

## Elsa's House of Sleep founder: 'It's never too late to start dreaming'

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The words of Eritrean immigrant Elsa Rezene sparked the Dream Sequences pop-up public art gallery at the corner of 36th Ave. and East Lake Street.

She said, "It's never too late to start dreaming," recalled her son, Tetra Constantino, who took over running the business she started, Elsa's House of Sleep.

"That's the story of all of us on Lake Street as we rebuild," observed Howe resident Jack Becker during a community event on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023. Becker, the retired founder of the nonprofit Forecast Public Art, curated and organized the outdoor art exhibit along E. Lake St. as part of his work with 36th A.R.T. (Avenue Revitalization & Transformation).

"What started out as an effort to mitigate blight along East Lake Street has become a creative celebration of a Black-owned business – Elsa's House of Sleep – working to reopen its doors and revitalize an important intersection in Southeast Minneapolis," he said. "It's also an opportunity to tell Elsa's inspiring story and demonstrate the ways in which artists and art can contribute to Lake Street's recovery and reawakening."

Becker added, "Thank you to the artists that made this project possible. This project was a labor of love and we got so much love back to us." The eight local artists featured in Dream Sequence are Ta-coumba T. Aiken, Christopher Harrison, Ron Brown, Katrina Knutson, Gordon



Artist Ta-coumba T. Aiken (left), flanked by Howe resident Jack Becker, talks about the piece behind him that was created in collaboration with children 26 years ago. The canvas came out of storage to be included in the pop-up art exhibit in front of Elsa's House of Sleep. More online. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

**Female, immigrant business owner inspires outdoor pop-up art exhibit at E. Lake and 46th Ave.**

Coons, Hawona Sullivan Janzen, Jordan M. Hamilton and Zarra TM. The work of everyone but Aiken was printed on panels that are attached to plywood on the fence and on the building. Aiken's original canvas is on display.

"We're currently trying to figure out how we do restoration along E. Lake St.," observed Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley. "How does the community come together and create projects in love to rebuild and revitalize this area? There are so many vacant properties."

Yet, there are also positive things happening at the intersection of E. Lake and 36th, and Dream Se-

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## TMC GARNERS 20 AWARDS AT MNA



TMC Publication's three newspapers earned a total of 20 awards at this year's Better Newspaper Contest through the Minnesota Newspaper Association. They were presented on Jan. 26, 2023. Left to right: Eric Erickson, Tesha M. Christensen, and Terry Faust celebrate and hold up a selection of the nine first place award plaques the newspapers earned. In its 40th anniversary year, the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger earned a total of eight awards, spanning its photographs, articles, and advertisements. >> More on page 3 and online.

## Give feedback on new zoning regulations

**City council poised to approve new rules this spring as it implements 2040 Plan**

By CAM GORDON

The city is poised to take a big step this spring when it enshrines zoning regulations that will guide the city's growth for decades to come.

Ward 7 City Council Member Lisa Goodman, who chairs the council's Business Housing Inspections and Zoning Committee, gave notice of her intent to introduce major amendments to 11 different sections of the city's code of ordinances as part of implementing the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan in February.

"The new and amended regulations are intended to allow a range of uses appropriate for each zoning district and provide a greater degree of predictability for residents, businesses and the development community," wrote Goodman.

"The city is legally obligated to eliminate the conflicts between our zoning

code and our comprehensive plan," said city planning manager Jason Wittenberg. "Minneapolis 2040 leaves quite a bit up for discussion," he said. "So, people can use their influence to get more of the uses they want to see more of, and limit uses that they find less desirable."

"This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change our city to be more walkable, more complete, and more neighborly," said Brit Anbacht, a Field neighborhood resident and volunteer with the group Neighbors for More Neighbors.

"The last time the zoning code was overhauled was in 1999. The time before that was approximately in the 1970s. Most likely we will not be changing the code in a major way again for another 20 to 30 years."

The draft plan was released for review on Jan. 21 along with an online survey to gather public feedback about it. On Feb. 15, the city held an online public meeting.

The new rules will not change any current uses of properties, but they will provide guidance and limit, allow or expand possible future uses.

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Leap opens and offers a personalized approach to healthcare

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AGING WELL:  
10 guidelines for a strong, long and happy life


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## ELSA'S HOUSE >> from 1

quences symbolizes hope, creative entrepreneurship, and the reawakening of Lake Street, according to A.R.T. Small businesses emerging at the corner of E. Lake and 36th Ave. include bakeries, a retro thrift store, Latin dining and more, adding to a vibrant collection of restaurants and services. In 2024, the corner will be the site of a 2024 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) METRO B Line station.

"It's this collective process through collective labor that is grounded in love, and we can do incredible things," remarked Wonsley.

Becker wanted to do something about the "blighted property" at E. Lake and 36th, so he researched who the property owner was, and then drove over to meet Tetra Constantino at his University Ave. store. He wasn't sure how the request was going to come across – and recalls being delighted by Constantino's enthusiasm for the idea and his desire to participate. And when Becker called his friend of 55 years, artist Ta-coumba T. Aiken, he discovered Aiken had known Elsa Rezene and had a painting rolled up in his storeroom that was created 26 years ago in partnership with her. It was created with children who are now 27-37 years old. Aiken added the black lines through the drawings done by the children.

"You'll see some things are right side up and some are upside down because that is how we are," observed Aiken.

On the west side of the building is a piece by Gordon Coons titled "Man Transferring into Healer." Coons is an elder Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa and Ottawa/Potawatomi artist, originally from Michigan, who has lived in Longfellow for 45 years just a few blocks from the site. In the piece with five panels, Makwa bear is transitioning into a man, a protector becoming a healer.

"The healing is so relevant to what needs to happen on Lake Street," said Becker.



Elsa's House of Sleep owner Tetra Constantino and daughter Asmara. More photos at [www.longfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.longfellowNokomisMessenger.com). (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



View Longfellow artist Gordon Coon's work on the west side of Elsa's House of Sleep. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Then the Uprising happened.

The building wasn't damaged then, but was later that year. Constantino is working with the Minneapolis Foundation to help fund the renovation, which will be a complete redo of the building constructed in 1922. Elsa's House of Sleep will then reopen, and there will be space for two other businesses off 36th. He hopes to reopen in August 2023.

"I'm looking forward to what it's going to be," observed his wife, Nnecka Constantino.

"I thank everyone for supporting our vision," said Constantino. He pointed out that the people who work at Elsa's reflect the community.

### BEAUTY FROM MESSY CHANGE

Donations for the pop-up art exhibit came from Lake Street Council, Elsa's House of Sleep, Longfellow Community Council, Xcel Energy and Trustone Financial. In-kind support was provided by Shapco Printing and Barebones Productions. Community volunteers involved include Brian Cornell, Mark Lange, Laura Mylan, Mark Safford, Amy Sundby, Jean-chaiyaphum, Nichole Goodwell, and Gail Fridlund.

"Thank you for doing this," three attendees told Constantino as the event on Feb. 5 concluded. They live in the neighborhood. "We appreciate it."

"After the uprising, it is beautiful to see something come from the messy change that was left behind," said Whittier artist Zarra TM, whose artwork adorns panels on the east side of the building.

"I hope people feel excited walking through the neighborhood. I hope people feel inspired. There's a lot of empty buildings, and there's so much that can be done in this area. Come see art. It's great."

### HISTORY OF ELSA'S HOUSE OF SLEEP

When the Green Line lightrail project was being planned, Elsa's House of Sleep at 1441 University Ave. W. looked like it was going to lose all of its parking. Constantino began looking around for a place to move. One evening, he found himself in front of 3540 E. Lake St. He recalled that his mother had always said how much she loved Lake Street, and that her first location was in the area. Rezene died in 2004, three years after Constantino had taken over running the store when he was 22. He decided to purchase the building and open up a second location. In the meantime, he lobbied his then-council member Russ Stark, and eventually the city purchased the lots at 1419 and 1427 University Ave. to create a parking lot that customers of neighboring businesses could use. The Minneapolis store officially closed in 2019, but they continued to use the E. Lake St. building for storage and clearance sales, with plans to fix it up.



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## ZONING REGULATIONS

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### NEW ZONING CATEGORIES

At a recent Planning Commission Committee of the Whole meeting, Wittenberg and other planning staff highlighted some uses often found to be less desirable. These included entertainment uses, liquor stores, tobacco shops, firearms dealers, pawn shops, check cashing establishments, and automobile services.

The new proposal creates new primary zoning categories with specific uses allowed or prohibited within them. The new catalogs, or districts, are urban neighborhood (UN), residential mixed-use (RM), commercial mixed use (C), downtown (D), production (PM), transportation (T) and parks (P). To find more details and submit comments people can see <https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/land-use-rezoning-study/>.

### DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 26

The deadline for comments on the draft was set for Feb. 26, but has been extended an additional 30 days until March 26, following a letter signed by Roxanne O'Brien & Shalini Gupta, co-founders of Community Members for Environmental Justice (CMEJ) that requested an extension to the process. The letter was co-signed by 20 additional organizations.

"Zoning is one of the most important functions of city law," the letter said. "As zoning was established nearly a 100 years ago in many cities across the country, it has historically played a major role in segregation and concentration of unwanted uses in lower income and communities of color. This rezoning will decide how and where specific industries, and hence pollution, will be allowed. Those decisions disproportionately affect the health and well-being of environmental justice and communities of color in the city."

"To result in a better more equitable zoning code revision," the authors requested a six-month public engagement period and that the city design a process, especially within the city's two designated Green Zones, that would "allow the city and neighborhood organizations to incorporate meaningful public input about the specifics and language of the proposal."

"I think that the extension is the bare minimum as far as having compassion or acknowledging that it is already going so fast," O'Brien, who is also a member of the Northern Green Zone advisory com-



Ward 11 Policy Associate Brit Anbacht (right) chats with Jan Lyson and Corinne Horowitz about the 2040 Plan and zoning. (Photo submitted)

mittee, said after the 30-day extension was announced. "It's still insufficient, and not what the 2040 plan had in mind about future community engagement."

With the extension, the public hearing at the planning commission has been scheduled for April 24, with consideration of the council's Business, Inspections, Housing, and Zoning Committee tentatively set for May 16, and the full council vote set for May 25.

### INDUSTRY AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS

O'Brien is most concerned about where industrial uses will be located and how close they might be to residential property, as well as schools and parks, including the new park and housing proposed for the Upper Harbor Terminal area. She wants those areas examined carefully, and worries that "too much may be left to the discretion of staff."

One aspect of the plan, highlighted at the Feb. 15 meeting, was that it will no longer allow many intense industrial uses that were allowed in the past. The proposal does away with the "industrial" zones, and replaces them with production and processing areas for production, processing and distribution of products "that have minimal or no air, water, or noise pollution impacts, and that provide quality living-wage jobs." As called out in the 2040 plan, future uses will be limited and "new heavy industrial uses that harm human health or the environment" will not be allowed throughout the city.

As outline in the proposal, this includes uses like shingle, asphalt, battery

and paint manufacturing, which will not be allowed as a new use anywhere. However, the new proposal would permit concrete, asphalt and rock crushing; concrete, stone, clay, or tile production; small scale forgeries and foundries, grain elevators or mills, recycling facilities and waste transfer facilities. At the meeting, staff encouraged people to review and submit comments on if and where these uses would be permitted.

Anbacht is organizing more on the southside, and has already conducted two community walks in her neighborhood to help educate people about the how properties might be affected.

Under the proposal, there are three exclusively residential districts. The UN1 district allows for small-scale residential uses. The UN2 district allows for small to moderate-scale residential uses. The UN3 district allows for moderate to large-scale residential uses near transit routes and stations. These areas allow a wider variety of housing types, but they would not allow any new commercial uses.

"There are legitimate concerns that zoning is supposed to help mitigate," said Anbacht. "When we live in a city, we live with our neighbors within hearing distance. The barking dog, the noisy party after 10 p.m., the delivery trucks. I live within the noise zone for the airport, as well as 35W. But those noises also come with benefits like a bakery where you get a donut before work, or a meal at a bar on the weekend without having to drive for 40 minutes first."

A point of contention is the interpretation of the 2040 plan's policy to not encourage commercial uses on land designated as residential. "Staff has been very conservative in their interpretations of some of the language of the 2040 plan, in particular that 'not encouraged' must mean 'prohibited' with regards to commercial uses," Anbacht said.

Anbacht, Neighbors for More Neighbors, and some planning commissioners are suggesting that some commercial uses could be allowed in these residential areas provided certain conditions are met.

"It's particularly apparent how restrictive the zoning is when looking at the map," said Park Board and City Planning Commissioner Becky Alper. "I see a lot of benefits, particularly from a 15-minute city perspective, of allowing additional uses within walking distance of residences as we seek to have three out of every five trips, taken by walking, rolling, or transit."

Fellow commissioner Chris Meyer said, "A potential proposal I'm working on would be to allow low-intensity commercial - coffee shops, dentist, thrift store

- on corner sites throughout the city."

"This is a step forward in the ongoing implementation of the 2040 Plan, and as we move forward, I want to make sure that I'm thoughtfully gathering feedback from Ward 11 to bring into our discussion at City Hall," said Ward 11 City Council Member Emily Koski, who is the council's appointee to the commission. She asks that Ward 11 residents, business owners, and local developers contact her with feedback.

When the plan was approved, Wittenberg recalls, a point was made to legalize existing commercial properties in residential areas, but there was also a call to preserve areas for housing to accommodate current needs and projected growth. Wittenberg said, "I think people are being selective in the reading of the policies. It was staffs' feeling that there was never much discussion of allowing new commercial uses [in these residential areas]." He said the proposal overall "will increase the amount of commercial zoning in the city by 50%."

Neighbors for More Neighbors has identified areas along bus lines where multi-story buildings are in UN districts, which means commercial uses in any part of those buildings would be prohibited. Allowing some conditional commercial uses there, they suggest, could lead to more complete neighborhoods in more areas especially along bus routes.

There is also interest in changing the square footage allowed in the residential mixed-use areas, at least to allow grocery stores to be larger than other allowed uses in an area. Anbacht uses the example of the Aldi grocery store that recently announced that they are closing in North Minneapolis. Along Penn and Fremont, the draft code would limit the commercial 5,000 square feet but the store that is closing is closer to 10,000 square feet.

### 'WE NEED TO LEGALIZE A GROCERY STORE'

With the planning commission expected to make recommendations in at the end of April, ideas and organizing will likely pick up in the coming weeks. More time could allow more people to dig into the details and build support for the changes they want to see.

"We have a two-year-old kid," said Anbacht. "I want the changes we make now to make it possible for them to live a car-free life anywhere in the city when they are an adult. Zoning code determines which neighborhoods are allowed to have corner stores and daily necessities in walking distance and which are not. We need to legalize a grocery store before we can walk to one."

## 20 AWARDS >> from 1

### NEWS

1) First Place, Sports Story - Eric Erickson, "Unforgettable dream come true," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, October 2021. Judge's comment: Great use of photographs put this entry in first place. Great writing and what a day for those athletes! It is like we were there!

2) First Place, Investigative Journalism - Jill Boogren, "Did city mislead, downplay public input on 38th and Chicago survey?" Southwest Connector, Dec. 2, 2021 (also ran in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger). Judge's comment: The information from the survey was very enlightening on this issue. Comments from the postcards didn't match public officials' comments. Information was displayed attractively which helped with understanding the content.

3) First Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "A new Dale Street bridge," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, September 2021

4) Second Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "It's Cheatham Avenue now," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

5) Third Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "Should 3rd Precinct stay in Longfellow?" Longfellow Nokomis Messenger



Jill Boogren

### PHOTOS

6) First Place, Photography Portrait and Personality - Terry Faust, "Affordable housing architect," Southwest Connector, March 3, 2022. Judge's comment: Good composition, fill flash,

and posing of the subject, each of which is a skill of its own.

7) First Place, Photography News Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Art on the Edge," Southwest Connector, Aug. 4, 2022.

8) Third Place, Photography Feature Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Blindfolded clay throw down," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, September 2022. Judge's comment: Liked the composition of the photo and the story line. Good composition with great lines of focus down the potters' line.

### INFOGRAPHIC

9) Second Place, Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations - Tesha

M. Christensen, "Lake Street 2 years later," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, July 2022. Judge's comment: Nice pictures

### DESIGN

10) Third Place, Typography and Design - Andoni Aldasoro and Tesha M. Christensen, Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Good design. A great entry in a crowded field.

### ADS

11) First Place, Advertising Campaign - Tesha M. Christensen, "Henry W. Anderson Mortuary," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

12) First Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Roadrunner Records," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: I like the orange for an ad for a record company. It harkens back to a time when harvest golds and earthy shades were all the rage but the shade you choose doesn't scream 70s.

13) First Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Village Shores," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Winner has the best balance, use of white space, accurate photo (doesn't look like stock image, even if it is) and large text to grab the eye.

14) First Place, Institutional Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M.

Christensen, "Yinghua Academy," Southwest Connector.

15) Second Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "United Noodles," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger. Judge's comment: You did a good job pulling the red and green from the photo into the words - it ties it together.

16) Second Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "ReUse Center," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

17) Second Place, Institutional Advertisement - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Elmhurst Cemetery," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor.

18) Third Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Fun City Dogs," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: There was just the right amount of different colors to tie everything together and draw the eye, without overdoing it.

19) Third Place, Best Advertisement - Tesha M. Christensen, "Longfellow Business Association," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

20) Third Place, Self-promotion or House Ad - Tesha M. Christensen, "Looking for carriers," Southwest Connector.



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# How a newspaper business developed



BY TIM NELSON



When I was chosen to be co-editor of our high school paper, it was exciting to learn the ropes of planning a publication, assigning stories, cleaning them up and eventually putting them on the page for publication. I can't say there was a some underlying desire to change the world, but I definitely developed a better understanding of the importance of being informed and keeping others informed to the best of my ability. The power of the printed word is important, but I was always aware of how easily it could be misused if not done ethically and fairly. To be honest, I always had trouble with the fact that expressing my opinions in a column or editorial lent it more power than someone simply expressing their views in casual conversation over dinner. I saw it as something that could easily be abused and I always preferred working behind the scenes. When I was a layout editor, I relied heavily on what the editor-in-chief of the publication wanted on the front page, since I felt that was their role, and mine was to make it look good. That is not to say that I didn't express my opinion at times, but it was



Cal deRuyter and Tim Nelson began and ended their careers in neighborhood journalism. In 1977, their office was at Thomas and Fairview in St. Paul. (Photo submitted)

never solely my choice.

With our newspapers, we always tried to find a balance with focusing on one or two important news stories, coupled with at least a teaser of a more light feature story that would have a general public interest.

Here's how the deRuyter-Nelson business developed over the years. It was nothing magical – a lot of flying by the seat of our pants in hopes of surviving.

## TYPESETTING/DESIGN/GRIEF PUBLISHING DIVISIONS

When Calvin deRuyter bought the Midway Monitor in 1975 he knew that the financial viability of running just one paper might support one person, but it would be hard to support multiple full-time employees. I was a senior at Hamline University at the time, taking journalism

courses at Macalester through the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities (ACTC) program, but majoring in political science. I had worked with Cal on the Hamline Oracle as the production editor. My goal was to attend law school or get a masters in public administration after graduating. He asked if I would be interested in working for him selling ads, and helping out with the layout of the paper. Hamline offered students the ability to seek internships in their field of interest and to receive academic credit for their work, so I applied with my advisor for an internship, and it was granted. It was a way for me to earn some much needed money as well as get academic credit.

I had been the editor of my high school newspaper and had always enjoyed writing, but I never seriously considered a career in journalism. My writing style lent itself to more feature-style journalism, and quite frankly, I did not care for the journalistic requirements of news writing and was not very good at it. I was pretty good at production work, and was able to envision page layout and work creatively to make a newspaper page visually interesting. Obviously at that time there were no computers, so layout consisted of cutting and pasting the typeset articles to create the layout. So, my skills complemented Calvin's, and we were a good team in producing the newspaper during those early months while sitting on the floor of his apartment with news articles spread from one end of the apartment to the other.

Upon my graduation, the newspaper was growing rapidly and Cal asked if I would be interested in joining him in the

NEWSPAPER BUSINESS >> 5

## A clear path to municipal sidewalk plowing

### GUEST COLUMN

BY ROBIN WONSLEY,  
Ward 2 Council Member

As a member of the Minneapolis City Council, it's my job to work with the community to advance concrete policies that help improve the lives of working class people. That's why one of my top priorities this term is creating a municipal sidewalk plowing program.

The heavy snowfall this past January has reminded many of us just how big of a problem snow and ice on our sidewalks are. Normal tasks like going to work or the store become much harder and more dangerous. Elders or people with limited mobility are especially impacted. People who use wheelchairs or push strollers are put in extremely challenging positions and sometimes have to resort to rolling in the street. This is not the welcoming, accessible city that we want to live in.

Currently, the city takes full responsibility for plowing the roads, but sidewalk plowing is left to the personal responsi-

bility of the property owner. That system simply isn't working, as most any pedestrian knows from experience. There are thousands of unshoveled sidewalks each winter – in the winter of 2021, there were an estimated documented 4,500 unshoveled sidewalks across the city. Compliance varies widely, creating unequal conditions. Renters are subject to however their landlords chose to handle the snow. Elders and people with disabilities have to find a way to shovel, or pay punitive fees. Homeowners who live on corners are expected to take on twice the work of their neighbors next door. The result is a patchwork of compliance that doesn't guarantee safe, accessible sidewalks for everyone.

The good news is that the city can begin investing in a municipal sidewalk plowing program relatively quickly, and scale up over the next few years.

To start, the city can focus on plowing the sidewalks that pedestrians rely on the most. The Pedestrian Priority Network (PPN) is about 15% of the city's total sidewalks that the city has already mapped out and committed to improving. Starting with the PPN is a natural way to begin investing in the infrastructure that will be needed for citywide sidewalk plowing.

A sidewalk plowing workforce can also be scaled up over time. The city can lead a mixed-delivery model that could

include a combination of workers employed directly by the city, contracts with small businesses and neighborhood associations, or temporary or on-call work for youth or other residents. The city already uses existing partnerships to remove snow and ice in certain areas of the city – think college campuses, Metro Transit, and the Special Service Districts that cover specific commercial corridors.

How much would municipal sidewalk plowing cost, and what would that mean for residents? One big factor in cost is frequency. In 2018, the city did an estimate that showed that plowing every sidewalk in the entire city every time it snowed half an inch would cost about \$20 million per year, or about \$95 for the median property taxpayer. Clearing less frequently, like only during heavier snow or a Snow Emergency, was estimated at about \$6 million, or about \$33 for the median property taxpayer.

In June, the council will receive the results of an operational and fiscal analysis that Council Member Aisha Chughtai and I authored to give us more updated and specific information about the options for beginning this crucial program.

By then, the last snow and ice from January's storm will probably have melted away, but our attention to this problem won't. It can be easy to forget about the snow when it isn't on the ground, but the city must commit to sidewalk plowing for the long haul. As the impacts of climate change increase, there will be more ex-

treme weather events. We need to develop programs and infrastructure now to make sure our city is resilient to the larger snowfalls that we know are coming. The current system of personal responsibility will only deteriorate further as the impacts of climate change bring more snow. Investing now will also help ensure that more vulnerable residents, like elders and people with limited mobility, aren't disproportionately impacted by the impacts of climate change.

The sidewalks may be icy, but the path is clear: begin investing in a municipal sidewalk plowing program now for a more safe, resilient, and equitable future.

Contact Robin Wonsley at [Ward2@minneapolisismn.gov](mailto:Ward2@minneapolisismn.gov).

## LETTER

### PULLING (OR SHOVELING) YOUR OWN WEIGHT

Disappointed to see a few businesses in the 34th/50th business area failing to keep their sidewalks clear this winter. (Looking at you, Speedway). While it has been a challenge this winter for everyone, it is still each owner's responsibility to keep the public sidewalks clear in front of their property. At little extra effort beyond a 24-inch path would be appreciated.

Tim McAllister  
Nokomis

# Messenger

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### Design & Layout:

Tesha M. Christensen

### Printing by: ECM/Adams Publishing Group

This issue is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink. Approximately 95-97% of material that enters the print facility is recycled.



### Delivery: Bjorn Willms

612-235-7197, [delivery@TMCpub.com](mailto:delivery@TMCpub.com)  
Mail subscriptions are available at \$40 a year.

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ety that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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# Mayor Frey - what are you hiding?

by DANIEL COLTEN SCHMIDT

At the corner of 28th St and Longfellow Ave in East Phillips neighborhood, south Minneapolis, the Roof Depot building quietly awaits its unknown fate.

The city wants to demolish the Roof Depot to build a new Public Water Works facility, which will replace the existing one in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. In contrast, East Phillips residents want to renovate the Roof Depot building to be used for urban agriculture, low-income housing, a solar array to power 700 homes, and a small-business hub.

East Phillips residents are resisting the city's plan for two main reasons: 1) the Roof Depot building sits on an unremediated section of a Superfund site and demolition would fill the air with unknown amounts of lead-arsenic dust; 2) the city's proposal includes 888 parking spaces and a diesel fueling station which would drastically increase neighborhood pollution levels, and the likelihood that residents develop more, and harsher, health conditions. The East Phillips neighborhood is already burdened by a major share of the city's pollution, resulting in some of the highest rates of asthma, heart conditions, lead exposure, and cancer levels in all of Minneapolis.

All of this information is publicly available through city-authored documentation, yet the city relentlessly pushes their plan into the unconsenting East Phillips

community. Why?

In my search for an answer, I came across a city-authored document titled, "Minneapolis Water Yard: Proposal for New Two-Story Structure on Existing Site," which offers an ostensibly-win-win solution.

The analysis concludes that it's in everyone's best interests to upgrade the Water facility that already exists in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. The report demonstrates that Marcy-Holmes residents desire the renovation in their neighborhood, whereas East Phillips residents are vehemently opposed. The document also states that renovation at the Roof Depot site will cost the city more money. The report also notes that carbon-free goals adopted by the city would be more easily obtained at the Marcy-Holmes site. Finally, the document shows that the same architectural plans already designed for the Roof Depot site can be re-used at the old site, saving the city millions of dollars.

Why isn't this Marcy-Holmes option viewed favorably by the city? I tried to ask Mayor Jacob Frey, but I was told by his Director of Operations, "The Mayor will not meet with you now, nor ever, on this subject." Faced by secrecy, I am left to imagine...

Mayor Frey lives three-quarters of a mile from the Marcy-Holmes Water Yard site. Is it possible that Frey is pushing the building into East Phillips because he



Protestors attended the Jan. 26 city council meeting to show their support for the community plan for the Roof Depot site. There was no public comment during the meeting, and city council members approved demolishing the Roof Depot building and continuing with the plan to build a new public works facility there. (Photo submitted)

doesn't want so many diesel vehicles in his own neighborhood?

It is also possible that Mayor Frey has made a back-room deal for the Marcy-Holmes property which he hasn't disclosed. It is astounding that Frey's neighborhood boasts a 9.5% population of finance and insurance professionals. Is the mayor in cahoots with a developer who has their eyes on that property?

Or, maybe Frey picked East Phillips

for his pollution project because he thinks we lack the financial and political power to prevent his injustice.

The point is, we don't know. When you view both options side-by-side, the city's relentless push for expansion into East Phillips raises questions which have not been answered.

Mayor Frey, what are you hiding?

## NEWSPAPER BUSINESS

>> from 4

business. I had been accepted into a masters degree program in Oregon in Public Administration. I was also engaged to be married shortly after graduation. It was a tough decision, but my advisor in Oregon encouraged me to give the business a try and simply join the master program a year later if it did not work out. He told me that the opportunity to be a part of a start-up business did not come along very often, but academic institutions had been around for many years, so I had nothing to lose by giving it a try. By that time, Calvin had made the decision that if the business was going to survive, there was going to be a need to create other revenue streams. Computer typesetting was just becoming the norm for newspaper production, and the Twin Cities had a unique niche in that community journalism was a fast growing area of interest. Mayor George Latimer was instrumental in creating the district council form of local government within the city of St. Paul, and each of the local districts needed a communication vehicle to keep residents informed. These factors created a business opportunity for us, and we decided to offer typesetting services to fledgling community newspapers in St. Paul, as well as college publications such as the Hamline Oracle and Bethel Clarion.

The investment into typesetting equipment was very expensive and neither Calvin or I had any money at the time. Cal had gotten five local businesses and residents to help him raise some money to start the newspaper and also sold me 50% of the business to raise some capital. My parents co-signed a loan for me to come up with my investment, and we leased typesetting equipment at an astronomical interest rate. Our first office was donated space on the lower level of 1247 St. Anthony apartment building where Cal lived at the time.

The typesetting business grew extremely rapidly, but was stressful work. All of our clients were under very strict deadlines, so it was high stress and required tight scheduling with very little room for mistakes or breakdowns. In those days, typesetters had screens that showed less than a sentence at a time, so accurate typing was essential. Any typing errors had to

be corrected by printing out the correction and tediously pasting it over the errors. If the client wanted a different typeface, we had to stop the computer, change the film strip, and type what was required in the new typeface. Obviously proofreading was a very time-consuming part of the process in order to correct any errors before the client picked up their typeset stories. If the client made edits to their stories, which they frequently did, whole stories would need to be redone. Another frustrating issue we had to deal with in those days was that the typesetters were extremely sensitive and would lock up for seemingly no reason, and we would lose hours of work. Someone walking by the computer would create static electricity, and the computer would simply freeze or shut down. Tempers ran hot and the language coming out of our office was often not pretty! During our early years we hired college students as typesetters and did a great deal of the work ourselves, while still trying to write, edit, layout, and sell ads for our own newspaper.

The typesetting business continued to grow quickly and eventually expanded to include graphic artists and advertising agencies needing typesetting for their brochures, ads, posters, menus and nearly anything that was eventually printed. Our network grew to include printers needing work and expanded into government work such as the communications offices for Ramsey County, city of St. Paul and eventually the state of Minnesota. We added typesetters and eventually hired employees so that we were working nearly 24 hours/day. It was not unusual for Calvin and I to have to work late into the night ourselves and many weekends. Bob Wicker, a Midway resident and one of the original five investors in the Midway Monitor, was an employee of H.B. Fuller Corporation at the time. He was instrumental in introducing us to the corporate communications department within H.B. Fuller and they became our first large corporate client, allowing us to work on magazines, brochures, and eventually their annual report.

As years passed, the development of the personal computer came into existence and Apple started to develop sophisticated layout programs, allowing clients to create their own graphic pieces. Typesetting was a dying industry and luckily Calvin, in particular, was on top of the trend and saw the end coming. Working with

clients on a daily basis and dealing with their demands for perfect letter spacing and accuracy, it was hard for me to recognize that they would be satisfied with anything less than having a professional create their work. But I quickly learned that their demands became more flexible when they realized they could save time and money by doing the work themselves. We had to rethink our business quickly once we realized how fast the technology was changing, and it was at that point that we expanded our company services to include more actual layout and graphic design work in place of typesetting.

Calvin was a fine art major at Hamline, but did not focus on graphic arts. I was not a good artist but had an ability to envision what graphic pieces should look like. Working with so many graphics firms over the years, I also had a good understanding of what clients looked for in their artists. We hired an excellent staff artist, and we teamed up to eventually build the graphics division of deRuyter Nelson. Selling graphic design services turned out to be a very lucrative area of the business during the peak years. We had a number of large corporate clients we created publications for and designed and produced a quarterly four-color magazine for the State of Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The graphics division of deRuyter Nelson was an important source of revenue throughout all our remaining years in business. That division was also essential to our decision in the 1990s to start creating and distributing grief resources for families who had lost young children. After my wife and I lost our second child at birth, it became clear there was a serious lack of quality resources for families who not only needed support themselves, but wanted to be able to have nicely designed mementos to remember their children. That division was called A Place To Remember and it was a way for us to combine our personal experience along with our ability to write, design, and distribute quality printed material.

When you are in business as long as we were, you see all sorts of change take place, especially when dealing with technology and the explosion of changes that occurred in those areas during the past 45-50 years. Revenue streams that once seemed like they would be forever profit-

able, become elephants. Ethical standards that you once took for granted become seemingly non-existent, and it's easy to see how older people become cynical and feel like the world is crumbling around them. But I think it is important to try and remember that change is inevitable, and you have to have faith that people will once again demand better as time goes on. For me, nowhere is that more evident than in journalism. The demand for accurate and fair journalism seems to have disappeared. While there has always been the feeling that an article or story that goes against one's belief is unfair, today it's possible with the click of a button to find another article on the same topic that expresses what you want to hear, whether based on fact or simply opinion. When you have powerful politicians constantly telling folks that the mainstream media is out to get them and are nothing but liars, the cynicism grows exponentially.

For me, the value of local journalism is becoming more and more important, because it helps inform people in their own neighborhood as to what is going on and helps keep everyone grounded and working toward a common goal of making the community better where they live and shop and experience life firsthand. It is much more difficult to create a story where one does not exist.

Tim Nelson co-owned the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger with Calvin deRuyter from 1986 to 2017 and the Midway Como Monitor from 1976 to 2017.

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GIVE ME  
A MINUTEBY VALERIE FITZGERALD  
Howe resident

I'm interested in health care. I'm a licensed professional clinical counselor (LPCC), and I worked as a case manager and care coordinator for over 10 years. In March of 2022 I left my job as a care coordinator with a Minnesota-managed care organization. In this role, I worked primarily with people on medical assistance (also known as Medicaid or MA) who were considered disabled. I talked to them about their health needs and helped them to connect with providers and services that were covered by their insurance. I explained frequently used terminology: levels of care; in-network vs. out-of-network coverage; medically necessary vs. elective care; prior authorization; billing codes and what they mean. It could be rewarding, but it was also stressful. When the work began to take a toll on my health, I decided to take a break.

What interests me now is learning how and why our health care system in the U.S. developed as it did. In his book, "The Social Transformation of American Medicine," Paul Starr examines the history of the medical profession in the U.S. This column focuses on one small piece of that history: how the U.S. came to be the only developed country that does not have universal health care.

It's not for lack of trying. Americans have been working for universal health care for over 100 years. Presidents Truman, Nixon and Clinton proposed universal health plans, none of which passed. Medicare and Medicaid, passed in 1965, brought us closer, as did the Affordable Care Act (ACA), passed in 2010. Most recently, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Representative Pramila Jayapal of

## Why don't we have universal health care?

Washington have introduced Medicare for All legislation.

To learn more about current universal health care efforts, I spoke with Anne Jones, RN, of Health Care for All Minnesota (HCA-MN). HCA-MN is a non-profit organization dedicated to comprehensive, affordable, high quality health care for every Minnesotan. Their partners include Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP) and the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA). Anne is a retired nurse who practiced for over 45 years, including 23 years in the United States Air Force Reserve. Now she volunteers her time working to advance HCA-MN's goals. Their highest priority: a state-based (or national) universal, single payer health plan.

At the state level, the Minnesota Health Plan (MHP) was developed by Senator John Marty. It is outlined in his book, "Healing Health Care: The Case for a Commonsense Universal Health System." At the federal level, Medicare for All would provide benefits similar to the Minnesota Health Plan: it would eliminate networks, co-pays or co-insurance, and deductibles. Many services that are not currently covered by most health plans, such as dental and long-term care, would be covered. Senator Sanders has a bill in the senate (S4204), and Representative Jayapal has a bill in the house (HR1976). Minnesota Representatives Ilhan Omar and Betty McCollum are cosponsors of the House bill.

Anne told me, "While Minnesota is one of several states working on single payer legislation, advocates for single payer financing for health care agree that a national health plan – improved and expanded Medicare for All – would be the best solution to issues related to cost, quality, and access to health care in the U.S."

The alternative to Senator Marty's single-payer plan would be a multi-payer plan. Minnesota Senator Jamie Long has proposed a state-level "public option"

(HF96, SF49). The public option was part of the Affordable Care Act as it was first written, and was originally intended to be a government run program to compete with private insurance plans. It was removed because then-Senator Joe Lieberman threatened to filibuster the ACA. Now, states are considering implementing public options.

The proposed public option in Minnesota would use an existing health plan, MinnesotaCare. Currently, MinnesotaCare is available to people with incomes at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. The proposal would remove that income limit, making MinnesotaCare available to everyone. MinnesotaCare works with multiple insurers, so the proposed public option would be a multi-payer plan.

So, why don't we have universal health care? For one thing, opposition has been well-organized and well-funded from the start. Insurance and pharmaceutical industries argued against the first proposed national health plan in 1915, and they continue to do so. A study published in October 2022 in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Health Forum found that health care lobbying expenditures grew by over 70% from 2000-2020, with pharmaceutical companies among the top spenders.

Another obstacle is disagreement among advocates for universal health care. Here in Minnesota, we have a single-payer and multi-payer option, both described above. Both options are well-designed and would improve health care for Minnesotans.

Finally, it's no surprise that we are in a highly politicized environment. A Gallup poll conducted in late 2022 found that, overall, a majority of Americans (57%) believe the federal government should ensure health care for all Americans. It looks like we agree, but when we break down these overall statistics by party, it is Dem-

ocrats and Independents who agree; 71% of Republicans do not think health care is the responsibility of government. Consensus, even among people who appear to agree, is a challenge.

When I left my job last year, I got a bronze plan through MNSure. The premiums are high, but lower than my other option, COBRA. The deductible is also high. I use the skills I learned as a care coordinator to prevent unexpected bills: calling providers, confirming in-network status and billing codes, etc. My health is mostly stable, and I was able to put money into a health savings account when I was employed.

The situation is very different for people who have chronic health conditions, who are self-employed (like farmers), who don't get health insurance through their employer, or can't afford to contribute to an HSA. The U.S. has the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality among comparable developed countries, especially in Black communities. Our current system is not sustainable.

This column scratches the surface of a complex topic. Beneath the surface noise – the barrage of information, politicized rhetoric and outright misinformation that comes at us constantly – facts are more consistent and things begin to make more sense, at least from my perspective. Single payer or multi-payer, I hope we can agree on a way forward to providing affordable health care for all Minnesotans and all Americans.

## RESOURCES:

- Health Care for All Minnesota, [www.hca-mn.org](http://www.hca-mn.org)
- The Minnesota Health Plan, <https://mnhealthplan.org/>
- Physicians for a National Health Plan, <https://pnhp.org/>
- The Commonwealth Fund, [commonwealthfund.org](http://commonwealthfund.org)

*Valerie Fitzgerald is a licensed professional clinical counselor who worked as a case manager and care coordinator for over 10 years. She resides in Howe.*

## AWARENESS

STORIES  
AND JOURNEYS

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



Without awareness, does anything or anyone really exist? I am aware that I enjoy sitting in the front room of my house. In the front room of my house I enjoy sitting in a rocking chair and looking out the window. I look out at the activities going by on 46th Ave. in my Hiawatha neighborhood. It's like getting to watch a free movie which I call, "As Life Goes By." I am aware there is snow everywhere. We are blanketed in it. Underneath that blanket of snow I am aware there is stuff happening. Stuff like nature getting ready for a rebirth come spring.

It's a week day. I have the television tuned to TPT. I am aware of coverage of the Minnesota legislative session. Jim Davnie is no longer my state representative. Now it's Samantha Sencer-Mura. Patricia Torres-Ray is no longer my state senator. Now it's Zaynab Mohamed. I wonder if they know that elders like me even exist. State Representative Frank Hornstein and Senator Scott Dibble are back representing southwest Minneapolis. Watching the legislative session enables me to stay aware that there is more to Minnesota than south Minneapolis. I am very aware that I grew up on the north side of Des Moines. I am rooted and grounded in south Minneapolis. And if you have read this far you have taken the plunge and become a reader of this Stories and Journeys column.

tricia Torres-Ray is no longer my state senator. Now it's Zaynab Mohamed. I wonder if they know that elders like me even exist. State Representative Frank Hornstein and Senator Scott Dibble are back representing southwest Minneapolis. Watching the legislative session enables me to stay aware that there is more to Minnesota than south Minneapolis. I am very aware that I grew up on the north side of Des Moines. I am rooted and grounded in south Minneapolis. And if you have read this far you have taken the plunge and become a reader of this Stories and Journeys column.

## AWARE OF MIKE AND JENNY. AWARE OF MY PAIN.

I met them through Senior Community Services. They have been doing my snow removal and lawn mowing. As I write, I have their photo in front of me. It's their Happy Holidays card containing their picture. On the back of the card is what I know to be the prayer of Saint Francis which starts out, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..." It has been a source of inspiration for Mike, Jenny, myself and many others throughout the ages.

On Dec. 23, I received an email from Mike telling me that Jenny, his wife, died at 4 a.m. I have in mind pictures of Jenny showing up with Michael to do snow removal or lawn mowing. She had cancer. I once asked her how she coped with her cancer-related pain. She told me she just tried to ignore it. I took her words to heart. I have been trying to ignore the pain and discomfort that are part of my lumbar and cervical spine stenosis for years. I am aware that the pain and discomfort have become constant – impacting my everyday life functioning. My hands are in pain as I type this column. Would my pain and discomfort exist if I wasn't aware? I have an appointment with my spine surgeon coming up shortly after I make deadline for this column.

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## AWARE OF AN URN

It's sitting on the top shelf of the closet in my bedroom. It is my urn. I have been trying to imagine myself as a pile of ashes in that urn. At the end of the day is that all I am? A pile of ashes in an urn to eventually be placed in my niche in the Green Mausoleum at Lakewood Cemetery. My sister-in-law, Carol, recently came to stay with me for a few days. We paid a visit to Bradshaw on Minnehaha Ave. I have now signed the paper work and paid the money. When I die, Bradshaw will come and pick me up. They will take me to get green cremated. My ashes will be turned over to my sister-in-law to ultimately be delivered to Lakewood for direct burial.

There will be time and space in the Green Mausoleum chapel for people to gather to share their awareness of me, how they knew me and be part of a service. I am calling it a Celebration of Pure Awareness. I'm hoping to say a few words even though I have died. Awareness is everything. Does anything or anyone exist without our being aware? My obituary will have appeared in the Star Tribune, the Longfellow-Nokomis Messenger and the Southwest Connector. Copies of the Messenger and Connector newspapers containing my last Stories and Journeys column and obituary will be available to attendees. Tessa told me she could make that happen. I am aware that death is the great equalizer. A lesson I learned when I was night attendant in a mortuary on Minnehaha Parkway.

So, I ask you dear reader: Is that all we are, a pile of ashes in an urn or whatever form we take after dying occurs? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me.

I am aware. Staying strong. Writing with courage. Aware of my pain, I am not a robot.

In gratitude always!

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

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# A PERSONALIZED APPROACH TO HEALTH CARE

*Leap, a clinic for children, teens and young adults, aims to reduce barriers*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

When your physician looks like you and understands your culture, studies have shown your health outcomes are better.

Knowing that, Dr. Julia Joseph-Di Caprio, a Black physician, decided to open Leap Pediatric and Adolescent Care in the Midway last fall.

The longtime Merriam Park resident and former Longfellow resident observed, "There's something about listening in a different way."

A study out of the University of Minnesota looked at health outcomes of Black newborns, who die at three times the rate of White newborns. It found that when Black newborns are cared for by Black physicians, they are more likely to survive. "That's not to say that others can't produce high-quality care, but we know outcomes are improved when bringing that level of cultural competency," added Dr. Julia.

Leap addresses the continued and growing need for high quality healthcare



Working together at Leap Pediatric and Adolescent Care are (left to right) Dr. Julia Joseph-Di Caprio, office manager Tanjeræ White and assistant lab supervisor Crystal Johnson. "I am proud of this because of the Black women I am here with," said Johnson. White has been in the medical field for 26 years, working her way up from medical assistant to office manager. She's excited by her own growth and that of the two women she's working with. She said she is proud to represent "people of our color." White added, "I think this will help a lot of young people." (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

for those who face the greatest barriers to health and wellness in a medically underserved area.

Since opening Leap with many partners, Dr. Julia has heard from patients that

they had been looking for a Black doctor for their child. "I want them to see this as possible," she said. "Many times people questioned my competence because I was Black."

The clinic is located in the 450 Syndicate building in the Midway, Suite 250.

## REMOVING BARRIERS

"What we want to do is remove as many of the barriers as possible," explained Dr. Julia.

With a small practice, people can get in to be seen and get in quickly. "Folks get the benefit of a really personalized approach to their needs, but at the same time they can access our specialists if they have the need for that," observed Dr. Julia.

The approach at Leap includes county health workers who can help address the myriad of needs a family faces. A child might be seen for dental pain at Leap, and while there, they determine that the family needs help getting the child to the dentist. Dr. Julia is excited about the possibilities that come with a community health worker model.

While Leap Pediatric and Adolescent Care offers modern services, Dr. Julia points out that part of her vision is a little old-fashioned. It's one-on-one work, and right now she's the only doctor there. "We're the voices on the phone," she said.

At Leap, they provide services to ages 0-26, including well-child checks, same day sick appointments, adolescent care, sports physicals, ADHD/mental health assessments, and telemedicine. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Reach Leap at 651-350-3580, Main@leapcaremn.com or www.leapcaremn.com.

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# 10 GUIDELINES FOR A STRONG, LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

## UNDER THE HOOD

BY SUSAN SCHAEFER



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

Some time ago, after suffering the shocking and unexpected loss of my still young husband, Martijn, while we were living in Europe, I experienced what is called traumatic grief. In addition to a year of intense grief counseling, I also trained and earned my certification in Presence-Based Coaching. During this period, I developed 10 simple coaching guidelines that contribute to well-being. These apply to people of all ages, but are especially useful to help us as we age, designed to keep us thriving rather than simply surviving.

### 1 CREATE QUIET TIME EACH DAY

The Information Age and modern life have shaken us from the natural rhythms that promote balance. It takes an intentional effort to break from the intensity. Creating a place and or space to reduce the literal and emotional noise is one essential step. Simplicity is key. While adopting meditation, yoga, Qigong or other practices brings an elevated sense of peace, so too can merely breaking away from the technological onslaught by doing something quiet and or manual. Like reading a book. Having a conversation. Playing a board game with family or friends. Walking in nature. Playing or listening to music. Whatever activity or down time gives a true break from contemporary clamor will contribute to a greater sense of well-being.

### 2 EAT WHOLE FOOD AND DRINK LOTS OF WATER

The pace and "conveniences" of modernity seem to have hijacked common sense. Many of us have fallen prey unhealthy food and beverage choices. We short-circuit our health and healthcare systems by so doing. Breaking the habit of reaching for highly processed foods, including sugary drinks, can be done in increments. Replacing one sugary or salty snack with a piece of fruit or veggies is one way to start. Not buying sodas or sweetened fruit drinks in the first place helps, as does keeping fresh, filtered or bottled water within easy reach. Research proves that fast foods are actually engineered to be addictive – as dangerous as smoking cigarettes or abusing alcohol! It is not easy to end addiction but doing so can prevent the onset of diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure that lead to stroke, heart disease, dementia and an overall poor quality of life. Incremental change yields big results.

### 3 TO SLEEP, PERHAPS TO DREAM

Everyone has a different sleep requirement and the older we get the more likely we are beset by disruptions. Getting ample sleep is critical to good health. Sleep disorders such as insomnia, restless leg syndrome, narcolepsy, and sleep apnea can cause a cascade of other health issues. However, we can control many of the impediments to getting a good night's sleep – starting with making sleep spaces quiet, dark, relaxing



Original collage by Susan Schaefer

and at a comfortable temperature. Next, remove electronic devices such as televisions, computers, and smart phones from the bedroom, and end screen time well before bedtime. Avoiding large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bed helps, as does using herb teas that promote good sleep. Of course, maintaining regular sleep and waking times is highly beneficial, as is getting regular daily exercise. The key is knowing what we can change and that we can change.

### 4 REGULAR BODY MOVEMENT

There is much hype about what is the best and how to get adequate exercise. A rule of thumb that most medical experts agree with is that we should maintain some practice of regularly moving our bodies. However, we do not need extreme physical activity, which actually can contribute to problems as our bodies age and change. Medical research has shown that simply walking each day for as little as 30 minutes promotes good health. All we need is a steady and regular practice that suits our temperament and abilities. Walking helps maintain healthy weight, prevents or manages conditions like heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, improves cardio fitness, strengthens bones and muscles, improves muscle endurance, and increases overall energy levels. For those of us in the cold climate, mall and museum walking brings it inside. Oh yes, and it helps us to get a good night's sleep! Talk about a virtuous circle!

### 5 UNCLUTTER

As night follows day, as we age we tend to collect stuff. Sometimes a lot of it. Excessive hoarding is a genuine psychological problem. The need to accumulate can be related to painful feelings and difficult experiences and extreme hoarders benefit with counseling. Yet simply living a long life means we tend to collect more. Many of us have authentic attachments to certain objects, like photos, a parent's ring or a child's first drawing. However, there's truth in the old adage that less is more.

Clutter causes chaos and can actually be dangerous by causing fire hazards or blocking exits. Too many objects in one place can also add to mental confusion. I have written numerous articles about the art of curating as a way to ease through the pain of parting with objects – pairing down to treasured items to showcase. An article in "Psychology Today" cites scientific documentation about how living in clutter creates or contributes to low subjective well-being, unhealthier eating, poorer mental health, less efficient visual processing, and less efficient thinking. The advantages of streamlining outweigh simple housekeeping by elevating happiness while also benefiting physical health and cognitive abilities. Plus, your children will thank you.

### 6 CREATE AND SERVE COMMUNITY

In his landmark book, "Bowling Alone in America," author Robert D. Putnam bemoaned the shrinking tendencies of American volunteerism and civic duty, pointing out this behavior in-

*Most resolutions made in good conscience are broken in good time. These 10 guidelines are ageless and timeless.*

creasingly disconnects us from family, friends, neighbors, and social structures, while lessening our social capital, which depletes both individual and community well-being. Fortunately, Minnesotans' inherent activism puts us in a different category, but we cannot take for granted serving our communities for granted. The truth is, that by serving community we also serve ourselves.

### 7 PLACE YOUR FRIENDS, LIKE YOUR ART, IN THE BEST LIGHT

Friendships represent a deep form of social capital. Unlike family relationships, which are a given, friendships must be forged and tended. Lifelong friendships so nourish our souls that the late author, John O'Donohue, titled an entire book, "Anam Cara," a Celtic term for soul friendships, the essence of true friendship. Making and keeping lifelong friendships by investing time and energy is strong medicine.

### 8 BE A BEGINNER, LEARN NEW THINGS, OPEN NEW DOORS

Older people are notorious for getting "stuck in their ways." But a positive aspect of modernity is that there are so many options to keep current and to keep learning. From national programs like the celebrated Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), to countless offerings from other, innumerable organizations. Many neighborhood schools, community colleges or centers, religious organizations, even food coops offer seminars and workshops. And, thanks to the internet, choices are countless. I keep this poem framed above my desk: "If the Angel deigns to come, it will be because you have convinced her, not by your tears, but by your humble resolve to be always beginning: to be a beginner." - Rainer Maria Rilke

### 9 RESPECT THE PAST, LIVE THE PRESENT, ENVISION THE FUTURE

The 1960's Hippie rallying cry, "Be Here Now," often has been misinterpreted. It is the balance of past, present and future that helps us thrive. As Winston Churchill is credited with saying: "Those of us who forget the past are doomed to repeat it." The popular trope of "being present" misses the mark. As it is for learning proper grammar, we need to practice all of our tenses in order to succeed.

### 10 ACCEPTANCE, COURAGE AND WISDOM

Can we truly shape our perspectives and make positive changes? I think so. Like all good things, it takes time and practice. But many wisdom traditions have variations of the legendary serenity prayer: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." It all begins within.

Susan Schaefer is a widely published independent journalist, creative writer, and poet. Her articles appear in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, PBS' online magazine, Next Avenue, Next Tribe, and beyond. She was columnist and features writer for Minneapolis' Southwest Journal and Minnesota Good Age magazine.

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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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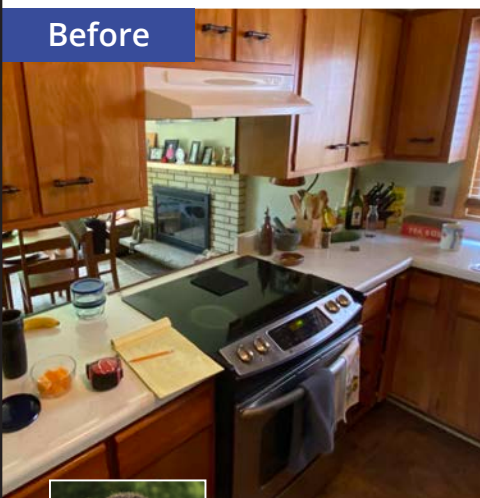
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## Q&amp;A WITH RAY N. WELTER HEATING

Ray N. Welter Heating Company celebrated its 100th year in 2012. Ray 'Rick' Welter, III, shared tips and information on the business located at 4637 Chicago Ave.

## WHAT ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS ASKING ABOUT?

Rick: Lately the most common question has been about heat pumps as these have never been a popular option in our climates. The technology is changing rapidly as to their effectiveness in cold climates. I am still not a big believer that the most common style air source heat pumps are worth it yet. They need 35 degrees outside temperature to kick over to the furnace, and our winters have many days that are below 35. So, I'm not convinced yet, but do believe with improved performance it will be a great option.

Customers mostly fear costly and inopportune timing of breakdowns.

## HOW CAN PEOPLE REDUCE THEIR HEATING AND COOLING BILLS?

Rick: I believe changing your filter often and keeping your outdoor AC condenser clean are the only real options besides changing the temperatures you find comfortable in your home to help reduce costs.

Get regular clean and checks from a professional. And beware of anyone doing a clean and check for too cheap; they tend to be the pushy sales technicians.

## HOW HAS COVID, SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES, AND HIRING ISSUES AFFECTED YOUR BUSINESS?

Rick: We had some minor hiccups

## UP CLOSE WITH LOCAL CONTRACTORS



Rick Welter with his dad, Ray Welter, II on their 100th anniversary.

with supply chain issues that were very minor for us as the previous generations had set us up with a building that can hold more equipment than most shops, and we quickly fill our warehouse to cover demand. As far as hiring, we have extremely low turnover here. Most turnover is due to retirements and have been able to fill any gaps very quickly.

## WHAT SETS YOUR COMPANY APART?

Rick: Our honesty and transparency, as well as longevity, seem to be what people gravitate to most as there are several companies that I have seen that can install well but miss some personal touch somehow. My dad has said we are big enough to get the job done well at a fair price but are small enough to really care about the customer.

## Q&amp;A WITH CHILEEN PAINTING

Chileen Painting is a third-generation, family-owned business started in 1952. Their home restoration techniques range from painting to woodwork to enameling. Greg Chileen brought Chileen Painting to the Twin Cities metro area in the 1990s after his service in the United States Marine Corps to focus on the restoration of older homes.



## WHAT ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS ASKING ABOUT?

Greg: They always want to know how long the job will take. We pay a lot of attention to quality and value good workmanship. For most jobs, we give them a time frame like 5-7 days. Customers worry about picking out the colors.

## WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE?

Greg: Hire quality contractors that you trust and you will have a better peace of mind with value and quality.

## HOW HAS COVID, SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES, AND HIRING ISSUES AFFECTED YOUR BUSINESS?

Greg: In some cases, it has gotten easier as homeowners are available because they are working from home. Paint supplies have gotten better and stores are close to full strength now.

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~ Emily, Minneapolis



UNDER THE  
MICROSCOPE

BY RUSS HENRY



Leaves rustle in a dry creek bed, tiny fish drift ever so slightly in stagnant pools of murky water. Drips slip past and quietly fall over the limestone cliff. While the mighty gush of Minnehaha Falls usually fills the park with the constant roar of a 65 cubic feet per second leaping 53 feet down from the limestone edge on its way to the Mississippi, the drought of 2022 saw a complete standstill to the water flow through the creek. Similar but less severe droughts stopped the creek flow in 2000, 2009, 2012, and 2021, as well. These droughts leave residents worried for the health of the creek and lakes, and they aren't the only problems facing this highly urbanized watershed.

Minneapolis loves Minnehaha Creek and falls. Traversing the entire city, west to east and culminating in a stunning waterfall, it is the highlight of an important nature corridor and recreational space between lake Minnetonka and the Mississippi River. While drought may temporarily remove this beloved landscape feature, spring melt from this winter's barrage of snow will soon fill the creek, and once again Minnehaha Falls will roar with thunderous splashing to the delight of visitors and residents alike. Long before President Johnson's foot prints were enshrined in concrete at the top of the falls, Minnehaha Creek and the bodies of water associated with it were highly productive food sources for local Dakota and other Indigenous Peoples. These vital resources were plundered into near oblivion by White settlers.

Dakota scholar and author, Dr. Waziyatawin, executive director of Makoce Ikiicupi stated, "Settlers rarely recognize the inherent importance of letting natural features be, to exist as they were intended, instead only seeing value in what people have created at the expense of the natural world. Certainly, this is the case at Bde Psin." (Rice Lake/Bde Psin now called Lake Hiawatha.)

"Since settler occupation, 90 percent of the wetlands in Minnesota have been destroyed. It's hard to imagine a more destructive culture than that which invaded our beloved homeland."

## HOW IT USED TO BE

Reading historical accounts of the massive productivity of local ecosystems and the way that productivity was attacked and dismantled is to see a glimpse into the devastating reality of colonization that occurred in Minnesota. According to Rich and Susan Cairn, in their report, "History of Minnehaha Creek Watershed," "When Americans first passed Minnehaha Creek around 1800, they saw unbroken wilderness. In fact, Native Americans had lived here for millennia, growing crops and opening the forest with regular burns. Yet theirs were mostly impermanent changes. By contrast, the first White settlers in the 1850s soon logged and plowed most of the watershed. Wildlife retreated to undeveloped corners. Large animals such as bear and bison disappeared. As farmers drained lakes and wetlands for fields and pastures, runoff increased. Animal wastes and erosion fouled the waters."

Writing about the early 1900s, author Coates P. Bull, recorded: "Sucker and Redhorse each spring swam from Lake Harriet through the outlet into Minnehaha... Settlers, even from Eden Prairie and miles to the west, brought their spears to harvest bushels of these fish to eat and to feed pigs... Farmers... could, and did, go down with pitch forks and pitch the fish out onto the banks for their fish fry."

From an article encouraging Europe-

## Can Minnehaha Creek be restored?



While the mighty gush of Minnehaha Falls usually fills the park with a constant roar, the drought of 2022 saw a complete standstill to the water flow through the creek. Similar but less severe droughts stopped the creek flow in 2000, 2009, 2012 and 2021. What does this year hold for the waterfall and winding creek? (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

an emigration in an 1852 Massachusetts paper, "The prairies are small, so that timber and water are easily accessible. And the natural meadows afford an abundance of good hay. A farmer may come on early in the spring, with team and stock enough for a well-cultivated farm. He can readily find a location, where he can plow land and put in his seed... The lands west of the Mississippi river, heretofore belonging to the Sioux Indians, are now open to settlement, and emigrants have been pouring into them like a flood for the last few months... Those who wish to get good farms, and to get them cheap, will do well to come on early in the spring...."

As the creek was being plundered for its ecological riches, the watershed that surrounds and feeds the creek was being permanently changed. According to the report compiled by the Cairns, "Settlers could 'pre-empt' or claim 160 acres at a low government price as long as they built and occupied a house, fenced and cultivated land right away. ... By 1860 the entire watershed had been claimed, most of the forest had been logged, and most of the prairie plowed."

As development continued through the 20th century, the watershed has been dramatically altered. According to Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Communications Coordinator Stacy Carlson, "Over the last 100 plus years, the creek's natural curves have been straightened and ditched, and in places the creek has even been relocated to accommodate land use change. A land survey from the 1850s shows stretches of the creek located up to two blocks north of where it runs today. In addition to the creek being moved, the surrounding land has been changed in a way that fundamentally affects parts of the water cycle. For example, 33% of the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed is covered by impervious surfaces, and Minneapolis has lost about 88% of its wetlands."

## CONSIDER STORM-WATER RUN-OFF

Given the massive difference in the way the watershed is managed today, is it possible to recover any glimpse of the historical health and productivity of the creek and watershed in today's urban environment?

St. Thomas University associate professor of biology and biochemistry, Gaston 'Chip' Small, provided context: "One of the big differences between urban watersheds and more natural watersheds is the extent to which we have altered the hydrology, by [constructing] impervious surfaces. In urbanized watersheds, a much

larger fraction of rainfall becomes surface runoff, and streams tend to be 'flashier,' with large jumps in discharge following rain events. This can scour stream beds and cause erosion of streambanks."

Professor Small further explained: "Runoff from urban watersheds also typically carries contaminants from roads, lawns, and other land cover – chloride from road salt is a big issue, but also fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals. For example, leaf decomposition is an important part of nutrient cycling in forests, but leaves from roadside trees that end up in storm sewers represent a significant input of phosphorus in urban lakes. Collectively, these impacts are referred to as 'urban stream syndrome' and often lead to a biotic community dominated by pollution-tolerant invertebrates." When asked whether pollution tolerant invertebrates provide enough nutrition at the right times of year to feed an abundance of native fish and birds, Professor Small stated, "I would guess that, in highly polluted streams dominated by pollution tolerant species, you're not going to have a lot of strictly insectivorous fish, and maybe more likely to have omnivorous fish species that could adapt to available food resources (or no fish at all). I suspect, too, things like mosquito control in the metro has a big impact on food resources for insectivorous birds and bats."

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), is the federally funded organization whose watershed wide mission is to: "protect and improve land and water for current and future generations." Carlson spoke to me about the importance of their work. "Replacing nature's storage and filters has increased the volume of runoff when it rains, and the pollution delivered to the stream. It has also fragmented and degraded the riparian corridor that used to buffer the creek, reducing wildlife habitat and separating communities from the creek ecosystem." When asked about MCWD's work to restore the health of the watershed, Carlson stated, "In the Minnehaha Creek corridor, we have emphasized partnerships to regionally capture and treat stormwater runoff before it is delivered to the stream. We have addressed the physical structure of the creek, its geomorphology, by adding meanders, in-stream woody debris and pools and riffles to mimic a natural system. And we have expanded, restored, and connected the surrounding riparian greenspace for wildlife and people."

And there is still so much more restoration to be done. When asked what would happen if 100% of the rainwater

## Experts weigh in on problems, suggest solutions

falling on the watershed were diverted into rain gardens, swales, ditches, and seasonal wetlands, Carlson replied, "Whenever you're able to stop water from draining straight from an impervious surface to the creek or any water body, there can be significant benefits for the whole ecosystem." She added, "We always encourage people to take a step back and see their community as part of a larger ecosystem."

## HOW TO FIX THE CREEK

Renowned ecologist and New York Times best-selling author, Doug Tallamy, recently weighed in. When asked what we could do to improve the ecological productivity of Minnehaha Creek, Tallamy replied, "Historically these streams want to be shaded. They want to be colder than they are. You cut down the trees, warming the water and right away that cuts out several species of fish including the trout.... We've removed woody debris that used to be a function of all of our waterways to make them navigable and prevent ice dams and maybe because we thought it looked ugly, who knows, but that's where the fish breed."

Tallamy continued, "Around every stream is a flood plain – it's supposed to flood. We killed all the beavers which were a function of every aquatic system in this country and, in doing so, we changed the hydrology of the entire country. Now they're starting to come back, we've got to let them do that, allow them to come back. Shading streams, bringing the beavers back, allowing some wood debris in the water, and creating a flood plain around the creeks would boost the productivity tremendously. And, of course, what does the shade got to be from? From native plants, because the primary component of the food for the fish in the streams, isn't aquatic insects, it's the insects that fall into the stream from the trees and plants above.... Put all those things back and you will build the fish populations up again.... One report showed 80% of fish insect consumption

“

Since settler occupation, 90% of the wetlands in Minnesota have been destroyed. It's hard to imagine a more destructive culture than that which invaded our beloved homeland."

Dr. Waziyatawin

comes from insects falling out of trees and in the water.

"Within the Minnehaha watershed you've lost your infiltration, the deluge of water after a big rainfall speeds up and scours the stream. Storm-water runoff is a major killer of streams. Whereas, a well-buffered forest riparian community will

reduce the flow into the creek. It could soak up the rain as a sponge and then slowly release it so you have steady flow through the year instead of this deluge in the spring and then nothing. It's the same old thing, putting the plants back solves most of the problems.

"You don't want the influx of nitrogen, phosphorus, and silt into the streams because that degrades them on every level. Seasonal wetlands and rain gardens are your best bet. Minnehaha Creek flowing through the center of Minneapolis is a challenge because it's surrounded by concrete. But you have a huge park system in Minneapolis and every one of those acres should be designed for storm-water retention in one way or another."

Russ Henry is a landscaper, naturalist, gardener, soil health specialist, and educator. The Longfellow business owner is devoted to pollinator protection, urban farming, local food system development, and restorative justice.



## CITY BRIEFS

## POLICE 'OFF DUTY' WORK TO BE EXAMINED

In January, the Minneapolis City Council voted to review how the city's police department allows its officers to do off-duty work. An audit the city conducted three years ago identified concerns about how the department assigned and tracked the extra hours worked. The department's off-duty police work system allows businesses and organizations like nightclubs, stores or neighborhoods to hire officers while in full uniform and using a city squad car.

## MORE MPD WORKERS COMP CLAIMS

In February, the City Council approved another group of legal settlements of workers' compensation claims of Minneapolis police officers including Dean Christiansen for \$175,000, Keith Smith for \$150,000, Jeremy Howard for \$175,000, Thaya Wallace for \$110,000 and Derrick Foster for \$125,000. It is now estimated that over \$25 million has been paid out in similar settlements to over 100 officers since the police killing of George Floyd in May of 2020.

## CITY LOAN TO 805 E. 38TH STREET

The City Council has approved giving

a forgivable loan of \$230,000 to the 805 E. 38th Street LLC to help them purchase and renovate their property located on the southeast corner of George Floyd Square. Dan Coleman, owner of 805 E. 38th Street LLC, intends to lease the ground floor commercial space to a catering business called Chopped & Served that plans to expand offerings to takeout meals. The total costs for the project are estimated to be \$775,625.

## SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

The City Council has approved a number of appointees to serve on the special services districts in the Longfellow/Nokomis area. Most will be serving two-year terms that end in December 2024. For the 48th & Chicago Special Service District Advisory Board, the appointees are Joyce Tesarek, Harvey McLain, and Bob Gustafson. For the Bloomington-Lake Special Service District, they are Stacey Geniz and Julie Ingebretsen. For the Chicago-Lake Special Service District Board, they are Sharrie Gronewold, Julian Ocampo, and Earlsworth Baba Letang. For the East Lake Street Special Service District, they are Nancy Ford, Alan Puder, Trentt Cramer and Daniel Kennedy.

## CITY GREAT STREET GRANTS AWARDED

The annual 2023 business district support grants have been awarded and 23 local business associations, community

development corporations, neighborhood groups, and other not-for-profit organizations working on commercial district health will receive \$671,275. Notable awardees for the Nokomis/Longfellow area include the Lake Street Council for \$75,000 for a marketing campaign and promoting Lake Street art; the Midtown Greenway Coalition for \$12,000 to support bike and walk ambassadors; Our Streets Minneapolis for \$36,000 for open street events; Corcoran Neighborhood Organization for the Midtown Farmers Market for \$31,000; the Latino Economic Development Center for \$34,500 for a Taco Tour and marketing; the Longfellow Business Association for \$17,900 for marketing and events; Pillsbury House and Theatre for \$21,500 for a community event; and Seward Civic & Commerce Association for \$10,500 for engagement and marketing.

## NEW CITY HEALTH COMMISSIONER NOMINATED

There was a public hearing on Feb. 15, 2023, to consider the mayor's nomination of Damon Chaplin to be the next Minneapolis Commissioner of Health. According to the mayor's nomination letter to the council, "Mr. Chaplin brings decades of proven public health leadership and expertise to the table. As the current Director for the New Bedford, Mass. Health Department and a Board Member with the National Association of County and City

Health Officials (NACCHO), Mr. Chaplin has driven positive change in community health and health equity in historically vulnerable populations." The full council was expected to vote on the nomination on Feb. 23.

## SOLAR ENERGY ON LAKE ST.

The Lake Street Council has been selected to join the U.S. Energy Department's Solar Energy Innovation Network that is designed to bring resources to help businesses increase the use of solar energy, reduce inequities in solar adoption and make increase businesses more resilient. The council will be working with the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, as well as the Great Plains Institute, Neighborhood Development Center, Northside Energy Opportunity Network, Weber Consulting, and Xcel Energy. This is one of eight projects nationwide recently selected to join the network.

## CITY TREE SALE LOTTERY

People interested purchasing a tree through the 2023 Minneapolis Tree Sale need to enter the lottery by registering online between Feb. 1 and March 31. People will be notified on April 5 if they have been selected to participate in the tree sale. Landlords are asked to submit a new form for each property address.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon

## EVENTS

## SEE HIP HOP DOCUMENTARY ON MARCH 4

The Minnesota Historical Society is proud to continue its great partnership with the filmmakers of the "A Great Day in Twin Cities Hip Hop" documentary. Minnesota History Center's 3M Auditorium will host a special screening to celebrate local music pioneers, the history of Hip Hop in the Twin Cities, and commem-

orate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the genre on Saturday, March 4, 2023, 2-4 p.m. The event is free, but registration is required. Over the past few years, Minneapolis and St. Paul have been in the national spotlight, acting as the forecaster of unstable conditions within the hip hop community. This documentary serves as an important time capsule, providing a rare look of Black youth cultural expression prior to the 2020 uprising following the tragic killing of George Floyd.

## BILLY MCLAUGHLIN SHOW MARCH 19

Mount Olive (3045 Chicago Avenue S.) Music and Fine Arts presents Emmy Award-winning composer/guitarist Billy McLaughlin, recognized as an innovative performer and composer who embraces the advantages of acoustic guitar amplification, unorthodox techniques and altered tunings, while celebrating a gift for melody. He will perform Sunday, March 19, 2023, 4 p.m., with members of Simple Gifts. This event is free and open to the public.

## FILMMAKERS AT TRYLON APRIL 7-9

The Minneapolis films of David Burton Morris and Victoria Wozniak will be playing at the Trylon April 7-9, and the filmmakers in person for all shows. Victoria and David helped establish the IFP/North (now Film North) and the first IFP branch in LA (now FIND). Victoria is also a founding creator of the Spirit Awards. The Trylon is proud to bring all three of their Minnesota produced films to the screen together for the first time, screening 35mm and 16mm film prints.

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Wednesdays: NA group, 7:30 pm  
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## SEWARD ARTISTS AT MINNEAPOLIS ICE SHANTY PROJECT



Seward artists Lisa Carlson (above) and Peter Schulze (at right) build an ice garden, showing both the beauty and fragility of ice. They used a wide range of containers to make the ice pieces that they set up along the shore of Bdé Umáj / Lake Harriet during the four-week Ice Shanty Project Jan. 21-Feb. 12, 2023. The festival took place on land along the lakefront, in Bandshell Park, and in the picnic ground due to poor ice conditions in January. This year, there were 18 shanties and over 20 performances + art actions. Carlson and Schulze provided ongoing live demonstrations, tours, and hands on experiences. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)





# Let's make sure White and BIPOC enjoy our parks

## LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY ANDREA TRITSCHLER,  
communications  
andrea@longfellow.org



There's a diversity gap in our outdoor spaces. Participation and attendance at state and national parks is almost 70 percent White. This is alarming considering 40 percent of our national population are people of color. This gap has been perpetuated by economic inequality and legalized segregation, as well as historic and current racial discrimination.

While nature doesn't discriminate, the systems and people who grasped control of natural spaces did. Throughout history, parks in the United States have been conceptualized, created, and managed by White men who held racist beliefs. People of color were not considered in outdoor recreation and have been segregated or ex-

cluded from outdoor recreation agencies.

Because of this history, people of color often have to plan trips or participate in outdoor activities in groups because the White majority can see them as 'out of place.'

We are focusing our work with the Hennepin County Green Partners Grant to center BIPOC people in our neighborhood's natural spaces. We've partnered with three community organizations that are BIPOC owned/operated – Better Futures, Black Table Arts, and Urban Bird Collective – to create three activities that we hope will help to imbue the BIPOC experience into the outdoor experience.

Better Futures Minnesota is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the community and the environment. They focus on reintegrating high-risk adults, primarily Black men, into society through on-the-job training in deconstruction, warehouse safety, appliance recycling and more. Part of their work is salvaging materials through deconstruction work and diverting tons of building materials from landfills.

During the first part of our project,

we will be working with Better Futures to build Leopold benches, commonly used for bird watching, out of reclaimed materials to install in our community. Participants will learn about how to repurpose materials and create something to expand accessibility in our natural spaces. There are two bench building sessions: March 9 and March 18.

After the benches are built, participants will work with artists from Black Table Arts, a local Black artist collective, to paint the benches on March 25. This project is meant to uplift the voices of our neighbors through shared connection and expression. With this initiative, we hope to use art as a tool of healing by centering BIPOC experiences and cultures when designing and painting the benches. Once installed, the benches can be something that not only benefits people, but serves as a reminder that everyone deserves to feel safe and welcome in the outdoors.

Finally, our project will have several bird walks from April to June led by Urban Bird Collective, a group that works to create safe, welcoming spaces for all communities to enjoy nature and bird-



Urban Bird Collective will host bird walks from April to June through Longfellow's parks, teaching participants about native bird species. (Photo submitted)

watching. These communities include Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and the LGBTQIA communities and more. Leading groups on walks through our neighborhoods and parks, members of the Urban Bird Collective will teach participants about native bird species and how we can help protect them through proper waste management, clean ups, and environmental protections.

Sign ups for all of these events are available on our website, longfellow.org or for more information email Jasmine Epps-Flowers at jasmine@sng.org.

## REBUILDING DREAMS

### NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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



Most of us were raised on the American dream. Work hard and you can succeed. We all watched "Rocky" and rooted for the underdog. This is one of those stories.

Casa Maria is unique in that it is the first up-scale Mexican food I've ever had. Emilia and Ernesto Reyes work hard to make this unique cuisine their own. Working by day cleaning houses to afford their new restaurant, they have put their heart and soul into going back to "handmade traditions that do things the long way, but the right way." They told me that "the flavors of Mexico are very underrated," and they "don't just sell tacos and burritos" in their restaurant. They boast that nothing is canned; everything is made from scratch – even the tortillas are handmade.

Casa Maria is more than a restau-

rant – it is a statement to all women in the world. Casa means 'house' in Spanish, and "[Maria] is an honor to all the women in the U.S., Mexico, and Latin America, because each woman gives us food, and we learn to cook from them. We learned to cook from our mother. From each mother... this is our mission." Ernesto spoke about the importance of food in culture and how it plays such strong familial roles. "If we are going to do this food – the narrative of what Mexican food is – we are going to do it right... It's going to make you feel like you are getting food from your grandmother's kitchen."

In 1992, when Ernesto's brother moved to Minnesota, he was quick to discover the lack of Mexican ingredients in grocery stores and lack of Mexican restaurants. He missed the taste of home. Being a great brother, Ernesto drove to Minneapolis from his home in Chicago with a truck full of ingredients. He was surprised by how many people approached him asking to buy his fresh ingredients. He started to make weekly trips from Chicago to Minneapolis to sell ingredients for people to be able to cook Mexican food at home.

Three months later, Ernesto bought a small burger restaurant on Lake Street named 'Alfaro's,' and converted it to 'Me Gusta Mexican Cuisine.' "My focus on the

food was a focus for Mexican people," he stated proudly, knowing that he was bringing a new culture and cuisine to the Twin Cities. Soon there was a "big line [of people] that went around the corner." Ernesto and Emilia had only been living in Minneapolis for a few months and "had no idea how life was here." Ernesto said he had been completely oblivious that his family restaurant was on a street not known for safety, and he was changing how the street defined itself. Local Minnesotans helped him and his restaurant. "I didn't know why the people wanted to help – I was so surprised," Ernesto said, explaining how people volunteered their time to help paint the new restaurant, and designed and put up a sign for him.

In 1993, their restaurant, Me Gusta Mexican Cuisine, became so popular Ernesto and Emilia opened a new one in a bigger space. The great recession in 2008 suddenly dashed their dreams. They were unable to keep up with the loans they took to make their dreams come true. Wells Fargo took everything – including their home. "We lost the house, the buildings, the business, and we had no money." One week after the bank took their property, Ernesto's son passed away when he fell asleep driving to meet them from Chicago. "We lost everything, because we

felt we had nothing more to lose." Ernesto "divorced from God," and decided to never go into business again.

After several years, Ernesto found himself at the local church. He volunteered to cook for an event and the church-goers loved his food. He was resolute in being done with business, but the church talked him into opening a restaurant again. Friends from his church raised money to help him to be part of this partnership to start anew. Casa Maria was born.

But these partners have had to go through, like many people, the unexpected pandemic. With all this and after several changes in this partnership, Casa Maria continues to struggle to move forward. Emilia and Ernesto had to take a second job to make their dreams come true.

Today, on the corner of 50th and 34th street, Casa Maria is one of the only up-scale Mexican restaurants in the Twin Cities. Ernesto and Emilia continue to build their dream, one hand-made tortilla at a time, holding several events per year, including comedians and local bands while you can enjoy Mexican food with a twist. As you go, please remember to help spread the word of this special place. It's not every day you can see a dream being built.

## LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL river clean up



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DON'T MISS THE HIRING ADS ON PAGE 16

## HELP WANTED >> from 16

finding ways to bond the team are more important."

Sime primarily works with small to medium-size businesses. Some are offering referral bonuses for employees to make qualified referrals. Others are offering sign-on bonuses – some for all positions, and some for really key positions that are core to the business or need special skills and training.

### TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

"For employers, find the right balance of getting the bottom line you want and maintaining happy employees," recommended Kulas. "With a tight job market, employees and job seekers have the upper hand in negotiation, so make sure you're treating your employees the way they want to be treated. If you can create a great work culture, you have a leg up on others. Also, don't be afraid to change what you're doing and find uncommon solutions. The world changes and you need to adapt."

"I wish there was a silver bullet or a top three list of things to do, but there isn't," said Sime. "Main tips, however, are to actually live and create a healthy workplace for people. Treat your employees as you want your children to be treated when they venture out into the work world. We spend one-third of our life at work, so employers should focus on employee well-being overall – helping employees to be successful people in the world will pay dividends at work with productivity, loyalty, happiness and engagement. This benefits the company, the employee and the community at large. While creating this intentional and healthy culture takes time and effort, this attracts and retains people better than any hiring bonus."



### TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

"For employees, the past few years have made many people rethink the type of job they want," remarked Kulas. "While this means you should also be thinking of the type of work you want to do, job loyalty means more than ever. You will be ap-

“

For over 10 years I've heard employers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance."

Chad Kulas

preciated if you stay at your current job, and the grass isn't always greener elsewhere. While you should look for better fits, don't just leave because you think you can find a slightly better spot.

"Think about the future of that particular job. What does it look like in 10 years? Twenty? Can you do it for the rest of your working life? Will a machine replace it?"

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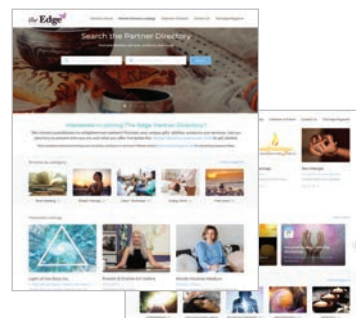
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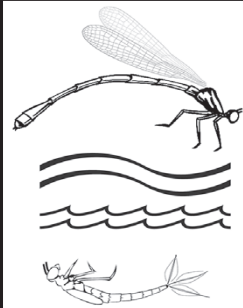
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# HELP WANTED: *Tips on how to keep and maintain staff*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

It's been called the Great Resignation, the Big Quit and the Great Reshuffle.

Resignation rates across the United States have remained high since COVID-19 hit in the spring of 2020.

Businesses are struggling to find people to fill positions at all levels and departments with qualified staff who will be reliable and show up.

"If you are an employer struggling to find workers, ask yourself what you could be doing different," advised Midway Area Chamber of Commerce and south Minneapolis resident Chad Kulas. "Can you look at other job boards? Ask different people if they know anyone? Have you consid-

ered hiring people with disabilities? What incentives can you offer that will last? Culture has become a very important priority to attract and maintain employees. What are you doing to make sure you have a great culture?"

"Employees want flexibility, good pay and benefits," pointed out Kara Sime of Your HR Navigator. "In addition, I see employees ask about and expect a positive work environment, more than in the past."

Current job openings are offering more incentives and many are focusing on flexibility, Kulas pointed out. "The ability to work remotely is now very common and seen by many as a perk for applying. I've also seen unlimited PTO, though I've also heard employees who

have it oftentimes take less days off."

He added, "Flexibility is the biggest thing – and actually was even before the pandemic. For over 10 years I've heard employers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance. Employees really value time off and the flexibility to get the job done when it fits them best. If they need to take their kid or aging parent to a doctor's appointment, they want a boss who understands they can work earlier or later that day."

"While this trend has been going on for years, the pandemic certainly made it bigger. Now if your kid is sick or you or a family member was COVID-exposed, employers need to understand you may need to alter your schedule on the fly."

While more employees want to be remote or have more work flexibility to be remote more often, more employers are pulling people back into the office, observed Sime. "So, there is going to be a disconnect here at some point. And, in my opinion from 25 plus years of professional experience, I think our pendulum had to swing way over to remote work because of COVID-19, but it swung so far to one side it has to swing back to a middle ground where some live and in-person work is needed. It is true that there just are some things that need to be done in-person or are more effective live where non-verbals can be seen and accounted for in the conversation."

"In addition, as human beings, we have a physical need to be with and interact with other humans, so I can see that employers who stay with remote workers are going to have to get very creative with the structure and plan new interactions and ways of connecting with the other



“

Employees want flexibility, good pay, and benefits.”

Kara Sime

humans in the workplace.”

To draw people in, some businesses are offering incentives for those who are there in person.

"They might offer free food and drink, or games like ping pong, pool, darts. These ideas were all popularized

by tech firms in Silicon Valley years ago," remarked Kulas. "I'm also seeing more opportunities for team bonding; this is becoming more important when some employees never or rarely see their coworkers. I've witnessed many times two people meeting for the first time even though they work for the same company and have for months or even years. With employees more scattered and working at home,

HELP WANTED >> 15

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