

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • DECEMBER 15, 2022 • VOL. 2 • NO. 1



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## A POUND OF LOVE

Madison Weissenborn holds three-month-old Llasa prior to a free adoption day event on Dec. 9, 2022 meant to clear out the shelter before Christmas. Weissenborn is the volunteer and community partnership coordinator at Minneapolis Animal Care and Control. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

## NOT THE POUND YOU THINK YOU KNOW

**Minneapolis Animal Care and Control shelters animals, offers pets for adoption, and needs volunteers**

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

The Minneapolis city animal control facility isn't the grim place many picture.

"For a long time, this place would have been called a pound with all the negative aspects that entails," observed Lyle James, who volunteers as an animal care assistant. "It's hard to change the image." But, he's hopeful things people are changing their minds about Minneapolis Animal Care and Control (MACC).

"We've changed a lot in the last 10 or so years," pointed out Madison Weissenborn, the MACC volunteer and community partnership coordinator. "We're focusing on the community and keeping people and pets together. Whatever they need, we're trying to help with that."

Weissenborn acknowledges that in the past, shelters hid things – or at least, people thought they did. So, MACC works to be transparent and posts all its data on the city's online dashboard. "With that transparency, we hope people trust us more," she said.

Many don't realize it, but Minneapolis animal control is a

▶ 5

## INSPIRED BY THE NORTH WOODS

**Tangletown author's books are based on her experiences in northern Minnesota**

By **Chloe Peter**

Erin Soderberg Downing never wanted to be a writer when she was a kid. In fact, she didn't really like writing all that much. But she did love the adventures books could take her on, and her first job was working at Scholastic in NYC as a children's book editor.



It was there - working with other writers to help them make their stories better – that Downing learned more about how to create a great book. When she left that job, Downing missed helping people create their stories – and realized the only way she could be a part of making books anymore was to start writing some of her own.

Now Downing, a Tangletown resident, has written more than 50 books for kids, tweens, teens, and adults. Her most recent book, "Controlled Burn," is out now.

**HOW DID YOU GET INTO WRITING FOR KIDS, TWEENS, AND YOUNG ADULTS?**

Downing: My first few books were teen romantic comedies (the types of stories that I'd loved to read and that I felt fit my skills and humor at the time), but over time, I've migrated to almost entirely middle-grade and

▶ 12

## LOWRY HILLS GETTING MORE POLICE PATROLS THANKS TO PRIVATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC WORKERS

**Council members approve controversial program, instruct staff to give a detailed report by end of March**

By **Cam Gordon**

Lowry Hills will be getting more police patrols next year thanks to a nonprofit that will pay the city \$112 an hour. Some are questioning this buyback program while there are staffing shortages.

On Dec. 8, the Minneapolis city council

voted to approve renewing a contract with the Minneapolis Safety Initiative (MSI) for \$268,800, to pay for added police patrols in the Lowry Hill neighborhood next year.

According to the staff report, the city will be compensated at \$112 per hour per officer to "increase police visibilities in

the neighborhood where safety perception has indicated a need for extra police presence." MSI and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) will agree upon the number of hours on a month by month basis with "no guarantee that hours requested will be filled."

Approval of the contract

▶ 3

2023

# SOUTHWEST CONNECTOR SPECIAL SECTIONS

## JANUARY

Health & Wellness due Jan. 9, pub Jan 16  
School Guide due Jan. 9, pub Jan 16

## FEBRUARY

Summer Camps due Feb. 6, pub Feb. 16  
Tie the Knot due Feb. 6, pub Feb. 16  
Employment due Feb. 6, pub Feb. 16

## MARCH

Home Improv't due Feb. 17, pub Mar 2  
Aging Well due Mar 6, pub Mar 16

## APRIL

Home & Garden due Mar 27, pub Apr 6  
Drive & Ride due Apr 10, pub Apr 20

## MAY

Home & Garden due Apr 24, pub May 4  
Summer in the City due May 8, pub May 18

## JUNE

Aging Well due May 22, pub Jun 1  
Summer in the City due May 22, pub Jun 1  
Paws & Claws due Jun 5, pub Jun 15  
@ Lake & Hennepin due Jun 5, pub Jun 15

## JULY

Summer in the City due June 19, pub Jul 6  
Back to School due Jul 10, pub Jul 20

## AUGUST

Summer in the City due July 24, pub Aug 3  
Back to School due July 24, pub Aug 3

## SEPTEMBER

Back to School due Sept. 11, pub Sept. 21  
Aging Well due Sept. 11, pub Sept. 21

## OCTOBER

Home Improv't due Sep. 25, pub Oct. 5  
Voters Guide due Oct. 9, pub Oct. 19

## NOVEMBER

Holiday Recipes due Oct. 23, pub Nov. 2  
Family Court Awareness Month due Oct. 23, pub Nov. 2  
Shop Small due Nov. 6, pub Nov. 16

## DECEMBER

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## ▶1 POLICE PATROLS

passed on a 9 to 3 to 1 vote, with Ward 1 Council Member Elliot Payne abstaining and Council Members Aisha Chughtai, Jason Chavez and Robin Wonsley voting against it.

At the same meeting, the council also passed a motion by Payne calling for a more detailed report about the program to be provided to the council by the end of March 2023 with possible recommendations for policy changes.

In a presentation to the city council earlier this year, the police department reported that the buyback program is offered to officers who want to work beyond the regular and overtime operations of the department. The work is funded by an entity outside the department, but is paid through the MPD payroll.

Funding usually comes from grants, stadiums and other venues, organizations, neighborhoods, and other departments of the city. There were 9,691 buyback hours funded this way in 2021. Geographically-based entities who have contracted for buyback patrols over the past 10 years include Marcy Holmes, St. Anthony West, the Hawthorne Neighborhood Council, the Downtown Improvement District, and the Uptown Special Service District.

According to MPD, this allows police to target crime hotspots, provides extra patrols in areas that want them, and helps provide security for large events and city projects.

When a similar contract (of \$210,000) between MSI and MPD was approved last January, concerns were raised about potential impacts to patrol staffing shortages and unfair advantages going to wealthier areas of the city.

"I have concerns that richer neighborhoods can have access to police resources when a lot of our neighborhoods are struggling with safety," said Ward 9 Council Member Chavez before the vote last

January. "So, it's an equity issue for me."

At the same meeting, Ward 10's Chughtai raised concerns about the larger concept of what she called the "privatization of public goods." She said, "The result is always worse for the people who are most marginalized."

Lowry Hill is widely recognized as among the top 10 wealthiest neighborhoods in the city. Homesnacks.com, for example, puts it at the 8th richest of 84 Minneapolis neighborhoods in their 2022 ranking, with a median household income of over \$107,000.

The funding for the Lowry Hill program appears to rely mostly on individual contributions that are being collected through a website operated by MSI. On their website no individuals are named as contacts but Wedgelive reported last January that, "Minneapolis Safety Initiative is a nonprofit that registered on 12/24/2021 by Cam Winton, or someone using his home address. Relatedly, Cam Winton was listed on the Jan. 4 agenda of the Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association (LHNA) to discuss public safety."

When asked about the buyback program, a LHNA spokesperson was clear that it is not their program. "Please contact Minneapolis Safety Initiative for further information," a spokesperson wrote. "The Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association shared Minneapolis Safety Initiative information with residents. LHNA is a neutral party, not for or against this initiative; we want residents to be informed."

According to the association's minutes, at LHNA's September meeting, questions for 5th Precinct Inspector Kathy Blackwell "included whether the off-duty Minneapolis Police Officer hired by the neighborhood has been effective. Inspector Blackwell stated the officer's presence is correlated with below average crime trends in Lowry Hill compared to the rest of the city and reduced police response times."

The MSI website says, "Our goal is to

increase safety for all residents and visitors." It calls the program a temporary measure to address the current crime wave while MPD continues to rebuild to full staffing levels. "The program will continue as long as there is a need for additional patrols and support from neighbors to deploy them. ... To determine the appropriate program length, we will evaluate data and consult with program participants within six months of program start." No evaluation, however, was available on the website, and there has been no response from email inquiries to MSI for comments for this story.

Without measurable results articulated, it is hard to determine if the program has been successful so far, after nearly a year of implementation. It is also unclear when and where the patrols have been working and to what ends.

Looking at crime data alone, it appears that the program has had little impact. The year-to-date statistics of reported crimes maintained by the city reveal increases in most types of crime. Assaults have gone up, at 32 compared to 14 at this time last year, and the three-year average of 15. Burglaries/break-ins are also up to 29 from 22 last year, but slightly below the three-year average of 31. The three crimes, of the 14 tracked on the department's dashboard, that have gone down are robberies - from 24 last year at this time to 23 this year, car jackings (a subset of robberies) are down to 7 from 9; and shots fired calls, which are down to 32 from 36.

While the number of crimes has increased in Lowry Hill since 2018 and 2019, there are many other neighborhoods in the city, including in southwest, that have more crime than Lowry Hill. Whittier, for example, had 408 assaults, 108 burglaries and 119 robberies so far this year. Lowry Hill East has had 175 assaults, 71 burglaries and 91 robberies.

Some residents from higher crime areas are concerned that with a reduced

number of officers from past years, and the limit on how many hours officers can work each week, buyback programs could mean less patrol officers in areas or at times when they may be most needed, as occurred last summer on July 4 downtown.

One Lowry Hill East resident, Charlie Rybak, has been looking into buyback programs and written about them for Southwest Voices. When asked about the new buyback program for the Lowry Hill neighborhood area he said, "If we are in the environment when lots of well-meaning people think we need more police, I think it's very important we use them where they are most needed."

Rybak and others are hopeful that the attention this issue has gotten at the council and the latest staff direction, as well as the upcoming labor contract negotiations with the police federation and the potential consent decrees with state or federal agencies, will make this a good time to rethink the buyback policy.

After voting for Payne's directive that was approved unanimously on Dec. 8, but before voting for the contract, Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman, who represents all of Lowry Hill expressed her support of an improved policy. "I obviously support this today and ask for your vote, but I, for many years, have been raising the issue of overtime and who does the allocation and what is our level of responsibility," Goodman said. "I do think it is time to look at this."

Based on the directive, citizens should be learning more about the use of the program by the end of March next year. City staff have been instructed to report on the requirements for qualifying entities to participate in the program, the staffing capacities, the objectives of the added officers, performance measures, and an equity analysis that includes an analysis of how the hours of service that have been delivered over the previous five years by precinct and neighborhood.

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*From all of us at the Southwest Connector*

**2023 DEADLINES**

Publication typically 1st and 3rd Thursdays. Deadlines typically 2nd and 4th Mondays.  
\* Some exceptions

Publication date	Deadline date
Break	Break
Jan. 19	Jan. 9
Break	Break
Feb. 16	Feb. 6
March 2	Feb. 17 (Friday)
March 16	March 6
April 6	March 27
April 20	April 10
May 4	April 24
May 18	May 8
June 1	May 22
June 15	June 5
July 6	June 19
July 20	July 10
Aug. 3	July 24
Break	Break
Sept. 7	Aug. 28
Sept. 21	Sept. 11
Oct. 5	Sept. 25
Oct. 19	Oct. 9
Nov. 2	Oct. 23
Nov. 16	Nov. 6
Nov. 30	Nov. 20
Dec. 14	Dec. 4



LETTERS

## THANKS FOR THE CONNECTOR NEWSPAPER

We are delighted to receive your paper. You focus on local events. Please consider a detailed article on the need for the Minneapolis neighborhood associations. I'm a big supporter of the fourth estate and local voices speaking for local needs.

**Aroti Bayman**  
Longtime Minneapolis Public School teacher  
Linden Hills

We want to hear from you.  
[news@SWconnector.com](mailto:news@SWconnector.com)

## MUSINGS ON \$20

### STORIES & JOURNEYS

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



By **Donald L. Hammen**



### 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

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 specialist) at Midtown Farmers Market. There were the Neighborhood Roots markets of

Fulton and Kingfield. 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, Krisna's Delights, Havliceks Orchard, Hmong Eggrolls and Carolyn's Hats at Midtown. At Fulton, there was Havliceks Orchard and Peter's Pumpkins. And at Kingfield, there was Krisna'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.

## ADD MORE HOLIDAYS TO YOUR LIFE AND HONOR WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT TO YOU

### GUEST COLUMN

By **Eddie Glenn**

My children and I tested positive for COVID-19 about a week before Thanksgiving, which meant we had to miss a larger family gathering that my in-laws were hosting.

We made the best of it on Thanksgiving Day. My wife baked a turkey and a few sides, and we exchanged goodies with some friends who were similarly on quarantine.

The most interesting thing about it to me was what we did after Thanksgiving. My wife and I are members of the Bahá'í Faith, and there are a couple of Bahá'í holidays that fall around Thanksgiving every year. However, a lot of our family lives in the Twin Cities and Thanksgiving is such a dominant American family tradition that the Bahá'í holidays get lost in the shuffle.

When my immediate family suddenly had the week to ourselves, my wife and I raised the question, "What exactly are we

honoring on Thanksgiving?" We realize the holiday has a controversial history, but everyone we know embraces the chance to hang out with extended family. When my wife and I couldn't actually see our family this year it made us wonder, what are we celebrating at home? Old pie recipes?

It led to a rather exciting conversation around the Bahá'í holidays that we usually miss in November, the history and significance behind them, and what we want them to mean for our kids. We basically decided that, while we'll still embrace Thanksgiving as a chance to hang out with others, we wanted to make the Bahá'í holidays "bigger" within our household.

We have both been Bahá'í long enough to realize that is actually a difficult goal to reach. Living in the United States, you get swamped with American holidays - especially Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Regardless of ones belief, these holidays are inescapable from October until January. But the bigger obstacle is that we get swamped with life. Everyone we know gets so preoccupied with daily life that we can barely fit Christmas shopping in. And that is even with every major retailer reminding you of it a dozen times per day. It is even more difficult to

celebrate something with no prepackaged traditions; when the vast majority of people don't even realize you are trying to celebrate something.

This year helped me to realize how commemorating something despite the rest of the world not knowing can make the celebration more poignant. With mainstream holidays, it is easy to engage in them thoughtlessly. You put up the decorations you already have in your attic, you buy what was advertised while you're already at the store, you click through on the sales that are emailed to you. America works hard to make certain holidays convenient when it can be a little more rewarding when you have to work for it.

For my wife and I, the freedom of quietly choosing our own tradition led to a really fun conversation reflecting on what will draw our family together. There were no expectations to meet or rituals to uphold. These holidays made us feel completely free to develop whatever felt most meaningful to us.

After this experience, I encourage you to add some more holidays to your calendar. Either pick some under appreciated events or make up your own. Enjoy the blank canvas of celebratory opportunity.

You can make your own traditions, focus on exactly what you find significant, and include the people that you really want to share it with. Maybe there's a member of your family who has passed away who deserves some more birthday parties? Maybe you want take a day to appreciate the impact of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Charles Darwin, or James Baldwin? Countless monumental events only live on in books and Wikipedia; you could dig for something surprising and commemorate it in your way. Or, maybe keep it personal: Perhaps you remember the first time you fell in love with paddle boarding, birdwatching, or painting, and you want to relive that feeling once a year. Or maybe the day you bought your first car, quit smoking, or started your own business was such a big accomplishment that you need to take credit for it again every year.

Whatever brings significance into your life, maybe it would be worth creating a tradition around? It can bring more motivation and direction into your life if you can identify these timestamps in your year. Then relish the fact that, despite the world's apparent unawareness of it, it means a lot to you.

## SOUTHWEST Connector

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## ▶ 1 ANIMALS

No Kill Shelter. That means that 90% of the animals that come in are re-homed versus euthanized. This high percentage is hard for a city-run shelter to achieve, pointed out Weissenborn, because they can't pick and choose which animals they take. When there is a dangerous, sick or injured animal in the city, it comes to them. "We are an open intake shelter," she explained.

They get in animals that have never lived in a house before, or never been fed two meals a day. These animals require more care and training to get them to be adoptable. Weissenborn has observed that it takes dogs a few days to feel that the shelter is a safe place for them where they will be fed and cared for. "Cats are more sensitive in general, and it might be longer," Weissenborn stated.

In addition to regular meals, exercise for the dogs and cuddle times for the cats, there are also enrichment activities. These are designed to use the animal's natural skills, such as smelling, hunting, foraging, and playing, according to Weissenborn. There are sensory things like bubbles and smells; and cognitive things like puzzle feeders. Plus there are training times. "Behaviorally, it really helps them," said Weissenborn, who previously worked as a primate zookeeper for eight years and lives in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood of St. Paul. These activities stop an animal from focusing only on when the next meal is or the next walk. "We keep them busy all the time."

### DOGS AND CATS AND MORE

Roughly the same amount of dogs and cats come into animal control, and account for about 80% of the animals cared for. Another 6% are birds. They see a lot of chickens, and some reptiles, pigs, goats and venomous snakes. Not all of these stay long at the shelter, but they go to one of the 50 partner agencies that MACC works with, such as Chicken Run Rescue and the Minnesota Herpetological Society. When Connie came in, they could tell she was part wolf, and a visit from the International Wolf Center and a blood test confirmed it. She was transported to a sanctuary in California that had an opening.

In 2021, MACC saw 4,000 animals come in through their doors. They anticipate that number being higher this year. "Everyone is busier this year," said Weissenborn. "I don't know if its related to the economy or COVID-19." Their services are up across all categories. "Vet clinics are swamped. We're getting in kittens because people can't afford to spay their animals. They fell on hard times."

While it is true that the biggest bucket of animals that come to Minneapolis Animal Control are strays, not all are. In the past four years, 43% of the animals that come in are strays and 17% are wild. Another 26% are surrendered. For two percent, humane euthanasia is requested.

There are many reasons why pets come in. Sometimes a cat was left behind in an apartment when the owner moved out. Other times, someone left a dog with



Lyle James takes Honey, a two-year-old bulldog, out into the run next to the shelter building. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)

a friend and never came back for it. If an owner gets arrested, the police call animal control to look after the pet.

MACC provides free kenneling for victims of domestic violence so they can stay in a shelter without the fear that their animals may be left behind in a dangerous environment. They also help owners who are homeless, and those with substance use or mental health disorders who are unable to care for their pets while in treatment.

"We take some of the pressure off owning an animal until they get on their feet," said Weissenborn.

MACC is in the pilot stage of a foster program with the Animal Safety Net. The program is small right now as they work to expand their foster base. To become a foster, apply online.

### DOG WALKER, CAT CUDDLER

James is a Marcy-Holmes resident who lives near the University of Minnesota. He lives in a condo and can't have pets, so he started volunteering at MACC in October 2012. This year, he has donated 1,424 hours to the shelter. In all, he's spent 10,600 hours there in the last decade.

"I am a dog walker, cat cuddler, and animal care assistant. Animal Care Assistants help clean cat cages, provide food and water, wash dishes, help with the laundry, remove trash from the receptacles, restock toys in the outside bins, and help with enrichment toys," he observed.

James is one of the carriers who delivers the Southwest Connector, Longfellow Nokomis Messenger and Midway Como Frogtown Monitor newspapers owned by the small, woman-run TMC Publications CO, as well as the Northeast that was re-

cently purchased by Vince Brown.

He is among about 150 people who volunteer 700 hours at month at MACC, and they're always looking for more to take on two-hour shifts. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old.

James is particularly attached to the pit bulls and staffies that come in, in part because they are often mistreated and many consider them to be scary and dangerous. He doesn't, and believes it comes down to how they are treated and trained.

"I like being with the dogs. I really like the walking aspect of it," said James.

He didn't really like cats before he started volunteering at MACC. "For years, I thought [the cats at the shelter] would be dangerous, but they're not. It turns out preconceived notions don't work out for anybody. I missed out on a lot of time with the cats because of that."

### BLUE WENT BACK TO HIS OWNER

The most important day James experienced at MACC occurred in November.

He wrote in a Facebook post: "We really have something to be grateful for this Thanksgiving here at the shelter. Blue has been staying with us for quite some time now as his person deals with substance abuse problems. Our volunteer manager Madison was able to have a professional designate Blue as an emotional support animal, which allows him to live with his person in a sober home. Our friends at the North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center raised \$1,100 to help Blue's person pay for a security deposit and rent. Thanks also go out to our fosters that gave Blue a home away from home, and our donors who kept our buddy happy with treats and toys."



St. Paul resident and shelter volunteer Caroline Serrano takes one-year-old Aimee, a Chinese Sharpei and Vizsla mix, on a walk.



The shelter houses a variety of animals and staff never quite know what will come in – such as birds, chickens, goats and this one-year-old Hamster.



Madison Weissenborn (left) and Lyle James hold up small and large frisbees smeared with peanut butter that are used as treats and enrichment.

### GET TO KNOW MINNEAPOLIS ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL

#### WHAT DOES MACC DO?

- Adopt out companion pets to owners
- Educate owners on proper animal care
- Enforce laws pertaining to animal welfare
- Investigate animal crimes
- Offer low-cost vaccination clinics
- Provide no-cost kenneling to victims of domestic violence

#### ADOPTION DETAILS

- Any animal over 7 months old is free of charge
- Dogs and cats under 7 months range in cost from \$50 to \$100 for Minneapolis residents; fees are higher for those who live outside the city
- Occasional pet adoption days are held where all pets are free

#### LOW COST CARE

Minneapolis residents can get low-cost vaccines (rabies and distemper) and microchips for \$10 each.



We take some of the pressure off owning an animal until they get on their feet."

Madison Weissenborn



I am a dog walker, cat cuddler, and animal care assistant."

Lyle James

With the holidays around the corner, you can beat brutal winter temperatures with a few smart purchases that promote good health, are energy efficient, and can last a lifetime

# WARMING UP FOR WINTER

By **Susan Schaefer**  
**UNDER THE HOOD**



Ever been accused of having a thin skin? When it comes to maintaining proper body temperature, this old adage is no joke. As we age, our metabolic rate decreases and our skin literally thins. Often, our aging bodies are not capable of generating enough heat to help maintain our normal 98.6-degree body temperature. Certainly, maintaining an active lifestyle, including mild exercise, can offset this heat loss, but not everyone can. Sub-zero temperatures can be particularly brutal in the bedroom, and with today's focus on the environment and decreasing energy consumption, turning up a thermostat is not always the best solution. After all, why heat a whole house when all that's needed is a bit of extra attention in specific areas?

We hearty Minnesotans know that keeping a cooler bedroom is recommended, but we can take a hint from our European friends by creating a warmer welcome to the bedroom just before our bedtime.

### THE BED WARMER

Memories of Mrs. Senior's copper bed warmer being slipped into my guest bed in Edinburgh, Scotland sent me on a quest. I keep the temps down in my home but slipping into an ice-cold bed on frigid winter nights doesn't promote falling asleep easily. Not willing or able to heat a copper bed warmer, I set out to find the safest and most efficient way to send myself to the land of nod. My research con-



Luke Kabat is the assistant manager at Frattallone's Como Avenue store, one of their many Twin Cities locations. Local stores carry items that can keep folks warmer this winter. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

firmed that heated mattress pads are the safest and most efficient forms of electric

bedding. According to the Electric Blanket In-

stitute, safety is the number one consideration for any electric bedding. Happily, modern electric bedding products don't get as hot as older models, a key feature geared to preventing fires. The EBI suggests choosing products that are durable, able to be washed repeatedly, and preferably with a minimum five-year warranty. Be sure to consider models that offer well-lit controls that are easy to operate for those with poor eyesight or arthritis. And importantly, they recommend only brands with the UL (Underwriters Laboratories) or ETL (Electrical Testing Laboratories) mark - indicating they have passed rigorous safety standards.

In side-by-side comparisons, electric mattress pads top blankets for both safety and efficiency. Because pads lie flat, they tend not to overheat, as is the case with blankets that can easily ball up, making pads safer. On the efficiency side of the ledger, since heat radiates upward, half the heat is lost with a blanket. Additionally, our bodies and bedding act as insulators, holding in the heat. Finally, most pads heat up quicker than blankets - five to 10 minutes versus up to an hour or longer.

My long-time machine washable, multi-temperature, dual control mattress pad bed warmer has an auto shut off timer. It has turned my queen mattress into a 5-star slumber vessel every winter night! This device



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**6 WARMING UP**

works so well, I can crank it up before turning in, then shut it off for a toasty, nightlong snooze.

**TAKE THE CHILL OFF**

While it's recommended to keep a cooler bedroom, sub-zero outdoor temps can create sub-par sleeping conditions. As with switching on the mattress pad, you can pre-heat the bedroom with an energy efficient electric oil heater, which is rated as safer than fan-driven models for many reasons: they are low wattage, don't blow dust around (so they're great for allergy sufferers), and are silent. With only one hour of preheating, you can shut your heater off, creating a toasty welcome and a great night's sleep.

**BREATHE FREE**

Dry winter air cracks skin and dries sinuses. A way to create a perfect night and daytime indoor environment is by investing in a humidifier. A cool mist humidifier is the preferred option to a warm mist humidifier in terms of safety, cost and area covered. A warm mist humidifier must boil water to create steam so there is always a risk for burns, and because it uses heat to boil water, it consumes more energy. Also, while heated steam produces a more concentrated stream, a cool water humidifier spreads droplets over a much wider area.

A one-room capacity ultrasonic cool mist humidifier provides relief from dry skin and allergy symptoms, plus extra defense against airborne illnesses by keeping germs at bay with an active carbon filter!

**BOTTOMS UP!**

My European holidays also introduced to me to the luxury and hygiene of

heated-seat bidets. A bidet (pronounced beh-DAY – from the French) is basically a sanitary toilet apparatus with a warm lavatory seat and a warm water shower that sprays water to clean one's genitals. Europe, Japan and other parts of the world have long utilized this sensible alternative to wiping. Washing with water is gentler than scraping dry paper across your tender parts, which may irritate and damage the sensitive tissue and nerve endings. Some units even feature a handy puff of air for drying. Using a soft stream of water is excellent for individuals who suffer irritable bowel syndrome or have difficulty reaching behind themselves. Plus, the gentle jet cleans more efficiently, and provides the added environmental benefits of buying and using less paper.

After another short internet sleuthing session comparing available products, I found an affordable bidet toilet seat that requires minimal installation. With a three-temperature heated seat and dual washing wands for separate front and back cleaning, this fourth addition transforms a bedroom and in-suite bathroom into a five-star hotel experience!

**FOUR EASY PIECES**

It's easy and inexpensive to create a smart, simple way to enhance your lifestyle during Minnesota's dark, cold days of winter. Isn't it worth it to invest in yourself, or as a gift this holiday season? Sweet dreams.

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

**BIDET AND GENITAL WATER WASHING: A BRIEF GUIDE AND IRREVERENT HISTORY**

The aging community, and people with physical disabilities, are increasingly finding the benefits of bidets helpful. Personal hygiene is greatly improved with a gentle spray of water that more thoroughly penetrates difficult to reach, tender genital areas. Water washing is especially helpful post-surgery and for those who suffer from hemorrhoids and IBS (irritable bowel syndrome). Moreover, environmentally conscious folks resonate with the fact that "using a bidet is much less stressful on the environment than using paper." A recent *Scientific American* article reports that if the U.S. switched – 15 million trees could be saved each year!

Just how does water washing our privates work, and how did it all begin?

Water washing the genital area has a long and storied provenance. Dating all the way back to the 2nd millennium BCE, well preserved examples of a lota, or bodna, have been found. These small, usually spherical, often vase or teapot shaped water vessels of brass, copper or other material continue to be used for personal hygiene throughout South Asia.

Famous American designers, Charles and Ray Eames, (of Eames Chair fame), expressed great admiration for the Lota's design. They reported, "Of all the objects we have seen and admired during our visit to India, the Lota, that simple vessel of everyday use, stands out as perhaps the greatest and most beautiful." An ancient art object of tremendous practical use!

The design of these lovely vessels hasn't changed much over their 4,000-year history. The ancient lota pictured here is identical to the brass model I toted across India, from latrine to latrine during my year of living there in early 1970.

How is it used? One first fills the lota with fresh water, carries it to the latrine, uses the latrine, and then pours the water into a cupped hand, splashing clean, though not



directly touching, the genital area. No paper is used. Air drying is typical. It's very ancient and very simple. Of course, hand washing post usage is de rigeur.

It seems to have taken Westerners a lot longer to appreciate the hygienic benefits of a water wash after taking care of business. The bidet (pronounced beh-DAY) is thought to be an invention of French furniture makers in the 17th century. American inventor John Harvey Kellogg patented an "anal douche" in 1928. In 1965, the American Bidet Company offered an adjustable spray nozzle and warm water option seeking to make the bidet a household item.

Hmm. Didn't really catch on here. But that may be changing.

Anyone who has traveled throughout South America, Japan or Europe, particularly the southern regions, knows that a bidet is an essential household item.

In Europe, it is typically a separate bathroom fixture, looking like a low basin positioned next to the toilet, with hot and cold faucets and an upwards jet spray. To use, one squats, hovering over the spray.

However, in Japan, the bidet seat is increasingly an all-in-one experience. Toto is a well-known, upscale contemporary manufacturer that features free standing models or "washlets." There are also models with heated seats, dual front and back adjustable nozzles, a dryer, a deodorizer, a disinfecting basin with nightlight, and even programmable music.

Remember that old ditty by Bob Margolin? *Stick out your can. Here comes the garbage man / Well, what did the fish say to the eel? / The more you wiggle, baby, the better it feels*

With inexpensive bidet seat top models becoming more available, it's true – the more you wiggle the better you'll feel!



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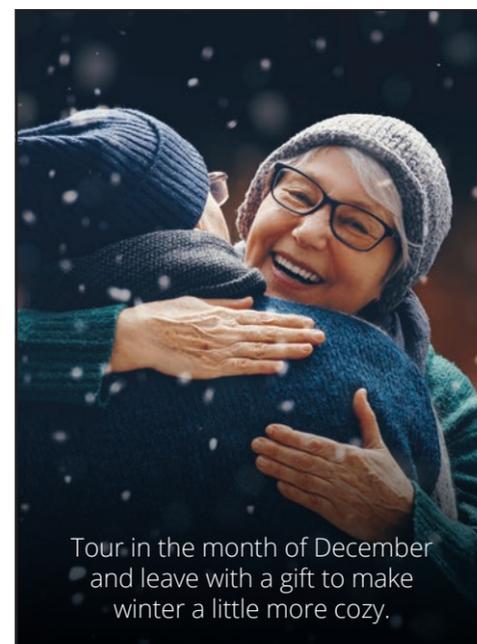
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# IT'S TIME TO LEARN TO WALK AGAIN

How do we solve community problems? One step at a time. Together.

Walking is one of those big early milestones in life. When you're a kid, you have to walk before you can run. As you get older, walking is how we move through the world from task to task each day. Walking to work. Walking to the kitchen. Walking to bed.



By Eric Ortiz

Walking is such an important part of our lives that sometimes we take walking for granted. Until it's taken away.

I am learning to walk again after having right ankle replacement surgery in October. When the doctor gave me the green-light to put all my weight on my foot, I was a little apprehensive at first. Once I realized my foot wasn't going to fall off, I got comfortable putting weight on it. It was really heavy and stiff and sore. I hadn't used my ankle or foot in six weeks, and before the surgery, I didn't walk right. Which compounded the problems.

Now, I felt like a baby taking my first steps again. I had documented all three of our kids taking their first steps, cheering them on with my wife. This time, my wife and kids (ages 14, 10 and 7) were cheering me on. You can do it. Yay, Dad. You did it.

Well, not exactly. That's how it might be in the Hollywood version. The real-life version was variations of indifference, rolled eyes and disinterest. And me clapping for myself. If you can't cheer for yourself, who can you cheer for?

My first walk outside our house was a public safety walk in our Lowry Hill East neighborhood. Like many neighborhoods in Minneapolis, we have had some issues. Gunshots, armed robberies, squatters, car thefts, speeding vehicles. Instead of doing



Wedge resident Dave Whorton talks to community members before a neighborhood public safety walk. (Photo by Eric Ortiz)

nothing, a neighbor, Dave Whorton, has taken action with a block club to raise awareness of the issues and help come up with solutions in our neighborhood.

Dave has shared video of crimes with residents, the Minneapolis Police Department and city leaders. He has contacted the mayor's office, city council members and community stakeholders. He even did a sitdown TV interview with Reg Chapman from WCCO.

On this night, Dave organized a safety walk through with MPD Inspector Katie Blackwell from the 5th Precinct, Lt. Chuck McCree, crime prevention specialist Jennifer Waisanen and community members. New MPD Police Chief Brian O'Hara and Ward 10 city council member Aisha Chughtai also participated. The goal of a walk

through (which any neighborhood can request) is to build stronger relationships with the MPD, learn custom safety tips for your neighborhood and uncover specific issues that need to be addressed to create a safer environment.

I went on crutches, a day after a snowstorm. I thought it was important to be there. About 35-40 other neighbors agreed, and we walked around the block together. It was a tremendous turnout and great to see friends and neighbors, old and new, from our neighborhood.

Inspector Blackwell and all of MPD's observations will help us create an action plan. We got to know Lt. McCree, who could retire but remains on duty to serve our community because MPD is understaffed. Jennifer Waisanen talked about

practical, preventative steps we can take to build community and make communities safer and stronger, such as adding more streetlights and creating more active block clubs. She also told me about other communities in Minneapolis doing similar work.

The next day, I followed up with Jennifer and got more information about block clubs in our neighborhood and how we can expand them. I had a great meeting with Councilmember Chughtai to discuss our community and how we can work together with city stakeholders to solve community issues.

Once we connect our community to solve community issues, we can connect with other neighborhoods that are doing similar work and train others that need guidance. Once we connect our community with other communities in Minneapolis, we can create a connected city that works together to cultivate confidence and solve problems.

Every community is unique. But here in Minneapolis, every community shares a common bond. After the pandemic and civil unrest, the whole city is relearning how to function as a well-functioning community. In this sense, we are all learning to walk again.

We need to put aside all our differences and work together to nurture the healthy development of all our communities. We need to be a part of solutions.

I'm off crutches and walking a little bit better every day.

If you want to make things better, don't throw up your hands. Roll up your sleeves. It's time to rally our residents and institutions, schools, families and neighborhoods to solve community problems.

The first steps are the hardest. We are on the right path. When everyone walks together, we will be off to the races.

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

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# THE VALUE OF THREE DOCUMENTARIES I WATCHED ON A PLANE

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## TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

In flight and book-ending our Sonoma County vacation, where we enjoyed winding wine-country roads, redwood forests, and sunbathing seals at the mouth of the Russian River, I watched three documentaries



By **Larry LaVercombe**

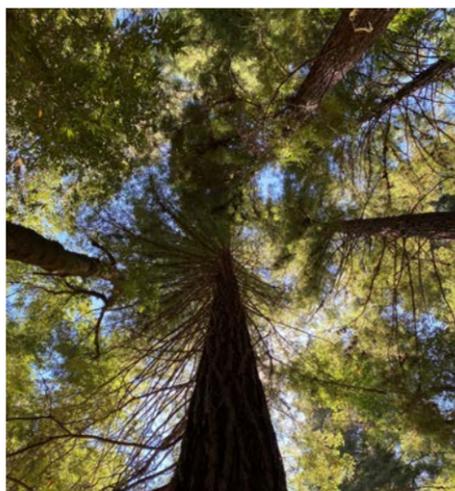
about three unusual people: Brian Wilson, Julia Childs, and Jane Goodall.

I tend toward fiction in my cinematic and artistic tastes, but all three of these films had the same welcome effect on my psyche – they made me want to work harder on my own art and purpose.

“Brian Wilson: Long Promised Road” opened a window into Wilson’s sadness and mental illness that haunted me for days. Like other portraits of artists, this film reveals the difficult chasm often found between the deep soul that an artist plumbs and the mundane give-and-take of everyday life. Wilson is painfully shy and remote in conversation, experiencing his feelings with deep anxiety and fear as if every public moment is a struggle.

The film is built around Wilson’s relationship with Rolling Stones editor Jason Fine, who gently attempts to get Brian to talk as he drives him around Los Angeles. But Wilson seems to be in perpetual mental anguish, constantly biting his lip and gripping the car seat. There is mention of the drugs and the famous acid trip that changed his life, and some talk about his mean and overbearing father, but it seems clear there is something else, too, something hidden, unknown, and heartbreakingly insidious locked inside of him. Or still growing inside.

“Julia” was made by the same two women who made “Gabby Giffords Won’t Back Down,” a film that I referenced



My vacation was full of transcendent experiences of natural beauty, including these redwoods, but I was most inspired by the work of other people doing good. (Photo by Larry LaVercombe)

months ago in my column about gun violence. You likely remember Julia Childs for her cooking shows and her high, breathy voice, but the film also portrays her commitment to political activism. She was a passionate supporter of Planned Parenthood, risking her career back in 1982 when she went on record with this: “Few politicians will take the risk of supporting either contraception or abortion – and who is ‘for abortion’ anyway? We are concerned with Freedom of Choice.” And in 1986, she became an advocate and fundraiser in the fight against AIDS.

Meanwhile, in “Jane Goodall: The Hope,” we see another passionate, driven, and focused woman, now in her eighties and yet still Teaming Up for Good with other do-gooders around the globe. What struck me about her story is that she would have so happily spent her life studying and interacting in nature with the chimpanzees that she loved – but instead, she realized that the world needed

something else from her. She responded with soulful generosity, leaving that quiet life behind for one of incessant advocacy and speaking engagements. Her success became something of a cage of its own, and yet she continues to do her work, speaking through its microphone.

None of these films are the first of their kind, and all three of these individuals have been portrayed in Hollywood feature narratives in addition to other documentaries. What I find interesting is that together, they left me with a strong feeling of: DO IT NOW. I titled this column “The value of” these films because I am oriented toward doing things and making things for a reason.

“Long Promised Road” makes a point about how little we understand mental illness; I felt like a better person for having watched it. “Julia” and “The Hope” both gave me a sense of what those women saw as their “value” in the world. And all three of these films made me want to contribute more. All three were inspiring.

It’s strange and notable to me that after a vacation full of transcendent experiences of natural beauty, with redwoods everywhere and I mean everywhere, plus seals sunning and seal pups swimming and pelicans diving and enormous rock formations jutting out of the sea... Still, it is the work of other people that inspires me to work.

Money, of course, is often motivator. But what motivates you to do the work you are not paid to do? It is, I suspect, your desire to do good. To contribute. To give. It’s in all of us.



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

At their Dec. 6 meeting, the Board of Commissioners adopted a 2023 Budget for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) that focuses on building safer communities, caring for park assets, protecting the environment, and serving the youth of Minneapolis.

The 2023 budget totals \$142 million, including \$99.8 million for the general operating fund, \$15.7 million for the enterprise operating fund, \$1.9 million for the special revenue fund and \$24.8 million for capital project funding. The budget utilizes the maximum 5.4 percent tax levy approved by the Board of Estimate and Taxation in September.

The MPRB’s 5.4 percent property tax increase will result in an estimated annual increase in property taxes of \$24 for the owner of a median-value \$319,000 house due to growth in the tax base.

The adopted budget maintains current service levels, including \$260,000 to support the MPRB’s 2021 six-year arrangement with the city for the historic \$2.6 million youth investment that began in 2022 and an estimated \$449,000 to offset the State of Minnesota Local Government Aid (LGA) funding decrease due to the current legislative session ending without passage of a new tax bill. The budget includes \$389,000 for system equity investment largely due to the introduction and activation of parks within the downtown service area and regional park system. This investment would provide for increased safety and security with an investment in sworn officers and non-sworn agents.

Additional board-approved amendments include reallocation of funds within the \$142 million budget to provide for: Minnehaha Falls Regional Park security cameras; additional canoe/kayak racks and sailboat buoys at Lake Nokomis and Bde Maka Ska; Loring Park Pickleball Courts; and the hiring of a full-time Natural Resources Technician.

The budget supports the MPRB’s commitment to strategic long-term planning.

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Age/s:  0-19  20-99  30-44  45-64  65+

## UPDATED CEDAR LAKE PARKWAY CLOSURE/ TRAIL DETOUR



As part of the construction of the Kenilworth LRT Tunnel in Minneapolis, Cedar Lake Parkway has been closed to vehicle traffic since May 2022. For the duration of this closure, the project has committed to preserving trail access across the corridor in proximity to Cedar Lake Parkway. The new temporary bridge is currently under construction. By early-mid January trail access will shift from the current location at Depot Street to the north, closer to Cedar Lake Parkway. Signage and striping will guide trail users along the relocated temporary path. This temporary trail alignment is expected to remain in place until Cedar Lake Parkway is reopened to traffic in spring 2023. The Cedar Lake Channel is closed to recreational use until spring 2023. The Kenilworth Lagoon is accessible from Lake of the Isles. (Graphic courtesy of Metropolitan Council)

## NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

### 2312 LYNDALE AVENUE FIRE

Last Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022 a condemned apartment building at 2312 Lyndale Avenue was destroyed by a fire. The incident is currently under investigation and building slated to be demolished. LHENA has contacted the city to determine the future of the site and will update residents as more information is available.

### BRYN MAWR SCHOOL WINTER WISH LIST

On the Bryn Mawr School Winter Wish List are: 1) Winter clothes: in particular there is a high need for snow pants and gloves. School social workers collect these items and distribute them to students. Drop them off at the school office. Contact Mr. G, one of the school's social workers: peter.gawienowski@mpls.k12.mn.us. 2) Pants and underwear: The school nurse's office has a high need for pants size 4-8 and boy underwear sizes 5T-12. Drop them off at the school office. Contact Ms. Monique at monique.edwards@mpls.k12.mn.us.

## 2023 PROPERTY TAX LEVY RISING 6.5%

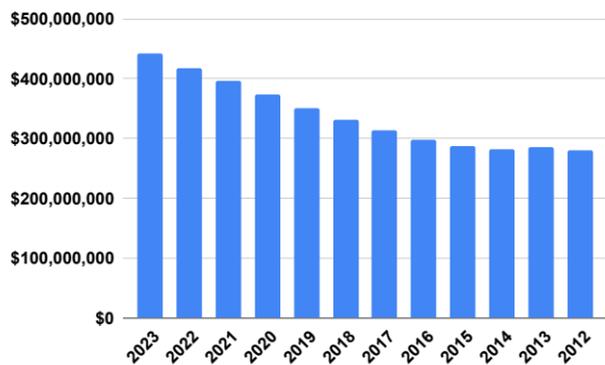
By **Cam Gordon**

On Dec. 6, after making 26 amendments to Mayor Jacob Frey's proposal, the council approved a 2023 budget that totals \$1.66 billion and increases the property tax levy by 6.5%.

The amendments included moving over \$1 million from the police department's proposed budget of \$195 million to fund, among other things, a Lake Street safety center. All southwest council members except for Andrea Jenkins introduced amendments to the mayor's recommended budget.

Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman's amendment to increase funding for neighborhood organizations so that no neighborhood organization will receive less than \$20,000 between the base funding and equitable engagement funding in 2023 was approved.

Ward 10 Council Member Aisha



Chughtai authored an amendment that was approved to dedicate \$150,000 for the Traffic Calming Program in order to complete additional Neighborhood Traffic Calming projects. Her amendment to reallocate \$200,000 to implement the city's approved but stalled municipal identification program, failed on a 7-6 vote. She was successful in her amendment to move \$150,000 from the police department to the office of immigration and refugee affairs to expand immigration-related services.

Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski, who also chaired the budget committee, authored an amendment that passed to move funds from the police department to add a public safety auditor to the city auditor's office.

Ward 13 Council Member Linnea Palmisano authored a series of amendments to implement the new government "Executive Mayor-Legislative Council" structure ordinance and one that reduced the budget for the police department by \$30,000 in order to add \$30,000 to the civil rights department's budget to fund the proposed Community Commission on Police Oversight (CCPO).

Palmisano also authored a legislative directive that was approved that calls for a report in June of next year on neighborhood organization funding with recommendations for "potential future improvements to the Neighborhood Network Fund (base funding) in an effort to maintain a full network of neighborhood and community organizations that support residents across the city."

The budget also includes \$9 million for streetlights with targeted investments in the Loring Park, and Stevens Square neighborhoods.

More details on the 2023 budget can be found at <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov>.

### SAFE HAVEN FOR GENDER AFFIRMING CARE

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey has signed an executive order protecting people seeking or receiving gender-affirming care in Minneapolis. During a time when many states are restricting or criminalizing access to this kind of care, this executive order supports people's access to all services, supplies, drug therapies, and other care that an individual may receive to support and affirm their gender identity.

Executive Order 2022-04 prohibits all city departments and city staff from taking any enforcement action against providers or individuals exercising their right to gender-affirming health care in Minneapolis. The executive order also affirms the right of minors living apart from their parents to make their own medical decision regarding gender-affirming health care, pursuant to Minnesota state law.

### LYNDALE HOLIDAY POTLUCK

The Lyndale Crime & Safety Committee will host its Holiday Potluck Party on Dec. 20, 6:30 p.m., at 3200 Pleasant Ave. All are welcome for some good food and a chat. Hosts: Michael and Shirley Montrose. If you have any questions, call 612-326-6029.

### EAST BDE MAKA SKA COFFEE CONNECTS

The next East Bde Maka Ska Coffee Connects with Our President is set for Tuesday, Dec. 20, 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. at Dunn Brothers Coffee. The president is Thang Holt. A Neighborhood Social is set for Monday, Jan. 9, 5 - 7 p.m. at Lake & Irving Restaurant + Bar. Socials are monthly gatherings to meet other residents and learn what's going on in East Bde Maka Ska.

### JEROME FELLOWSHIP EXHIBITION TO OPEN

On behalf of the Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) presents the new 2021/22 Jerome Foundation Fellowships for Early Career Artists. The four fellowship recipients are artists KOBİ, Sarah Sampedro, Brooks Turner, and Shun Yong. Their works will be on view Jan. 17-March 4, 2023 in the MCAD Gallery. It is free and open to the public. These four artists were carefully selected from 104 applicants by a panel of arts professionals. Since its inception in 1981, this fellowship has been administered by MCAD and generously funded by the Jerome Foundation. Over the course of four decades nearly 200 artists have been supported by this program. A reception will be held on Friday, Jan. 20 from 6-8 p.m.

### UPTOWN WINTER WONDERLAND

Swing by your favorite spots in Uptown to check out their festive windows.

## CITY BRIEFS

### ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING

The city council has approved using \$15,880,000 of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) to support 10 affordable housing projects. This includes two located in southwest Minneapolis. One, located at 1301 W. Lake St. in South Uptown, will receive a loan of up to \$1,000,000 towards the new construction of a 120-unit apartment building. The other project, Passage Community in Whittier at 17 24th St. East, will get up to \$650,000 towards rehabilitating 17 units of permanent supportive housing. All the approved projects are expected to create or preserve 1,351 units with 867 being considered affordable to people making \$58,650 or less a year, including 325 units that should be affordable for those making \$35,200.

### GRANTS TO CREATIVE BUSINESSES

Minneapolis' office of arts, culture and the creative economy has awarded 26 enterprises money to assist in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include cash assistance, training, and planning. Those receiving funding include the southwest area creative businesses of Z Puppets Rosenschnoz, at 4054 Chicago Ave S; Arena Dances located at 711 W. Lake Street; and Soo Visual Arts Center at 2909

Bryant Ave. S.

### NEW NICOLLET PROJECT

Until the end of the month, city staff are encouraging people to comment on what should be done at former Kmart site where they plan to reconnect Nicollet Ave. between Lake St. and the Midtown Greenway. People can take an online survey by midnight, Dec. 31 and learn more about the New Nicollet Redevelopment Project visiting <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/programs-initiatives/new-nicollet/>.

### TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND EQUITY

The city is seeking comments on a racial equity framework for transportation planning in the city. The framework identifies racial equity strategies to be implemented through 2030. In 2020, the city council declared racism a public health emergency and outlined goals related to reversing past racist policies and practices. Now, city transportation planners hope to incorporate this in planning, designing, and maintaining transportation projects as a part of building an antiracist culture in the city. The draft was discussed on Dec. 6, at a meeting at the Midtown Global Market, and additional comments will be taken through Jan. 20 via the website at <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/publicworks/tpp/racial-equity-framework/>



5009 Beard Ave. S. formerly housed the Lake Harriet Christian Church.

### 5009 BEARD AVE. S.

In December, the city planning commission reviewed plans for a new mixed-use building at 50th and Beard on the former Lake Harriet Christian Church property. Brian Woolsey of Beard Manager, LLC, is proposing to demolish the existing structure to construct a new five-story building with 63 dwelling units and 1,500 square feet of commercial space. The existing church structure, built in 1950, was determined by city heritage preservation staff to be a potential historic resource, but a demolition of historic resource application was approved by the heritage preservation commission in September.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

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**CRISIS HOTLINE**

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

**LAMPS**

The Lamp Mender Retirement Sale: Fixtures, crystal chandeliers, scones, lamps, glass, parts. Repairs still welcome. 9911 Lyndale Av S, Bloomington. Open 10am-4pm, Sat, Sun, Tues, Wed, Thurs. Closed Mon. & Fri. [www.lampmender.com](http://www.lampmender.com)

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**▶ 1 INSPIRED BY**

series fiction for seven to 13-year-olds. I think this is the age of kids I connect with the most, and they're the kinds of books I most love to write. Middle-grade fiction is also my favorite thing to read - so it's where I've found my writing home!

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE 'CONTROLLED BURN'?**

Downing: It's a story about a girl named Maia who is trying to forgive herself and find courage and personal strength after her sister is badly injured in a house fire that Maia is pretty sure was her fault. She's sent to spend the summer with her grandparents in northern Minnesota while her sister heals in the hospital and her parents work on trying to put their lives and home back together. At its core, this is a book that highlights the healing power of nature, digs into anxieties, and fears, and celebrates the connection of family and found family.

**HOW DID YOUR VISITS TO NORTHERN MINNESOTA AND THE NATURE SHAPE THIS STORY?**

Downing: Most importantly, the setting is very much based on my grandparents' hometown of Tower, Minn. I grew up exploring the woods around Ely and Tower, and my parents now live on a lake near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. A few pieces of personal history that impacted the nature pieces of this story:

- 1) My mom worked for the forest service, and she actually fought wildland forest fires when I was a teenager!
- 2) My dad, uncle, cousins, and I used to go to the Boundary Waters every summer, which I both loved and hated. To this day, my dad still loves leading me and my kids out into the woods to explore cranberry bogs, trails, and woods.



ABOVE Author Erin Soderberg hikes on the Superior Hiking Trail with her then-13-year-old son Henry in 2021 while researching and writing "Just Keep Walking." Henry previously delivered copies of the Southwest Connector and Southwest Journal.

AT RIGHT Tangletown resident Erin Soderberg with her latest book, "Controlled Burn." Her mother worked for the forest service and actually fought wildland forest fires when Soderberg was a teenager. (Photos courtesy of Facebook)

- 3) My grandpa Howard worked as a lookout in a fire tower, was a wilderness guide, and worked for the DNR until he retired.



**HOW DID YOU BRING THE STORY FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES WITH YOUR GRANDFATHER TO THE NOVEL?**

Downing: Bottom line: it was such a delight to relive all those happy days I spent with my grandparents each year - while I was writing this book, I could even remember the smell of their house. It was fun to think about the great, not-so-great, and interesting/bizarre things that happened when I was staying with them! Most of this story is entirely made up, but a lot of the details are very much based in reality - real people, places, and my own fears and anxieties.

**YOU HAVE ANOTHER BOOK INSPIRED BY NORTHERN MINNESOTA COMING OUT IN 2024. CAN YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT THAT?**

Downing: I am so excited about "Just Keep Walking" which was a story I researched and wrote while hiking 100 miles of the Superior Hiking Trail with my then 13-year-old son. I wrote all of our worries, injuries, and hilarious moments into the story that I crafted after that adventure - and then amped things up to make the novel much more exciting. I'm calling this book "Gilmore Girls on the trail," since it's about a mother-daughter pair who are both utterly delightful, and also utterly unprepared for the reality of a hike like this. But despite their lack of skills, their toughness and determination and love for each other keeps them going to prove they can do it. It's a little like the memoir "Wild," but for middle-grade readers - discovering your strength and finding yourself while surrounded by nature! Sound familiar? "Controlled Burn" and "Just Keep Walking" definitely play off some similar themes. More about this book can be found at <https://www.erinsoderberg.com/just-keep-walking.html>.

**ICE SHANTIES RETURN JAN. 21-FEB. 12**

After a successful festival with pandemic and climate change adaptations last winter, Art Shanty Projects is returning to the frozen water of Bdé Umán/ Lake Harriet in South Minneapolis Jan. 21 through Feb. 12, 2023. Public hours are 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday.

The program offerings this year include 18 shanties (15 of them new) and more than 20 rotating performance groups. Lavelle explains, "While every shanty is open during all public hours, we also feature a rotating lineup of artists doing a variety of time-based, activist, in-

teractive, wacky, sweet, experimental, climate-conscious, DIY, totally shantastic activities throughout the in-between spaces."

Many projects are movement-based, which helps keep both audiences and artists warm outside. The opening weekend features a new contemporary skating performance from American Ice Theatre (ICE. COLD. JAZZ!). Their performance last year drew cheering crowds on the festival's first-ever official rink and skating performance. Between their sets they will host an open skate; BYO-skates or borrow some from the artists. Don't miss weekly yoga

in your snowsuits on Saturdays (fro-gahhh: yoga for the planet and the people) or the weekly dance parties on Sundays (Pollinator Frenzy). The festival closes out with community games from Twin Cities Native Lacrosse (Thakápsicapi).

As visitors roam the village they may be greeted by an opera ensemble (Frigid Airs), feel their body resonate to the sound of taiko drums (Taiko on Ice), join in a klezmer party (Klezmer on Ice), or harmonize with one another at weekly singalongs from Good Trouble and Sarina Partridge (Subzero Singalong: Community Sing on Ice). Nick Knutson (of past shanties -7° Entry Danceteria and Rock Box) is teaming up with Jei Herald-Zamora (AKA DJ Gwiingwans) to create Boom

Box, a project that hosts live bands, performers, and DJs in a boom box shaped structure that includes a cassette-tape drawbridge door. Techno from the Sun will be a solar-powered, interactive, electronic music project where visitors can manipulate light to add to what the resident DJ is doing. Archive of Collective Memory (also solar powered) is using heat sensors to observe movement and translate it into a record of corresponding sounds.

There will also be plein air painting, puppets, theatrical shows, a climate action, and some roving surprises, among other offerings. For more information, visit [www.artshantyprojects.org](http://www.artshantyprojects.org).

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