagram.

"To see her being so uplifting, even as she grieved the loss of the child was so inspirational," Willman said. Through Foster the Family, Willman was also gaining and sharing information about trauma, birth families, and regulations.

Admitting that she is not a support-group type of person, Willman said she found Foster the Family to be so encouraging and professing such a can-do attitude that when last September the organization was looking at starting support groups across the country, she thought it



Jessica and Steven Willman, with (left to right) Adon, Sophie, Jack and Ollie. Two children were adopted after being fostered. (Photos submitted)

would be cool to start one in the Twin Cities. Willman said over 200 applied and at the end of the year, 10 were selected to be Foster Family support groups. "The Twin Cities was one of them, so we started in December 2021," she said.

"We meet in person at the Knox International Center in the Hamline Midway area on the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8 p.m.," Willman said. "We continued to meet in person as long as we could during the pandemic, because the basis of the group is connecting with people. That's hard to do with strangers over Zoom."

Now the group is meeting in person again, and held its last meeting at a park.

"We have stayed a pretty small group," said Willman. "Our Facebook page has 60 members, and about 5-10 meet regularly." She and two other leaders attend every time, with others coming by each month, not necessarily the same ones each month.

Willman said she went into Foster the Family thinking it would be one thing, but finding out it was different. "You can learn in depth about trauma, but it's not necessarily just educational," she noted. It's meant to be relationship-building.

Half of the people who come to the group come from over 45 minutes away, because they are really isolated. People are craving not just community in general, but specifically people who understand the foster and adoptive world and the unique challenges.

## CENTERING SELVES TO BETTER CARE FOR OTHERS

tract before it was negotiated and approved. They filed the lawsuit after meetings were closed and not accessible to the public. As part of the agreement, the city will pay them \$60,000 for attorneys' fees, and will have to publish the time and location of all future bargaining sessions with the Police Officers Federation and ensure that the public may observe. Negotiations for the next contract are expected to begin this fall.

## NEW COMMISSION ON POLICE OVERSIGHT

There will be public hearing on Nov. 30 on an ordinance amendment that would replace the existing Police Conduct Oversight Commission with a new commission to help oversee the police and fire departments. The ordinance itself has not yet been made available to the public for review so the details of the proposal are not known at this time.

## VOLUNTEER ADVISORS NEEDED

The Hennepin County Board is recruiting volunteers for 38 advisory and watershed district board positions through its annual open appointment process. Appointees advise commissioners and help set policy on a variety of topics. There are openings on many boards including the Adult Men-

"You can relax into the group," Willman stated. "You can connect with others who are going through the same things you are, or have gone through them. A lot of it is how we can share our calm and our peace with the kids in our home. We can center ourselves to better care for the kids in our home."

Willman has two biological children and has adopted two children that she fostered. She said when her family first started doing foster care, almost all of the answers to questions were "it depends." She said in the current Foster the Family group, about half of the attendees don't have a placement at the moment. "A quarter of them are waiting for their first placement," she said. Willman explained that placements can be long or short-term; a mixture of fostering to adoption and emergency care.

## CHALLENGE OF SAYING GOODBYE

One of the toughest things about being a foster parent is having to let a child go, according to Willman. She said it is so difficult loving a child, knowing the child won't be with you forever. "It becomes easier, but I don't know anyone who could keep their distance. You're going to love that child not any different than any other kid in your life."

"One of the things we hear most often is about navigating the system and the lack of control," Willman said. "No situation is the same, every kid is different, and we never know how long things will take."

Willman said another big challenge is the relationship between the foster parents and the birth family. "I am licensed through Ramsey County, but I was not trained on how to interact with the birth family. You have a relationship, but you don't."

She said her adopted children are half siblings, with the same mom. "We will have that person in our lives, even if there are no visits. We build relationships that are good for our kids. Our group talks a lot about birth families; it is never really clear how much control to give them."

Willman explained that situations can be hard. "You know the kid, and you know the situation," she said. "We want to see families re-united, and we look at how we can support them." She said the foster parent can sometimes help babysit to provide the birth mom a break and to help her succeed. "Ultimately, we have very little control over what happens," she said.

## COVID-19 DISRUPTED EVERYTHING

When COVID-19 happened, it hit both biological and foster families hard. "Everything was disrupted," Willman said. "We did not know how to do visits, and we were just lost. You have these babies, and you can't put them on Zoom. It's not the same as the birth mother being able to hold her child for a couple of hours. But we figured it out."

COVID-19 upended everything. Social workers could not make home visits. Training was postponed. A lot of mandated reporters could not meet with kids, and their teachers were not seeing them every day.

"I feel like our social workers are still scrambling to catch up," Willman said. "And a lot of families are getting caught up on everything."

## HELPING EACH OTHER

Willman said there is a waiting list of foster families for children under age two, but it is difficult to find placements for children with high needs, siblings or older youth. "Unless there is a shared trauma that separates them, we try to keep sibling groups together in foster care," Willman said. "Taking a sibling group is a big commitment."

Willman re-emphasized that the Foster the Parent group is to provide support for foster and adoptive families, whether it's providing a meal when needed or encouragement.

"We find the tools to change what we can while we navigate this tricky world and help each other," Willman said.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Foster the Family can email [fosterthefamilytwincities@gmail.com](mailto:fosterthefamilytwincities@gmail.com).

## CITY BRIEFS

### 42ND ST. SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The city and county have agreed to work together to improve several intersections along 42nd St. Using Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, they will install traffic signal upgrades, bicycle facility upgrades, pedestrian ramps with curb extensions, accessible pedestrian signals, pedestrian countdown timers, and durable crosswalk markings at the intersection of Cedar Ave. and 42nd St. They will also build medians and pedestrian ramps along 42nd St. at the intersections of 21st Ave., 26th Ave., and Nokomis Ave. The project is scheduled to be constructed in 2023.

### MPLS FOR A BETTER POLICE CONTRACT V. CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

In November, the city council approved a settlement agreement related to the lawsuit brought against the city by the group, MPLS for a Better Police Contract, that was formed to influence the current police con-

tract before it was negotiated and approved. They filed the lawsuit after meetings were closed and not accessible to the public. As part of the agreement, the city will pay them \$60,000 for attorneys' fees, and will have to publish the time and location of all future bargaining sessions with the Police Officers Federation and ensure that the public may observe. Negotiations for the next contract are expected to begin this fall.

### CITY LONG RANGE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The city council has approved a number of appointments to the very influential Capital Long Range Improvement Committee that includes two members for each ward and makes recommendations on millions of dollars of infrastructure improvements for city-owned buildings, roads, bridges, parks and more. This included the reappointments for two-year terms ending December 2024 of Jonathan Ahn for Ward 8, Matt Kazinka, for Ward 9, as well as Risa Hustad, and Willie Bridges for Ward 11. Mayoral appointments of Eamonn Schmitz from Ward 9 and Dan McConnell from greater Longfellow were also approved. Twelve people are still needed to serve on this influential committee, including 2 for Ward 12.

### VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN

The draft 2023-2025 Vision Zero Ac-

tion Plan is now out for public comment. An average of 150 people suffered life-altering injuries or were killed in traffic crashes each year on streets in Minneapolis from 2017 to 2021, and traffic crashes disproportionately impact people in neighborhoods with lower incomes, Native American residents and people walking and bicycling. There will be an online open house to learn more on Dec. 1 at 6 p.m.

### SANCTUARY LOFTS

There was a groundbreaking in early November for the new Sanctuary Lofts located at 3225 Minnehaha Parkway in the old St. James Episcopal Church building. The project preserved the historic existing church building, adding 21 apartments and common areas within it and building a new residential building with seven units.

### HOPE STREET SHELTER FUNDING

The city has accepted \$2.5 million from Hennepin County to support the acquisition by Catholic Charities of their Hope Street shelter. The fund will help them pay for the youth shelter that they opened earlier this year in the Hiawatha neighborhood.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon



# Riverview Theater one of few one-screen theaters still operating locally

By JAN WILLMS

It was Dec. 30, 1948, that the Riverview Theater at 3800 42nd Avenue opened its doors, showing the film "June Bride," starring Bette Davis. The neighborhood icon caters to its community residents as well as a wide range of film-goers across the Twin Cities.

"To my knowledge, we have been operating continuously since 1948," said Nathan Smith, the current manager, who has been with the operation for 25 years.

"I was in high school, and I saw a help wanted sign in the window," Smith said. "I filled out the application and started working here. I went through college, met my wife at the theater, and raised my family in the neighborhood. And I'm still here."

The theater, originally started by Sidney and William Volk, was built in streamline moderne style, and retains most of the same looks today as when the lobby was renovated in 1956.

The Riverview features tables with imported Italian marble tops, stadium seating, and softlit lamps in its lobby. The women's lounge is covered with cat wallpaper, and the men's lounge walls feature fish scenes.

"The auditorium is the same as it was in 1948," Smith said. The seats have been updated for comfort and to provide more leg room. Smith said a couple of the original lamps in the lobby remain.

"The lamps just wandered off over the years," Smith said. The current owner of the Riverview, Loren Williams, has collected additional lamps that fit the décor, however.

The original stage curtain was in use up until about a year ago. "We still have it, but it was getting pretty thread-bare, so we replaced it," Smith said.



Up until the pandemic, the Riverview had shown second run films, along with special showings of sports events or presidential inaugurations. But after closing its doors for a short time at the height of the pandemic, the Riverview reopened and began showing first-run films. "The second-run market doesn't exist anymore, with streaming available," Smith said.

"I don't know that we have it figured out 100 percent yet, but we definitely are trying to get some variety in there," Smith said. The Riverview carried the Manhattan Short this year, a global film festival that features film entries from around the world in competition for best film and best actor. "We have stuff generally on our radar," Smith said. "It depends on if we are running a big blockbuster, but we like to keep things in mind. The World Cup is coming up, and if we are able to squeeze it in and do it, we will try."

The Riverview also offers Christmas films, such as "A Christmas Story," "White Christmas," "Elf" and "It's a Wonderful Life." Smith said the run of Christmas movies is one of the biggest things at the theater. "We started running them 18 years ago, and it's a fun time to see everyone come in. A lot of the people we see every year we know. There's a food drive, also, so it is well-attended."

According to Smith, the Riverview has a wide-ranging audience. "Prior to the pandemic, we were playing more directly to the neighborhood, and we try to do that now. But today we have viewers come from all across the city," he said.

The community, whether local or distant, helped the Riverview make it through the pandemic. "We had lines down the block during the pandemic picking up popcorn to go," Smith recalled. "That was big for us. We also opened up a line of



Dante Donato serves up a big bucket of popcorn to Kaelee Johnson at the Riverview Theater. (Photos by Terry Faust)

merchandise online while we were closed, and we still have it up. The community really supported us."

The Riverview is known for its tasty popcorn. "I think the biggest thing is that we care quite a bit. We put a lot of effort into getting good popcorn, oil and tweaking the heat. Butter definitely helps," Smith said.

When the Riverview started showing first-run movies, it raised its prices, but they are still low comparatively. "To my knowledge, no one is as low as us. We are still trying to keep our prices as low as we can," Smith noted.

The Riverview remains one of only a few theaters operating in the Twin Cities with one screen. "The Parkway, the Trylon, and the Heights Theater are the only other I can think of," Smith said.

As for the name of the iconic theater, Smith said he is not sure of the reason. "Even if you climb up on the roof, you don't have a view of the river," he stated. "I think the original owners just wanted a name that was new and fresh."

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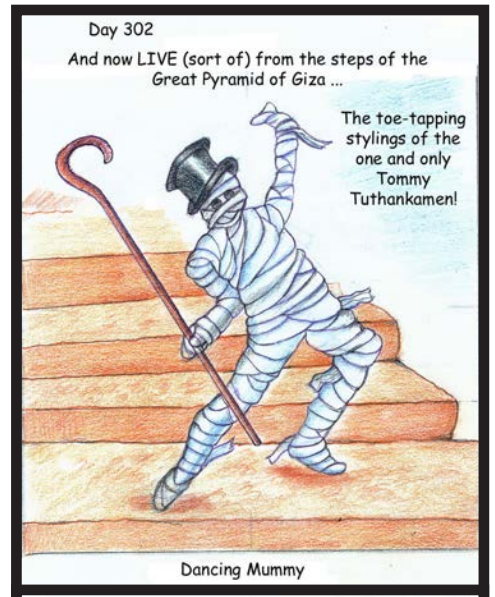
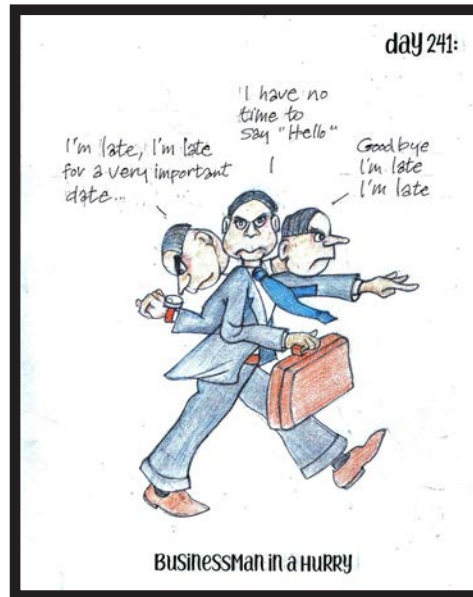
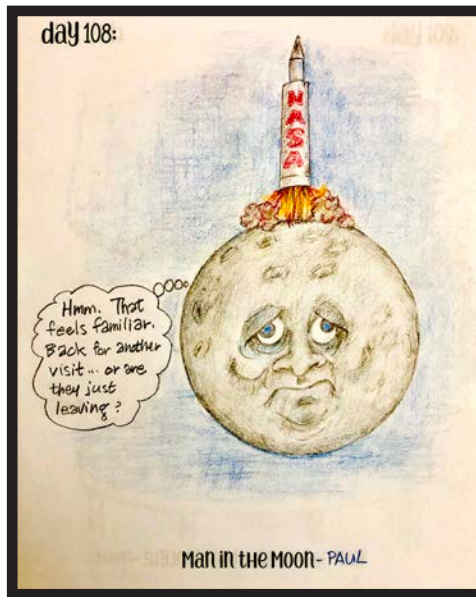
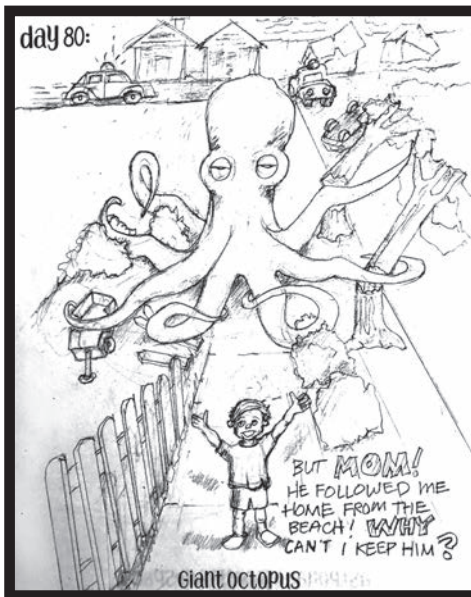
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## Creativity and community in a time of Isolation

In 2021, retired University of Minnesota filmmaker Paul Eide and a few members of his family pictured a way to fight pandemic isolation – a way that creatively drew them together.

Just before Christmas, Catherine, his niece in Seattle, discovered a unique sketchbook. Entitled “365 Days of Drawings Prompts,” it was a set of all blank pages, except for a day number at the top of each page and a “prompt” at the bottom. A prompt was a word or phrase intended to inspire a drawing. A couple examples: “Turtle Playing a Trumpet,” and “Zombie Who Loves Vegetables.” She sent out copies of the book to challenge members of her family to a year-long project of drawing and sharing. Besides herself and her own three children, the participants included her sister in Anchorage and her mother, father and Uncle Paul in Minneapolis.

Using the book's written prompts,

they all came up with imaginative illustrations and shared their pictures each day on a text messaging thread.

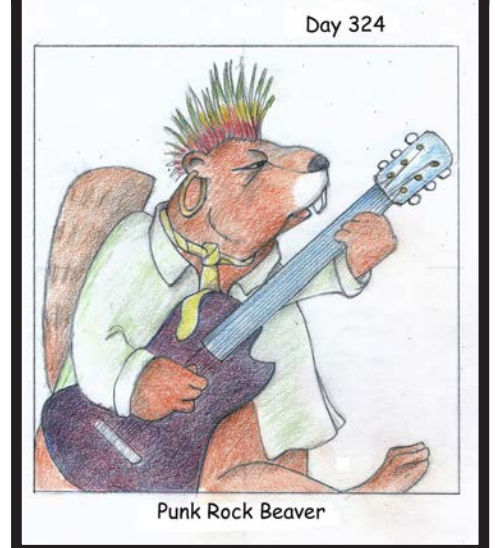
“The prompts were definitely what made the whole scheme work,” Paul said. “Each of us had a commitment to post a picture for each day. Drawing a picture became part of our daily routine. Some of the ideas that emerged were enjoyable surprises.” Looking forward to each day's sharing of images helped ease the isolation caused by the coronavirus lock-down and provided an amusing source of contact and community for all of them.

“Sort of to our surprise,” Paul said, “we all stuck with it and each of us managed to complete 365 drawings in the course of the year. We all brought different levels of drawing skill to the challenge. Some of us had taken college art classes in our earlier lives, and some had never done any drawing. It was not a competition...

we all learned that by doing something day after day, you can't help but get better at it.”

The daily exchange of images was a wonderful connection that kept family members in touch and creatively active. It was such a hit that, around the middle of 2021, Paul's nephew, Charlie, proposed another family project: writing and sharing short stories. That would include his own mother and father, and again, his Uncle Paul. In his scheme, the participants took turns randomly choosing three “elements” that needed to be included in a story. They would have two weeks to write, and then share their creations online at the end of a two-week period.

Paul mused, “Whether the need to stay home and isolate helped generate or inspire these family projects is a question I should ask of both my niece Catherine and my nephew Charlie. I suspect that is



the case. Though both the drawing and short story projects were family generated, I think any group of people could band together and do something similar.”

~ Edited by Terry Faust



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- 6) Write notes of encouragement and support, and help with “thank you” notes.
- 7) Offer to drive or accompany him/her to the cemetery regularly.
- 8) Make a weekly run to the grocery store, laundry or cleaners.
- 9) Anticipate difficult periods such as birthday, anniversaries and holidays.
- 10) Always mention the deceased by name and encourage reminiscing.

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## LATEST THRILLER &gt;&gt; from 1

One such story became Rendon's latest mystery thriller, "Sinister Graves." In this third installment of her Cash Blackbear series, Rendon maps out a dark and desolate terrain, which readers explore with Cash as their guide.

The Red River Valley is flooded from a spring snow melt, and Cash, a 19-year-old, "tough-as-nails" Ojibwe woman, is enlisted by Sheriff Wheaton to help solve the murder of a woman whose body is washed up by the floodwaters. In uncovering clues, Cash's intuition – "special abilities" that have helped her solve cases for Wheaton before – leads her to a small church, isolated and well off the beaten path, where she sees two little graves. She can't shake the feeling that she's needed there.

Wheaton is away for most of this story, and Cash is left to her own devices. There are plenty of reasons not to go down that road, but because Cash is going anyway, her faithful readers will trudge in the cold and the mud alongside her. The result is downright chilling.

With expertly crafted suspense, the story is a page turner both when Cash is on and off the case. Fans will be pleased to see Cash is still running the pool tables – and may even have met her match. And as a character who prefers solitude, Cash also begins interacting with more people, including a possible romantic interest.

"She had very limited relationships in 'Murder on the Red River' [the first of the series]. Very few, very limited," said Rendon. "It's like her world is growing bigger."

## WHO WOULD EVER KNOW?

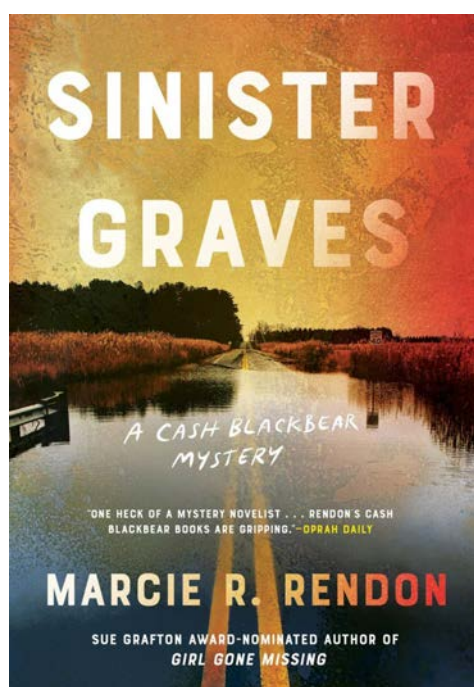
The story that became "Sinister Graves" was first imagined in 1990 when Rendon traveled through a remote part of Idaho and found a family graveyard with several children buried there, all under the age of two. The dates didn't coincide with a flu pandemic, which led Rendon to question what might have happened. Could their deaths have been the result of desperate acts committed by a mother suffering from post-partum depression? And who, out here isolated from everyone else, would ever know?

Somehow this story decided it was time to be told.

The fictional novel was written before the pandemic and before the very real uncovering of a mass grave of 215 Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, Canada, in 2021. This would mark only the beginning; more remains have



The story that became "Sinister Graves" was first imagined in 1990 when Marcie Rendon traveled through a remote part of Idaho and found a family graveyard with several children buried there, all under age two. (Photo by Jaida Grey Eagle)



been found at other locations, and numbers are expected to reach well into the thousands of people presumed buried in boarding schools across Canada and the U.S.

Rendon pointed out that these were government agencies and Christian, church-sanctioned boarding schools – large institutions run by people who were

LATEST THRILLER >> 10

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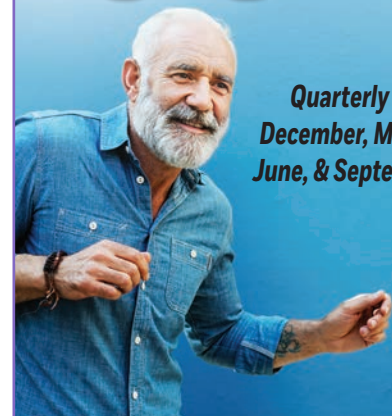
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Financing for this project was provided by the Metropolitan Council Metropolitan Livable Communities Fund, the City of Minneapolis, and the Hennepin County Affordable Housing Incentive Fund and Environmental Response Fund.



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## SUBVERSIVE SIRENS

>> from 1

"We swim. We dance. We do yoga. And Signe had a one-week synchronized swimming camp in the fourth grade. So we were totally ready," Messerole said.

"We started practicing, and we were taken under the wing of these synchronized swimmers in their 70s. We got three other people to join us, and we competed in duet and team combo," she said. They won gold in team combo and silver in duet in their age group. They also won gold and silver at the 2019 International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics (IGLA).

Most recently, The Subversive Sirens presented a combination piece of synchronized swimming and lesbian love poetry.

"I'm a theater artist," said Messerole. "I wanted to explore the more theatrical views of synchronicity. I wanted to do something that could be done in an outdoor pool, and the poetry was an inspiration."

She was awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board and Artists Initiative grant to do a piece in a swimming pool, and two weeks later COVID-19 hit.

Messerole got the music, composed by Peter Morrow, and the poetry by Natalie Barney and Audre Lorde. It took her nine months to create the three-minute sequence in synchronized swimming. Morrow composed three songs, and the first one was used for this piece of theatrical synchronicity called "Love of Silver Water."

The event was presented June 15, and Messerole taught the public some synchro as part of it. "We were having so much fun in the water," she said. The State Arts Board allowed those who received their funding at the height of COVID-19 to wait a year to give their performance.

Messerole said the two-hour event at the Jewish Community Center in St.



Suzy Messerole (left) and Tana Hargest. On this Thursday, Tana coached Suzy on some of her moves at the Phillips Aquatic Center. The Sirens will be appearing in London. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Louis Park included the performance, synchronized swimming lessons and a splash mob.

Messerole said she will do the other two pieces of music at some point. "The last piece is really meant to involve lots of community," she said. "The dream is I would teach a little bit of synchro to 15 to 20 people, and they would enter the water for the last piece of the song."

Because the Sirens are competing next summer and getting their routines ready, Messerole said she might wait until after that to work on the choreography for the second piece of her grant.

The Sirens practice every Saturday on a regular basis at the Phillips Aquatic Center in Minneapolis. "That pool is awesome," she said. "We love them. They love us. It's a pool where swimmers of color on our team have never had an issue. And

that's not true for all pools."

When getting ready for a performance, Messerole said the Sirens practice three to four times a week.

"There are queer swimming teams in a lot of different states. New York and California have big ones," Messerole said. "There is an organization in the Bronx that is almost all elderly Black folks who do synchronized swimming. In the Twin Cities, the group called the Northern Pikes took us under their wing and taught us to swim."

"But our pillars are very specific to us," she added. "All of us are activists, and these issues feel very connected to us." Messerole said one thing has changed for The Subversive Sirens, however.

"When we started we were super body punked, and body autonomy was very important to us, but loving your body was

almost overwhelming to some. So we have gone down the path of really understanding what body autonomy is. And for some, that hyper positivity was too much."

She said the synchronized swimmers are people who are day in and day out activists. "We're trying to imagine a better world. Envision large-scale as well as small-scale changes. It is not lost on us who does and doesn't have access to water, a connection to the land, or who is most affected by the Supreme Court decision on abortion rights."

"We were not surprised at the over-turning of Roe V. Wade," Messerole said. "These rights are all connected, and we try to disseminate good information and try to really message that there are organizations on the ground prepped and ready for this."

She said people have been working on these issues for a long time, and there is a deep connection between the loss of medical rights for transgender people and loss of rights for women.

Messerole said the journey (seeking equality) has been long. "It has been long for the seven generations before us, and it will last into the next seven generations," she stated.

She said that there is an element of what the Subversive Sirens do to encourage care and encourage people to engage with their bodies. "There is something very important about not disconnecting with your body," Messerole said.

"Before the pandemic, we were doing monthly splashes, where 30 to 40 people aged two to 90 would come out. We would teach synchro and then do a splash mob. That is just such a really great thing for people who have not felt welcome. It is sometimes very challenging for people of color and Trans folks."

"We do a lot more than just spread joy," Messerole affirmed. "Community is a very big part of our strategy."

## LATEST THRILLER >> from 9

aware of what was happening. But what of the foster care system?

"Thousands upon thousands of Indian kids were placed in these rural farms, places of isolation, and they were moved so often. One day a foster kid would be in school, the next, you know, they would just be gone," said Rendon. "How many of those kids are in some fields or tree grove? I mean, that's where my brain goes."

"With the foster care, it just seems way more untrackable," she said. "Kind of like the missing and murdered [Indigenous women]." Her book is dedicated to #mmiw and #stolenlives.

Also in the news, the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is now before the U.S. Supreme Court on a challenge to its constitutionality. The ICWA was enacted to ensure Native kids would first be placed with Native families or the tribe before going into foster care, where countless stories of abuse occurred and which traumatized generations of Indigenous Peoples.

For Rendon, these hard stories are easier to write as fiction because she can control the outcome.

"Even though there's dire things that happen, even though there's murder, even

though there's abuse, in my mind, as a human being outside of being a writer, I know there's a resolution, I know that it's going to be solved," she said.

In "Sinister Graves" – and "Murder on the Red River" and "Girl Gone Missing" before it – Cash Blackbear is on the case. Luckily for fans, a fourth story is already in the works.

An enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, Rendon is an award-winning author, poet and playwright and was the recipient of the 2020 McKnight Distinguished Artist Award. She resides in the Standish neighborhood of Minneapolis. Since September, Rendon has been working on a writing and healing project at Little Earth called Unconquered Nations. The project involves meeting monthly with the Little Earth Protectors, a small group of women, and writing their stories about their efforts to protect Little Earth during and since the Uprising. The hope is to publish a Chapbook, or small publication, in May.

Some signed copies of "Sinister Graves" are available at local independent bookstores. Visit Rendon's website at marcierendon.com and follow her at facebook.com/MarcieRendonMN.

## PARK UPDATES

### MINNEHAHA PARKWAY

Due to the recent cold weather and snow, construction has wrapped up for the year on a project to improve safety for trail users and drivers along Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail between Portland Avenue and Chicago Avenue.

Minnehaha Parkway has been closed between Portland Avenue S. and E. 50th Street since Oct. 3 to accommodate work on this project. Temporary frontage road 'no parking' signs have been removed and permanent parkway signs will be installed soon. Trail paving, pavement marking, and landscaping will be completed next spring.

The project includes:

- Realignment to create a 3-way stop and "T" intersection
- Expanded bike and pedestrian trail
- Upgraded crosswalk markings, expanded curb ramps and a raised crossing on the south side
- Removal of the parking bay immediately south of the intersection
- Conversion of the north and south Minnehaha Parkway frontage road segments to oneway.

### POWDERHORN PARK

A preferred concept plan for Powderhorn Park improvements is now available for comment and review. This plan is the culmination of extensive community engagement throughout spring and summer 2022, when over 300 people shared ideas and feedback through in-person outreach, pop-up meetings and online surveys.

Following that engagement, the design team developed a work scope, along with two draft concept plans showing possible design approaches (see the Oct. 6 project update). Public feedback on those draft concepts was considered in developing the new preferred concept plan.

Everyone is welcome to review the preferred concept plan and share their comments via email or in person at the public hearing on Dec. 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m. at the Mary Merrill Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Headquarters Building, 2117 West River Road.

Following the public hearing, Park Board Commissioners will consider public input and vote on whether to approve the preferred concept plan. If approved, the project moves into the final design and construction phases.

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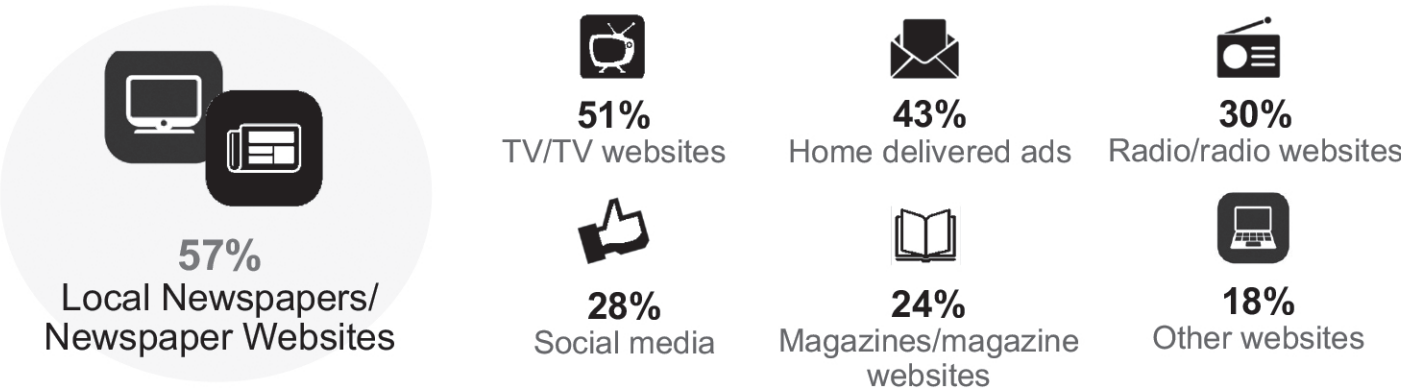


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# HAVE YOU BEEN TO ASA'S BAKERY?

## NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BY SARAH FRIEDMAN  
communications manager  
sarah.friedman@nokomiseast.org



You have probably heard of Asa's Bakery by now, but just in case you haven't, it's time to tell you about a little shop located on 5011 S 34th Ave.

When first walking into the shop, you'll see everyone hustling and bustling. These bagels are made fresh – they even mill their own malt – an ingredient that gives bagels the distinctive 'bagel' flavor. Asa is very proud that he and his team buy whole ingredients and buy local as much as possible.

When looking in the back, you will see a person wearing special glasses with a light connected to them. This is so the person may pick the bones out of the fresh fish to serve Asa's bakery's amazing salmon or whitefish bagel. Asa gets salmon from coastal seafood distributors and their white fish from Lake Superior and smoked in Wisconsin. He noted that this is the gold standard of white fish – even New Yorkers look for Lake Superior white fish.

Asa has been a food nerd since he was five years old. He always loved baking and has fond memories of going to the bakery with his family every week when growing up. "A bakery fills a lot of emotional needs for people and I'd like to help build that space," Asa said, looking around his shop. He started by bringing baked goods to the Midtown Farmers Market. In 2019, he shared a kitchen with Kabomelette food truck, and, in 2021, he moved into his own space where you can find his five

varieties of bagels (plain, poppy, salt, sesame and everything), five kinds of bread (sourdough, kasha, seed, pumpernickel, and cheddar scallion), and bialys.

This begs the question: What is a bialy? It's a relative of a bagel. It's a flat bread roll with an indent topped with onions. It's not as dense as a bagel, but serves the same purposes. Bagels are also boiled before baked, whereas a bialy is baked.

Asa noted that bialys are something that is hard to find out of the northeast and because he grew up eating it, it's something he missed in the Twin Cities. He notes that many customers lit up when they saw them on the menu exclaiming that these are a delicious treat that someone just can't get here. He has had some regular customers since the farmers market. "It's food that's meaningful and holds lots of memories for lots of people, so it's nice to make that possible," Asa says.

As he is growing into his new space he hopes to continue making his classics, while adding to his menu. "I'm a better baker than I was a year ago, and I am appreciative of our customers," he said, mulling on his years of experience being a baker "I'm excited to see what we can continue to grow and do."

### TWO OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

Nokomis East Neighborhood Association has two open board seats! You can join 14 other board members in shaping your community. NENA is a community-based nonprofit organization serving four unique, welcoming neighborhoods with over 14,700 residents and dozens of businesses in the southeast corner of Minneapolis. NENA is dedicated to bettering the quality of life and building a sense of community pride by sponsoring actions that help our environment, businesses, and homes.



Asa Diebolt stands inside his bakery, located in the former Sassy Spoon space.

We look for Board of Directors members who are energetic, strategically-minded leaders to help NENA and our neighborhoods thrive.

Please apply if:

- You are 18 or older
- Live in Minnehaha or Keewaydin
- Would like spend about 10 hours per month to serving your community
- Complete a full two-year term (or replacement term)
- Live (homeowners and renters) in the neighborhood elected to serve (Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park, or Wenonah), or
- Resident, property owner, business owner or employee in Nokomis East (At-Large seats)
- Attend Monthly Board Meetings – Fourth Thursday of Each Month (6:30 – 8:30 p.m.). Third Thursday of November and December.
- Serve on a committee and volunteer for community events
- Commitment to supporting NENA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement of Principle

• Commitment to financially support NENA within your means

Applications can be found at [nokomiseast.org](http://nokomiseast.org) and are due Jan. 19, 2023.

### UPCOMING:

- 1/5/2023: NENA Housing|Development Committee, 6:30-8 p.m. (Zoom)
- 1/10/2023: NENA Executive Committee Meeting, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 1/12/2023: NENA Fundraising Events Team, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 1/16/2023: NENA Environmental Committee, 5:30-6:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 1/17/2023: NENA Wellness Engagement Committee, 7:30-8:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 1/26/2023: NENA Board of Directors Meeting, 6:30 pm at Morris Park Recreation Center at 6:30-8:30 p.m.



Jennifer Davis is the new NENA Community Organizer.

## CHANGES AT SENA

Our SENA team has changed and we are happy to be working with a team of committed volunteer board members. Our monthly board meetings occur the second Monday of every month (federal holidays exempted) at 7 p.m. Please visit [www.standish-ericsson.org](http://www.standish-ericsson.org) for more information. Please join us!

### BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACT INFO:

- David Austin, president@[standish-ericsson.org](mailto:standish-ericsson.org)
- Cheryllyne Vaz, vicepresident@

## STANDISH ERICSSON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

BY KATIE GENS  
coordinator  
[office@standish-ericsson.org](mailto:office@standish-ericsson.org)



[standish-ericsson.org](http://standish-ericsson.org)

- Sheila Cracraft Fehler, treasurer@[standish-ericsson.org](mailto:standish-ericsson.org)
- Brynn Kasper, secretary@[standish-ericsson.org](mailto:standish-ericsson.org)

### GET TO KNOW KATIE GENS

I live in Standish, and have loved it since 2013. My family enjoys exploring our favorite places, finding new ones, and meeting all of our neighbors.

Our family – 2 adults, 2 kids, and 1 big cat – are happy to grow an excessive amount of vegetables for enjoyment now and later, (Pickles! Have you ever made your own enchilada sauce out of green tomatoes?). We bike around the neighborhood, play at local parks, and attend school at Northrop.

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

Mid-pandemic, I was looking for a way to clean out our garage, hence the SENA Annual Garage Sale. I saw the Help Wanted and thought, "I want to do that!"

My goal is to be an accessible resource for all questions and to provide workable solutions for the needs at hand.

Our volunteer board of residents, business owners, and property owners make SENA a helpful resource for our community. We provide options, resources, experiences, opportunities, and places for our community to promote a safe, cohesive, and sustainable neighborhood.

## Do you live in the Minnehaha, or Keewaydin Neighborhoods?

### JOIN THE NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD!

Applications Due January 19th, 2023

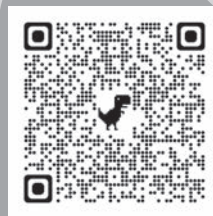
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## Volunteer with LCC

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## Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater presents new holiday production

Classics Lost 'n' Found Theater company presents the premiere of "A Christmas Carol Krampus or It's A Pretty OK Life," a new holiday production for adults, written and directed by Lisa M. W. Phelps. The production will be presented Dec. 9, 10, 16 and 17 at 7 p.m. at Lake Nokomis Presbyterian Church, 1620 E. 46th Street in the Nokomis neighborhood of south Minneapolis.

"A Christmas Carol Krampus" is an irreverent and satiric mash-up of familiar Christmas characters. Carol Krampus dreams of fame beyond her traditional role as a child-eating monster while Mrs. Claus and her number one assistant must battle a corporate takeover to save the holiday from a greedy villain. Characters such as Frosty, Hermey, the Grinch, and Dickens' famous ghosts all make an appearance in

a world where the snow isn't always white and the elves are sometimes up to no good. (Recommended for adults due to language, alcohol use, and adult situations.)

Returning for this production are Norreen K. Brandt, Dan Dyke, Rose B. Johnson, J. Emily Peabody, Anna Whiting, David Norini, Stephen Greenhalgh, Ari Stemple, Meagan Kellom, Troy Lowry, Jr. Cat Martin, Maureen Trepp and Carole Conama. They will be joined by Jeny Stevens, Dan Durkee, Amanda Krumrei and Andie Moore. Candace Dyke will serve as production stage manager.

Please note that CLFTC accepts cash and checks, but cannot accept credit cards. For more information, contact lavignebiz1952@gmail.com, Classicslostandfound@gmail.com, or contact 612-724-4539.

## PLAN IT

### HEALING WATERS QIGONG

Healing Waters Qigong now meets in the Lake Hiawatha Park Building. "Improve your health, increase energy, connect with community and learn how to activate healing from within in this weekly drop in class. Come in person or join online," urge organizers. Walk in or register through Minneapolis Parks at 612-370-4930. Wednesdays, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

### ELECTRIC ORGAN RECITAL JAN. 8

Mount Olive Music and Fine Arts presents Katelyn Emerson in an eclectic organ recital on the 55-rank Schlicker organ at Mount Olive. Organist, lecturer, and pedagogue Katelyn Emerson, hailed as "one of the world's most promising organists" (Listvinafélag Hallgrímskirkju, Iceland), is internationally renowned for performances throughout North America, Europe, and Asia that are "thrilling from beginning to end" and that showcase repertoire from the 14th - 21st centuries with "impressive technical facility and musicianship" (Cleveland Classical). The recital takes place at 4 p.m., on Sunday, January 8, 2023, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, 3045 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis. This event is free and open to the public.

### PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING DEC. 13

The next Ward 11 Public Safety Meeting is on Dec. 13 from 7-8:30 p.m. at Pearl Park Recreation Center (414 E Diamond Lake Rd, MN 55419). Agenda items for include, but are not limited to, an introduction to the new Chief of Police, Brian O'Hara, and an update on Operation Endeavor.

### LBA ANNUAL LUNCHEON DEC. 7

The Longfellow Business Association annual Holiday Luncheon will be on Wednesday, Dec. 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Legacy Building. Catering by Official Fried Chicken and fresh juice from The Dripping Root Juice Bar. Hear year-end highlights and what's coming in 2023, plus information from the city's Homeless Response Team. Plus connect with other local businesses. The Legacy Building, located at 46th and Minnehaha, is owned by Emmanuel and Sarah Duncan. As a Black owned space for artistic creativity and collaboration, their mission is to provide a safe space for artists to create, while offering free programs, networking events and artist workshops. More at [www.longfellowbusinessassociation.org](http://www.longfellowbusinessassociation.org)

## TIDBITS

### COMMUNITY FIX IN

The Minnesota Tool Library has recently expanded its programming to include the Community Fix In. This once a month program gives people the opportunity to learn how to fix their own small household items, tools and textiles. If you have any of these issues or something similar, the Minnesota Tool Library has Fixers who can help: a chair with wobbly legs, a lamp that flickers, a vacuum that's lost its suck, a weed-whacker that no longer whacks, a jacket with a broken zipper, a tear in the your favorite jeans, a knife that's lost its edge. No reservation required and open to the public (not just members of the MN Tool Library) on the third Sunday of the month from 3 to 6 p.m. at the northeast branch of the Minnesota Tool Library (1620 Central Ave NE Suite 120, Minneapolis).

## ALL THE THINGS WE DID IN 2022

### LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY ANDREA TRITSCHLER,  
communications  
[andrea@longfellow.org](mailto:andrea@longfellow.org)



As I'm writing this, snow is falling outside announcing winter's arrival. With the snowfall and bitter cold temperatures, we prepare to leave another year behind, but not first without looking back on 2022.

This was a year of growth for LCC. We added three full-time staff members - a Community Organizer, a VISTA Tenant Organizer and a Communications Manager, which allowed us to expand our reach into the community and build stronger relationships with Greater Longfellow residents, organizations and businesses. We've been working with the International Leadership Institute and the honorable Judge LaJune Lange on projects to amplify the stories of Black history in the Longfellow neighborhood and south Minneapolis. We also have partnered with the Seward Neighborhood Group, Longfellow Business Association, and others.

New to LCC this year, we took on the work of Free the Deeds, which educates and engages residents on racial covenants. Greater Longfellow has one of the highest numbers of racial covenants in the city, and only about 10 percent of covenants have been removed through the Just Deeds program. We work in partnership with the lawyers of Just Deeds to help neighbors remove those covenants. Although we have just started this work, we want to eradicate all remaining racial covenants and really look forward to diving more into this work next year.

Free the Deeds is just one of the new programs LCC has been working on this year. We were able to distribute just under \$32,000 from September to December in rental assistance to renters in Greater Longfellow through the Renter Support Fund. Every month there was an overwhelming amount of applications and only a handful of people were able to receive the help they needed. There were over 420 applications in September and 25 of them came from the Longfellow neighborhood. We hope that launching our Building Ambassador program will help us continue to connect with renters. Additionally, many homeowners in Greater Longfellow have taken advantage of our Home Security Lighting Grant with around \$7,000 distributed in the community.

And while much of our work remains focused on residents, part of our mission is to support local businesses. Our business corridors and neighborhoods are still

feeling the devastating effects of the uprisings following the murder of George Floyd. Through 2022 we have granted over \$100,000 to businesses and organizations in Greater Longfellow - including CommonSense Consulting, Urban Design Perspective, and Du Nord Craft Spirits. They used the \$5,000 they each received toward the redevelopment and ownership of the historic Coliseum building.

"This development structure and approach is significant as there will be four partners, three of which are BIPOC who will own more than 59% of the building collectively," Alicia Belton of Urban Design Perspective said. Janice Dowling of Common Sense Consulting said the grant was crucial in helping to purchase legal advice to review the documents associated with this deal, and to form a new corporation, SHAKE Incorporated. These businesses are determined to make our community stronger, and more vibrant than it was before.

The devastation in our community isn't more obvious than in the burned and abandoned Third Precinct building. Earlier this year we brought community members together for the first time to discuss what they wanted to see happen with that property. After two years, we were finally able to start a conversation between city officials and the residents of the Third Precinct. And that conversation turned into action on the city level. Our council members advocated for expanded community engagement to determine what residents want to see happen with that property and where the Third Precinct building should be located, then allocated \$100,000 in funding to that end. This is an example of real change and action created by our community and neighborhood organization.

This year also brought the return of more regular community events. We hosted several community clean ups including our Earth Day River Gorge Clean up with Friends of the Mississippi River, which drew a great crowd even with a bit of a chill in the air. Our annual River Gorge Festival was a great success. Every year we put on this event more people are able to try out canoeing or rowing and also discover the gem that is the River Gorge! Our spring General Membership Meeting was to elect a new Board of Directors and in fall community members were able to taste (and judge) 14 different pies!

Thank you to all our volunteers and neighbors who have been involved with LCC and to those new volunteers and neighbors, who have joined a committee, attended our events, or donated to our organization. It is an honor to work for you and alongside you to make our community better. Learn more about Longfellow Community Council at our website - [longfellow.org](http://longfellow.org), or send me an email at [andrea@longfellow.org](mailto:andrea@longfellow.org) with things you would like to see in 2023. We're looking forward to all the new year will bring.

## DO THE MATH!

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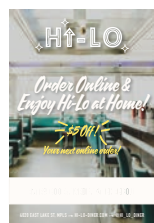
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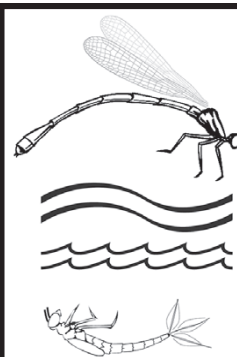
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# Best time to prune most plants is late winter

## THE CITY GARDENER

BY LAUREN BETHKE,  
Master Gardener



As fall turns to winter, you may be looking at the bare, brown branches in your yard and wondering when to cut them back. Overall, the answer is not yet! But there's lots to think about before pruning season starts. Read on for advice on timing and techniques for pruning trees and shrubs.

The best time to prune most plants is in the late dormant season – generally around January or February. It's ideal to prune while temperatures are below freezing to reduce the risk of disease, and waiting until late winter ensures that new growth will quickly seal the cuts in the spring. The exception to this rule is that trees and shrubs that bloom early in the growing season on last year's growth should be pruned immediately after they finish blooming. These include azalea, flowering cherry, forsythia, lilac, and magnolia. There are also some specific best practices for pruning hydrangeas, which I'll talk about below.



*Most plants should be pruned in the late dormant season, generally around January or February. The exceptions are those that bloom early in the growing season on last year's growth. (Photo submitted)*

Pruning is both an art and a science, and it can be intimidating to start cutting your prized trees and shrubs. For large mature trees, it's often best to call a professional who has the experience and equipment to do the job right (and safely). But for shrubs and smaller trees, don't worry too much – as long as you don't remove more than about a third of a shrub (or 20% of a tree), you probably won't hurt the plant.

First, remove any diseased, broken, or dead branches, and any branches that are growing directly downward or upward. Whenever two branches are crossed, tangled, or rubbing together, remove one of the branches at its base. Next, remove any small branches growing too low on a tree's trunk (often referred to as "suckers"). It's recommended to remove entire branches whenever possible, to thin out your tree or shrub. If you only cut off part of a branch, it can encourage more growth below the cut, which can create an odd shape. However, if you do prune a branch in the middle, you should cut above a bud facing the outside of the plant, to encourage the new branch to grow in that direction. Finally, when pruning trees, make sure not to cut the "leader," or the vertical stem at the top of the trunk. This can weaken the tree and destroy its natural shape.

Now, as promised, let's talk about hydrangeas. Hydrangeas are very popular in Minnesota, and widely loved for their long-lasting, showy blooms. But best practices for pruning hydrangeas are different depending on the specific type you're growing, causing confusion for many home gardeners.

There are four main types of hydrangeas grown in Minnesota: panicle, bigleaf, smooth, and climbing. Panicle hydrangeas have cone-shaped flower clusters, which provide nice winter interest in the garden.

They regrow on previous seasons' growth, so it's best to prune back dead branches and spent flowers in late winter or spring. Bigleaf hydrangeas have the classic round flower clusters, and they form flower buds in late summer for the following season. Therefore, you should aim to prune them in summer right after the flowers fade, to avoid removing next year's blooms. However (to make things even more confusing), Endless Summer is a popular variety of bigleaf hydrangea, but it produces blooms on both old and new wood, so it will bloom nicely whether you prune it or not. Smooth hydrangeas can be identified from their green, flexible, and relatively soft stems. They grow on new wood each year, so you can prune them down to the ground around March. Finally, climbing hydrangeas form a tough, gnarly vine and rarely or never need pruning, except to remove dead wood.

One last tip: I recommend putting pruning on your calendar for sometime in January or February so you don't forget! You may not be thinking about gardening with snow on the ground, and it's easy to accidentally let the ideal pruning window pass. But a bit of advance planning will ensure that your trees and shrubs are healthy and beautiful in the coming year.

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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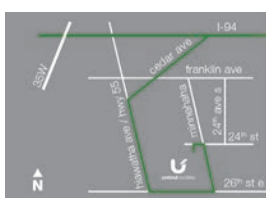


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