

SOUTHWEST Connector

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Trans rights advocates pack three levels of the Minnesota Capitol rotunda on March 31, 2023 for Transgender Day of Visibility. "Our visibility matters," said Kat Rohn of OutFront Minnesota. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

Advocates pack state Capitol for Trans Day of Visibility

By **Jill Boogren**

Minnesota's transgender community and supporters packed the State Capitol for Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31, sending a clear and unapologetic message that reverberated throughout the rotunda: "You belong here." The day came as an unprecedented number of bills tar-

geting trans people have been introduced and enacted in states across the country this year and a week after the Minnesota House of Representatives passed the Trans Refuge Act.

Kat Rohn, executive director of OutFront Minnesota, said showing up is itself

a powerful act. "Our visibility matters," she said. "Because when we're visible, when we show up in our communities as our whole, complex, messy, beautiful, amazing, authentic selves, we change the narrative that is being written about our lives."



FOOD VISION

Minneapolis prioritizes food justice and healthy food access in new plan

By **Cam Gordon**

Minneapolis has a 10-year path to establish a more resilient, just, and equitable food system in the city.

The Minneapolis Food Vision (MFV) plan prioritizes six goals that are focused on local food supply, urban agriculture, local food business, healthy food access and skills, food waste, and food systems research and outreach. By implementing the plan, according to the vision, "Minneapolis residents, community-serving organizations, and city government can partner to make sure our food system is healthy, affordable, equitable, profitable, and good for people and the environment."

"I am excited that the Minneapolis City Council has unanimously approved the Minneapolis Food Vision," said DeVon Nolan, a member of the Minneapolis Food Council and northside resident who has been shepherding the plan's development since 2019. "The Food Vision is a blueprint built in partnership with commu-



Mayflower Early Childhood Center transitions to Creekside, recognizing that old name was hurtful to Indigenous folk

NEW NAME FOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Mayflower Early Childhood Center is now Creekside Montessori School.

"If the name Mayflower is hurtful to anyone, why would we want to keep it? That is not who we are or how we want to be represented. Montessori education is peace education. Creekside well suits this identity," remarked Head of School Anne Estes.

"Sprung from a desire to more fully



We in many ways really had no choice but to search for a name that better suits us to be able to grow as a community in the way we are all striving for and a name that is more welcoming and inclusive."

Anna Estes



reflect our values of belonging and inclusion and recognizing the historical trauma associated with the name Mayflower, Creekside families initiated the name change process during the 2020-2021 year," explained Rachael Peters who serves on the Parent Involvement Committee Chairperson. "After two years of committee meetings, community brainstorming sessions, and consultation with our anti-bias educational partner, AMAZEworks, the name change will be complete for the start of 2023-2024 academic year."

A preschool at the intersection of the Tangletown, Windom, Page and Diamond Lake neighborhoods, Creekside is a mission-driven school. "Our mission is to serve an economically diverse community of families through financial aid and scholarship while fostering an environment of equity, belonging, and inclusion," said



SHOVEL, BAG, BIN, REPEAT...

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



I feel like I read or saw an interview with Iggy Pop a few years ago wherein he discussed the fact that now that he lives in Miami, he begins his days just after sunrise with a 30-minute swim in the ocean. Iggy poetically expounded on his daily routine by marveling that when the weather is just right, the solar orb of our sun dapples the water with orange and pink, transforming the ocean into liquid light.

It thoroughly impressed me that after having lived a hand-to-mouth life of grit, loss, exuberance and excess in the alleyways and filthy ballrooms of every urban metropolis from Tacoma to Berlin, that his reverence of a routine natural phenomena



▶ 1 'YOU BELONG HERE'

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan said, "Trans people belong in Minnesota. You are safe here. And we want you to live your fullest and happiest and healthiest and most beautiful life possible here."

Flanagan read a proclamation by Gov. Tim Walz designating March 31, 2023 as Transgender Day of Visibility. The proclamation celebrates trans, gender non-conforming, and non-binary Minnesotans while recognizing that trans people are disproportionately affected by hate crimes, violence and discrimination.

Rep. Leigh Finke (DFL-Saint Paul) knows all too well the political realities. Her bill passed in the House after a long, grueling night with a 68-62 majority – enough to win, but not enough to curtail the insults, slurs and damaging rhetoric that have become part of the public discourse. She spoke about the "shocking rate" and "terrifying number" of states where trans rights are being decimated. So much so, it prompted independent reporter Erin Reed (@ErinInTheMorning) to create a "risk map" that color codes in deep red the worst states for trans rights. These laws do far more than ban books and drag shows. In many states it is now illegal for teenagers and young adults to seek gender affirming care, and at least two states – South Dakota and Kentucky – direct health care providers to detransition youth.

"I can hardly utter those two words 'forced detransition' without succumbing to emotion," said Finke. "They represent to me the final compromise that is being asked of our community: Will you choose the closet or the coffin? That's the bargain of forced detransition."

Governor Walz signed an executive order in March protecting the right of Minnesota's LGBTQIA+ community members to receive gender affirming health



Trans rights advocates pack three levels of the Capitol rotunda on March 31, 2023 for Transgender Day of Visibility. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

care services. It also protects against extradition orders from other states where this care is no longer legal, making Minnesota a trans refuge state. To become permanent, however, the Trans Refuge Act needs to be signed into law. Finke said she is optimistic for the bill's passage in the Senate.

"What we are fighting for is simple," said Flanagan. "It is life affirming care. It is life saving care, and everyone deserves it."

Pediatrician Dr. Katy Miller spoke of the positive outcomes of providing gender affirming care. "In my job, every single day I have the incredible honor of seeing trans youth thrive," said Miller.

Miller mentioned a young patient she called "Mary," who wanted to start estrogen therapy. Mary was at first shy and visibly uncomfortable – with her body and



(Left to right) Meg Bexell, Eden Urban, Ace Austin, Jack Bexell, Savannah Berg, Elizabeth Dimock, Katie Dimock and Samantha Pollack attend the march for trans rights outside the Minnesota Capitol on March 31, 2023. (Photo by Jill Boogren)



"I want you to know how absolutely sacred you are," Mars Kamenski said to the youth present during the rally. (Photo by Jill Boogren)



Youth march for trans rights outside the Capitol on March 31. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

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her life. She had been hospitalized for suicidal thoughts, which prompted her parents to bring her to the clinic for help. At her first follow-up visit after starting estrogen, Mary came in "absolutely beaming, face full of smiles."

Miller said, "Over the course of the past three years, I have watched her grow into a confident and flourishing young adult. She is no longer the shy anxious girl who was trying to take up as little space as possible. She just exudes joy and light."

Miller pointed out that gender affirming care is endorsed by every major medical society in the United States. The American Academy of Pediatrics, Endocrine Society, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association and American Psychological Association are among those organizations, according to the LGBTQIA+ media advocacy organization GLAAD.

SHARING STORIES AND HOPE

Buoyed by the crowd, speakers shared deeply personal stories about their own transitions and offered messages of hope to others – especially to the youth in the room. For these speakers, visibility was everything. Most had had no experience with transgender and non-binary people as they were coming of age, no understanding of nor language to express it. They described sometimes long and painful journeys toward their own self discovery.

Looking upward at the crowd gathered on three levels of the rotunda, Rep. Alicia Kozlowski (DFL-Duluth) spoke of meeting for the first time – at 28 years old – Sharice Davids, an openly lesbian Native American congressperson from Kansas.

"That was a moment that catalyzed me to finally say out loud, 'I'm gay, gay, gay.' And everyone was like, 'We know, we know, we know,'" said Kozlowski, drawing laughter from the crowd. "It took another five years to finally come home to myself fully as a two-spirit, nonbinary person."

Mars Kamenski introduced himself as a Minneapolis resident, an immigrant from Bulgaria, an ancient soul who feels everything way too deeply, a gym rat "sans toxic masculinity," a healer, writer, creator and dreamer – and someone who spent the first 29 years of their life living as a woman who now identifies as non-bina-

ry and trans masculine. Coming out as queer at 15 years of age in the "White, cis-gender, heteronormative suburb of Rosemount" was damaging to Kamenski. He was bullied, assaulted and not accepted by people in his life. He repressed any introspection regarding his gender because it felt inaccessible and scary. In 2020, he began thinking critically about his gender, realizing that there was a great disconnect between who he wanted to be and who he presently was.

"I came to the epiphany that at the end of the day, the longest relationship that I'm ever going to have is going to be with myself. This was the wake-up call that I needed to step into my power and reclaim my life," said Kamenski. "Starting testosterone has been one of the most healing experiences of my life. Witnessing the physical changes daily as I go through puberty all over again at 31 has been a wild experience to say the least."

Kamenski addressed the youth in the room. "I want you to know how absolutely sacred you are. You are more than the laws they put forth trying to strip us of our rights. You are more than the news stories that they use to villainize us. You are more than the hate that people endorse to make themselves feel better about the things that they don't understand," he said. "You are powerful, you are beautifully unique, you are valid beyond measure, and you are worthy of everything that you want out of this life. No amount of darkness will overshadow your light."

Danh Huynh, age 17, was raised in a conservative home where being queer was taboo. Huynh identified as queer from a very young age and had to endure being the only out queer person in school.

"Social media, reading and art really educated me and gave me inspiration to tap further into my queerness and femininity," said Huynh, who wanted to let people of all ages in the LGBTQIA+ community know it is okay to be themselves.

"Normalizing being transgender is the first step we as a society need to take to improve not just the lives of trans people but the safety of our communities and neighborhoods as well," said Huynh. "The validity, rights and care of trans people shouldn't be a discussion... if you're transgender and feel as if you aren't enough, know

RISE & REMEMBER
 GEORGE FLOYD GLOBAL MEMORIAL CELEBRATION
 MAY 25-27, 2023
 GEORGEFLOYDGLOBALMEMORIAL.ORG
 JOIN US for our 3rd Annual, 3-day, Rise & Remember celebration.
CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
 MAY 25 | GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE
 FREE | 8 PM | Public Event | Minneapolis, MN
UBUNTU CONFERENCE
 MAY 25-26 | BEST BUY HQ
 Registration | Richfield, MN
GFGM GALA
 MAY 26 | PAISLEY PARK
 6 PM | Ticketed Event | Chanhassen, MN
RISE & REMEMBER FESTIVAL
 MAY 27 | GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE
 1 PM - 9 PM | Free Event | Minneapolis, MN
 Our vision is through these efforts, we can inspire people to rise to the occasion and come together in community, pursue justice, and build racial equity. We hope to see you there!
 TO REGISTER, VOLUNTEER, GIVE, AND OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [LINKTR.EE/GFGMRR](https://linktr.ee/gfgmrr)

▶ 1 NEW NAME

Peters. "Currently, 22% of our families are on some form of financial assistance or scholarship."

'WHAT'S UP WITH THE NAME?'

Estes joined the staff at Creekside in December 2019 and has been head of school since February 2020. The seed for a new name was first planted during a prospective parent tour in 2019. The parent said, "What is up with the name?" and later went on to explain that they have indigenous friends and family that would never send their children to the school because of the name, and how it was hurtful to their community.

"That was the first time I had considered the name hurtful," said Estes. "This parent did go on to enroll their child at MECC and never stopped talking about the name change until it finally did happen!"

A MONTESSORI SCHOOL IS BORN

Mayflower Early Childhood Center began as part of Mayflower United Church of Christ, seeking to serve economically diverse families with high quality learning environments that meet the development needs of the whole child. Mayflower is now a partner of the church and operates as its own entity.

Montessori schools fosters independent learning and follow the child in their development. A Montessori school has multi-age classrooms with a guide (lead teacher) and assistant who are formally trained in Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. Creekside has a toddler community ages 16-33 months and four Children's Houses ages 33 months through kindergarten.

Staff is multilingual, and includes those who speak English, Hmong, Somali, German, Spanish, Oromo, and Chinese. The staff includes four African, three Black, two American Indian/Indigenous, two S.E. Asian/Asian, one Hispanic/Latino, and 15 White; two are male and 25 female. On the student side, there are 12 African, five Black, three Asian, two Hispanic/Latino, one West Indian African, and 77 White.

TIME FOR A NAME CHANGE

"We have collectively reached a state of consciousness that has made our old name invalid and ingenuine for our identity as the Montessori school we are," remarked Estes. "We in many ways really had no choice but to search for a name that better suits us to be able to grow as a community in the way we are all striving for and a name that is more welcoming and inclusive."

In the spring of 2021, they began pursuing a name change by getting the okay from the MECC Board, as well as Mayflower United Church of Christ, and looking at whether there were any legal issues they needed to be aware of.

They formed a name change committee that met on Zoom every other week in the middle of the pandemic. On the committee were caregivers, board members and staff, and parents – including the parent who had first brought up the idea.

"After a great deal of discussion and brainstorming, we went from ideas that ranged from turning the name change process into a theatrical performance that would be filmed with books and artwork to go along with it, to brainstorming coffee hours and Zooms parents, caregivers, staff, and children. We asked parents and



Creekside Montessori students Kaamil Gabose (left) and Miles Deutschman play and learn about numbers. (Photo submitted)

caregivers to meet in the parking lot for an outdoor coffee hour and share name ideas; we invited children to join Zoom and share their name ideas; we asked families to hand in artwork and/or words describing what MECC meant to them," recalled Estes.

Name options were put in a Google doc, and the school community voted. While Mayflower received a few votes, the winning one was Creekside.

"The name Creekside is a nod not only to our location near Minnehaha Creek but also Creekside Commons, a subsidized housing development created by MUCC. Historically, MECC has had many families, as well as staff, come from Creekside Commons," said Estes.

In fall 2022, logo ideas were submitted by community members, and then forwarded to a graphic designer. After a vote in January 2023, a new logo was selected. The school website, signs and merchandise are slated to be changed by the 4th Annual Plant Sale on May 5.

RESPONSE TO A RACIAL RECKONING

The name changes is one step that the school has taken, and came out of a larger process.

"Starting summer of 2020 when Minneapolis was in total chaos and racial injustice was on everyone's minds to say the least, we reached out to AMAZEworks (a known entity as they had already been working with several other Montessori schools in the area)," said Estes. They started with staff and did an orientation to anti-bias anti-racist education. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, they held workshops with families, listening sessions for families of color, and a couple of

professional development days with Creekside staff.

In the spring of 2021, they presented an in-depth ABAR report for MECC which was shared with staff, board, and families, who then worked together on an Equity and Inclusion statement. "We now have this statement on our website with our mission statement as well as in our staff and parent handbooks," said Estes. "It is something we ask all community member to commit to be at MECC/Creekside."

Creekside used a Parent Aware grant to purchase two sets of the AMAZEworks tried and true vetted collection of ABAR books to use in the classroom. The books cover various topics that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belong (DEIB).

AMAZEworks did an intensive six-week series workshop with the MECC Board in the summer of 2021. "This allowed the board to experience first hand what the staff and families had been learning about," stated Estes.

Professional development with AW continued during the 2021-2022 school year for staff, and workshops were offered for families. "As a school we agreed to spend this year addressing the goals AW had set out for us to become a more welcoming and inclusive community," Estes said. "We also understood that for all involved, this is and will be a lifelong commitment and journey; that we can never stop learning and growing and becoming more aware."

As they complete the final steps

"The young, Black trans queer in me wants to encourage the young, Black trans queer in you to know that you can do and be whatever you want to be," said Reed.

Luna Hernandez described herself as a proud Mexican woman of the trans experience and spoke of meeting an "angel" in her friend who took 68 years to finally become "Miss" Gloria. The two bonded over wigs and hair styling while enrolled in a treatment program. Hernandez attended

4TH ANNUAL PLANT SALE

All net proceeds go toward the annual scholarship fund at Creekside Montessori School. Online ordering available from early March until April 30. Online orders will be available to pick up on the afternoon of May 5 in the parking lot of Mayflower Church, located at 106 E. Diamond Lake Road. Any unsold inventory will be available for on-site purchase on May 5.

WHAT IS MONTESSORI?

MECC/Creekside is a Montessori school that fosters independent learning and follows the child in their development.

A Montessori school has multi-age classrooms with a guide (lead teacher) and assistant who are formally trained in Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. Creekside has a toddler community ages 16-33 months and four Children's Houses ages 33 months through kindergarten.

The Montessori method of education is named after Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), one of Italy's first female physicians who helped open a small school for 3- to 6-year-olds in the slums of San Lorenzo in Rome. These children, the poorest of the poor, came every day to the simple, beautiful classroom with white walls, tables and chairs sized for them, green grass in the courtyard outside, and a teacher who would show them the materials

Dr. Montessori had developed. Her method reflected a profound respect for the children's natural development—seeing what they naturally chose to do, and making sure the environment allowed for those tendencies.

Montessori schools and societies began to spring up in Italy and in other parts of Europe. The Montessori method in America did not really take off until the 1960s. The North American Montessori Teachers' Association estimates there are about 4,500 Montessori schools in the U.S. and about 20,000 worldwide.

The Montessori method is more than an educational method—it is a philosophy of human development and of helping children reach their full potentials. Montessori observed this profound truth: The child, through her own constructive powers, builds the adult she will become. Montessori considered education an "aid to life."

- Information from <http://www.mayflowermontessori.org>

for the name change, they are continuing anti-bias education (ABE), and have held one community-wide event in-person with AMAZEworks that included staff, families, and board members, with another one planned for the spring.

"We are moving forward with our strategic planning to get a better idea for what we can become," said Estes. "I have a lot of ideas myself. At the end of the day, we want high quality Montessori education to be accessible to as many children as possible; we still hold true to our mission and only hope with our new name and identity we can continue to do so in an even more welcoming and inclusive way."

as her authentic self, her first time presenting anywhere as such. After her 30 days were up, she couldn't go back to her world as her true self and hid away. But then she remembered Miss Gloria saying, "Luna, now is the time. Do not live in regret."

"I chose to live life authentically today because I don't know any other way and because this is who I am," she said.

"Now is the time."

▶ 2 'YOU BELONG HERE'

that you are cared for, you are loved, and I care for you very much."

Davin Sokup talked about his journey back to his hometown of Northfield as a trans man and becoming a city council member there. He doesn't subscribe to the idea that trans people existing doesn't impact anyone else's life.

"Now that I'm back there as my full

self giving back to my community in a way that feels right to me, I can see that my existence does affect those around me – and I want it to," he said.

Performer and city of Minneapolis employee Andre Reed chose to speak out of a responsibility to show other Black trans people they can have productive careers and a family if they want to (Reed's partner and one-year-old baby were at the event).

WATCH OUT FOR THAT SINKHOLE

The season of street craters isn't over.

Good news. Minneapolis is back in the top 10. According to Extreme Weather Watch, this winter ranks third for the largest snowfalls ever recorded with 89.9 inches. And it's only April.

The most snow Minneapolis ever got is 98.7 inches in 1983-1984. So there's still hope of being No. 1.

After a tough couple of years, Minneapolis has taken a hit in the livability rankings. The city could use a morale boost, and it's nice to see Minneapolis trending upward in something other than vandalism, car thefts and disgruntled citizens.

There is no official data for disgruntled citizenry, but based on Nextdoor, Facebook and Twitter comments, Minneapolis leads the world in civic dysfunction.

Plenty of people are doing their part to contribute. As Earthjustice reports: "Human activity is causing rapid changes to our global climate that are contributing to extreme weather conditions.

"When fossil fuels are burned for electricity, heat, and transportation, carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that traps solar radiation, is released into our atmosphere.

"Over the past century, massive increases in carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gas emissions have



By Eric Ortiz



A sinkhole opened up at 27th Street and Girard Avenue in Uptown Minneapolis on Easter Sunday. (Photo by André Lambelet)

caused the temperature on our planet to rise. That spike in global temperatures is fueling climate disasters that will only get worse unless we take action. Experts warn that we are running out of time to dramatically cut pollution to avoid climate catastrophe."

Despite the high level of snowfall, Minnesota is getting warmer. Daily average minimum temperatures during winter (December-February) increased 7.3 degrees from 1895-2021 in northern Minnesota, 6 degrees in central Minnesota and 4.9 degrees in southern Minnesota, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The years ahead are expected to bring warmer temperatures.

Don't bet against Mother Nature. Especially when she's pissed. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and Mother Nature could make "Fatal Attraction" Glenn Close look like Mother Theresa.

All this extreme weather takes a toll

on streets, wastewater facilities, businesses, homes, farms, and natural resources. It can cost millions of dollars in cleanup and repairs. That impacts the economy, natural environment and quality of life.

We got a taste of it this winter with big temperature swings. Freezing one day, balmy the next. This bipolar freeze-thaw cycle, mixed with rain, wreaked more havoc on infrastructure than usual.

Have you seen our roads?

First, it was potholes. Now, it's sinkholes.

On Easter Sunday, a huge crater opened up in the middle of Girard Avenue and 27th Street in Uptown Minneapolis. The sinkhole was 5 feet wide, 10 feet deep, and caused by a broken clay sewer pipe from 1903, the Star Tribune reported. The 120-year-old sewer pipe could not handle the brutal freeze-thaw cycle and fast snowmelt this year. Utility workers replaced it with a permanent new PVC pipe within days, and the street is expected to be back to normal by late April.

Patching up all of the other potholes in the city will take longer. Minneapolis doled out an extra \$1 million to provide temporary street patches before permanent fixes can be made when asphalt plants open in the spring. Longer-term repavements are part of a citywide 20-year street funding plan.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation, via the Star Tribune, explained the science behind all the potholes. When ice and snow melt, water gets into a street through cracks in the asphalt. When water freezes again and expands, the pavement explodes. Cars drive over the broken pave-

ment and cause the pavement to break more, creating holes in the streets.

Extreme weather creates a more extreme freeze-thaw cycle and increases the production of potholes. Old, decaying streets are most susceptible. Anyone who has driven a car on a Minneapolis street since January has experienced the joy of potholes and gotten plenty of off-road training for the Baja 500.

I witnessed the sinkhole firsthand on my bike, returning home from an afternoon ride. A neighbor said, "You probably see that, but watch out." A police officer said, "Don't fall in."

The season of street craters isn't over.

Now that the snowmelt season has started for good, be prepared. That is advice from the National Weather Service.

"The combination of multiple rain events along with snowfall and wildly fluctuating temperatures have wreaked havoc on pavement throughout the region. Areas where water has been standing at times this winter are even more likely to have damaged road surfaces. So this year, more than ever, it is important to *Turn Around, Don't Drown* when you encounter a flooded roadway, even if the water is standing and not flowing. You have no idea what the road surface is like under that water, if it is even there."

In other words, protect yourself at all times. And do whatever you can to preserve a livable planet.

Oh, and watch out for sinkholes.



Eric Ortiz lives in the Wedge with his family. When he's not community building, he's the head of content and strategy 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.

IN LIGHT OF JUSTIN JONES AND JUSTIN PEARSON'S EXPULSION, SOME MINNEAPOLIS LEADERS APPEAR ROOTED IN A CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY

On Thursday, April 6, Tennessee Representatives Justin Jones and Justin Pearson were expelled from their House seats by the Republican super majority who determined these young Black Representatives are too "radical" for hallowed chambers. Their crimes? Rules violations: speaking without permission of the Chairman, using a sign to display a political slogan, using a megaphone, and gathering at the front of the House without permission. Supported by thousands of protesters against gun violence who gathered at the Capitol on March 30 in response to the school shooting that occurred in Nashville on March 27, Jones and Pearson chanted with the protesters, "No Justice, No Peace!" One week later, they were on trial, then expelled, leaving 150,000 Tennessee voters without full representation in their state legislature.

On Tuesday, March 9, the Minneapolis City Council voted to amend the Legislative Agenda and Policy Positions. One of the amendments, introduced by Council



By Daniel Schmidt

Member Linea Palmisano of Ward 13, is a dangerous attack on democracy which resembles the rules used to justify what occurred in Tennessee. The amendment is for "supporting legislation that would create clear guidance for lawful conduct at public meetings of government bodies." In other words, it paves a legal pathway for city leaders to indulge in anti-democratic behavior. The amendment narrowly passed 7-6.

Democracy is not binary, and it is not indestructible, even in Minneapolis. This amendment was written two weeks after Indigenous people, Little Earth residents, and their allies peacefully protested against the East Phillips Roof Depot demolition at City Hall. After the protest, three council members - Emily Koski (Ward 11), LaTrisha Vetau (Ward 4), and Michael Rainville (Ward 3) - filed police reports, claiming they felt threatened by protesters. Mayor Jacob Frey, in an interview with WCCO, said, "First Amendment rights stop at the next persons' nose! And when you start saying, 'we will kill you and your family if you take a certain vote...' that's not First Amendment rights, that's a terrorist threat."

Mr. Frey hits the issue right on the

nose: I smell toxic chemicals every day as an East Phillips resident. In fact, according to the EPA's Environmental Justice EJScreen, East Phillips is in the 97th percentile for "air toxics: cancer and respiratory health" as compared to the rest of Minnesota. The city council's votes, and the mayor's vetoes, are killing East Phillips residents and families. We are terrorized by their legislative and executive powers. When powerful individuals (like Frey and Palmisano) say they feel threatened by peaceful protesters, they are taking a page out of the racist stand-your-ground law book, and endanger democracy by prosecuting protesters.

Aisha Chughtai, council member for Ward 10, argued against the amendment with a nationally conscious perspective: "In the places that have implemented laws like this... the impact in real life, in real time, has been harsher criminal penalties and criminalization of people of color, of LGBTQ people, and of those without permanent citizenship status. These laws have not protected marginalized public officials from violence rooted in misogyny or in White supremacy. These laws historically have been carried by far-right Republicans."

The expulsion of Justin Jones and Justin Pearson in Tennessee confirms Ms. Chughtai's warning. The road to fascism is paved with decorum. It is time for the seven council members who voted for Palmisano's anti-protest amendment and Mayor Frey to clarify which "side of the aisle" they really sit on. Any law that makes it easier to jail peaceful protesters must be taken as a serious attack on democratic principles. Minneapolis is not exempt from the siren call of fascism. We must be ever aware of its clandestine signs.

Justin Pearson's final speech before expulsion should ring resonantly in Mayor Frey and the council member's heads: "Dr. King taught us that sometimes there is a consciousness above rule, above what you might say is law... You say, 'to protest is wrong! Because you spoke out of turn. Because you spoke up for people who are marginalized, you spoke up for children who won't ever be able to speak again, you spoke up for parents who don't want to live in fear...' [But] I've still got hope, because I know we are still here, and we will never quit!"



Daniel Schmidt is a Phillips resident.

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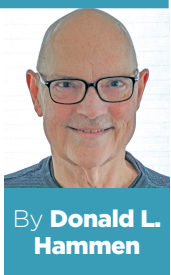


AWARDED

STORIES & JOURNEYS

I have recently been made aware that TMC Publications CO, which includes the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, Southwest Connector, and Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, received 20 awards at the recently completed Minnesota Newspaper Association Convention. That's eight for the Messenger, nine for the Connector, and three for the Monitor. This is a big deal in many ways for TMC Publications. In reflecting on this 20 awards, I became aware that Stories and Journeys is awarded every time you and I pick up a paper or go online to experience being readers of the Messenger or Connector.

So, if you have read this far, you along with me, have taken the plunge into the river (flow) of life experiences that is Stories and Journeys.



By Donald L. Hammen

DANCING IN MY LIVING ROOM ON THE EVE OF MY SPINE SURGERY

I admit that I have showed up to street dancing on Fridays at 36th and Bde Mka Ska three times. I admit that those are not the only times I have broken out in dance. It happened while I was watching the recently completed Grammys on the eve of my upcoming cervical spine surgery. It happened when Smokey Robinson broke out in his rendition of "Tears of a Clown." Granted, I have to dance with my spine stenosis in mind – which means my moves are limited. The fact is I never know when or where I'm going to break out in dance.

SPEAKING OF MY UPCOMING SPINE SURGERY

If all goes according to plan my surgery will have happened Feb.15 and by the time of my March column writing week I will be at home healing. As a result of this surgery I hope to be awarded the ability to do more dance moves. For me, dance is movement in space within my limits. I hope to have a few less limits so I can do more moves where ever I break out in dance.

The essence of spine surgery for me is captured in the following words: Cervical/neck fusion disks C4-C7.

As I anticipate my surgery, I have been revisiting my personal philosophy of

health that has evolved over time. The fact that I am consenting to my surgery tells me I believe there is a role for Western medicine while being open to what I call 'alternative healing modalities.' So, as part of my post surgery healing, I could use the services of a certified healing touch practitioner (CHTP) who makes house calls if there is such a person. I look forward to resuming physical therapy, acupuncture and massage therapy.

This is my holistic/integrative health (spirituality and healing) approach in play. Do you, dear reader, have a personal philosophy of health that informs your life? Mine includes adequate rest and sleep, nutrition and exercise, and stress management. Tell yourself, tell others or better yet tell me at tesha@longfellownokomessenger.com.

MY LIFE COMPLETION. CHECKING THE BOXES

Lakewood Cemetery in south Uptown. Paperwork signed and paid for services. Check. Bradshaw Funeral Services on Minnehaha Ave. Paperwork signed and paid for services. Check. Courtney Law Office services engaged for legal representation where it comes to creating and implementing my estate plan. Check. All next up is to write my obituary and committal service.

Then there is the back up plan and

that's where the Longfellow-Seward Healthy Seniors" SOLOS" Resource Group comes into play. Briefly, it is made up of the growing portion of the population 60+ individuals who, in my case, cannot always or choose not to rely on family to help them navigate life events and make health decisions. However, in the interest of full disclosure, since the death of my brother, my sister-in-law is very involved with my navigating life events and health decisions along with others. More on the back up plan in another column.

As I write, I am aware that I am about to entrust my body, mind and spirit to a team of other people. I am about to put my trust in the skilled hands of another human being who is Dr. Christopher Martin. I have no idea what my life will be like on the other side of surgery. My hope is that there will be less to no constant pain and discomfort. I hope and pray that I will be able to write again – that we, dear reader, have awarded Stories and Journeys every time you and I pick up a print edition or log on to read the Messenger and Connector. And for that I am eternally grateful.

In gratitude.



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

WORKING TO STRENGTHEN RENTER RIGHTS

One of my top priorities this session is strengthening rights and protections for renters in Minnesota. We are in the middle of a housing crisis, with rental prices soaring and affordable, quality units in short supply. This problem has disproportionately affected communities of color, which tend to have a higher renter rate than White communities. Coupled with fewer and fewer young families being able to afford to purchase a home, residents are in a perfect storm for landlords to take advantage of tenants.

My colleague, Rep. Esther Agbaje, is carrying a bill package to strengthen tenants' rights, and many pieces of legislation



By Hodan Hassan

I have authored over my past several terms are included in the proposal. Once passed, this bill will create a host of much-needed protections for renters in Minnesota and put a stop to many predatory practices used by landlords. The list of protections this package will create is long, so I'll jump right in.

Once signed into law, this bill package will prohibit sellers, landlords, real estate agents, and brokers from discriminating against individuals receiving public assistance. It will require landlords to be upfront about rental prices and prohibits hidden fees. Landlords will be required to ensure units have heat capable of reaching 68 degrees when the outside temperature falls below 60 degrees, as happens most months out of the year in Minnesota.

In Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Rochester, and Duluth, landlords will be prohibited

from inquiring about lease renewal until the lease has six months or less remaining, making student housing more accessible for Minnesota's learners. Tenants will also gain the right to terminate a lease if they require assistance with daily living and need to enter a nursing home or seek other long-term medical care.

The bill will create a requirement that landlords perform a unit walkthrough before a tenant moves in and inform the tenant in writing of their right to a walkthrough inspection upon moveout. By doing this, tenants will have a chance to rectify any damages to the unit themselves instead of losing their security deposit to repair costs. This will benefit both parties, with landlords receiving units back in better condition and renters getting more of their security deposit back.

The bill also addresses privacy con-

cerns, requiring landlords to give a 24-hour notice before entry, and limits that entry to between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Landlords will be unable to refuse to rent or require a current renter to declaw or devocalize pets. Finally, the bill empowers and supports tenants to take legal action against landlords that violate their rights.

This bill will affect many people in our district for the better. I am proud and incredibly excited to deliver on this for you and make South Minneapolis a better place to live.

Please continue to share your questions, ideas, and feedback with me throughout the legislative session. You can reach me by email at rep.hodan.hassan@house.mn.gov.

I am incredibly honored to get to work for you.



Hodan Hassan is the 62B Minnesota House Representative. Contact her at rep.hodan.hassan@house.mn.gov.

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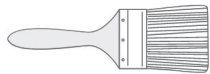


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SPRING CLEANING TIPS AND TRICKS

Here are some tips that can help anyone master spring cleaning.

- **Create a plan.** Make a checklist and establish a cleaning plan of attack. Focus on areas that are not regularly cleaned, as they probably need a little attention.
- **Curate your cleaning playlist.** Create a playlist with songs that will get you moving and motivated to clean.
- **Work from top to bottom.** Work efficiently by cleaning shelves, ceiling fans and other elevated items first, as dust and debris will trickle down and need to be cleaned next.
- **Clean windows.** Wash windows inside and out and utilize their screens to help brighten indoors spaces.



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1 FOOD VISION

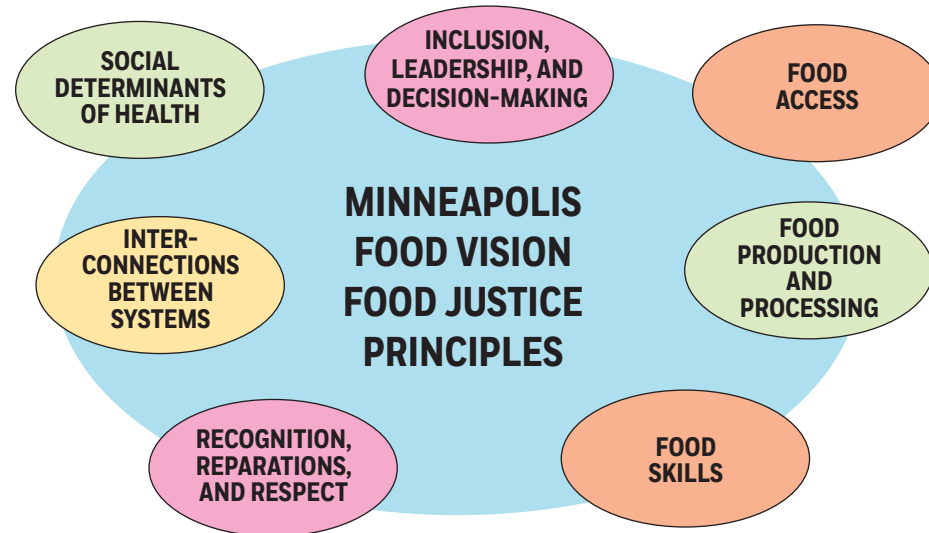
nity to help foster a more equitable local food system."

Created as part of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative that launched in 2008 as a priority of former Mayor R.T. Rybak, the MFV will be a companion plan to the forthcoming Climate Equity Plan, and is part of a global effort that includes over 200 cities worldwide who have signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Minneapolis signed the Milan Pact in 2017 and started work on the Minneapolis Food Vision the next year, in 2018.

Since then, the food council and city health department staff have conducted in-person and online events. They partnered with the University of Minnesota, Princeton University, Appetite for Change, Advancement of Hmong Americans, Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES), Harvest from the Heart, and the Somali American Farmers Association to support the development of the vision. Funders included the National Science Foundation, the Sustainable Healthy Cities initiative, and the City of Minneapolis's Health Department.

"I'm proud to say that over 1,000 people were involved in the development of the Minneapolis Food Vision," said Health Department Homegrown Minneapolis Manager Alison Babb. She said that work on the plan slowed down during the pandemic but picked up again in 2021. Work on food justice principles, priority areas, and strategies were the focus of food council meetings, community focus groups, in-



terviews with food experts, and six online events. "In February of 2022 we launched an online survey," Babb said, "that helped us further refine recommendations."

HISTORY OF INEQUITY

The plan identifies a legacy of historic inequities in Minneapolis and racial inequality is part of Minneapolis' food system. It notes that "Just and equitable access to affordable, healthy, culturally relevant foods varies across the city, which is one domino effect from these structural practices put in place many decades ago."

This may be why the plan defines seven "food justice principals" to serve as the foundation and guide for both what will be worked on, as well as how that

work will be done.

A variety of specific strategies are outlined to support each of the six goals in the plan. Examples of these include: provide funding and support to connect local production and local consumption; increase the purchase of locally and sustainably grown foods by institutions and businesses within the city; improve land access in the city for growers and year-round growing; improve conditions for food system workers and small businesses; improve access to affordable, nutritious, locally-grown and culturally-relevant foods; change policies to better connect excess food and those in need; and, raise awareness of food system activities and research.

1 SHOVEL BAG BIN

struck him with such awe.

I am not Iggy Pop (though I think at one point in my life I would have liked to be), nor do I have access to the ocean. I am, however, working toward a morning routine that opens me up to the sun in Minnesota and the open, loving arms of Mother Nature in the a.m.

While I don't yet get up at dawn (it's on my agenda – I'm getting there) by 8 a.m. I have usually brewed coffee, offered my wife a good morning smooch, and downed my salt water and fresh lemon gulper. I step outside and plant my feet on the concrete patio behind our home in south Minneapolis, point my face east, and bow. Then I relax my back and bend forward to stretch the tightness of sleep out of my back, calves and hamstrings. Everything resists, so I breathe deeply into my belly; in through the nose (taking in fresh air and any Vitamin D the early hour has to offer) and out through the mouth (expelling toxins and bad energy). I breathe that way for about a minute, more if I feel like I need it.

I rise up slowly and begin a spinal twist exercise I learned from a Qi Gong teacher years ago. It gets my blood flowing, wakes up the kidneys and helps me feel like the wizened old men I always see doing Tai Chi on the brick piazzas of San Francisco city parks in the opening credits of 1990's rom-coms.

Then I collect crap. Literally.

We have a 70-pound smooth collie named Chester. He's a swarthy, muscular blonde boy who looks, quite frankly, like a well-heeled dingo. Our backyard is his litter box. While he tends to favor certain plots, he's not averse to mixing it up for the sake of surprise or his own convenience.

During the first summer of COVID, I built a sort of zen garden beneath the blue spruce in our backyard: pine mulch, boulders, a rock sculpture, a temple lantern, and a fist-sized meditating buddha facing due south for no particular reason. When the weather is warm enough, I prefer to light a stick of incense, jam it into the rocks and meditate in his good company.

Dog crap is the problem. Chester isn't averse to lightening his load in the shade of the tree or anywhere near it. In the past,



J.D. Fratzke and his dog, Chester, are caught in a "Groundhog Day of Dung" in their backyard.

with long work hours in restaurant kitchens and no real morning routine, I'd let this go a few days. I usually only took care of cleanup when it became unsightly and awful on the olfactory. On more than one occasion, I was in half lotus and finding my way to bliss when my inward breathing took me away from a fast track to internal galaxies and dropped me on the front door of a sun-baked outdoor dog latrine. I would have to stop, find the offending aromatic landmine, scoop it and bag it, and try to get zen again. Often, I'd be frustrated and try to do it quickly, looking down the road at an approaching late morning appointment or afternoon meeting. Losing time to doo-doo made me feel cheated out of precious minutes in the ocean of eternity. Inevitably my rushing would lead me to overlook another pile, which I would scoop up, bag and dispose, leading to more lost time and more frustration.

I found myself cursing at the task on a recent afternoon – literally asking myself

aloud why one dog had to dump so much – when I was backhanded across the cheek with the realization that the excrement would never end. As long as I had a dog (and I can't imagine never having a dog) there would always be poop in the backyard – rain or shine, summer or snowpack – and it would be up to me to shovel it and bag it. As unpleasant as it is, the circumstance is eternal. A Groundhog Day of dung.

Accepting that the repetitive slow bending, scooping and bagging of crap was a minor natural movement workout – a sort of gentle punctuation mark to my stretching and Qi Gong – led me also to understand that if I tended to the turds as they happened (rather than just when I felt like it or when they were too numerous to ignore) it simply made for lighter work that, once addressed, was over quickly.

That's where the minor satori came in: The stinky unpleasantnesses of life are most easily disposed of when addressed as

10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

While the plan has a 10-year time frame, implementation will be done in stages. "We will be starting out with a one to two-year implementation plan," said Babb. "There will be three work groups around priorities that the food council has determined to be both important and the most exciting to work on." These workgroups will be, first, on local food procurement; second, on land access and season extensions for growing food in the city; and, third, on fostering healthy food skills. The workgroups will include community members, as well as staff and food council members.

The plan may already be influencing recommendations about city policy. This spring, the food council will be submitting comments on the land use regulations that will be considered by the city council and mayor later year. "The food council voted at their last meeting," said Babb, "to submit a series of comments related to season extensions as it relates to deep winter green houses and regular green houses, as well as hoop houses."

Both Babb and Nolan recognize that while approving the plan is an essential step, implementation will take ongoing commitment, work and money.

"Implementation of the Minneapolis Food Vision will take action from the community and resources from the city, the business community and our philanthropic partners," said Nolan. "I look forward to working with city leaders to obtain the investment needed to bring parts of this vision to life."

they occur.

As someone who has spent a lifetime engaging in the unproductive emotional practice of stepping over my own pain or telling myself I'll address it later, the aforementioned lesson explained a lot of the difficulties I have brought into the human relationships in my life; particularly with those I love the most.

The stench of my unshoveled issues overpowered the fact that I shared a beautiful lawn with more people than just myself. So, like the literal practice of scooping, bagging and disposing of the morning doo-doo near my grassy meditation spot, I do my best to bend down every day and do the work of shoveling up the personal garbage I've allowed to fester. And just like when I first began taking care of the backyard accumulation issue on the regular, I'm often frustrated that there is so much and I curse myself for having neglected it in the first place... However, I'm learning the uselessness of that. Regret doesn't make what you don't want to carry go away. Only the work of addressing it can do that.

When I dropped what was, for this morning, the last tightly-trussed bag of Chester's intestinal handiwork into our alleyway trash bin, I thought of all the spring and summer road trips from my childhood. With no automobile air conditioning in the early 1980s, my family would rocket down rural country roads with the windows down, fully exposed to the nostril-puckering aroma of freshly spread manure on the soybean fields of southeastern Minnesota. The memory seemed to put a fine point on the day's contemplation and I smiled to myself, acknowledging not only what our ancestors discovered when they first domesticated goats and started dropping gourd seeds into holes they dug in the mud – but also the source of countless human works of art, music and literature: Dealing with crap is the best way to fertilize beautiful and necessary things... It's hard to think of better work worth doing.

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.

MARK GRANLUND: AN ARTIST GROUNDED IN NATURE

THE ART OF...

Meet Mark Granlund, a Minnesota landscape and still life artist, who frames questions and connections, blending symbolism, whimsy and academic depth in a well-developed fine art style. Granlund's landscape painting flows from his sustained love of, and respect for, the geography and ecology of Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. Seeing Nature as a whole system requires engaging all senses to capture and express the authenticity of a complex eco-system. In his paintings, Granlund builds detail, texture and layers using washes, fields of color, impasto strokes, glazing and scumbling, to bring light, textures and motion to the canvas.



By Suzie Marty

Granlund's abiding love of lakes and woods is rooted in his early years. His paintings pass on his delight in play and discovery, fostered early in his life while living in northern New Jersey on a lot with 100 trees to play amongst.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

I was born in Minneapolis, but my family moved for a short stint to South Bend, Ind. seven weeks after I was born. Soon, we moved and I grew up until I was eight years old in northern New Jersey not far from Manhattan, N.Y. We eventually landed in the western suburbs of Chicago where I lived with my family through high school. So, I am a Midwest and East Coast kid.

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER AND ART BACKGROUND?

I have a long career in the arts as an administrator, teacher and art maker. I received my masters of fine art degree from City University of New York at Brooklyn College. I moved back to Saint Paul to teach at Bethel College, my alma mater. I taught there for a couple years and then bopped around for a while. I eventually landed at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory developing art classes. I became the artist-in-residence there and helped to develop the education department. Over



Landscape commissions are an important part of Mark Granlund's work, which he limits to a few annually. Each project must include time spent on location, and in meditative solitude, to achieve the detail and nuance defining a Granlund painting. Above painting is titled "Bluff I."

to maintain and expand gardens throughout the city. I had a staff of up to 60 to help with the gardens, as well. I was Saint Paul's Arts and Gardens Coordinator for 14 years.

I continued with my own art practice and began to create large collaborative projects. For example, "The Book of Bartholomew" where I wrote 48 short stories and illustrated them with 16 other artists. I also led a team that created a display for the International Children's Festival six years in a row. These displays were made of as many as 10,000 flowers and included items like a 35-foot-tall spinning daisy and a 2,000-pound upside-down carved tree trunk. It was a fun period of big projects and big ideas.

For the last six years, I have been working for Metro Transit as their public art administrator and rededicating myself

nine years I developed and administered a very popular botanical art and illustration program, and created a dozen murals and installations with youth. I continued to make my own art and exhibited it widely around the Midwest.

Eventually, the City of Saint Paul tapped me to start a citywide beautification program administering the public gardens and maintaining the public art collection - one of the largest in the state. I developed the Blooming Saint Paul program working with more than 30 community groups and thousands of volunteers

to my own art practice. I have been exhibiting and selling my work consistently over the last five years and just completed a five-year creative arc dedicated to landscape paintings. Now, stimulated by collaborations with fellow artists, I am finding new inspirations in the studio. Where this will lead I do not know and am excited about the journey.


DO YOU HAVE A FOCUS?

A key part of my art practice is to continuously consider and hone an earth-friendly focus. As a landscape painter, I am very concerned about the plight of the planet and want to do all I can to make sure that my art-making is not adding to the problem. For instance, because cotton canvas is water and pesticide-intensive, I have switched to linen which is virtually organic when grown in its natural environment. My next step is creating my own stretcher bars from sustainably-forested lumber. This is just beginning, and I am very excited about it. I will soon be painting on the most sustainable canvases that are available.

WAS THERE A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU KNEW YOU WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST?

I've always drawn, as long as I can remember. In elementary school, people always recognized this talent and I got to be known for it. I always took art classes whenever I could and thoroughly enjoyed them, especially in high school. So, I have always considered myself creative and artistic, but I never really thought of making art as being a career. Even after graduating from college and then graduate school, I still never conceived of art as being a career, although at this point, I considered myself an artist. Although I was making a living as an art administrator and continued to make art, it wasn't until I was in my 40s that I actually realized I wanted to be an artist. There wasn't any particular defining moment, just a slow maturing into this realization.

More at www.markgranlund.com. Mark Granlund's work can be found at a variety of places, including Everett & Charlie.

 Suzie Marty is an artist and curator at Everett & Charlie art gallery in Linden Hills. She is also an avid supporter of buying local, and a marketing specialist for the *Southwest Connector*. Contact her at ads@swconnector.com.

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FINDING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS CULTURES

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Two summers ago, I was playing in a little acoustic trio out front of Everett and Charlie's Art Gallery, and a guy with a violin rode past on a bike. He circled back and walked toward us. When I noticed him, I said, "You wanna join in?" He nodded, opened his case, and started listening...



By **Larry LaVercombe**

I saw a play the other day. Or rather, I saw my son Jesse perform at The Jungle Theater three times in one week, in a play he co-wrote called, "King Gilgamesh and the Man of the Wild." The story is from Persia and is widely regarded as the oldest narrative in the western world. It's a story of Gilgamesh – 2/3 God, 1/3 human – and his deep friendship with Enkido, the man who is seduced from the wild by the Goddess Ishtar, and who then becomes the king's trusted friend and warrior.

Jesse's play is also about his current day friendship with Ahmed, who was a famous actor and activist in Iraq, who has now been banished from Iraq for portraying a gay man in an independent film.

Friendship often blossoms out of shared interests. Mine was to learn how to play guitar and sing better. And turns out that RayCurt Johnson has been sort of a gift to me. Not just a friend, but a mentor.

RayCurt reminds me of a guy I knew from New Orleans, but he's from Washington, DC. He learned how to sing in church and in the DC Youth Chorale, and he auditioned into the inaugural class of the Duke Ellington Performing Arts High School in 1976. After that he got a full vocal scholarship to the Eastman School of Music.

Ray travelled to Leipzig, Germany to make a video of a famous violinist. While in Leipzig, he joined a chamber orchestra, and when they heard how he could sing, the chamber orchestra was transformed into a cabaret show. Ray arrived in Minnesota in September of 2020.

On that first night when we met, Ray played a few songs with us, and then he had a beer and joined my crowd of pals who hang at the Harriet Brasserie on those live summer music nights. He's become part of our community.

No surprise, he's made lots of other friends here, too; among them, the activists and musicians at George Floyd Square. Having arrived just months after



RayCurt has played music around the world. He arrived in Minneapolis in September 2020.



RayCurt co-founded the George Floyd Brass Band, and arranges and coaches the group. The marching band features spoken word and message-driven lyrics.

the murder, he co-founded the George Floyd Brass Band, a kind of a marching jazz, with spoken word and message-driven lyrics. You might say Ray plays the "professor" role in that band, not singing much, but arranging and coaching. I've been welcomed to sit in with this group a couple times, jamming in the Marvin Gaye Room of the Modus Locus Art Gallery.

Here's the happiest part for me: RayCurt has become my teacher. After we got playing together a few more times, he came to a couple of my band practices, and soon after that I started taking lessons from him in ear training. He is teaching

me how to listen to identify intervals, how to hear a one-five interval in any key, and how to produce it with my voice.

Sometimes I play scales, and then sing them, naming the interval as I sing it. "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean." Five – Three, two, one, two, one, six, five, threeeee... Or an easy one: "Here Comes the Briedee..." One – Four, four foour...

He's also teaching me how to "feel the tonal resonance" in my skull. He's patient with my ridiculous lack of memory. And I am really improving. As soon as I started my singing lessons with Ray, my band was like: "Dude. Whatever he's saying, it's helping. Don't stop."

PLAYLIST

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GROWING TOGETHER

King Gilgamesh cries and hold his friend Enkido as he dies, and the king's grief leads him to make an attempt to become immortal. He searches the world, and he does find the ancient plant-elixir at the bottom of the sea that grants man immortality, but on his way home to cook it, a snake devours it while Gilgamesh sleeps. And so, Gilgamesh becomes a mortal man with only one skin to shed, only one life to live. But in the end, he does not regret not becoming an immortal god, because he has known human life, and the love and friendship in it.

We travel this temporal landscape, sharing energy and time, and, of course, we've all experienced different walks through life. My life has been very different from RayCurt's. And, as Ahmed says to Jesse in a scene taking place in the current day, "Your country was bombing my country, man. People I knew were dying, and now you're in a movie about it, for entertainment."

We experience each other in The Now, but each of our "Nows" is different because our histories are different. Our memories, our schooling, our battles and traumas affect our current experiences. If we are lucky, we grow from it, learn from each other, enjoy each other's company, sometimes even heal each other. In other moments, perhaps we come to understanding.

May you have a moment this year, when you enjoy this good fortune.

- Find RayCurt "Da Fiddla" Johnson at raycurt.com
- Find King Gilgamesh and the Man of the Wild at Kickstarter-Gilgamesh



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.

STRETCHING YOUR COMFORT ZONE

FROM YOUR CENTER WITHIN

When was that last time you were invited (OK maybe thrust!) out of your comfort zone? This theme has come up multiple times in my coaching sessions and with friends this past month. One common characteristic for each person: there is certainty it is a YES to move forward and step into the excitement, trepidation, and uncertainty of what is being requested.



By **Michele Rae**

In some cases, it is to move out of a circumstance that you have outgrown. You simply can no longer stay at that job, in that limiting mindset, or in that friendship in the old way. This certainty reminds me of the poem by Anais Nin:

"AND THE DAY CAME WHEN THE RISK TO REMAIN TIGHT IN A BUD WAS MORE PAINFUL THAN THE RISK IT TOOK TO BLOSSOM."

Other times it is a calling to step more fully into your authentic empowered self. It may be a health issue demanding attention, a request to step up your impact and visibly professionally (my big out of my comfort zone request last month!), a call to support another during a transition, or to lead a new project whose time has come to manifest. You have a tap on the shoulder to take your seat at the table utilizing your full array of gifts, talents, and passion.

How is stretching beyond your comfort zone showing up in your life? Who is supporting you?

Recently I have been invited to contribute offerings to the Conscious Awakening Network. It feels totally in my realm of truth and simultaneously out of the box for most people I know. It is stretching me beyond my 'public' comfort zone! From their website, "The Conscious Awakening Network (CAN) is a progressive media platform that provides inspirational programs on humanity's evolutionary path. We offer 100s of hours of videos to help expand your awareness, evolve your consciousness, and transform your

body/mind/spirit. Our 'out-of-the-box' interviews and educational programming includes topics such as ancient origins angelics, walk-ins, hybrids, starseed, extraterrestrials, ascension, deep space, contact, spiritual awakenings, channeling, health and healing, light language, the paranormal and more. Our forward-thinking videos help to normalize conversations around topics traditionally considered taboo."

Here are a couple of my contributions to this group. It feels like a huge stretch to be featured alongside Lynne McTaggart, Joe Dispenza, Deepak Chopra, Gregg Braden, and Sheila Seppi!

- Expanding and Exploring Consciousness, <https://youtu.be/7ixcJGAK-k>
- Accessing Higher Consciousness, <https://youtu.be/SjzPLeaMBJI>

There was another invitation to become an ambassador with the Galactic Alliance Organization (www.thegalacticalalliance.org/ambassadors).

We are a multidimensional, conscious evolution movement for anyone seeking universal knowledge, spiritual growth, education, and community. Amazing contributors here, as well!

In addition, I will be joining many of the contributors at a conference in April

in San Diego called Portal To Ascension. I am not sure what to expect, but I know it is a yes!

The past four years I have been meeting monthly with a group of eight people who intentionally live out of the box. We each challenge the status quo, structures that we know are not optimal and do not support all beings professionally. It has been uplifting to be seen, heard and validated. We are each co-creating new mindsets, paradigms and systems that enhance the likelihood that everyone counts and is invited to flourish. What a gift this group of amazing people has been. We are real, emotional, funny, and honest. They amplify my courage to continue to step into my discomfort as I stretch beyond my comfort zone.

How are you being invited to step out of your comfort zone? Who is supporting you? Now is the time. We are the ones we have been waiting for!



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.

A STUDY ABROAD

Traveling around the world always requires a sense of curiosity and adventure. More often than not, travel demands a willingness to be uncertain, confused, and bewildered. Studying abroad holds similar expectations, though with some added challenges, as living in a different country for prolonged periods of time means learning how to call a new place home. However, studying abroad in France in the fall was the best experience of my life, and I encourage everyone to seek new adventures outside of their comfort zone, no matter how small.



By **Evan Vezmar**

When I was given the opportunity to study abroad in Rennes, France, last fall, I looked most forward to a new independence that I would gain from living apart from my family. My family is extremely close-knit, and we always support each other with all of our responsibilities. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, I had been spending most of my time with my siblings and parents, so I wanted to forge my own path. Studying abroad gave me so much freedom, and much more responsibility, which I greatly appreciated. The simple act of walking with my friends to get coffee or taking the subway to school opened my eyes to a life that is wholly my own. And, as an added bonus, the temperature never dropped below freezing, so I was still able to walk to school in December.

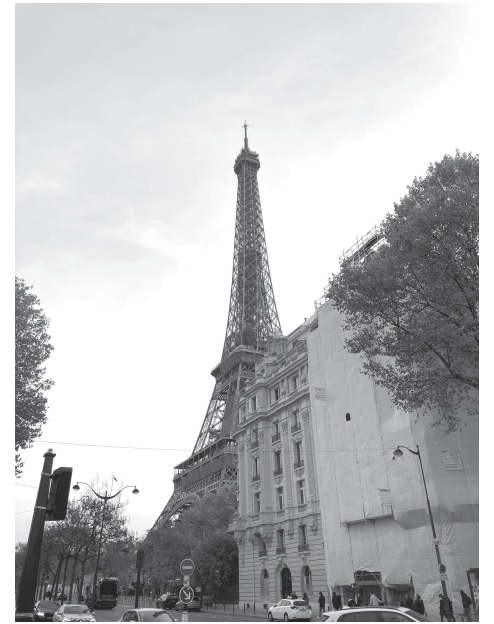
As well as finding newfound independence, I also met so many incredible and exciting people that I would have never met. Through the school program, I made American friends from all over the country, and we connected over our shared experiences in French class, sports, and the simple fact that we were all studying abroad. In addition, my host family showed me classic dishes from Brittany, took me to a soccer game in the Rennes stadium, and showed me around the city. I was able to join a fencing club as well, and my teammates welcomed me into their practices and competitions like I was one of their own fencers. The kindness of strangers struck me through my travels, because although I have been learning French for 11 years, I had to get used to the feeling of being a foreigner in a country I did not belong to. The transition from staying in France to fully living in



I had the opportunity to join a fencing club in Rennes and I participated in two tournaments in the semester. My fencing coach took a photo of me before my first tournament, which was a national tournament in Dax. I placed 25th out of 204 fencers in the two-day competition, and I had a wonderful experience receiving advice and support from my French teammates.



My host father and I went to a forest one afternoon and searched for mushrooms. It was my first time doing this, and I learned so much about which mushrooms were edible, and how to find the best ones nestled underneath oak trees.



I traveled with 3 of my friends independently at the end of November to Paris for a weekend. As it was my first time in Paris, we visited many of the popular sites, such as the Louvre, the Notre Dame, and l'Arc de Triomphe. My friends and I were able to climb up to the 2nd floor of the Eiffel Tower and were treated to an amazing view of the city.



I have always been a huge fan of soccer, so when my host father and brother offered to take me to a Stade Rennais game, I was ecstatic. My host father took a photo of me right after Stade Rennais scored their first goal against Dynamo Kyiv in a Europa League game.

France was difficult, but once I felt comfortable with being uncomfortable and uncertain, I appreciated both my experiences and Rennes as a whole.

Traveling is costly, and it is a major barrier for many people to travel. But studying abroad illustrated to me that travel is not completely about location and the sights we see, and rather the peo-

ple we meet and our own emotions as we discover the world. Travel can be simply within your own city or state - it does not have to be a luxurious vacation to an expensive resort or famous location. I urge everyone to seek new experiences and to see for themselves what the world has to offer in terms of people, culture, and joy.



This roman-style coliseum was in Nimes. During our fall holidays, the class traveled to the South of France and we spent a week exploring and visiting various cities and locations. Nimes was an extraordinary city, as its architecture mixes various cultural influences. The arena is used now for bullfighting, a nod to the city's Spanish history.

Evan Vezmar is a junior at Blake School, and is on the staff of the Blake School *Spectrum* newspaper. He resides in Edina.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

BLUE HUE FOR LAKE HARRIET BANDSHELL

Lake Harriet Bandshell repairs have begun.

The first phase of repairs, scheduled throughout spring and early summer, includes updating Bandshell windows, remodeling the bathrooms in the pavilion so that they are accessible, and repainting all building side-walls. Work will pause this summer to accommodate, as much as possible, concessions at Bread and Pickle, Minneapolis Music and Movies in the Parks, and other scheduled events. Work will resume after Labor Day to complete any unfinished work started this spring and replace the roofs of the Bandshell and associated buildings.



Over the winter, the new Bandshell color was announced as a grayish-blue color called Bluestone (left side of mockup pictured above) and an Open House was held in January. Afterward, many people shared a preference for a more blue color like the Bandshell previously displayed in the 1990s and early 2000s.

FESTIVAL OF GARAGE SALES MAY 6

This year's Festival of Garage Sales in Bryn Mawr is Saturday, May 6. This event draws people from across the state, and has included over 100 sales in the past. Register your garage sale with the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association to be on the map and get a sign. Utepils Brewing is offering a free beverage token to all registered sales. The registration fee helps the BMNA cover the costs of printing/promoting the event, traffic control, coordinating food trucks, and portable bathrooms.

EARTH DAY CLEAN-UPS APRIL 22

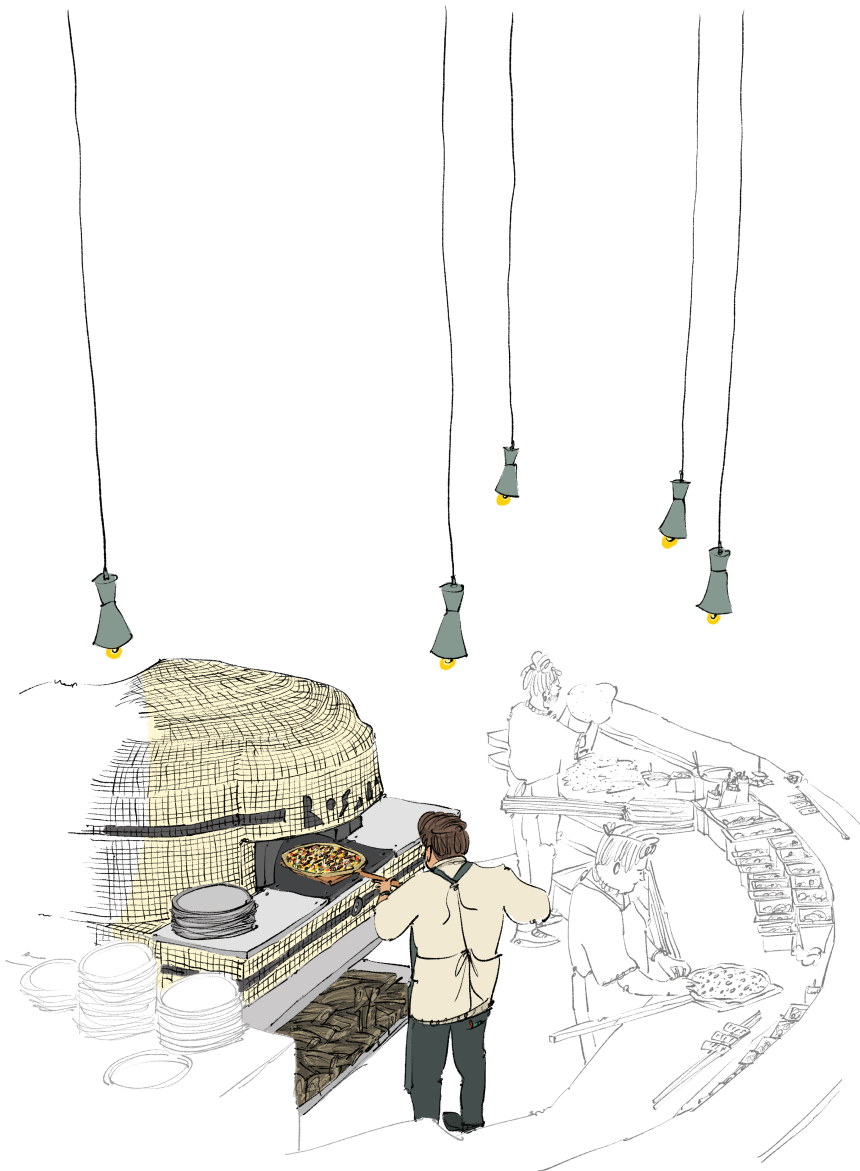
Local neighborhood groups are holding clean-up events on Saturday, April 22. Look on neighborhood association websites for details. Find information about park clean ups at www.minneapolisparcs.org.

KINGFIELD PORCHFEST COMING JUNE 15

Kingfield PorchFest will be on Thursday, June 15 from 6-9 p.m. On this single summer evening, Kingfield musicians will perform acoustic music outdoors at their respective homes, or at neighbor's porch or yard, while others stroll through the neighborhood, enjoying the sounds. This event regularly features over 50 musical performances dozens of Kingfield stages. Register at <https://bit.ly/Porchfest2023>

REPORT ON ELECTRONICS RECYCLING EVENT

On Sept. 24, 2022, 15 neighborhoods from across Minneapolis held an Electronics Recycling Event at Mayflower Church in Tangletown with Repowered (formerly Tech Dump). They collected over 16 tons, or 32,000 pounds of electronics and small appliances – over seven times what was expected. “Unfortunately, due to the realities of electronics recycling in Minnesota at this time, safe recycling and disposal costs are high,” remarked planners. “Even with collecting \$5,000 in donations at the event, the final vendor fees were much higher than expected due to the volume and weight collected. Repowered generously waived their staff's overtime fees for the event, which brought each of the 15 neighborhood's portion of the expense down to around \$700 each.



WALKIN' AROUND CHECKIN' STUFF OUT.

Slingin' pizzas at Rosalia (2811 West 43rd Street).

CITY COUNCIL RACES: ENDORSEMENTS

PALMISANO ENDORSED BY DFL

On April 1, at the Ward 13 Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party convention, Linea Palmisano was endorsed for reelection in her race for Ward 13 city council member. She won on the first ballot with votes from 142 of the 193 delegates. Kate Mortenson received 5 votes and 46 people voted for no endorsement. Mortenson said that she intends to continue in the race. The filing deadline for appearing on this year's city ballot is Aug. 15.



Linea Palmisano



Kate Mortenson

UPCOMING DFL WARD CONVENTIONS

The Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) will hold Ward conventions for Ward 7 on May 21 online, for Ward 8 on May 20 online, Ward 10 on May 13 in-person, (location yet to be determined,) and for Ward 11 on May 21 online. See <https://minneapolisdf.org> for more information.

WARD 7 CANDIDATE FORUM ON ENERGY

There will be Ward 7 city council candidate forum on energy and climate justice hosted by the group, Community Power, on Tuesday, May 9 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Loring Community Arts Center (1382 Willow St.). The candidates who are expected to attend include Katie Cashman, Kenneth Foxworth, Mark Globus, and Scott Graham.

SEAN SHERMAN TO SPEAK AT MCAD

Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) is pleased to announce that author and award-winning chef Sean Sherman will be the spring 2023 commencement speaker and recipient of an honorary doctorate. Past speakers and recipients included National Endowment for the Arts Chairperson Maria Rosario Jackson 2022 and Mohawk artist Skawennati in 2021.

“We are honored to welcome Chef Sherman to the MCAD community. He is an example of what creative leadership can do; that is, bring about profound change to ingrained perceptions and entrenched systems,” said MCAD President Sanjit Sethi.

MCAD ANNUAL ART AUCTION MAY 19

Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) hosts an annual art auction to raise funds for students in need of financial support. As one of the creative pillars in the Twin Cities, Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) hosts an annual art auction to raise funds for students in need of financial support. Every year the event showcases established artists from across the country, who donate their artwork, and gives attendees the chance to add paintings, photographs, sculptures, or ceramics to their own personal art collection. Tickets start at \$150 for the Friday, May 19, 2023 event at the MCAD Main Gallery, 2501 Stevens Avenue South.

CITY BRIEFS

1301 WEST LAKE ST PROJECT

On April 13, the city council approved a financing plan for the Common Bond Communities project at 1301 West Lake that includes a six-story apartment building on a one-acre parcel of land that has been vacant for 15 years. It will be built in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Seven Points Mall and will include 120 unit of what is considered affordable housing for families making between 60 and 30% of the median income for the region. Under the plan the city will provide up to \$32 million for the project that will be paid back using the new property taxes that will generated by the project.

2023 CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN

On April 19, a city council committee received a presentation about the draft 2023 Climate Equity Plan. The plan updates and replaces the 2013 Climate Action Plan and sets a goal to significantly reduce climate pollution and become carbon neutral by 2050 with a focus actions that can be taken over the next five years. Comments about the plan are being taken online until June 5, followed by a June 7 hearing at the Public Health and Safety committee, a Green Zone Summit final Plan presentation on June 10 and council adoption set for June 15.

BRYANT AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION

Phase 1 (42nd to 50th) of the Bryant Avenue South reconstruction project last completed last fall and work started on phase 2 from 42nd to Lake Street this April. Prior to that, on March 31, the city's director of Transportation Engineering and Design announced changes to the design that was approved by the city council and mayor. The announcement said, “Public Works re-evaluated the design and is working to implement the following changes to Phase 2.” Those include widening driveways aprons, moving on-street parking to the right side of the driving lane, removing some chicanes and moving the bikeway next to the roadway with green space between the bikeway and sidewalk.

COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON POLICE OVERSIGHT APPOINTMENTS

City elected officials, staff and a council committee has reviewed and is recommending 15 people to serve the newly formed commission that will, according to the new ordinance, “provide a forum for the public to have meaningful engagement in police oversight and shall serve as part of the deliberative review process.” Southwest area recommended appointees include Mary Dedeaux-Swinton for Ward 7, Fartun Weli for Ward 8, Alexis Pederson for Ward 10, Philip Sturm for Ward 11, Nichelle Williams-Johnson for Ward 13, as well as two Southwest appointees of the mayor, Louis Smith who is lives in Ward 13, and Latonya Reeves who live in Ward 7.

CLOSURE OF PENN AVE./S. WAYZATA BLVD.

As part of the construction of the Green Line Extension (GLE) LT project, work is continuing on the Bryn Mawr Station area in 2023. As part of this work, a full closure of the intersection of Penn Avenue and South Wayzata Boulevard in Minneapolis is needed to conduct utility work, as well as road reconstruction. The roadway closure is currently anticipated to begin as early as June 2023 and last for approximately two months. Non-motorized access will be preserved through the work zone. Visit the Meetings and Events page at GreenLineExt.org for information. For urgent questions about this work, call the GLE RT Project Construction Hotline at 612-373-3933.



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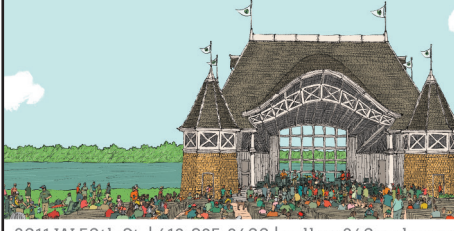
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