

SOUTHWEST Connector

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RESIDENTS SPEAK: NO CITY PROJECT AT ROOF DEPOT SITE

Indigenous people and allies rally around basic rights, reducing pollution and illness in city's most diverse neighborhood

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

For the Indigenous people and allies living in south Minneapolis, the Roof Depot conflict is an issue of life or death. And they can back it up with data.

Their decade-long fight to stop a city-run expansion of its truck training facility continued with a recent site occupation, protests at city hall and gatherings at the State Capitol in late February and March 2023.

"The community is tired of being a sacrificial zone," said Little Earth resident Cassie Holmes. Her son, Trinidad Flores, died at age 16 from a heart problem she attributes to the high levels of pollution in the area. It includes arsenic and lead, as well as other airborne pollutants from Interstate 94, Hiawatha Ave./Highway 55, Smith Foundry and Bituminous Roadways. Her best friend's daughter also died of a heart issue.

The area has high levels of asthma and heart disease. Studies have shown that the pollution also gathers over South High School just three blocks directly south of the Roof Depot site, affecting all of the students and staff there each day. Teenagers from throughout Corcoran, Longfellow and Seward attend South High.

The Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors' (MUID) 25 orga-



"You're talking about our children breathing. You're talking about our children living past 25 and not having heart issues that we don't understand where they got them. It's our future and our children," said Jolene Jones on Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the Roof Depot site. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



'LISTENNN' –THE MOVEMENT NEVER STOPS

KingDemetrius Pendleton's photos from front lines of social justice movement featured at The Third Place Gallery, GF Square

By **Jill Boogren**

Anyone attending a protest or march for justice in the Twin Cities over these past few years has undoubtedly heard a call carry over the crowd: "Listennn!" It's a sure bet KingDemetrius Pendleton is there. An award-winning independent journalist and photographer with Listen Media USA, he's been on the front lines of most demonstrations for about seven years, live-streaming events and documenting people and moments through

photographs. Some of these are on display in The Third Place Gallery (3730 Chicago Ave.) studio of renowned Minneapolis street photographer Wing Young Huie.

Called "The Movement Never Stops," the exhibition and accompanying book is a collection of Pendleton's images from countless gatherings with family and community members seeking justice for Minnesotans killed or impacted by violence. The photographs are at turns raw, beautiful and painful – and offer perhaps the most comprehensive body of work surrounding the local Black Lives Matter movement to date.

As Pendleton's artist statement reads: "The images I capture give voice to the voiceless. I focus on the social justice movement documenting the powerful words and actions of the people, so they won't be erased from memory."

Pendleton came to this profession later in life, a direction moved, sadly, by tragedy. His daughter, Brandy Ann

Banks-Sutta, was killed by a drunk driver in 2013 at the age of 21. Determined to fight for justice, Pendleton began live-streaming events. When Jamar Clark was killed by police officers in 2015, he saw firsthand how readily a false narrative was spun by authorities and reported on by the media. He recalled a young child recounting what he saw happen to Clark.

"A lotta times we ignore our children's cry," said Pendleton. "This young child was so convincing, and not only that, he knew exactly what he was sayin'. He described all the details and everything." But according to Pendleton, the child's mother began receiving threats if her son talked again.

As Pendleton became more and more of a fixture in the movement, he said he saw a pattern in coverage by the mainstream media.

"All these things was happening, and every time the news would say somethin' it would be



By **J.D. Fratzke**
SAVORING THE 612



GET RHYTHM

The Norwegians have a word, friluftsliv, for the practice of embracing a life outdoors as a bulwark against the inevitable soul-crushing doldrums of a long, dark winter in a Northern climate. I wouldn't quite call friluftsliv the opposite of hygge – the Scandinavian term for the coziness one tries to create in one's home during the same kinds of long, dark winters – but they certainly don't rock the same vibe. If hygge is the tender aunt who greets you at the door with a cup of hot, spiced tea, a woolen throw and fleece-lined slippers, friluftsliv is the obnoxious fit uncle who is outside chopping wood for the sauna after he rode his Fat Bike to a trailhead on the river and crushed a nine-mile loop in his showshoes – and when he comes inside with an armload of split oak – is going to ask why you didn't join him.

While the two don't have to be mutually exclusive, both practices typically gravitate toward one personality type or another. Everyone has the friend or handful of friends who have their skiing and snowboarding vacations dialed out years in advance and can't wait for the first November snowfall to gnarl traffic and glaci-ate driveways, so long as their Telemarks are waxed and the NO HIKING signs are clearly marked on all woodland trailheads between Grand Marais and Lanesboro. We also have the friends with four different Pinterest accounts who keep asking us what we're currently reading and whether or not it would be a good selection for next



Award-winning independent journalist and photographer KingDemetrius Pendleton poses inside Wing Young Huie's The Third Place Gallery at 3730 Chicago Ave., where his exhibition "The Movement Never Stops" is on display. The exhibition includes photographs Pendleton has taken from the front lines of the social justice movement in the Twin Cities over the past seven years. (Photo by Jill Boogren)



AN URBAN FARM INSTEAD?

The East Phillips Indoor Urban Farm project would repurpose the existing 230,000-square-foot former Sears warehouse built in 1947.

The indoor farm at the 7.5-acre site would produce organic aquaponic grown fish and produce. It would provide very affordable family housing along with free housing for people experiencing homelessness with the promise of food, jobs and safety. The project would also include one of the largest solar arrays in the state on the roof; a world café, coffee shop and food market with a gallery to display and sell neighborhood artisans' works all run by local youth; a bike shop on the Midtown Greenway; and space for many of the burned out Lake St. businesses resulting from the murder of George Floyd.

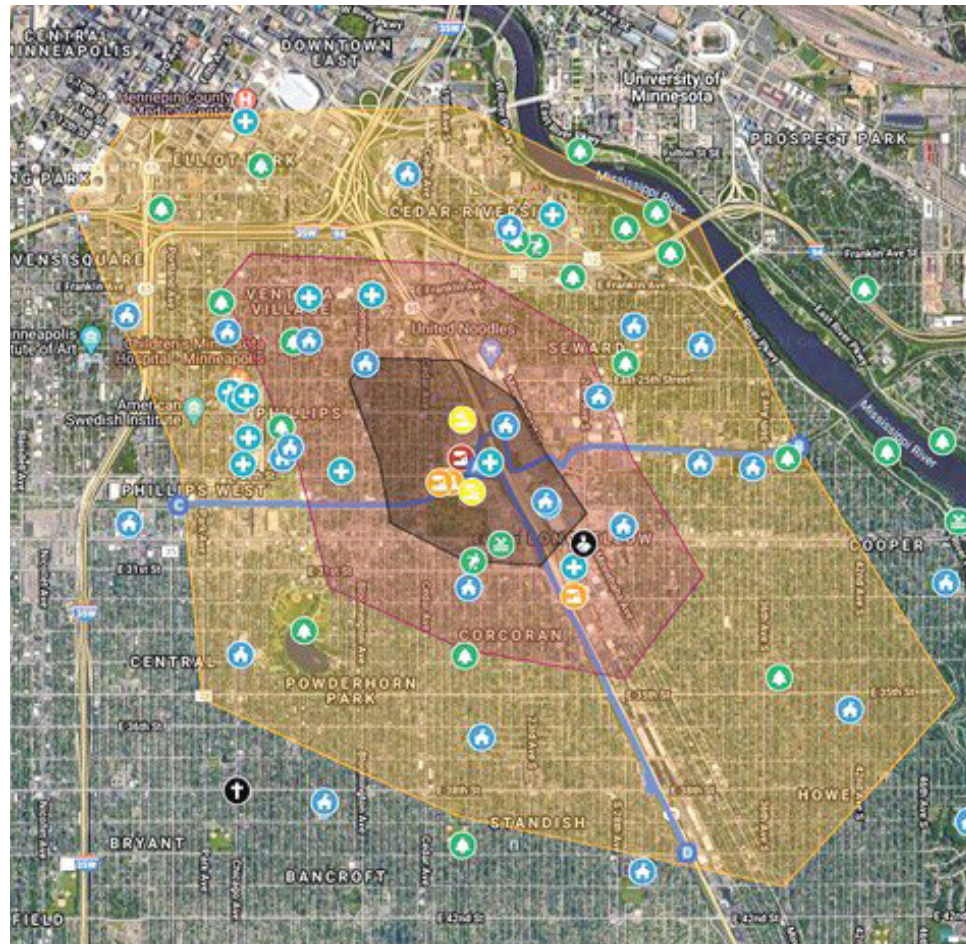
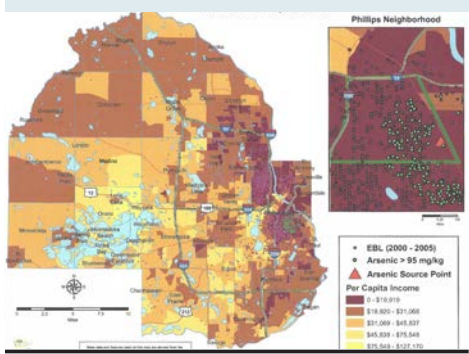
The project meets every goal of the South Side Green Zone and is in the South Minneapolis Opportunity Zone. It is also supported by the wide range of diverse organizations in the neighborhood that is 83% people of color.



OTHER PUBLIC WORKS SITES: NORTH-EAST, COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, 394 BRIDGE

The city's plan is to demolish the iconic Sears warehouse, and many are worried it will release arsenic in the air that is currently encapsulated beneath the building. It would be replaced by a series of sheds for 400 commercial city vehicles (most of them diesel), a hot asphalt storage facility, diesel-fueling station, and multi-story parking ramp for the 400 employee vehicles that would be coming and going twice a day. They would also store manhole covers, sewer pipes, and sand-salt mix. No water would be treated on the site; that is done at 4500 Reservoir Blvd. in Columbia Heights.

The city's current water maintenance facility, known as the East Water Yard, is located on 2.4 acres in Ward 3 at Hennepin Ave. E. and 5th Ave. N. It dates back 120 years and is the hub for maintaining the city's 1,000 miles of water mains, 16,000 valves, and street holes, and 8,000 hydrants. A whistleblower leaked a city-generated report showing that it would be cheaper to expand the building there than the Roof Depot site. It is located in an industrial area near 35W. The city also stores items near and under the 394 bridge, a site that is over four times the size of the Roof Depot location.



This map illustrates the pollution effect from the existing businesses near the Roof Depot site in the Arsenic Triangle. Neighbors say the cumulative effect of Smith Foundry, Bituminous Roadways, and the city's public works facility, along with diesel truck traffic from Hiawatha Ave. and Interstates 35W and 94 is too much. View full graphic at www.eastphillipsneighborhoodinstitute.org.

RESIDENTS SPEAK

nizations collectively oppose the Hiawatha Expansion Project. "The membership of MUID believes there are better community-led, green initiatives to be pursued that will better mitigate the negative social determinants of health caused by environmental racism," they wrote in a letter to the city. "American Indian people in the Phillips Neighborhood suffer from the poorest health outcomes and highest rate of health disparities in the state of Minnesota."

"Minneapolis is committing environmental racism that will further the genocide of Indigenous people and community members of south Minneapolis," said Rachel Thunder at a press conference at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 at the Roof Depot site (named Nenoocaasi Camp by protesters). Thunder is a member of the Plains Cree, part of the American Indian Movement (AIM), a Little Earth Protector, and a community member of south Minneapolis. On Feb. 22, she said, "We are standing together united and in solidarity to say we do not want the city to demolish the Roof Depot. We want to have control of the site to have an environmentally-friendly food center to feed our people and boost our economy."

Marisa Miakonda Cummings stated, "We have suffered. We suffer from the effects of institutional and generational trauma and we live in this every day. Some times it feels like we are being left again to die.... This is the definition of institutional genocide." She said they are standing up "because it is the right thing to do." She added, "We're not asking for anything outside of basic human rights."

The community's plan for the 7.5-acre site includes an indoor urban farm, aquaponics, solar array, very affordable housing, bike shop, and other small businesses. It would reuse the Roof Depot building and leave the arsenic-laden soil dating to the former pesticide plant encapsulated underneath.

"The Roof Depot is the heart of the Green Zone," observed Robert Lilligren, who is a third generation self-described urban Indian, 36-year Phillips resident, White Earth member, and former city council member. He stated that he was part of the robust citizen input that resulted in the plan for the East Phillips In-

door Urban Farm, beginning in 2014. "The city has never really been interested in the plan. ... The city says things like trust and reconciliation are important. Putting them into action is required. Here is an opportunity to put those beliefs into action in a more environmentally-friendly, community-driven way."

The city is proposing to increase the amount of vehicle traffic on the roads around the Roof Depot site, which include Hiawatha, Cedar, 26th and 28th (near the Midtown Greenway crossing) by 67 percent. Currently, a total of 1,100-1,300 heavy commercial vehicles travel a day on Hiawatha, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation T9 Urban Freight Study in 2018. The city's proposal increases that to about 2,000.

Also spewing pollution in the air in that area, dubbed the Arsenic Triangle, is Bituminous Roadways and the Smith Foundry, two businesses that have permits that grandfather them in and have purchased pollution offsets from other businesses in the city to continue to exist in East Phillips. Recognizing the high level of pollution already there, in 2008, the state government passed the Clark-Berglund Environmental Justice Law that prohibits additional pollution in the Arsenic Triangle around the Roof Depot site. Despite that bill, the city has continued with its plans to more than double its public works facility there.

A COMMUNITY AGAINST

Residents question why their elected officials and city staff have continued to push forward a plan that the community is against.

"The city of Minneapolis claims to listen to communities, but we have been systematically denied a voice," observed 25-year East Phillips resident Amy Pass, who has raised two children in the neighborhood. Her brother-in-law, who grew up in East Phillips two blocks away from the Roof Depot site, needed open heart surgery in his early 40s. "Other communities have asked to have the city water yard expansion project located in their space. Why is the city so desperately insistent that it be located in East Phillips? This is about racism and power. It's about keeping us in our place and making it clear that we can't have what we want."

HOMELESSNESS AND POOR HEALTH LINK

The connection between housing and homelessness is generally intuitive, but the strong link between health and homelessness is often overlooked. People who are homeless have higher rates of illness and die on average 12 years sooner than the general U.S. population.

Homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Living on the street or in crowded homeless shelters is extremely stressful and made worse by being exposed to communicable disease (e.g. TB, respiratory illnesses, flu, hepatitis, etc.), violence, malnutrition, and harmful weather exposure. Chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and asthma become worse because there is no safe place to store medications properly. Maintaining a healthy diet is difficult in soup kitchens and shelters as the meals are usually high in salt, sugars, and starch (making for cheap, filling meals but lacking nutritional content). Behavioral health issues such as depression, alcoholism, or other substance use disorders can develop and/or are made worse in such difficult situations, especially if there is no solution in sight. Numerous health conditions among people who are homeless are frequently a complex mix of serious physical, mental health, substance use, and social problems. ~ From the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, www.nhchc.org

COUNCIL CONSIDERS ACTIONS TO LIMIT CITIZEN INPUT

Following recent disruptions at city council meetings by Indigenous protesters and allies, City Council Vice President Linea Palmisano brought forth two items to add to the city's legislative agenda at the state capitol. One would clarify acceptable conduct at council meetings and the other increase penalties for protesters.

"We have had council members and their families threatened. We have had regulatory service workers have their tires slashed and guns drawn on them. We've had public works employees shot at. Harassment, intimidation and bullying is not OK. It is not part of anyone's job description and we owe it to all people serving the City of Minneapolis to do better," said Palmisano in her e-newsletter.

"It's very dangerous to conflate Black and Indigenous residents' genuine and justified fear about a harmful city-led project with right-wing violence. These amendments are a reactionary and retaliatory response to mass protests that we typically see from Republicans," countered Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley. "I'm disappointed to see the conservative city council majority adopting right-wing tactics. From Stop Cop City in Atlanta to Line 3 Water Protectors here in Minnesota, increased criminal penalties are being used as a tool of retribution."

HODAN SPONSORS HF 2093

On March 1, 2023, the House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee passed legislation to invest \$20 million into the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute for the East Phillips Indoor Urban Farm project.

The bill is authored by Rep. Hodan Hassan (DFL - Minneapolis). "The East Phillips neighborhood has been burdened with severe environmental racism and injustice for years, with high levels of pollution causing measurable adverse health effects to residents," said Rep. Hassan. "With a third of East Phillips residents living below the poverty line, the community is in great need of affordable housing, investment in jobs and infrastructure, and sustainable development. This legislation would provide the community the opportunity and resources to further negotiate with the City of Minneapolis on EPNI's plan to repurpose the Roof Depot into an urban farm complex, creating jobs, housing, and sustainable food sources. I am confident that an equitable and environmentally sound and sustainable agreement can be met, putting this investment to good use in the East Phillips neighborhood."

2 RESIDENTS SPEAK

The people of south Minneapolis have never supported the city's proposal for the public works project, and city council representatives have passed measures back and forth over the project. Some council members have flipped their votes, including Ward 8 Council President Andrea Jenkins who supported the EPNI plan last year. Little Earth resident Jolene Jones questions the narrative that the city held meetings with the community and asked for input on the Hiawatha Expansion project. While working at Little Earth, she learned about a meeting and attended it. No one else from her community was there. When she was told that the city had sent out notifications to Little Earth residents, she pushed back. After investigating the issue, staff told her that none had actually gone out.

"How do you miss a whole community? We get our water bills. We've got 220 households. How did you miss us?" she asked.

The neighborhood group, EPIC (East Phillips Improvement Coalition), hosted two large community meetings at East Phillips Park in November 2017 and September 2018 with approximately 250 community members at each. Votes were taken at both as to those favoring the city's plan or the community's indoor urban farm project. No one at either meeting voted in favor of any of the city plans.

Public input on the city-fashioned environmental assessment worksheet in March 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic was "unprecedented," according to city staff. Over 1,000 people submitted comments. Only two were in support of the city's plan. Indoor urban farm supporters point out that says something about the city's decision-making process when one of the widest margin of citizen comments in city history is ignored.

AN OCCUPATION FEB. 21

At a press conference at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the Roof Depot site, Thunder read out their list of demands (also available at www.defendthedepot.com):

- 1) Total relocation of the Hiawatha Expansion Project
- 2) Hand over control of Roof Depot to the community
- 3) Plans to remove Bituminous Roadways and Smith Foundry
- 4) Enact a moratorium on encampment evictions
- 5) Provide funding for peer support workers
- 6) Invest in pilot programs to shelter and services to the houseless community like the former navigation center
- 7) Provide funding for the community's vision for an indoor urban farm at the Roof Depot site

A statement from Defend the Depot pointed out that East Phillips is a neighborhood with over 70% residents of color and home to the Little Earth housing development, where 38 tribes come together.

According to a Wilder Foundation Study, Indigenous people make up 1% of Minnesota's adult population but a disproportionate 13% of the houseless population. A survey of a large encampment in Minneapolis in 2020 found that nearly half of the 282 people living there were Native. People who are homeless have higher rates of illness and die on average 12 years sooner than the general U.S. population, according to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and chronic medical conditions are a common cause of homelessness. Unhoused people are more likely to suffer from heart attack, hypertension, diabetes, HIV, hepatitis C, depression and substance use disorders.

Mike Forcia, a member of the American Indian Movement, pointed out that the 50th anniversary of Wounded Knee was on Feb. 27.

He stated, "We were always told to go through the process. There's always a pro-



After a Minneapolis Police Officer pushed a woman on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023, Little Earth resident Cassie Holmes decries the treatment of "an elder." View the video of the altercation and more photos at www.swconnector.com. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



Indoor urban farm supporters pose with Representative Hodan Hassan, who represents a portion of south Minneapolis, to celebrate the House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee passing legislation to invest \$20 million into the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute for the East Phillips Indoor Urban Farm project on March 1, 2023. (Photo submitted)

cess. That process is a systemically racist process set up to benefit them. It's not for us."

The city council approved an agreement labeled as a "compromise" in city documents, that would give three acres on the corner of the 7.5-acre property to the neighborhood for development.

"We don't want them to bring more pollution in. That's our main point," stressed Holmes, who serves on the East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI) board (www.eastphillipsneighborhoodinstitute.org) and the city's Southside Green Zone committee.

"Do we want to convince our people just for three acres and still have them poison us? No."

Jolene Jones agreed. "They can take their three acres and shove it because you're talking about our children breathing. You're talking about our children living past 25 and not having heart issues that we don't understand where they got them. It's our future and that is our children."

OCCUPATION BROKEN UP

Over a hundred Minneapolis Police Officers and 50 squads shut down an eight-block radius around the Roof Depot site on Tuesday evening, Feb. 21, 2023, at about 6:15 p.m., and forcibly removed Indigenous people and allies who had began a peaceful occupation of the site that morning at dawn.

Cedar between 24th and 28th, along with sections of 26th and 28th between Hiawatha and Cedar were blocked for more than two hours. Neither residents nor press were allowed within two blocks

of the site.

(Note: The Longfellow Nokomis Messenger/Southwest Connector arrived at the scene by 6:20 p.m. before the entire area had been blocked off with crime scene tape, and was the only media outlet at the Roof Depot fence. View video and photographs from the scene on the Messenger website, as well as Instagram and Facebook accounts. Other media, including Unicorn Riot and the Indigenous-led NDN Collective, were prevented from viewing what was occurring at the Roof Depot site, and remained at 27th and Cedar covering the gathering of protesters who were there.)

POLLUTION AFFECTS SOUTH HIGH, MULTIPLE OTHER SCHOOLS

"Our students deserve to be safe and healthy both in and outside of school, that's why we have organized with our communities/other unions and taken very clear, strong positions against the demolition of the Roof Depot and to shut down the HERC incinerator," said MFT59 President Greta Callahan.

"MPS will continue to implement procedures and systems to ensure quality indoor air inside all our buildings," said MPS spokesperson Crystal Lugo-Beach of the office of communications. "MPS has also recently upgraded building ventilation and filtration systems that were implemented as part of COVID-19 protocols." She directed people to the Environmental Health & Safety section of the district website for more details.

Thunder, who was arrested with seven others at the site for trespassing and released later that night, stated, "There is no trespassing on stolen land." She was treated on Feb. 22 for a knee injury she said she received when a police officer forced her into the squad car she was stepping into.

A request to the mayor's office and to the Minneapolis Police Department on the cost of deploying over 100 officers to protests and encampments was not answered. As of press time, an open data request to the city submitted on Feb. 24 had not been filled.


Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center President/CEO Marisa Miakonda Cummings read a letter on behalf of the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) at a Tuesday, Feb. 22 press conference. "MUID formally denounces the militaristic actions taken by the Minneapolis Police Department on the evening of Feb. 21, 2023, to dismantle a peaceful and ceremonial occupation of the Roof Depot site.... Our membership believes that such community-led civic actions are directly protected by the United States Constitution Bill of Rights regarding the right to peaceful assembly and the right for citizens to petition their government." MUID collectively opposes the Hiawatha Expansion Project.

"Asking the Indigenous people in my neighborhood to compromise with the city is asking them to repeat the same compromises that have left them impoverished, sick, and oppressed for centuries. East Phillips has been given no reason to trust the city. In fact, we have a long history of being lied to. (Go back and read the history of the garbage burner the city wanted to locate here.) I don't see why we should trust them with a new agreement now," said Pass.

"We are slowly dying. We are slowly being killed," said Holmes. "It's affecting our kids. It's affecting generations to come."


Planning travel?

THINK MEASLES



- Bring back only memories, help prevent the spread of measles.
- Talk with your doctor about what immunizations you and your family need before traveling, including the MMR vaccine.
- Call your doctor if anyone gets a fever and rash within 3 weeks of returning from your trip. Describe where you traveled.

Learn more at:
www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/measles/basics.html



THE JOY OF UNCLOGGING STORM DRAINS

Adopting a drain is an easy way to reduce water pollution and make a difference.

I have some big news to announce. We have a new addition to our family. His name is Harold Green, and he is a storm drain at the southwest corner of 27th Street and Dupont Avenue South in Minneapolis. We adopted our drain on Feb. 26, and couldn't be happier.



By **Eric Ortiz**

The journey began with a Sunday morning email from a neighbor in a neighborhood block club.

"The forecast calls for rain tomorrow which, with the recent snow blocking the storm drains, means the roads will be giant puddles. If you are able/willing to shovel out the storm drain in front of your house (or your neighbor's house), it will benefit us all. If you're not sure where the nearest storm drain is: <https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org/>."

Adoption is a big responsibility. We don't take it lightly. So we did our due diligence.

Did you know Minnesota is one of six states in the United States that participates in the Adopt-a-Drain program (the others are Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Louisiana and Washington)? The program started in St. Paul in 2014, and today is the biggest adopt-a-drain effort in the country with over 10,700 adopters across Minnesota. They have adopted over 19,500 drains



Cal Ortiz with Harold Green, the storm drain at the southwest corner of 27th Street and Dupont Ave. South. (Photo by Eric Ortiz)

and collected over 565,000 pounds of debris. In Minneapolis alone, volunteers care for 6,000 of the adopted drains. The city is responsible for another 40,000.

Storm drains flow directly into our local lakes, rivers and wetlands, and act as a channel for trash and organic pollutants. With the Adopt-a-Drain program, residents can adopt a storm drain, and keep it clear of trash, leaves, and other debris to prevent water pollution.

In the winter, the debris collection process includes snow and ice. When it rains and snow melts, that water needs to go down the drain. When storm drains are clogged, the Land of 10,000 Lakes adds a few more lakes across the city. These lakes can create a big mess on streets and cause flooding. That's why it's important to keep

the drains clear.

We were sold. The map showed a drain was available on our block. We signed up, created an account and claimed our storm drain. Harold Green, aka Mr. Green, was part of our family.

It was time to meet him. This proved to be more challenging than adopting a drain. Weeks of snow had created a small mountain of ice. Based on the drain locator map, we only knew the general vicinity where

Harold was located on the corner of 27th and Dupont. I got our shovels and ice scraper and went to work with my 8-year-old son. Hours later, as afternoon turned to night, the corner looked cleaner, but there was no sight of our adopted drain.

It was time to call it a day. Our first meeting with Harold would have to wait.

Another neighbor in the block club shared a great suggestion in the same block email thread. In the past, her husband had used Google Maps satellite mode to find the exact location of a drain. Bingo. I pulled up Google Street View and pinpointed where the drain was located. It was to the left of a lamppost, right off the sidewalk, on the street, buried beneath ice at

least two feet from the curb and two feet deep.

This job was going to require more than an ice scraper and shovels. We went to the hardware store to get a pickaxe. Many other people had the same idea, and the store was sold out. We drove to another store and got one.

We returned to work and chipped away at the ice mountain, breaking up the ice and shoveling it away. This started to feel like rolling a boulder up a hill. But little by little, we made progress. After a few hours of swinging the pickaxe and shoveling away a few pounds of ice, we heard a glorious clank. I looked down and saw a tiny hole in the ground. It was the drain. You would have thought we had struck gold.

We cleared away all of the snow and ice covering the drain. Water started going down it. The sound and sight of water going down an unclogged drain is a beautiful thing. Many people agree. There's even a TikTok account called Unclogging Drains that shows videos of people unclogging drains worldwide. It has 1.7 million followers.

Now, I am one proud pop. I drive by our drain daily to see how Harold is doing. My wife and kids think I'm nuts. But I am committed to keeping our drain clean to protect our water.

This is the power of community. This is the power of collective action. It adds up to make a difference.

If you'd like to adopt a drain and track the impact you're making with other volunteers, go to mn.adopt-a-drain.org.



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

Support the newspaper. Support the businesses who advertise. TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN THE CONNECTOR.

AWARENESS

STORIES & JOURNEYS

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



By **Donald L. Hammen**

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.

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. Tesha 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 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.

SOUTHWEST Connector

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AN OPEN LETTER TO WARD 11 COUNCIL MEMBER



Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski,

As neighbors in the Ward 11 communities you represent, we have great concerns about your actions on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2023.

First, you repeatedly voted against measures to protect Little Earth and other impacted neighbors in the East Phillips communities from the environmentally hazardous demolition of the Roof Depot building. Then, you followed up these harmful votes by filing a police report against the neighbors who expressed anger and disappointment at your votes. You did not use your role and access to power to help these community members facilitate a conversation with the Mayor or other public officials who could help them. You used your power and privilege to insist that those in attendance be punished for their reactions to your harm. Then you went to the media about it, as the Star Tribune article from Feb. 24, 2023 shows. This is how you show up as an elected official.

This way of holding space for community members is vastly different from the community care and community safety that we discussed at the conversation that you attended with staff on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023 hosted by Ward Eleven Allied Voices for Equity (WEAVE). This event, created by and for Ward 11 neighbors, highlighted how relationships are key for creating trust and healing in our communities. Not everyone there was in agreement about a vision for our city, but we all were committed to hearing one another and addressing the divides in our city together.

Had you chosen to bring forth some of the ideas of right relationship and generative conflict that were discussed at WEAVE's event, you may have acted by reaching out to your colleagues on the council who represent the impacted communities or leaders of EPNI and sharing your concerns about the language or behavior that caused you to feel threatened.

Perhaps you all could have used restorative practices to heal the broken relationship and distrust that is currently present in your interactions. Your choice to involve police continues the breakdown of relationship and distrust in our elected officials. We don't need more barriers between us. Yet you repeatedly choose barriers and the erasure of groups and communities that do not align with your viewpoints.

During your campaign and tenure, the divisions in our city have widened, and



Protesters attended the Feb. 23 city council meeting to show their support for the community plan for the Roof Depot site, many stood in the hallways when the city council limited how many could be in the chambers. There was no public comment during the meetings, 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)

distrust of city officials has heightened. Many in Ward 11 were impacted by the divisive mailers that flooded our mailboxes during the campaign in 2021, and left us feeling as though our voices and concerns were not valued in this community. Since taking office, you have failed to take opportunities to expand and move forward on assurances that you made during your campaign to promote equity and healing in the city of Minneapolis. You have not been transparent about your voting record and the reasoning behind your votes. Some of your colleagues share detailed reports in their constituent emails of what is happening at council and the votes they take and why. As the neighbors you represent, we deserve to know how you are showing up to vote and whose values and vision of Minneapolis you are upholding.

As your neighbors, we are signing on to this letter to demand that you shift your current path of harm, divisiveness, ambiguity and fear to one of right relationship, healing, clarity and repair. We will be watching your votes and actions as both a representative and candidate, and expect you to be transparent, honest, and willing to move through discomfort without causing additional harm to already marginalized communities in Minneapolis. With the Ward 11 caucus coming up and several of us signed up as delegates, we will be paying close attention to whether your actions are in alignment with our endorsement. Here are three actionable items that you can take towards healing and repairing

relationships in our ward and city:

1. SHOW YOUR WORK.

Your newsletter with city news does not give Ward 11 neighbors the information we deserve about how you represent us. Your constituents need to know how you are voting to determine whose interests you are promoting at city hall. Your newsletter should offer a weekly record of your votes, and information about how you plan to vote on upcoming issues and why.

2. SHOW YOUR LEARNING.

On Feb. 8, 2023, you attended the Ward Eleven Allied Voices for Equity (WEAVE) Conversation on Community Care and Community Safety. This event was attended by other neighbors and community members who are committed to having the deep discussions necessary to promote healing in our city. What did you take away from this meeting? You did not mention the meeting in your newsletter or share feedback with the organizers. Going forward, we expect that when you take part in a meeting, conference or other training that you share with your constituents what you learned, and how it will impact your work representing our community and city.

3. SHOW YOUR VALUES.

During your campaign and in emails to constituents you have described yourself as a connector and bridge. Your actions on Feb. 23, 2023, show that when those

harmful by your decisions express anger and outrage, you walked out of the room and closed the door behind you. Filing a police report against Indigenous activists from a marginalized community that is system-involved at disproportionate rates is not in alignment with the actions of someone who values connection and care. Living into the values you proclaim requires accountability and right relationship with community.

Clearly, this relationship is damaged. Going forward, we ask that you maintain all relationships equally, both with your constituents and other city communities affected by your votes in council. We ask that you are honest about your impacts, and right-size these with the discomfort you face. Acknowledge the power in your role, and the opportunities that you have to be a two-way connector and bridge across divides – not a drawbridge that goes up and down depending on who the community is on the other side.

We promise to continue to pay attention and act to help you align the way you represent Ward 11 with a fair and just vision for all of Minneapolis,

Ward 11 constituents and community members:

Rebecca Donley, Hale
Anne E Wagemaker, Hale
Theresa Dolata, Windom
Kate Vickery, Hale
Maggie Anderson, Northrop
Henry Bishop, Wenonah
Virginia Zaunbrecher, Hale
Catherine Iloff, Wenonah
Katharine Krueger, Windom
Aneesa Parks, Hale
Maggie Rittenhouse, Tangletown
Lindsay Bacher, Tangletown
Byron Richard, Tangletown
Sharon Thomas, Hale
Molly Leutz, Tangletown
Amy Kennedy, Page
Joan Flaaten, Page
Lauren Mathews, Page
Robert Reed, Northrop
Noelle, Northrop
Gregory King, Hale
Elizabeth Brophey, Wenonah
Stefanie Hollmichel, Wenonah
Dirk Nicholson, Tangletown
Rita Ayers, Tangletown
James Weber, Keewaydin
Karn Anderson, Tangletown



Learn more about WEAVE – Ward Eleven Allied Voices for Equity – on their Facebook page.

CITY BRIEFS

CEDAR ISLE PARK PLAN

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has released a new plan for the Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles and surrounding parkland; Dean Parkway; Kenilworth Channel; and a portion of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The plan will guide how the parkland in the area will be operated, maintained, and improved over the next 30 years. Park board staff are reviewing comments made by citizens, and determining any changes they might recommend. The park board will likely review a final plan for approval in late April.

PICA HEAD START EXPANSION

The City Planning Commission has reviewed and approved plans for the Parent In Community Action's (PICS) Education and Training Center project at 4225 3rd Ave. in the Regina Neighborhood across from the Temple Israel Memorial Park Cemetery. PICA is proposing to demolish most of the original one-story Regina convent building on the southwest corner of the lot and to build a new two-story building in its place. The first floor will have early childhood classrooms, administrative offices, and a multi-

use activity space. The second floor will have training and meeting rooms for early childhood educator training. The project would add a new surface parking lot near the new building at the south edge of the site with 18 parking spaces.

SEVEN POINTS CLEAN-UP FUNDS

In February, Hennepin County awarded \$163,033 to the City of Minneapolis to assist Doran Companies with soil cleanup and vapor mitigation costs for their new mixed-use commercial and residential building they plan to build at 3003 Hennepin Ave. According to a county report, petroleum contaminated soil, soil vapor contamination from petroleum and solvents, and asbestos-containing materials are present on the site.

ROOMING HOUSE ON LYNDALE

The Planning Commission has approved Hennepin County's plan to convert the former Metro Inn Motel at 5637 Lyndale Ave. S. into a 39-room single room occupancy rental property. The inn was purchased by the Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HCHRA) to house individuals experiencing homelessness during the pandemic with the intention of converting it to permanent housing units in the future. Work on the site is scheduled to be completed by July 2023.

COMMISSION ON POLICE OVERSIGHT

People are being sought to serve on the new Community Commission on Police Oversight. The new 15-member commission will have one member for each ward appointed by city council members and two appointed by the mayor. Members will serve on panels to review investigations of police misconduct and meet as a group to discuss police policy. The application deadline is March 20. People can apply and find more information at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/boards-and-commissions/current-openings/>.

REPUBLICAN PARTY CONVENTIONS

The Minnesota GOP Congressional District 5 2023 Convention has been scheduled for April 22, at 10 a.m. at the Crystal VFW #494, 5222 Bass Lake Rd. in Crystal. The more local Senate District 63 convention will be on March 25, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at Burroughs Community School, 1601 W. 50th St.

DFL CAUCUSES AND CONVENTIONS

The Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) held ward level caucuses for Ward 12 and 13 on March 14. Ward conventions for each ward will meet in April and May as follows: Ward 7 on May 21 online, Ward 8 on May 20 online; Ward 10 on May 13 in-person, location yet to be determined;

Ward 11 on May 21 online; Ward 12 on April 29 at Roosevelt High School; Ward 13 on April 1 at Armatage Park. See <https://minneapolisdf.org> for more information. Business to be conducted at the ward convention includes: endorsing a candidate for city council and electing two ward representatives to join the Minneapolis DFL Central Committee.

2023 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE

People are invited to participate in the city's annual Community Connections Conference that will be held Saturday, June 10, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. It is a free event.

MARKETS IN THE PARK

The Park Board plans to host "markets" this summer where local vendors can display and sell handcrafted items. The markets that will be held at five parks including at Lake Harriet on Sundays, 2:30-6:30 p.m. from June 4 - Aug. 27 near the bandshell. The initiative is intended to help "local entrepreneurs, producers and artists share their goods and services and grow their business ventures."



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

10 GUIDELINES FOR A STRONG, LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

By **Susan Schaefer**
UNDER THE HOOD



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 highjacked 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.



Original collage by Susan Schaefer

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 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

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

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, healthier 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 increasingly disconnects us from family, friends, neighbors, and social structures, while lessening our social capital, which depletes both



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6 GUIDELINES

individual and community well-being. Fortunately, Minnesotans' inherent activism puts us in a different category, but we cannot take for 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.

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TWO ENTREPRENEURS CONNECT, LAUNCH SPACE FOR MUSIC

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Two neighborhood musical entrepreneurs are hosting a showcase for teens on Friday, March 24, 5-7p.m. at Jones Coffee (5008 Xerxes Ave. S. location).

What is a "neighborhood entrepreneur?" For me, it's a small business owner who actually has a brick-and-mortar building in the neighborhood. A business where most of the customers and clientele literally walk to the place from their homes in the neighborhood.

MEET BRAD MCLENMORE & ANTHONY JONES

Just arriving in Minnesota, Brad McLemore was carrying furniture into his new Minneapolis home when he started getting calls from his hometown of Dallas. "Dude, are you all right?"

He recalled, "It was the day the bridge fell. 2008." Within months, McLemore had a job teaching at the Linden Hills House of Music, and he was soon asked to take on the role of general manager there. In 2009, he bought the House of Music.

Around that time, Anthony Jones was working part-time in the 43rd Street Dunn Brothers while playing in his full-time touring rock band, The Push. One summer night, in the parking lot behind House of Music in what is now the Rosalia patio, Jones sang and played acoustic guitar on the Linden Hills Live stage that McLemore ran once a month in the summers.

McLemore expanded in 2010, opening a second site on the corner of Washburn and 50th. Jones quit touring, and went from part-time barista to manager. "I had a vision," he says, "and, in 2014, at the age of 23, I started looking for a coffee shop to buy."



Anthony Jones of Jones Coffee partners with Brad McLemore of House of Music on music shows.

Turns out his old boss wanted to sell, so Jones bought both of his Dunn Brothers locations, in Linden Hills and Fulton.

Fast forward – business flourished. McLemore continued to volunteer in the neighborhood, hosting and producing teen stages at outdoor events. He also saw a group of his students win Best Teen Band at The Minnesota State Fair. Jones started hosting Open Mic Nights in his coffee shop, and both teens and accomplished players started showing up to play. [Author's note: I actually played acoustic guitar in public for my very first time at one of Anthony's Open Mic Nights.]

And then COVID-19 hit. Both businesses immediately saw their revenue

drop in half.

As McLemore put it, "The late and very kind Don Hawkinson let me out of my lease, so I could close the Linden Hills location, and weather the downturn in revenue." Jones said that after making it through COVID-19, he was determined to purchase the two shops for his own. House of Music survived, and Jones Coffee was born.

And they were right around the corner from each other. "It was a perfect fit," Anthony says. "My whole reason for opening a coffee shop was to bring cool people together. You know... a community of artists and creatives and neighborhood people that like what we're about – all while showcasing coffee in its purest form."

"Plus, I'm there every day before I teach" McLemore adds. "So, eventually the music thing was bound to happen."

TELL ME ABOUT THE MARCH 24 SHOW, BRAD

"Well, one cool thing for me is that these are all my actual students. Most House of Music events have students from several teachers. This is a night with just six of my own – ranging from 14 years old to over 60."

60? – "Yep. Retired guy, music lover, music appreciator. Now he's taking lessons."

What's not to like? It's all acoustic; and each person will play two to four songs, mostly covers.

"This is the beginning," Jones says. "We're planning on having a regular thing. It will be a supportive place to play, a place for people of our vibe, and for both aspiring and accomplished musicians. Let's see how fast it takes off."

McLemore and Jones both agreed that this is the first year since COVID-19 that they've had a chance to get healthy again.

"Summer camps are back," says McLemore. "And they are booking up earlier and earlier." Target age range for these four-day, three-hour/day intensives (each of which end in a "bar gig" at the Driftwood Char Bar at 4415 Nicollet Ave.) is 10-15 years. "But that's not firm," Brad says. "Last year I had three nine-year-old drummers, and all of them were great!"

Jones hopes to remodel soon, and he also wants to get this music thing going.

Word is, there may be an acoustic night there on March 30 – with Anthony himself, Alanna Snortland, and yours truly.



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



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PLAN AIMS FOR ZERO-WASTE FUTURE

Decrease in waste to come from composting food waste, recycling, and waste reduction

By **Cam Gordon**

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners wants to cut waste. And according to a recent county report there is roughly 2.8 trillion pounds of waste produced in the county every year. That is over 8,000 tons produced each day, totaling 1.3 million tons, or enough to fill the downtown baseball stadium 11 times, each year.

The county wants to change that and, in February, released the Hennepin County Zero Waste Plan that is expected to go to the board for approval in April.

The Zero Waste Plan builds on the county's Climate Action Plan and sets the commitment of "achieving a zero-waste future."

"In 2019, I led much of the work that eventually became the county's Climate Action Plan – a living policy that we are continually iterating on to set more aggressive goals towards a more resilient and sustainable future," said District 3 Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Green, who represents southwest Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

"One element of the draft Zero Waste Plan that most excites me is the intentional way my colleagues, staff leadership, and I continue to take on the biggest issues of our generation by layering supportive policies on top of each other," Green said, "to create real, transformational change in infrastructure and community practice that offer so much promise for the generations to come."

The Zero Waste Plan defines a zero-waste future as "a waste management system where all materials are designed to become resources for others to use. One that systematically avoids and eliminates the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserves and recovers all resources, and does not burn or bury them." The plan indicates that success will be "divert-

ing 90% or more of all discarded materials from landfills, incinerators, and the environment."

In 2021, according to the plan, the residents and businesses of Hennepin County only recycled or composted about 39% or 507,000 tons and the remaining 793,000 tons was either burned or buried. That year, 34% of the 1.3 million tons went to landfills and 27% was burned at the county's downtown Minneapolis garbage incinerator, also called the Hennepin Energy Recover Center (HERC).

“

The HERC emits more greenhouse gas than a coal-based power plant."

Frank Hornstein



State law requires Hennepin County to prepare a solid waste management plan every six years to implement the state's plan for the metropolitan area and reach the state's goal of diverting 75% of its waste by 2030.

Development of the county's next solid waste management plan will begin in 2023 for adoption in 2024. The county will use the solid waste management planning process to further prioritize and implement the Zero Waste Plan over the next six years.

The Zero Waste Plan aims to create a materials management system that reduces racial disparities, adopt policies that accelerate the transition to a zero-waste, expand county waste education, grants, and programs, and implement new programs to reduce waste and support reuse.

Work on it started in January of 2022. "To create this draft plan, the county was part of more than 500 conversations with community members, collaboration with 18 community groups, 10 meetings with sector stakeholders," said Green. "The robust collaboration inspires a lot of optimism for the program's success but even such a large pursuit will have gaps and we look forward to additional feedback."

People can provide feedback online, through a survey and were invited to an online meeting that was held on March 9. You can find the draft plan, the survey and the March 9 presentation at <https://beheardhennepin.org/zero-waste-future/>.

Comments submitted by March 20 will be considered by county staff as the plan is finalized, and a summary of the survey and all comments will be shared with commissioners before the consider amending and approving on a final plan.

The plan outlines over 50 strategies aimed at increasing the recovery of recyclables and organics, finding alternatives for hard to-recycle materials, reducing consumption, and reducing waste by influencing what is sold into the region.

"I imagine residents will be energized by the steps Hennepin County is taking towards a zero waste future, steps to ensure we are addressing climate change and building a more equitable region," said Green. "That commitment starts with looking at how and what waste is generated, by the county organization, by residents, and by businesses and what we do with that waste."

If the actions in the Zero Waste Plan are successfully implemented, the plan estimates that they will divert between 76% to 82% or approximately 500,000 tons of waste through recycling, composting, and waste reduction. Part of this will require that all the food waste and recyclable materials now thrown away will be composted and recycled and no longer sent to the garbage burner or landfill.

Some actions can likely be done more easily or independently by the county, especially if funding is available, like expanding drop-off options, increasing waste education programming and establishing more reuse and repair centers. One action that may face some opposition from building owners and operators would be to expand composting or organic waste programs and services throughout the county and into commercial, office and apartment buildings.

Others strategies will require policy or law changes and some could meet with stronger opposition like developing large scale organics processing facilities, transitioning to a better organized and more regulated system of waste haulers and collection, as well as mandating participation in recycling and composting programs and adopting zero-waste packaging requirements for food service.

“

Our collective pursuit of a zero waste future is the path to closing the HERC."

Marion Green



To reach the diversion rate of 90%, the county will need to divert an additional 155,000 tons a year. The pathway for diverting that last 10% and reaching the definition of zero waste as outlined in the plan, will, according to the plan, "require changes in technology, consumption, and manufacturing that are not available today."

"There are some viable options the county is considering to achieve that 90% threshold," said Green, "but it's likely that eliminating the extra tonnage will come down to individual changes in consumption and waste reduction."

One action step that has received public attention is phasing out the use of the downtown incinerator. The plan calls for the county to "establish milestones to phase out the use of HERC as [the] county approaches zero waste."

State Representative Frank Hornstein, at a rally last month hosted by the Minnesota Environmental Justice Table, shared his hope that this plan will lead more directly to the closure of the HERC. "The HERC emits more greenhouse gas than a coal-based power plant," he said. "It is one of the top emitters of global warming emissions in the state." He believes closing it should be part of the zero waste plan. Advocates at the rally called for the plan to set a closure date of December 2025.

"I concur with State Rep Hornstein," said Green, while not specifying a date. "Our collective pursuit of a zero waste future is the path to closing the HERC."

Green supports the plan and said, "This draft plan improves the health of our region's land, water, and air, supports the reduction of chemicals and carbon emissions that exasperate climate change, and offers specific supports for communities that have identified lack of equal access to recycling, composting, and diversion options as a limitation to an equitable zero-waste system."

HEALTHY BELIEFS, HEALTHY LIFE

FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

Limiting beliefs, whether you are aware of them or not, can self-sabotage your health. What are limiting beliefs? They are a state of mind or belief about yourself, how the world works, ideas, or how you interact with people, that restricts you in some way. It can stop you from making healthy choices.

Limiting beliefs are the stories we tell ourselves about who we are that hold us back from reaching our full potential. We diminish our own success or health. Limiting beliefs are disempowering. By often blaming the circumstance or people that trigger us, we can feel entitled or self-righteous and defend our unhealthy choices and behavior.

WHAT CAUSES LIMITING BELIEFS?

Generally, you hold onto limiting beliefs to protect yourself from struggle, frustration, disappointment, and failure. At a time in the past, you may have suffered from something specific, and now



By **Michele Rae**

when you come face-to-face with a similar situation, your subconscious, often operating outside of your awareness, finds a way to try to block it. You may overeat, overreact, over shut down, or over medicate with unhealthy substances.

WHERE DO LIMITING BELIEFS COME FROM?

These limiting thoughts and beliefs can have several origins. They can be personal beliefs that were created by you. They can also develop through conditioning and programming from our families, social circles, and society. Our institutions can teach us we are somehow flawed or need to be afraid. They can be reinforced without us noticing. It takes awareness and intention to observe and replace limiting beliefs.

DISCOVERING AND CHANGING LIMITING BELIEFS.

Everyone experiences limiting beliefs, but learning how to identify them can help you proactively prevent these beliefs from limiting you. Here are ideas for you to become aware of your limiting beliefs, how they influence unhealthy choices, how to challenge them, and how to choose empowering beliefs.

INCREASE YOUR SELF-AWARENESS OF YOUR LIMITING BELIEFS

The first step to overcoming your limiting beliefs is in identifying what they are. Be mindful, pay attention in the present moment with as little judgement as possible. Pick one belief you want to change. What are you noticing?

- Negative self-talk such as not good enough or worthy?
- Don't trust the world, people are out to get you, you feel like a victim?
- Are you afraid of criticism and what others think?
- What unhealthy choices do you make when acting from your limiting belief?

NOTICE THAT IT IS JUST A BELIEF

Recognize that your belief may be founded on falsities. FEAR is simply "false evidence appearing real." This is the first step to freedom and liberation.

CHALLENGE YOUR BELIEF

Reflect on it by raising such questions as:

- What are the supporting facts?
- Did I always think that way? If not, what has changed?
- Is there evidence counteracting my belief?
- Is this belief helping me to progress towards living an empowered life?

RECOGNIZE THE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES

What are the negative impacts on the health of your mind, body, heart, or relationships when you act from your limiting belief?

CREATE A PLAN

Choose something new to believe in, something that is positive, healthy, and will help to improve your life. This transition may not be easy. It takes strength, courage, and conviction to adopt the new belief. Find and engage your support team. Patience is required.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Take action and start implementing things that support your new belief. If your limiting belief told you that you were "too old to start cooking healthy food," instead start to adopt an "it is never too late to start" belief. Choose one healthy meal a week you enjoy eating and is simple to shop for and to cook. Start small. Share your new beliefs with your inner circle for healthy accountability partners. Celebrate your wins.

You got this!



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

▶1 LISTENNN

some-thing that was totally different from what I've seen. And I'm boots on the ground, grassroots," he said.

He describes his earlier photos as "very shallow." With encouragement from friends, especially from Felicia Clark, who really inspired him, he attended Minneapolis Community & Technical College. In 2019, he earned a degree in applied science and another in photography and digital imaging – nearly three decades after being out of school.

As a single dad with six of his kids ages 11 on up living at home with him, Pendleton was proud they were able to see him walk across the stage for his graduation. He got to show them it's never too late to get an education.

"It's never too late, right?" he said. "So, when they see me do that, then I just wanted to keep on doin' more."

‘LISTENNN’

He began calling out "Listennn" when a speaker would make a poignant statement, because he truly wanted people to listen – with a critical ear. This led to the name of his platform, Listen Media USA. After George Floyd was murdered and Pendleton's photography garnered a lot more notice, he put his hat in the ring to be among the pool of reporters allowed in the courtroom to cover Derek Chauvin's trial. Listen Media wasn't selected, but a cohort he was part of, Move for Justice News, was.

Pendleton was inside the courtroom on three separate days during the trial. On the first day, he came face to face with Chauvin, who was walking freely – with officers, but without handcuffs. He said Chauvin stopped in his tracks.

"The reason why he stopped in his tracks is because I practice Islam, so I had my kufi on my head, my Muslim hat. And I was dressed to the 'T' with my briefcase and everything... He had this look like, 'Oh [expletive]... we got a Muslim in here on me,'" said Pendleton. "But ah, it was phenomenal to see the expression on his face, to see he was totally shocked."

A fan of both the television show Perry Mason and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Pendleton was in awe of special prosecutor Jerry Blackwell. He was impressed by how Blackwell painted the picture of the full weight bearing down on George Floyd's neck, beginning with Chauvin's body weight and one by one adding on the service belt, the service gun.

"[Blackwell] whooped 'im fiercely. He didn't let up and he didn't get up," said Pendleton.

BALANCING COMMUNITY SERVICE

It's hard work being on the front lines of the movement, especially balancing time to be present with family.

"I want my children to understand that, when you see me out here doin' this, this is not for fun. This is me givin' back to my community," he said.

Pendleton battled addiction for nearly 15 years of his life but said even then he knew that wasn't him. With a "praying grandmother" who was a Christian and an uncle who introduced him to the Nation of Islam, he knew "right from wrong." He had the best of both worlds – on the one hand spiritual songs that made his hair stand up on end, and on the other hand, an education.

"Anything I learned in school, it wasn't beneficial to me. But when I went to the mosque... they taught me my history, they taught me the true value... of different things, and that was a plus plus for me," he said.

SUPPORTED BY MENTORS

Pendleton credits a number of mentors who offered guidance and support, especially master photographer Wing Young Huie. He first went to Huie's studio be-

AJ BANTLEY GUIDES VISITORS ON PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR



By Jill Boogren

Visitors to George Floyd Square who find their way to The Third Place Gallery on the weekends are likely to be invited inside by AJ Bantley. Administrative manager for Listen Media USA, she's volunteered her time at the studio nearly every Saturday and Sunday since last summer when KingDemetrius Pendleton's photographs were first displayed there. She has greeted visitors from all over the United States and the world – Europe, South America, Australia – taking time to provide stories and context for the photographs.

"There's that saying, a photo speaks a thousand words, which it can. But if you don't know the back story it's not necessarily true. So, I feel it's important to give the storyline," she said. She'll share stories of about 12-15 of the photographs. Some people stay for a few minutes. Some have stayed for hours.

Bantley has encountered a few what she calls "closed-minded" people, but feedback in general is positive. Most people, she said, especially People of Color and people who are active in their own countries, appreciate what's being done. For a few, it's so traumatic and triggering that they've had to walk out.

"That's really hard. Even sometimes there's been a lot of tears," said Bant-

(Photo by Jill Boogren)

ley. "But I always tell people this is a safe place. We never speak about race in this place to be divisive. We always speak about race because we know that there's this race problem because of these systems, and... we're standing in solidarity."

The thing that uplifts Bantley most is seeing the younger generation, families coming in with kids, having conversations her generation never had.

"That gives me hope. And that keeps me coming back," she said.

Bantley developed a passion for social justice at an early age. She recalls being in about second grade going with her mom into a Kmart and wanting a Black Baby Doll. She had seen a National Geographic magazine and was really taken by the different people, customs traditions and clothing pictured inside, which may be what prompted her to want this particular doll. Her mom told her, "We don't play with Black babies."

"As a little kid I understood that this was ridiculous. Like, how could you be against – and this was a doll, not even a human being," said Bantley. "I understand my mom was a product of the [1950s], a product of her very White culture, but... that just did not sit with me. And I walked out of there with my baby doll."

Fast forward a few decades to a very

encouraging interaction with a teenage girl from the Dakotas who was visiting the Square. She told Bantley that at the daycare where she worked there had been no dolls of color, only White dolls. When she told the owner they needed to bring in some BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) dolls, the owner asked, "Why? We don't have any BIPOC clients." And the girl replied, "Because we live in a world of not only White people."

Bantley met Pendleton a few years ago and began doing small projects for him behind the scenes – editing, researching, placing online orders. With 30 years in the publishing industry, she also helped Pendleton put together his book, "The Movement Never Stops." Having been on the protest lines herself, she remembered certain images and suggested them for the book.

Working with Pendleton has become Bantley's way to be an ally in the movement. A point she makes to visitors is that these systems are all rooted in White supremacy – housing, banking, health care, education, criminal justice – and that People of Color shouldn't have to fight the fight; they've had enough burden.

"White people really need to pop the bubble of other White people who are still living in their ignorance," she said. Having grown up the same way, she understands where it comes from. But she also believes that silence is not an option. Being in the gallery is a way for her to help people understand what's really going on in the movement – while uplifting Pendleton as an artist.

"It's all kind of fate that I was planted here, but now that I'm here I don't wanna be anywhere else," she said.

Like Pendleton, Bantley is a staunch believer in independent media.

"We know that our mainstream [media] does not go into this depth. I really respect King, because he's got such passion and drive," she said. "A lot of mainstream media will just show up for five, 10, 20 minutes, get their story and go. And he's out there, not only taking photos but oftentimes live-streaming for hours upon hours upon hours. And that takes tenacity."

Bantley welcomes visitors to the exhibition "The Movement Never Stops" at The Third Place Gallery (3730 Chicago Ave.) on Saturdays and Sundays.



KingDemetrius Pendleton counts Wing Young Huie among his mentors, and is grateful that his photos are on display in the studio where he learned so much. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

cause he wanted to learn, and began volunteering and helping out. Now, some of Pendleton's most striking images are on display in the very same studio.

Huie commented, "I am honored to showcase the important photography of



A sandwich board outside The Third Place Gallery invites passersby to come in and see KingDemetrius Pendleton's exhibition, "The Movement Never Stops." (Photo by Jill Boogren)

KingDemetrius Pendleton at The Third Place, where over the decade hundreds of local artists have used my gallery as an artistic incubator."

"It's just amazin' for him to open up a space for me," said Pendleton. "Wing

of times people get on the elevator, and they get all the way up to the top and... they don't press the button so it'll go back down to get other people. He's not one of those people."

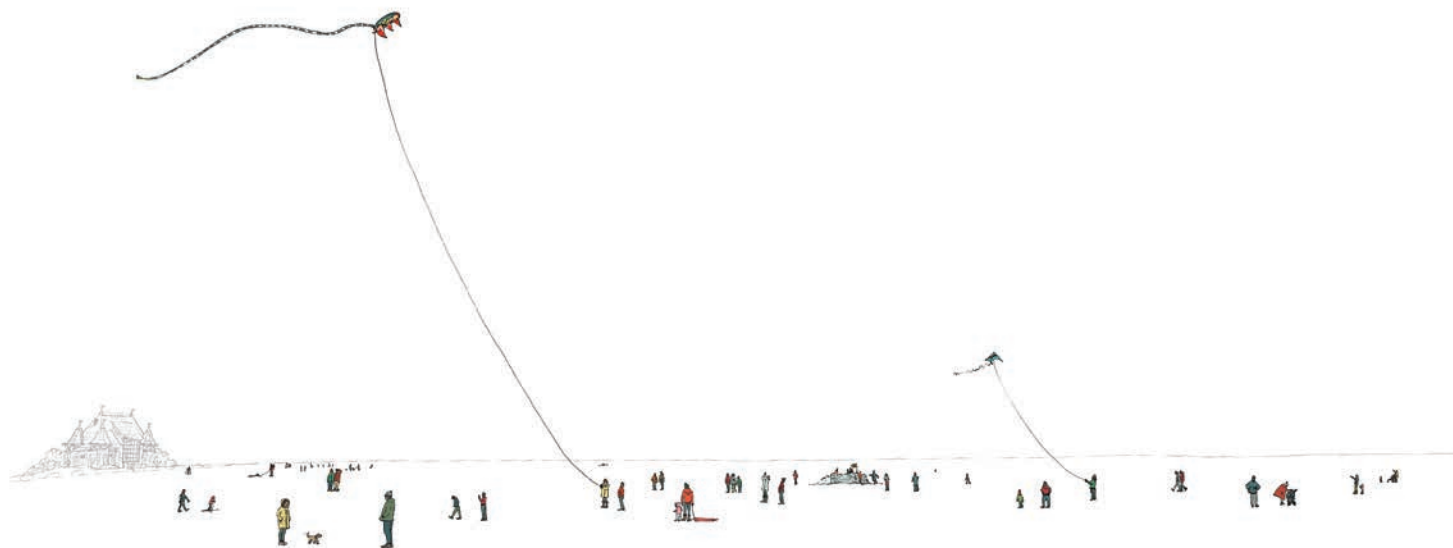
Pendleton has received recognition for his efforts and held his first exhibition in St. Paul in May 2022. But as an independent journalist, pay can be slim to none. Sales of his book and prints offer some support, but ultimately he would like to obtain funding to open his own storefront studio with a darkroom where he can mentor others.

"I want my flowers while I'm alive so I can smell 'em," he said. "I just want my children to be able to enjoy the fruit of the land, and I want to be able to enjoy the fruit of the land while I'm here."

"The Movement Never Stops" exhibition is open Saturdays and Sundays at The Third Place gallery, 3730 Chicago Ave. More information can be found on Facebook at Demetrius.pendleton.5, on Instagram at kingdemetriuspendleton and at listenmedia.org.



VIEW MORE PHOTOS in the online version of this story at www.SouthwestConnector.com



Only a Minnesotan would think 40 degrees in February is "warm"... and only a Minnesotan would spend that warm day out on a frozen lake taking a walk, skiing, and flying a kite. (Illustration by WACSO)

▶ 1 GET RHYTHM

week's 'Nebbiolo and a Novel' afternoon book club.

At the end of the day, I think we all contain both people. It's important to remember that like where we have chosen to live, we are inherently multifaceted. In our current culture of lifestyle labeling and personal branding, it's easy to forget that defining ourselves as one thing or another was never part of the contract we signed when we joined the human race. We are meant to be many things and to feel many ways. For all of the proven benefits to physical and mental health provided by fresh air, outdoor activity and the slow, comfy moments of reflection we all require – they are no permanent cure to what ails each of us. We will still fall ill. We will still experience fear and frustration and anger. We are as sure to be as deeply sad as we can be fleetingly, gloriously happy. We will be confused and unsure. We will make poor choices. We will seek and savor love where it is best and warmly found.

Perhaps one of the reasons we find ourselves so susceptible to negativity and exhaustion is that we find it so difficult to find any pattern in the aforementioned pantheon of emotions we all experience. It's difficult for us to get outside of ourselves and gain perspective.

I would never refer to myself as a seasoned traveler, but whenever I leave our 612 area code – particularly if I'm departing by plane – it becomes very clear very quickly that I am somewhere utterly unlike where I have chosen to make my home in Minnesota. This is not to say that I don't find beauty, relaxation and excitement in places like Palm Springs, Atlanta or Duluth. Far from it. I am, however, reminded of how much of the whole package we are so fortunate to have in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Quite frankly, it's an embarrassment of riches that speaks to our bodies, our spirits and our intellects.

For a few examples, one of the greatest collections of historical artifacts and works of human expression is accessible – free of charge – to anyone gracing the entrance at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. The Walker. The Guthrie Theater. The Mu-



J.D. Fratzke likes hiking in blizzards, and appreciates the reminder that the Natural World exemplifies perseverance. (Photo submitted)

seum of Russian Art. There are forty-two public libraries in Hennepin County. Pair these with the dozens of parks, trails, lakes, creeks, rivers, and beaches we can simply step into – any of us at any time – to clear our heads and experience our bodies.

I considered this last week as I sat on the rear bumper of my car in the parking lot overlooking Hiawatha Golf Course. I was going full friluftsliv as a remedy to a week spent in meetings and in front of screens, doing menu and recipe work for a new project. Warm in layers of deer hunting regalia, I was struggling to strap on my snowshoes as the first half foot or so of

the February 2023 'Snowpocalypse' storm pummeled the Nokomis neighborhood. With my earbuds in, I locked my Toyota and ventured forth into the healing winter howls of Mother Nature. I like going hiking in blizzards because I am easily reminded that despite the weight I often lend to my personal miseries and obligations, not only is the Natural World the only thing that is ever truly in charge, but it also exemplifies perseverance. Weather, like our emotions, can be volatile and destructive, but it comes and goes. Lakes and creeks remain. Trees still stand and birds perch in their branches. The stillness after a storm allows us the peace to contem-

plate that.

Usually when I hike, I'm filling my mind with an audiobook or podcast, obligated to double down on any form of enlightenment. But just shy of a half mile in to my Shackleton-esque efforts, words began to grate on me. I didn't want information, I wanted rhythm. I pulled out my phone to switch over to a Nordic mix I had put together a while back. One of the artists on the playlist is Garmarna, a Swedish ensemble that uses traditional instruments and ancient folktales to create moody, ethereal and sometimes explosive musical works of art. I recalled how years ago, shortly after I had heard them on The Current for the first time and ran out to buy their album, I found out they were touring the US and were going to play the Cedar Cultural Center. My wife and I bought tickets to the show and were treated to one of the greatest live musical performances I have ever seen.

The memory made me consider that additional, often gaudy feather in the cap of our myriad Twin Cities amenities – music and the venues that showcase it. I can't think of Minnesota, much less Minneapolis and Saint Paul, without feeling the music we've offered the world (Lizzo, Prince, The Trashmen, The Replacements, Atmosphere, Erik Koskinen). It's a huge part of our lives here – I daresay a birthright to the degree that the other wonderful facets of our lives here are offered.

Whether winter forces us to hunker down and comfort ourselves or step out into the gales we face in our physical, professional and emotional lives, where we live and what we have access to offers us all kinds of opportunity to remind ourselves that Mother Nature is just outside our door, that the wonder of art is where we choose to find it and that if we're not savoring music in the clubs or coffee shops, we can hear it in the branches, birds and Northern breezes of the neighborhood we call home.



J.D. Fratzke is a husband, father, wilderness advocate, and word enthusiast. He has spent most of his adult life toiling in restaurant kitchens to varying degrees of success. A lifelong Minnesotan, JD and his family live in South Minneapolis.

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