



Guests turn their backs and raise their fists in peaceful protest against police officers visiting George Floyd Square. People were gathering for a candlelight vigil on the third anniversary of George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

## 3rd annual event brings joy, solidarity to George Floyd Square

By JILL BOOGEN

Embracing the community-centered theme "Ubuntu," a term from South Africa that loosely means "I am because we are," family, friends and supporters gathered May 25-27, 2023 for the annual Rise & Remember celebration to honor George Floyd and uplift one another.

Floyd's murder at the hands of Minneapolis police continues to bring people together from across vast networks – and even oceans – to 38th and Chicago, and the same was true on the third anniversary of his death. The three-day celebration welcomed visitors, including Ndaba Mandela, grandson of South African President Nelson Mandela, to a candlelight vigil and festival at George Floyd Square, a conference and a gala at Paisley Park.

The vigil was a solemn occasion, its deep significance made apparent early in the evening when Minneapolis police, in-  
RISE & REMEMBER » 2

## Coliseum reconstruction boosting East Lake revival

Community ownership key to partnership between businesses moving into space

By IRIC NATHANSON

The reconstruction of the iconic Coliseum Building, now underway, marks an important milestone in the drive to rebuild East Lake Street.

During the civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the 100-year-old landmark at 27th and Lake was badly damaged and has remained vacant and boarded for the last three years.

Now, thanks to the efforts of the non-profit Redesign Inc., the Coliseum is undergoing a \$29 million make over.

In 2021, Redesign purchased the 85,000-square-foot building from an out-of-state owner who had planned to tear it down.

"That is something we never considered doing," said Taylor Smrikarova, who is overseeing the Coliseum redevelopment for Redesign. "We are sometimes asked if it wouldn't be cheaper and more efficient to demolish the building and build new on the same site, but that is not the case.

"New construction is nearly as expensive as rehabilitation so we really would not have saved much money by starting over with a new building. And, if we  
COLISEUM RECONSTRUCTION » 8

## Reflections on 10 years since Marriage Equality Law was passed in Minnesota

# How love won: 10 years later

By JAN WILLMS

It has been 10 years since the Marriage Equality Law passed in Minnesota – a history-making and life-changing event for many people.

In celebration of Pride month, MSP Film Society recently screened "How Love Won," a documentary film by Michael McIntee. It explores the nuts and bolts of a campaign to provide the same legal rights of marriage to the LGBTQ community that heterosexuals enjoy. The screening was held at the Main Cinema, 115 SE Main.

The film was released in 2016 and takes a close look at how an attempt to pass a bill that had failed in 30 other states was successful in Minnesota. Republican legislator Michele Bachmann was hoping to get an amendment passed that would ban same-sex marriage, and she support-



Scott Dibble of Minneapolis is one of 14 queer legislators serving in Minnesota.

HOW LOVE WON » 3

# CAUGHT BETWEEN

Over 11 years in, their family court case is still spread between two states and getting worse. Now she's been ordered to pay fines or go to jail because her daughter won't go to dad's house.

She lived in Minnesota for only five months and her daughter was born in Iowa, but Dani\* has been dragged into family court in Minnesota nearly every one of the past 11 years by her ex-boyfriend.

She's been trying to figure out what happened and why things have gotten worse instead of better.

She did what everyone tells women to do when they're being abused. She left.

She fled back home to Iowa when she was six weeks pregnant, determined to raise her baby in a violence-and-alcohol-free environment with the help of her family.

And then, before her daughter had even been born, Dani found herself in



By Tesha M. Christensen

family court. Her ex-boyfriend had filed for custody of their unborn child two months before her due date.

She filed herself in Iowa then, but Sherburne County Judge Mary Yunker, the same one who presided over the controversial Autumn Hallow case, ruled that the case be in Minnesota instead of Iowa. (Autumn Hallow was murdered by her father and step-mother despite repeated abuse reports and attempts by her mother

in Yunker's courtroom to protect her.)

Today, neither party resides in Sherburne County, Judge Yunker retired in November 2022, and Dani has asked repeatedly to have the case moved to the state where her daughter has lived her entire life. But it remains in Minnesota.

Dani finds herself stuck between two states. Iowa begins investigations, but is then told by Minnesota that it will follow through on them. Instead, the issues dealt with in Minnesota are in regards to the latest motions filed by her ex-boyfriend Bryan.

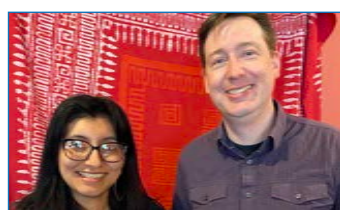
"The nightmare doesn't exist until you're in it," said Dani. "And then no one wants to talk about it."

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Meet Talia McWright, one of the summer interns at TMC Publications CO

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Longfellow Business Association, SCCA partner with Redesign

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Got problems with your lawn? The City Gardener talks about solutions.

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# 3RD ANNUAL RISE & REMEMBER BRINGS SOLIDARITY, JOY TO GFS

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cluding Chief Brian O'Hara, paid a visit to the Square. In response, several hundred guests turned away from them and raised their fists in peaceful protest.

"If they was here for solidarity, why didn't they stay"? asked one community member.

Once the program was underway, the evening's emcee Rev. Jeanette Rupert encouraged people to come together in solidarity "to stand in the gaps so we don't have more names on the street" – a reference to the names of lives taken at the hands of police that are painted in block letters along Chicago Ave. known as the "Mourning Passage."

Music, including songs sung by Floyd's aunt Laura Stevens, his uncle Ike Floyd and other performers, sounded throughout the Square. Vine Raynell delivered a powerful spoken word piece, and guests were invited to lay rose petals and place candles throughout the memorial. At dusk, the Brass Solidarity band led a procession to Say Their Names cemetery, where the Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Chorale and 29:11 International Exchange choir delivered a soulful tribute to Floyd, the community caretakers and the ongoing movement for justice and Black liberation.

The following evening a gala was held at Paisley Park to support the conservation work of the George Floyd Global Memorial (GFGM). Music included riveting performances by 29:11, Buddy McLain (Amir Locke's dad), Ike Floyd, Julius Collins, Thomasina Petrus, Sounds of Blackness and Jamecia Bennett, and guests were treated to delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts curated by Sean Sherman (the Sioux Chef) and Mecca Bos of the BIPOC Foodways Alliance.

As keynote speaker, Ndaba Mandela remarked on the United States' refusal to apply the term "apartheid" to ourselves, despite Jim Crow and other laws in this country that literally segregated people by the color of their skin. He likened the system of apartheid that imprisoned his grandfather in South Africa with the system that caused the murder of George Floyd here in Minnesota – two people from two continents, with two different backgrounds, both victims of the same system of oppression.

## JOY AND HEALING

More than 100 volunteers helped with the celebration, which concluded on May 27 with a day-long festival at the Square that featured Black-owned businesses offering clothing, jewelry, plants, books and more.

On being part of the festival, Antoinette Mitchell of Splash of Royalty Designz said, "It's a great way to honor [George Floyd] and come be together."

The always-free clothing from the People's Closet was available for people to browse and take. Makers and healers shared their services and wares in the self-care fair, with massages given free of



Ndaba Mandela, grandson of South African President Nelson Mandela and keynote speaker at the Rise & Remember gala, gets into some old-school hip hop from Chubb Rock on May 27, 2023. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

charge throughout the day. And a team from Sidewalk Talk was on hand for anyone who wanted to talk.

"In this world we live in it's about making connection," said Sidewalk Talk's Harry Adler. "We're a group of listeners and we listen to whoever wants to share where they're at in their journey, whether a journey based off being here or a journey in life in general."

Art showed up in many forms. Some of the offerings preserved by GFGM were displayed on easels along the Mourning Passage. Harvest Best Academy showcased student art projects created through its conflict resolution program. One, an identity project, had students look into themselves and talk about roots, where emotions come from, and the lived experiences that contribute to their identities – both visible and non-visible.

"By doing these projects we learned how to communicate with ourselves and

let us know what we're feeling and experiencing, because we can't really expect other people to if we don't know how to process ourselves," said Cassie Walker, the school's student family liaison who was serving as a conflict resolution teacher for part of the year. "We're learning how to process, we're learning how to communicate, how to identify feelings."

The Chicago Ave. Fire Arts Center (3749 Chicago Ave.) opened its doors for a GFGM rememory exhibit, Voices of the Unheard, which they are hosting through Aug. 19.

Two 24-foot expressionistic live public art pieces were also created outdoors throughout the day. Led by artist seangarrison, people were asked to recall their emotions and feelings the day George Floyd was killed and channel that emotion onto the canvas.

"The hope is to have younger kids come through and add the hope, the

peace and the love, 'cause it'll be harder for them to process what they felt in that moment," he said. "We do this for them... We have [some people] paint that heaviness – and these younger kids to paint what tomorrow looks like."

Brass Solidarity and the Brooklyn Park Lions Drum & Dance team brought people together. So did speakers and musicians on the main stage, including Lewee Blaze and headliner Chubb Rock, who closed out the day by getting the crowd jumping with a medley of old-school hip hop classics.

GFGM hopes to create a permanent memorial and museum to house the more than 5,000 offerings that have been left by visitors to the Square. More information about GFGM is at [georgefloydglobalmemorial.org](http://georgefloydglobalmemorial.org).



Candles and lanterns are lit during the candlelight vigil on May 25. (Photo by Jill Boogren)



A volunteer takes a quiet moment to reflect at the Say Their Names cemetery during the Rise & Remember Festival on Saturday, May 27. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

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**HOW LOVE WON** >> from 1

ed putting it on the ballot for the people to vote on. That amendment failed, and LGBTQ activists moved forward to pass a bill that would build on this momentum and make marriage legal for everyone.

Following the screening which took viewers back to the discussions, tactics and strong emotions that flourished at the time, director McIntyre facilitated a panel discussion on what had happened then and what is happening now.

Former Minnesota United For All Families Campaign Director Richard Carlbom, co-author of the bill, State Senator Scott Dibble and UpFront Executive Director Kat Rohn, all of whom had been a part of that campaign and resulting success from 10 years ago, participated in the panel.

McIntee's documentary could be called a blueprint for how to have conversations about difficult issues and address the hate that may be present. Those small conversations, in schools and church basements across the state in rural and urban settings made the difference, pointed out panelists after the film showing. "Conversations will change hearts and minds," said Carlbom.

The filmmaker focuses on people who would directly be affected by the legislation they were hoping to pass. Activists studied carefully what had worked and had not worked in previous states that were trying to pass the marriage equality bill and had failed. They embraced the tough conversations. And love won.

**HOW THE NARRATIVE WAS CHANGED**

Reflecting on the film, Carlbom said he remembered fundraisers, fundraisers, fundraisers.

Dibble said seeing the film again reminded him, especially with some of the current issues regarding LGBTQ across the nation, that Minnesota was able to stand up and achieve passage of the marriage equality law. "The whole state was able to fight, and the film reminds me that we can do so again," he said.

"I think the power of story, of people showing up for one another, the story of Minnesotans all over the state having these conversations is what the film brings out," said Rohn. "I think about my parents and grandparents sitting in church basements and having these conversations about us. That's what changed this narrative."

When McIntee asked about the current situation across the country regarding the LGBTQ community, Carlbom noted that in 2021, there were zero laws against



Panelists Richard Carlbom, Scott Dibble, and Kat Rohn with facilitator Michael McIntee, director of "How Love Won," chat during a recent screening in Minneapolis. (Photo by Jan Willms)

trans individuals on the books. Today there are 23 anti-trans laws that have been passed.

According to Dibble, what is happening today is shocking and deeply disturbing. He cited the circumstances of women in the 50s trying to enter the professional work force, the Japanese internment, and the civil rights struggles. Although progress can always draw pushback, Dibble said progress always prevails. "With integrity, courage and dignity we will stand up and tell our stories," he stated.

Carlbom said that with recent pro-LGBTQ legislation passed in the state, Minnesota has become a shining beacon for the 21 states that have had anti-trans laws passed.

"We are going to dig in deep here and do everything we can to show up," Carlbom said. "People have been empowered to say things out loud that they have been thinking for a long time, and they are getting on school boards and city councils. We have to show up at Pride, we have to be visible, and we have to continue these conversations we have started to make people realize how proud of ourselves we are. We have to fight this fight day in and day out, every year."

Rohn said she applied for her job with UpFront because "we need this moment. National polls are at 71 percent in favor of gay marriage across the country. I firmly believe we will have these same conversations about trans," Rohn said.

safer Minnesota. It makes these conversations we have to have a little easier."

Dibble talked about the importance of bread and butter issues for everyone, and he also said the things learned from the LGBTQ community are so profound. "We have to win the next election, he stated. "The Minnesota United For All Families campaign is so important."

Rohn said she thinks real strength is so much built on decades of grassroots organizing. Referring to the work done on behalf of the marriage equality law, she said people did not just show up. "This is a model for moving forward. You can start building a sustaining movement across the country. That is the goal."

**'YES, WE ARE BETTER OFF'**

When McIntee asked the panel if things were better now than 10 years ago, the panel agreed that they were.

"We have 14 queer legislators in Minnesota," Dibble said. We have three women of color, and two of them are queer."

Carlbom reflected on the great people he is meeting these days. He admitted that hatred and uncertainty are still out there and very real for many, but the organizing has continued. "Queer people and trans people have been elected and lead the country," he said. "We have a lot to be proud of 10 years later in Minnesota. There have been so many great victories. We are definitely better off 10 years later."

"I worry a little about going to bathrooms," Dibble said. "That can be real scary in this moment, but it is exactly the same stuff I heard. Growing up in middle school. Ten years later on there are more of us. We are in a better place, and we need to keep persevering."

More people are coming out and having a marriage experience, according to Rohn. "Young people get to see it, and I am proud of what we have done. Yes, we are better off."

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# GEN Z NEEDS STORIES, TOO

## A GEN Z PERSPECTIVE

BY TALIA MCWRIGHT



Across many cultures and generations, storytelling has played an immense role in our understanding of the world. It is the tradition of storytelling in all its unique forms that connect us all.

Storytelling contains the capacity to establish identity, fight to preserve and provoke change. In our current culture it seems that this tradition has taken a different shape. Stories are to be captured in no longer than eight seconds; about the time of the average person's attention span. This shift can sound as if value is lost, but that is simply untrue. People, especially of my generation, can scroll and still want to read the paper. The truth is, people will always need stories and storytellers that adapt and change as the world does.

People often express that their distaste for journalism is due to a lack of trust. Each of us have our own preconceived notions and biases. Thus we tend to pay attention to stories that align with our personal values and beliefs. At the same time, many seek journalism that is as unbiased as possible. Unbiased journalism is the kind of work I strive to create. Stories that tell the truth, and represent multiple points of view, so that you the reader can form your own opinion.

It is equally important for journalists to care about storytelling. Along with trust, people want to know that reporters care about their beats, and the communities they represent. As racial injustice, inclusivity and diversity are topics that are beginning to be brought up more frequently and openly, the world of journalism has leaned into stories that relate.

Though this can be extremely positive, it also presents challenges. Who is telling these stories? Do they care? And do they really understand?

As a biracial, Black woman, I often explain that I have two sides of history that exist within me. One of the oppressed and oppressor. This does not at all sum up what it is to be biracial, and I do make light of the statement. I am proud of being biracial, and of being Black. What it does mean, however, is that my experiences with race and culture are very nuanced, and I am fortunate to have this awareness. To understand the ways in which I am privileged, along with negative ways in which I have been and can be perceived in the world. As a Black journalist, I strive to write stories of the multitudes of BIPOC communities in a way that uplifts, honors, respects and are true.

Local journalism is highly encouraged for new journalists that are excited about reporting. In order to write good stories we must start in our own backyards. But it's more than that. Our "backyards" are full of rich history, and wonderful people, organizations and businesses that do amazing things each day. Sometimes you have to be a tourist in your own home state to be able to see what already exists with clarity. I love writing about our Twin



Traveling to places like Belize has challenged Talia McWright's storytelling and writing abilities, and allowed her to experience the world in new ways. (Photo submitted)

Cities communities like Como, Midway, Frogtown, Longfellow, and Nokomis because I am able to do just that.

As a 21-year-old journalism student, I have been fortunate to travel to countries like Guatemala and Belize through study abroad programs at Bethel University. Traveling has challenged my writing and storytelling abilities, and allowed me to experience the world in ways I never would have before. I've seen how Guatemalan families persevere after a volcano eruption took many lives and destroyed entire neighborhoods. How communities in Belize thrive using resources from the jungle, and more. I feel extremely fortunate of the travel experiences I've had, and even more grateful for the relationships formed.

I can say first hand that, yes, people of my generation do care about journalism.

We do want to engage in our communities and have awareness of what things

currently and historically are affecting the world. Gen Z has the negative connotation that we're hyper aware and hyper sensitive. What may be viewed as a weakness is our greatest strength. We care, seek the truth, and are outspoken about it. That being said, there is always room for all of us to learn and be open to constantly learning, changing and growing, myself included. The transition to digital is clearly what our generations are leaning towards, though no one can deny the glorious feeling of the turn of a page. The beautiful thing is that they can coexist and continuously evolve.

*Born and raised in Saint Paul, Talia McWright is incoming senior at Bethel University, majoring in journalism with a minor in creative writing and studio art. She believes that journalism is alive and well, and will continue to thrive as there are many stories deserving to be told, and readers awaiting.*

## Three kinds of trust in our community

### TRUST

This column revolves around three kinds of trust. There is the Donald L. Hammen Trust. There is what I call the Stories and Journeys Readership Trust, as well as the Elder Voices (Telling Our Stories, Sharing Our Journeys) Trust.

### DONALD L. HAMMEN TRUST

I have taken a big step in my journey toward life completion. I now have an estate plan. It includes the Donald L. Hammen Trust and a will. I have a power of attorney, my sister-in-law, and a health care directive with my sister-in-law as my primary agent. She is a Messenger reader in Iowa. Not long ago, I wasn't sure I had an estate. Christine Courtney of Courtney Law Office assured me that I have an estate. Apparently the fact that I own property qualifies me. She did the research and created the legal documents which myself and my sister-in-law signed recently. There is a part in the Donald L. Hammen Trust where I list to whom I want my assets, such as they are, to be distributed. I have included TMC Publications CO. My reasons might seem obvious given that I am grateful that TMC Publications publishes Stories and Journeys in the Messenger and Connector. That aside, dear reader, have

## STORIES AND JOURNEYS

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



you thought about including TMC Publications CO in your estate plan?

Trust me. If you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river(flow) of life experiences that is Stories and Journeys.

### STORIES AND JOURNEYS READERSHIP TRUST

OK. I made up this trust. Allow me to explain.

Trust me. This is for real. It's May 25, 2023. I am at the monthly meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council (MRRRC) AFL-CIO at the United Labor Center. President Leif Grina is facilitating a group discussion around the theme, "Culture Trumps Politics." He invites us to share what our daily life experiences reveal about how we are perceived as elders/retirees vs. how we are portrayed in the culture via marketing ads and other

media. I offer that, from my perspective, we are invisible as we exist in the dominant culture. I go on to say it depends on cultural context in which one is an elder. For example, I perceive Native American cultures recognizing and embracing being an elder.

So, dear reader, what daily life experiences have revealed how you are perceived as an elder/retiree? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me at [tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com).

Next, seemingly out of nowhere, Louise Sundin, part of the MRRRC leadership and southwest Minneapolis resident, suggests that I tell everyone about the column I write. I'm stunned! I say, "How do you know about the column?" She says, "I read it!" As in the Southwest Connector.

Internally, I felt like I had just been found out. I take the mic from President Grina. I vaguely remember saying that the column is called Stories and Journeys. It appears in two south Minneapolis neighborhood newspapers, the Messenger and Connector, published by TMC Publications. I remember saying that the current column is headlined, "Goodbye, Vic Rosenthal, and thank you." Many people in MRRRC knew Vic. Beyond that I was just rambling hoping I could figure out a way to stop talking.

President Grina gave me that opportunity to stop talking when he tapped me on the shoulder as if to suggest it was time to

give him the mic, which I did with a feeling of relief, so that the next person could speak.

The second week of every month I manage to settle down to write Stories and Journeys. When I send it to Tesha M. Christensen for editing and publication, I have always trusted that someone besides Tesha and myself reads the column. Occasionally – like now – a reader reveals themselves to me. I trust there is readership of Stories and Journeys. Sometimes you reveal yourself as in the case of Louise.

### ELDER VOICES (TELLING OUR STORIES, SHARING OUR JOURNEYS) TRUST

Once again, I made up this trust. Allow me to explain. This is a reboot of Elder Voices that last met in February of 2019.

First gathering will be Friday, July 28 in Greater Longfellow at Turtle Bread (4205-34th St.), 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Location, date and time for southwest Elder Voices is under consideration. I intend to be there. I trust some of you will join me. Meeting notifications will appear in this column for now. I trust I'll see some of you at Turtle Bread. A lot has happened since February 2019.

In gratitude.

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

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Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be e-mailed to [tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com](mailto:tesha@longfellownokomisemessenger.com). Unsigned letters will not run.

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# LBA, SCCA partner with Redesign

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Gabriela Ortiz-Riera wants all businesses in Seward and Longfellow to thrive. Through her new role with Redesign, Inc., she's seeking to help businesses build relationships with fellow community members and use each other as resources.

Ortiz-Riera was hired earlier this year to replace outgoing Longfellow Business Association (LBA) staff member Kim Jakus. While Jakus supported only the LBA, Ortiz-Riera's role has been expanded. She's officially a staff member at the Redesign (2619 E Franklin Ave.), and will split her time three ways, supporting Redesign, the LBA and the Seward Civic and Commerce Association (SCCA).

"The way Redesign, LBA, and SCCA make Longfellow and Seward a better community is how they all want to ensure all businesses thrive," stated Ortiz-Riera.

The partnership between the three organizations grew from meeting regularly together. Plus, all three had part-time job openings at the same time. The two neighborhood groups, Longfellow Community Council (LCC) and Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG), also join the business groups to keep updated on projects.

Ortiz-Riera is based out of the Redesign office on Franklin Ave., but the three organizations still operate independent-



*Gabriela Ortiz-Riera enjoys drawing, painting, journaling, and crocheting. You can find her in Seward at Seward Cafe, and in Longfellow at Loons Coffee. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)*

ly and maintain their non-profit statuses. The intent is to cut down on any redundancies and increase capacity.

Ortiz-Riera graduated from Columbia Heights High School and earned her bachelor's degree in public policy from Augsburg University. She resides in Fridley.

Hear more from Ortiz-Riera:

## WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS POSITION?

I find value in a place with a community because it allows everyone to know each other and know they are not alone – that there are folks who support them and

## Redesign's new executive director believes in power of community development

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Redesign is working with community members to re-shape areas that were damaged in the civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd. They are leading the projects at the Coliseum building and former U.S. Bank property near E. Lake and Minnehaha Ave./27th.

At their helm is Andy Hestness, who came back to Redesign, Inc. (2619 E Franklin Ave.) after a stint away, drawn back because he believes in the power of community development.

Learn more from Hestness:

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF REDESIGN AND WHAT DOES THE ORGANIZATION DO?

Redesign was founded in 1969 to build and preserve affordable housing in the community. The organization grew as a collaboration of a local church and a group of Seward Neighborhood activists that had taken over the Seward West Project Area Committee (PAC), and were agitating for a community-led redevelopment approach rather than the near-wholesale neighborhood demolition and reconstruction initially proposed by the Minneapolis HRA in the Seward West area. Growing in scale over the years, Seward West Redesign became Seward Redesign, and now Redesign, Inc. as the geographic focus grew.

Over time Redesign also expanded from affordable housing into commercial corridor and small business support, as well as leading community planning efforts.

Now Redesign is a geographically-based nonprofit organization serving five neighborhoods of Minneapolis: Seward, Longfellow, Cooper, Howe and Hiawatha. Redesign has developed and manages seven commercial buildings providing nearly 100,000 square feet of commercial space in the community, as well as supporting the management and preservation of over 800 units of affordable housing.

We provide small business technical assistance and administer small business grants from the city and a loan program for business investment in our service area.

We have been working closely with partners on the rebuilding and reimag-



*Andy Hestness said, "Being led by people within community allows us to design and implement projects that meet the dreams and visions of community." (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)*

ing of the Lake Street corridor after the damage to the commercial corridor during the civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. We just began construction on the Coliseum Building, which will restore another 75k+ square feet of retail and office space in the community as a hub for businesses owned by people of color.

## PLEASE TALK ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT (PAST AND PRESENT) WITH REDESIGN.

I began my involvement with Redesign as an intern in the lead up to the Blue Line Light Rail launching in 2004. Redesign was organizing community partners to develop a station area master plan surrounding the Franklin LRT station, and I supported that community engagement and planning process. I joined Redesign's development committee in 2013 while working as a partner at the Native American Community Development Institute in Ventura Village. Following another stint as staff at Redesign as a project manager in 2015-16, I joined the Board of Directors in 2017. Following Chris Romano's tenure as leader, I joined Redesign as executive director in January 2022.

## WHAT DREW YOU BACK TO REDESIGN?

I really believe in the power of community to lead real estate development and community investment, and Redesign is one of the few organizations doing this work with a long-term neighborhood focus. Being led by people within community allows us to design and implement projects that meet the dreams and visions

## New staff member serves Longfellow and Seward

understand the issues each other is facing in the neighborhood.

Before I knew where I wanted to go after college, I reflected on my experiences from internships and other opportunities. I was a Legislative Intern at Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) while I was reflecting on what was next for me after college. I enjoyed my time there, which made me want to find a job in the non-profit sector that focused on small business development support. As I started my search, I came across Redesign, Inc. I have heard of the great work they do, and I was excited to apply for the role of business outreach specialist. I thought that my journey to continue to work with small businesses could proceed in Redesign, Inc. and be able to learn more about the beauty of a community can be through the opportunity to work in the Seward and Longfellow neighborhood.

## WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT?

I am excited for the opportunity to connect with small business owners through the business associations, and be part of the community Seward and Longfellow have. I am also excited about the opportunity to have events happen and bring businesses together to host and lead events. My goal is to have business owners know each other and find ways to connect

of community. We are able to focus on projects that build personal and community wealth, capacity, and agency for people to shape the world around them. I believe every neighborhood should have an organization grounded in relationships and focused on community-led transformation.

## WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THIS NEW JOINT POSITION WITH REDESIGN/LBA/SCCA?

One of my goals coming into Redesign has been deepening our partnerships with other neighborhood institutions like the neighborhood associations: Longfellow Community Council (LCC) and Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) and business associations: Longfellow Business Association (LBA) and Seward Civic and Commerce Association (SCCA).

All of these organizations have been meeting regularly to collaborate on shared goals and strategies and look for opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing. Coming out of those conversations and staff transition at both business associations, we decided to launch a shared position, housed at Redesign, to provide staffing for both business associations in addition to Redesign.

This position leverages the networks and relationships of all the organizations to build a more connected business support system. We hired Gabriela Ortiz-Riera in early 2023 for this new position, and she is off to a great start.

The challenge of a shared role is balancing the time and needs of multiple organizations, though we believe the alignment of goals across the organizations will ultimately make any challenge worth the effort.

This new position will be a common point of entry for a coordinated businesses support system within the five neighborhoods we serve. The new position will be focused on developing relationships with established as well as new businesses, and providing connections for those businesses to meet with peers, support a strong neighborhood business climate, and connect business owners to loan, grant, and support opportunities tailored to their needs.

## WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

We are in the early stages of developing and launching a business retention and expansion (BRE) program to connect with businesses, collect and aggregate their needs, and provide this data to guide the creation of new support tools and funding

with each other and support each other as they continue to grow their businesses.

## HOW WILL YOU BALANCE THE THREE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS NEW POSITION (REDESIGN BUSINESS/LBA/SCCA)?

I see balancing my roles among the three responsibilities by making time for all three each week by organizing my calendar and to-do list. In addition, I plan to connect and make the work I do for all three of my responsibilities overlap with each other as they are similar in how I focus on making sure I connect with businesses letting them know of the benefits of being a member of either business association and knowing about the services Redesign has and how we can help them.

## WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

Once I am well adjusted to the role, I hope to host many events with businesses inviting the neighborhood to connect and learn about each other's businesses and how they started. I want to do many things in this role, and I am excited to work with board members and business owners to make all my visions for the business associations go well. I hope to find ways to continue the mission of Redesign Inc, LBA, and SCCA to ensure that the neighborhood has a great connection.

The LBA and SCCA send out a joint e-Newsletter once a week. Contact Ortiz-Riera at [gabriela@redesigninc.org](mailto:gabriela@redesigninc.org) or 612-435-0277.

## LONGFELLOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (LBA)

For more than 25 years, the LBA has worked to ensure a vibrant business climate by monitoring issues that impact area businesses. The LBA provides advocacy, networking, resources and marketing to all businesses in Greater Longfellow. [www.longfellowbusinessassociation.org](http://www.longfellowbusinessassociation.org)

### Board members:

- President: Ken McCraley, KMS Air Duct Cleaning & KMS Construction
- Vice President: Anna Tsantir, Two Bettys Green Cleaning
- Treasurer: Cathy Heying, The Lift Garage
- Dan Kennedy, Kennedy & Cain
- Lauren Callis, Curiosity Studio
- Denis Woulfe, Longfellow Nokomis Messenger
- Michael Cain, Kennedy & Cain
- Henry Slocum, The Bicycle Hub Co-op
- Dan Swenson, Alexander's Auto Repair
- James Freid, Minnehaha Scoop
- Carley Kammerer, Wildflyer Coffee

## SEWARD CIVIC AND COMMERCE ASSOCIATION (SCCA)

The Seward Civic and Commerce Association was founded in 1964 by seven local business owners. SCCA is a nonprofit association. More at [sewardbusiness.org](http://sewardbusiness.org)

### Board members:

- President: Allyson Tarnowski, Fortune Fish & Coastal Seafoods
- Vice President: Joe Buck, Buck Brothers Construction
- Treasurer: Fatima Turnadzic, Trustone Financial
- RyAnne Quirk, Fun City Dogs
- Jennifer Schoenzeit, Zipps Liquors
- Suzanne Weinstein, Beyond Tilefish, Inc.
- Laura Larson, Seward Co-Op
- Kimber Fiebigger, Art by Kimber

and also to advocate for the needs of businesses.

Our hope is to expand membership in both LBA and SCCA to support their stability while broadening participation.

There has been some conversation about new offerings to connect businesses within specific industries (e.g. restaurants, retail, home-based businesses, manufacturing businesses, etc.). This would create space for businesses to share their experiences and resources with peers to strengthen connections in the neighborhood business community.

# Solace at the Palace: Creating community connection through art

## LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY ANDREA TRITSCHLER,  
communications  
andrea@longfellow.org



Art has the ability to bind people to places and to each other – and on a beautiful Sunday in June, over 700 members of our community came together at Solace at the Palace to make art, connect with neighbors, and explore a piece of our local arts and music scene.

Solace at the Palace was a free day of interactive community art with 20 artist vendors, three musical performances, art workshops, and art projects for all in the courtyard of Moon Palace Books. Our community is resilient, we've found ways to support each other through a global pandemic and the destruction caused by the uprisings following the murder of George Floyd. We wanted to find a way to support our community's healing process and bring joy to a space that holds a lot of trauma for our community. Art is a great anodyne.

And there was so much joy! And so much art! It was clear that everyone from workshop artists, vendors, musicians, and attendees were having fun. Around 120 people came to a free workshop where all materials were provided. The six workshops included printmaking, collage, fabric journals, needle felting, leather working and making a clay neighborhood. Art isn't always accessible to everyone, supplies can be expensive, classes can be difficult to schedule, so we wanted to pro-

vide the opportunity for people to try out something new, awaken their creativity, and share stories and experiences that we can't always articulate.

"It was a great way to connect to the community and find a new hobby!" one attendee said.

During the workshops, we saw people exchange numbers, while talking about their project and making plans to continue to create together. Connecting with people can feel really hard, especially as an adult, and especially after years of isolation has imparted upon each of us in various ways. Connection was a central tenant to the creation of this event. There were Somali and Spanish translators for the workshops in an effort to make sure that no one felt excluded from the process.

Despite us all knowing that art is at the heart of life, art is often undervalued. Part of our mission was to compensate and care for all artists that were participating in the events and to focus on emerging artists. Minneapolis has such a robust and talented community of artists.

"The generosity showed to the vendors at this event from everyone here and the organizers has been so wonderful," one of the artist vendors said.

"I loved it, the classes, the art fair, and the inspiring energetic music and venue!"

And no event would be complete without a soundtrack. The musicians and emcee did an incredible job and had people dancing and swaying. Emcee Biig Miic Brooks provided some of his own beats between creating a welcoming environment and introducing the musical performers. Wynn Rivers took the middle spot and entertained the crowd with folk numbers. Carolyne Naomi with special guest RION brought soul and funk while

signing about justice, love and equality. Several people came up to me and asked about who was performing or bought CDs or followed the musicians on social media. People connecting and engaging with new artists was an intention of the event.

My favorite part of the event was the community art project, which was using embroidery floss to weave through nails on a board. Watching it transform from what looked like a simple woodworking project to an art piece throughout the day was so fun. It was great to watch people of all ages engage with it - from ages 3 to 80. There were also free arts projects for kids and the kids at heart to paint, make friendship bracelets, create temporary tattoos and more. One of our volunteers said she felt like she made so many new friends at the art tables. She was able to hear people's stories and relate to them.

Community stories and our connection to place was a part of the indigo and water weaving project of Sarah Nassif, working with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, to use water from the Mississippi River to dye fabric strips with indigo that were then weaved on a loom into a tapestry. We learned about the resources that are used to create fabrics, clothing, and the impact that it has on our environment.

We did several surveys last year and the community was resounding in their call for more festivals, more chances to connect and more arts opportunities. We are all creative and as a community, we have the opportunity to create the beauty we want to see and can build it together.

Thanks to all the people who experienced this event with us – attendees, artists, vendors, food trucks, musicians, post-

### WORKSHOPS

- Printmaking - Gabi Estrada + Lauren Callis from Curiosity Studio
- Needle Felting - Jessi Hartwig from Bibi & Mija
- Collage - Jgo
- Clay Neighborhood - Now Make Art team
- Fabric Journals & Patch Making - Jacques and Carmen Elate (atelier mamako)
- Leather Working - Anna Brauch

### ARTISTS & VENDORS

- Ricard Perez: prints and mixed media
- Kelly Hutchinson: willow weaving
- Patricia Olga Peuschold: Vintage and antique amulets, medallions, charms
- Mary Jo Howell: Incense blending bar
- Tara Fahey: Silk screen patches, t-shirts
- Jackelyn Doyle-Eustice: Vegan baker
- Renee Boynton: Charcoal, chalk, pastels
- Domnoval: Mixed media, abstract
- The Blue Topaz: mystic gems, crystals, jewelry
- Sheena Vang: Whimsical handmade items
- Marcy Hokanson: Tie dye, prints and cards
- Guulsame: paintings
- RLM Art Studio: justice-themed posters, cards
- atelier mamako: Joyful fabric patchwork
- Tanya Gravening: t-shirts, stickers
- Pater Giebink: Photography for levity and delight
- Irenio Dos Santos: t-shirts, paintings, jewelry
- Geordin Crist: Abstract art
- Casper Warren: mixed media, buttons, cards

er artist Pablo Kalata, and Moon Palace Books for letting us use the space. Thanks to the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and the City of Minneapolis for funding this event. We hope to see you next year!



SEE PHOTOS on page 7 and online at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

## DOING BETTER FOR THE CLIMATE

*As city creates Climate Equity Plan, some push for more and others applaud new outline*

By CAM GORDON

This city's update to its 2013 Climate Action Plan is grabbing the attention of community members, council members and candidates alike.

Called the Climate Equity Plan, over 500 written comments have been made on a draft that was released in April, and dozens of people spoke at the public hearing held on June 8, 2023. The plan is expected to be returned to the city council's public health and safety committee on July 12 where it could be forwarded to the full council for consideration.

"We heard from hundreds of people in our community in the development of this new climate equity plan and worked hard to ensure it reflected what we were hearing from community priorities," said Minneapolis Health Department Director of Sustainability Kim Havey.

The goal of the plan is to significantly reduce climate pollution by 2030 and make the city carbon neutral by 2050. Strategies include insulating 30,000 homes, reducing natural gas emissions, supporting 1,000 new green jobs, and expanding green space, and local food production.

According to the plan, in 2021 3.6 million metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were released into the air in Minneapolis. The city estimates that 45% of that is coming from natural gas, 28% from electricity that is produced by burning fossil fuels, and 24% from motor vehicles. To meet the goal of zero GHG

emissions by 2050, as outlined in the plan, transitioning to using clean renewable energy sources for heating, electricity and transportation is called for.

The new plan focuses on equity, as well as climate action. It outlines a tale of two cities and states that, "Redlining practices of the 1920s systematically provided less green infrastructure and located less desirable buildings like manufacturing facilities and transportation corridors through BIPOCI, low-income neighborhoods."

The plan notes that climate change "hits our most vulnerable communities the hardest," and prioritizes the city's designated Green Zones, cultural districts and lower-income households. "Achieving equity," it says, "means that all people – regardless of their race, color, gender, age, sexuality, national origin, ability, or income – live in safe and healthy communities."

The plan has been attracting attention throughout the city.

"We've already started incorporating some of the feedback into the next version of the plan which will be shared in the near future," said Havey.

At the hearing on June 8, most speakers supported the goals and objectives of the plan, but concerns were raised by many about the need for a clearer timeline, lines of accountability and funding.

The only southside council member on the committee is ward 2's Robin Wonsley. "While the vision laid out in the draft Climate Equity Plan is great, I have a number of serious concerns that align with the majority of the testimony that residents gave. The Climate Action Plan has minimal timelines included in the bulk of its strategy proposals," wrote Wonsley after the meeting. "Currently, the plan does not include an ownership/im-



Citizen rally prior to a public hearing on the new Climate Equity Plan at city hall on June 8, 2023. (Photo by Cam Gordon)

plementation section so we can be aware of who is charged with completing each action."

Community organizations, including MN350 and Community Power, have been organizing and educating about the plan for months. Community Power has hosted several candidate forums where the plan has been discussed, and MN350 has organized community members in each ward to meet with council members.

Still, Dan McConnell, a Longfellow resident who also represents building trades labor unions, shared his concerns at the hearing about not being consulted. "We support this initiative, but we have concerns about omitting engagement with labor," said McConnell. "As the plan is just a draft, we would respectfully ask for the opportunity to engage with staff to improve the plan including incorporating provisions to bring people from underrepresented communities into union careers."

"Add timelines to the strategies, measurable outputs and identify who is responsible for each part of the plan to increase the likelihood of its success," said Rebekah Doyle, Community Power's co-director.

"While I'm pleased the city's proposed plan begins to show an understanding between climate action and racial equity, paying attention to the needs of our historically neglected neighborhoods, I don't think the mayor has in any way begun to reckon with the amount of revenue the city is going to need to raise to meet the climate goals he's committed to," said Longfellow resident Michelle Hensley. "He and the city council must make the major spewers of greenhouse gases in Minneapolis pay fees for their pollution and raise the almost \$4 billion in revenue Minneapolis is going to need to meet their climate pledges."

While there is no budget presented in the plan, it identifies three sources to facilitate implementation through a "Climate Legacy Initiative." These are increasing revenues from franchise fees that are currently charged for gas and electricity based on a percentage of use, applying a social cost of carbon to emissions through the state's Pollution Control Annual Registration (PCAR) program that allows cities to collect fees from polluting businesses,

CLIMATE EQUITY PLAN >> 11

# Celebrating Juneteenth with southside soul



Artist Rajine started her business *Rajine-TheQueenArtistry* during the pandemic making multimedia art about black femininity. (Photo by Talia McWright)



Minnesota-based artists Brotha Asè and Godson King David perform at Soul of the Southside festival at Hook and Ladder on June 19, 2023. (Photo by Talia McWright)

By TALIA McWRIGHT

The free Soul of the Southside festival centered around Black culture and community in celebration of Juneteenth. The event took place Monday, June 19 from noon to 8 p.m. along Minnehaha Ave. and was presented by The Legacy Building, The Hook and Ladder and KRSM 98.9. The Longfellow Nokomis Messenger was a sponsor.

Juneteenth is a celebration of the emancipation of slavery in the United States. To many, the celebration is more

than that. As racial inequity and injustice continue to persist, Juneteenth is also a celebration of the Black communities as a whole – a celebration of resilience, beauty, and togetherness.

Black-owned pop-up businesses and organizations lined the block of Minnehaha starting from Arbeiter Brewing up to The Hook and Ladder. These businesses featured hand-crafted fashion pieces, mental health services, food and more. Many of the business owners are new, local businesses that got their start during or after the pandemic. One example of

this is Black artist, teacher and entrepreneur Rajine of *RajineTheQueenArtistry*. Rajine began her art business and teaching career in 2020 after the death of George Floyd. Her goal is to show her students the value of having a BIPOC teacher. Rajine's multimedia artwork is inspired by the femininity of Black women.

"I just want to show I'm proud to be a Black woman," Rajine said. "We all come in different shapes, sizes and hues."

Black music and spoken word artists also took the stage at The Hook and Ladder performing in honor of the celebra-

tion. Two Minnesota-based artists, Brotha Asè and Godson King David, performed a musical duo that spoke on topics of Black empowerment, perseverance and healing. Brotha Asè also performed spoken word pieces alongside his wife, Jada, who performed an interpretive dance.

"We celebrate Juneteenth because we celebrate freedom," Brotha Asè said. "Freedom isn't about being physically free. Freedom starts in your mind."

**\* MORE PHOTOS online at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)**

## FINDING SOLACE AT THE PALACE



Neighbors came together to heal and create community during Solace at the Palace in the courtyard of Moon Palace Books on Sunday, June 11, 2023. The free day of events organized by the Longfellow Community Council included art projects and workshops. Carolyn Naomi performed with special guest RION. [Read more about the day on page 6.](#) [More photos online at \[www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com\]\(http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com\).](#) (Photos above by Elissa Evenson; at right by Andrea Tritschler)



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## COLISEUM >> from 1

had built new, the structure would have been smaller than the existing Coliseum; maybe only two stories. Now, we have a larger building and we will be able to accommodate more small businesses. The bones are good. We have lots of windows that will bring in light, the ceilings are high. All of that is positive.

“By saving the Coliseum, we are able to preserve a Lake Street landmark that helps define this community. It is much better to use what we have now rather than putting more debris into landfills.”

In order to generate the funds needed to cover the cost of the \$29 million project, Redesign drew on more than 10 separate funding sources that included state, county and local public programs along with private corporate and foundation support. Redesign's major source of funding came from a federal program known as New Market Tax Credits. The New Market credits enable private investors to receive federal tax benefits in exchange for providing up front cash for community development projects like the Coliseum.

The Coliseum's \$29 million price tag includes expenses that are usually covered by the tenants in more conventional real estate ventures. “In those projects, tenants receive raw space known as ‘a plain vanilla shell’ when they move into the building,” Smrikarova explained. “They have to pay for the improvements needed to make the space usable – the wiring, plumbing, and painting. But we don't want to do that. We wanted our tenants to be able to move into their space on day one with their improvements all ready in place. That's why our costs on a per square foot basis are somewhat higher than they might be in a more conventional project.”

The Coliseum's redevelopment also marks a departure from standard real estate industry practices when it comes to the ownership structure for the project. Currently, the Coliseum has three private owners in addition to the non-profit Redesign. They include Chris Montana from Du Nord Craft Spirits, Alicia Belton with Urban Design Perspectives, and Janice Downing at Commonsense Consulting @work. Montana intends to own and operate a tap room for Du Nord on the Coliseum's first floor. Belton will use a co-operative structure to provide ownership opportunities for BIPOC businesses that will occupy the second floor.

“After the near wholesale destruction of the area, the Coliseum is still standing; that means the building can represent resilience within the community but only if the building is put back into use,” said Montana.

“The recent history of the area demands that the building is not just rebuilt but is repurposed to address the underlying cause of its near-destruction. I'm proud to be a part of the effort Redesign, Alicia, and Janice are making for BIPOC collaboration and growth at this most important intersection.”

“For several years, we have had a dream to own a building where we can be a part of and create a community that values and supports business owners like us,” added Belton. “Redesign's vision to make the Coliseum an opportunity to provide asset ownership is in alignment with our dream. What this means to us is that people who have been marginalized, overlooked, navigating systemic and institutional barriers will have a pathway to build capacity and achieve sustainable

“

Our response to the events of 2020 has always been to use development as a tool for achieving racial justice. That is why we are redeveloping the Coliseum in this new way.”

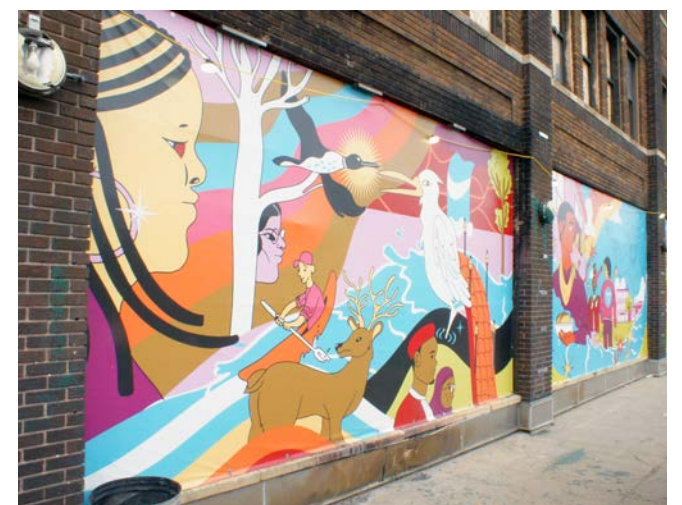
Taylor Smrikarova



Left to right: Alicia Belton of Urban Design Perspectives, Taylor Smrikarova of Redesign and Janice Downing of Commonsense Consulting @work stand inside the historic Coliseum building. The building is being renovated and will eventually be owned by the businesses that are in it. These include Du Nord Craft Spirits, Urban Design Perspectives and Commonsense Consulting @work. (Photo by Terry



A series of poems and colorful murals are displayed on the first floor of the Coliseum building. The wrap project was the first step in an ongoing effort to rebuild the East Lake landmark by owner Redesign Inc. and was installed in the summer of 2022. “The arts project was a way for us to provide a message of hope and to demonstrate the continued strength of this community,” said Taylor Smrikarova, Redesign's Coliseum project coordinator. It will cost an estimated \$29 million to get the building ready for new tenants, and money is coming from 10 different funding sources. “After the near wholesale destruction of the area, the Coliseum is still standing; that means the building can represent resilience within the community but only if the building is put back to use,” said Chris Montana of Du Nord Craft Spirits. He plans to open a tap room on the first floor. (Photo by Terry Faust)



growth.”

The three businesses and Redesign own the building together through a partnership. That arrangement will remain in place until the tax credits are paid off in about seven years. At that point, Redesign will bow out and the three businesses will have full ownership of the property.

“With the traditional model of development there are owners and tenants but we rejected that model,” Smrikarova said. “One of our goals as always been to provide opportunities for community ownership in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder. That means we have to provide ownership opportunities for people who aren't able to bring piles of cash to the project. They don't come from well-to-do families who can provide financial support and they don't come with expertise in development.”

“Redesign went to our partners and offered them an opportunity to participate without a large equity contribution. We had to use this non-traditional form of

development in order to meet the goals of the project.

“Our response to the events of 2020 has always been to use development as a tool for achieving racial justice. That is why we are redeveloping the Coliseum in this new way.”

Redesign's efforts to acquire the Coliseum have generated strong support from Lake Street area businesses. “At over 100 years old and 80,000 square feet, the Coliseum building is one of the largest and most consequential buildings left standing on Lake Street,” noted the Lake Street Council's Marie Compos. “Without efforts like Redesign's, we risk losing small businesses, which means losing local ownership, entrepreneurship, and control. I am really excited to see existing Lake Street businesses like Du Nord Craft Spirits expand into the Coliseum. It will be amazing to see their growth alongside flourishing BIPOC entrepreneurs in the building's planned incubator space.”

### LOW CARBON VERIFICATION

PACE Equity has announced its CIRRUS Low Carbon Verification for the Coliseum Building in Minneapolis. The historic building was funded with a complex capital stack including Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, multiple grants, and other financing options that paired well with PACE Equity's unique C-PACE financing that helped earn lower rates on lower carbon emissions.

“CIRRUS Low Carbon helped us achieve our energy efficiency goals while also providing financial incentives. The program made it easy for us to access low-cost financing and technical support, which was essential to meeting the CIRRUS technical specification. Thanks to this innovative program, we were able to build a low-carbon building that reduces our carbon footprint and operating costs,” said Taylor Smrikarova, real estate development director at Redesign, Inc.



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**THE CITY GARDENER**

BY LAUREN BETHKE,  
Master Gardener



# What's wrong with my lawn?

Summer has arrived in South Minneapolis and you may have started to notice dead patches in your lawn. There are many potential culprits for lawn damage and, unfortunately, they can be difficult to predict or treat. Before you call a lawn service (or blame your dog), read on to learn about some potential culprits and options for prevention or mitigation.

White grubs are probably the most common cause of irregular patches of dead grass. White grubs are the larvae of several species of scarab beetles (including June Beetles and Japanese Beetles). Adult beetles lay their eggs in your lawn in June and July, and the larvae hatch and begin to eat the roots of grass plants a few weeks later, so you may begin to see grub damage in July and August. Because the grubs eat grass roots, in areas of severe damage, you may be able to roll back the sod like a carpet. It is very difficult to predict where or whether grub damage may occur from year to year. Some people choose to apply a preventative insecticide treatment every year to head off any potential lawn damage. However, you can also wait and see if grubs are present in your lawn and apply a curative treatment later in the summer to reduce damage if they do occur. Keep in mind that most insecticides that are effective on white grubs are also toxic to bees and other pollinators, so make sure to follow application directions very carefully if you choose to



Does your lawn have big, dead spots in it? It might be the work of grubs. They eat grass roots. In areas of severe damage, you may be able to roll back the sod like a carpet.



treat your lawn.

Another common lawn issue is damage related to ice cover. This occurs when water from the spring snow melt cannot freely drain from an area, and there are frequent freezing and thawing cycles during the snow melting process. If you notice light tan-colored dead grass in low areas of the lawn or along the edges of curbs, driveways, or sidewalks, with a distinct boundary between dead and healthy grass, this may be damage related to ice cover. To mit-

igate the issue next year, consider grading or filling affected areas to reduce drainage issues next spring.

Heat and drought can also stress your lawn. This generally occurs when temperatures are above 85 degrees and there is little moisture for two to three weeks. You may notice a general browning or thinning of the entire lawn, or patches of damage. To mitigate this type of stress, consider watering your lawn periodically during hot, dry periods. To reduce water usage, keep

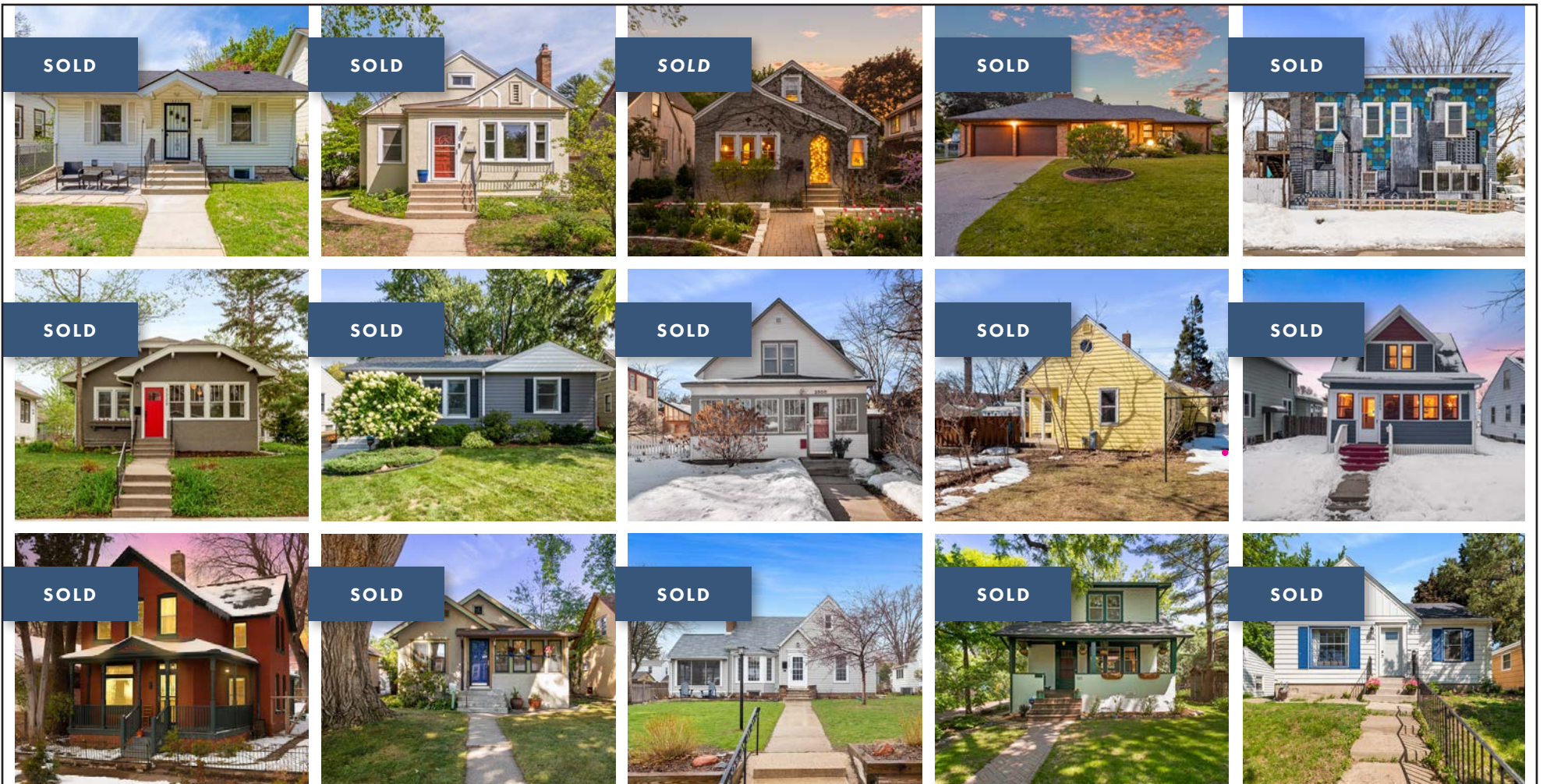
in mind that most types of turf grass only need a quarter inch to an inch of water per week. It's best to water between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. to reduce evaporation.

"Patch disease" is a general name for several types of common lawn fungus that can also cause brown lawn spots. Damage is often found in round, ring-shaped, or arc-shaped areas and commonly appears when a period of hot, dry weather follows a period of cool, wet weather. Patch diseases typically arise when the lawn is already stressed for various reasons, including poor soil conditions or excessive thatching. There are unfortunately no quick fixes for patch diseases, but improving the underlying lawn conditions can help keep lawn fungi under control. Consider having your soil tested by the University of Minnesota Extension to determine whether you should apply fertilizer or organic material. Dethatching or aerating your lawn can also improve air circulation, making conditions unfavorable for fungi to develop.

There are many more diseases and details than I can fit in this space, so I'll also recommend the "What's Wrong With My Plant?" feature on the University of Minnesota Extension Yard and Garden website. This page can help you identify specific lawn and garden issues by answering a few simple questions. Whether your lawn is afflicted with a fungus, pest, or just plain old dog spots, there is plenty of research-based information and expert advice available to help you figure out what to do. Happy gardening!

For more information, check out the University of Minnesota Extension Yard and Garden website. Extension resources are written by experts, and contain the latest and most reliable research-based information. Happy gardening!

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# Lavish Mack enters Ward 11 race

Zachery Metzger, also known as Lavish Mack, is running for the Minneapolis City Council seat in Ward 11.

If elected Metzger says he is committed to donating half of his city council salary to local non-profits to truly stay connected to the people.

With a progressive campaign, Metzger is focused on making Minneapolis become a beacon of what is possible. As a life long southsider, Metzger has made a career out of fighting for this vision and the needs of the people. "We envision a Minneapolis that invests in the needs of its people. These needs include affordable housing, structurally supported public safety alternatives, protecting our green spaces and expanding social protections that protect all our residents," he said. Metzger has led campaigns, created laws and organized movements that have created lasting change. He has worked deeply with community and in the capitol as a legislative aide, with major policy wins, such as The Beyond Bullying Bill which ensures schools are safe learning environments for every Minnesotan, no



matter their race, religion, sexuality, gender, or disability

Since 2020, Metzger has been deeply rooted in the community, dedicated to justice, and creating real change. He says he is committed to continue the selfless work needed to make a difference.

This is Zach for The People. More at [www.zachforthepeople.com](http://www.zachforthepeople.com)

## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

>> from 6

and by utilizing new federal, state, and local grant funding.

"We need to allocate dollars to support these programs and we need to do so in an equitable, progressive way," said Wonsley. "Even if it's not fully understood how we will pay for these strategies, it's concerning that the plan isn't even fully transparent about the costs."

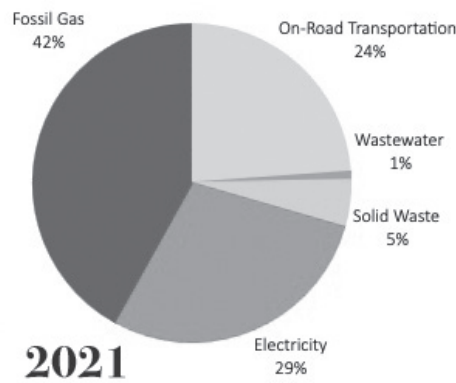
Funding is a concern raised by Ward 12 city council candidates, as well.

"I appreciate many aspects of the plan and we must take the climate emergency seriously. However, in the 101-page document outlining the plan, there is no clear framework as to how the project will be funded or what the exact or estimated costs are," said Ward 12 candidate Nancy Ford. "One of the few ways a plan like this could be funded would be a sales tax presented to voters, similar to what happened in Denver. A proposal like this, however, would not come without further controversy as to how we should be using new tax revenues. I cannot consider having a position one way or another on this plan when I have no idea of the associated costs or the sources of funding."

"I'd like to see the current Xcel and Centerpoint Energy franchise fees paid to the city that go into the general fund as the primary source of revenue for this work. Those funds, in whole or in part depending on the cost of this plan, should be sequestered into a dedicated Climate Equity Fund," said Ward 12 candidate Luther Ranheim. "We would need to backfill the general fund with other revenue sources. There's no cost estimate in this plan. So, my biggest question is, what is this plan going to cost Minneapolis taxpayers?"

"I want to see the franchise fee and the PCAR fee dedicated directly to climate action," said Ward 12 candidate Aurin Chowdhury. "I am interested in what this discussion foreshadows for when the franchise agreement is up in 2024 and the city council will need to renegotiate it. I am interested in what is being thought of in Chicago's franchise agreements- making the utility shareholders pay into a climate fund, not just putting the burden on the ratepayer. We have opportunities to be creative."

People are both cautious and hopeful about the potential of this updated plan



and how it might help city government to "...collaborate with residents to advance environmentally just policies that achieve deep carbon emission reductions, repair past environmental injustices perpetrated upon Indigenous, Black and Communities of color, and create solutions for a sustainable, inclusive economy," as its mission says.

"I will be meeting with staff from the sustainability department to gather clarity to these concerns and offer additional feedback that my office has gathered," said Wonsley, "with the goal of strengthening it as much as possible before council takes final action on it."

"We're proud that in the years to come, not only will we be doing our part to mitigate climate change, but we'll have a cleaner, greener, healthier city, and our community members will be able to see our beautiful city evolve over time," said Havey.

"I see the biggest strength of this plan in its focus on heavily investing in historically marginalized communities/BIPOC majority areas of Minneapolis, neighborhoods that were red-lined and did not receive the investments of Whiter, wealthier neighborhoods," said Ranheim.

"Minneapolis must take on its role as one of the nation's leading climate resilient cities," said Chowdhury. "The ambitions of Climate and Equity Plans' goals can meet this mark."

"It's a chance," said Hensley, "for Minneapolis to be a bold leader and set a national example of how a city can address climate change."

"If successful," added Havey, "this could make Minneapolis one of the most sustainable cities in the world."

## CITY BRIEFS

### B LINE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

Construction work on Lake Street from Minnehaha Ave. to the river started in June and will move from east to west along Lake Street. This includes station construction at Lake and 44th, Lake and 36th, Lake and 31st and Lake and Minnehaha. Two-way traffic with lane restrictions will be maintained as new station platforms, street sections, sidewalks, traffic signals, and pedestrian ramps are installed. Improvements will also be done at intersections without stations, and a mill and overlay with new lane striping will occur later in the summer. Metro Transit staff will be available to talk in person about construction from 12:30-2 p.m on Thursdays throughout the summer at Dogwood Coffee (4021 E. Lake St). For more information, contact at 651-356-6995 or to the project email at [BLine@metrotransit.org](mailto:BLine@metrotransit.org).

### HEALTH MERGER OPPOSED

The city council has voted to oppose the proposed merger of Sanford Health and M Health Fairview. They noted, among several reasons for doing so, that "all residents of Minneapolis benefit from access to high quality medical institutions, protection from the risk of monopolies or lessening of competition in healthcare, safe and fair workplaces for healthcare workers, and leading medical education and research institutions."

### AIRPORT NOISE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

In June, the city council approved appointments of Council Member Emily Koski and Loren Olson, city intergovernmental relation staff and southside resident, as representative and alternate to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) for a two-year term, beginning June 26, 2023, and ending June 25, 2025.

### AIRPORT TRAFFIC SHIFT

In June, the Metropolitan Airports Commission announced that flights over south Minneapolis will be increasing as they resume using 'north flow pattern,' and runways 30L and 30R for more flights. This will likely result in more airport noise for people living in south Minneapolis, Richfield, and St. Louis Park. Since May 20, due to higher wind from the south and east, more flights had been using other runways and a south flow pattern.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

On June 13, the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education approved a budget that would rely on more than \$90 million in one-time federal funding for its \$976 million budget next year. Because those funds will not be available in 2024-25, school board members and activists have expressed concerns that the funding gap will result in staff lay-offs and school closings in 2024.

### LAKE HIAWATHA LITTER BOOM

A pilot project designed to prevent litter from entering Lake Hiawatha was installed on June 3. Called a "trash boom system," it is intended to capture litter at the end of a storm sewer pipe before the stormwater from more than 900 acres flows into the lake. Over the summer, the city will study the effectiveness of the system. If it proves to reduce litter in Lake Hiawatha it may be used in other city lakes.

### SNELLING YARDS MOVING FORWARD

Lupe Development Partners and Wall Companies announced they are moving forward with the Snelling Yards development, an inter-generational campus of senior and affordable family rental housing. The project is supported by \$900,000 in funding through Hennepin County's Affordable Housing Incentive Fund recently approved by the county board. Snelling Yards will include 90 units of family affordable housing with an emphasis on three- and four-bedroom units.

~ Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon

## Faith

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3141 43rd Ave. S. • 612-721-5768  
[www.bethlehemcov.org](http://www.bethlehemcov.org)  
Pastor Colleen Nelson  
(Handicapped Accessible)  
Traditional Service - 9 AM  
Contemporary Service - 10:30 AM  
\*Beginning June 11 to fall: one  
Combined Service at 10 AM  
All sermons can be found online

**Epworth United Methodist**  
3207 37th Ave. • 612-722-0232  
[www.epworthmpls.org](http://www.epworthmpls.org)  
Sundays 8:45am - Faith Formation for All Ages; 10am - Worship In-person & Live-streaming on Our FB Page - @EpworthUMCPLS  
7/2 - The Joy of God is Your Strength  
7/9 - ...And God Will Delight  
7/16 - Love, Justice, Service  
7/23 - The Lord's Prayer:  
7/30 - Outdoor Worship

**Faith Ev. Lutheran Church**  
3430 East 51st St. • 612-729-5463  
[www.faithlutheranmpls.org](http://www.faithlutheranmpls.org)  
Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jared Yogerst  
Sundays - Service times on website (Communion 1st and 3rd)  
Mondays: Exercise Class, 9 am AA, 6:30 pm  
Wednesdays: NA group, 7:30 pm

**Minnehaha Communion Lutheran**  
4101 37th Ave. S. • 612-722-9527  
[www.minnehahacommunion.org](http://www.minnehahacommunion.org)  
Pastor Shawna Day  
9:45 am Sunday Worship in person & online. Info on church website  
12-step groups Tuesday thru Friday evenings

**Park Avenue United Methodist Church**  
3400 Park Ave. • 612-825-6863  
[www.parkavechurch.org](http://www.parkavechurch.org)  
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**St. Albert the Great Catholic**  
E. 29th St. at 32nd Ave. S.  
612-724-3643  
[www.saintalbertthegreat.org](http://www.saintalbertthegreat.org)  
Fr. Jude McPeak O.P., pastor  
Saturday mass 5:00 pm  
Sunday mass 9:30 am (also live-streamed on Facebook), 12 pm  
Sacrament of Reconciliation 4-4:40 pm Saturdays; Sunday 11:30-11:50 am; Or by appointment  
Weekday masses at 8:15 am, M, T, Th, F in the chapel

**Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls**  
5212 41st Ave. S. • 612-724-3691  
[www.trinityfalls.org](http://www.trinityfalls.org)  
Pastor Matt Oxendale  
Centennial Year  
Worship 10 a.m. (June-Aug.)  
AA Sun & Tues 7:00 p.m.  
Call for info on July youth camps.

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## CAUGHT BETWEEN >> From 1

### FROM A DREAM TO A NIGHTMARE

Only 23 when she met Bryan\*, Dani thought she had fallen into a love story. He was charming, it moved fast, and within a few months of meeting him in Des Moines, Iowa, she had agreed to move to Elk River, Minn. "I thought he was the answer to my prayers when I met him. And then I thought there was something wrong with me," she said.

"After I moved, his personality changed really quickly from a nice man to my worst nightmare." He drank excessively, she recalled, and on more than one occasion she called her mom while she was hiding from him in a bathroom. Her mom recalls hearing him swear and yell at Dani while pounding on the closed door. She told her mom, "I'm afraid he's going to hurt me." When her mom visited, she saw how much alcohol he drank. "He had the potential for violence," Cindy\* recalled. "I saw the amount he consumed." He coerced Dani into doing things she didn't want to do in the bedroom. He destroyed things her biological dad left after he died. He changed her phone password. She had to dash out of the way one day when he directed his vehicle at her in the yard. He threatened the life of her dog.

But she never called the police. Not even when he somehow sold her car without her signature. It left her even more isolated, far from home and her family. But he didn't ever punch her. Instead, he broke the things around her, throwing bottles at the door when he raged at her. When she threatened to call the police, he said he'd have them lock her up. When she said she was going to leave, he retorted that he'd report the car she was in as stolen. He wanted her tested for Borderline Personality Disorder and told her she was crazy.

Later, others gave her the words to describe the experience. Abusive. Coercive. Controlling. Gaslighting. Manipulative. Narcissistic. Friends began to suspect that he might have a personality disorder.

"I feel so bad for that version of me," Dani said. "I know I tried to stand up to him, but I never stood a chance. He had the money. He had everything. He knew that by moving me to Minnesota, he was moving me from my support system and anyone who would help me. And then he'd call me the crazy one."

Then she discovered she was pregnant. She opted not to get the abortion he suggested, and when he said they were through, she got him to put in writing that she could drive the car that was in his name and she headed back to Iowa.

She didn't know what was in front of her. "He uses the court system to terrorize me," said Dani. "I've never had a break."

"It's a form of control," pointed out her mother.

Cindy added, "He's a master gaslighter. You don't even know how to defend it. He'll put anything in an affidavit."

"His biggest go-to is, 'Dani are you of sound mind? Do you need to speak to a professional?'"

### IN COURT BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN

Bryan kept calling her when he was drunk, yelling and screaming at her every day over the phone line. It took her awhile, she said, but she finally blocked his calls. Later, he used that to show she was refusing to co-parent.

On March 14, 2012, Bryan filed a pre-birth petition in Minnesota seeking to establish paternity, custody, and parenting time for the unborn child. Dani counter-filed in Iowa, but citing provisions of Iowa's version of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA), the case was placed in Minnesota. Dani's appeal was heard in Minnesota and they affirmed keeping the case in Minnesota. Despite mother and child living in another state, the Minnesota court said it would not be an "inconvenient

► "Research and submissions received demonstrate that perpetrators of domestic violence can also misuse family law proceedings to continue to perpetrate violence against their victims, resulting in secondary traumatization. In this context, parental alienation may be employed as a useful tactic."

## UNITED NATIONS IDS LINK BETWEEN ABUSERS AND PARENTAL ALIENATION ACCUSATIONS



► "States ensure that the views of the child are sufficiently and independently represented in family law procedures."

► "States ensure mandatory training of the judiciary and other justice system professionals on gender bias, the dynamics of domestic abuse, and the relationship between allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts."

► The report urges family court professionals: "In the context of domestic violence, there is a duty to listen and respond to children's accounts of violence, with a view to validating these experiences, ensuring that decisions are better informed and that the child's safety and welfare are promoted."

► The UN Special Rapporteur recommends that states legislate to prohibit the use of parental alienation or related pseudo-concepts in family law cases, the use of so-called experts in parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts, and the use of reunification camps.

2023 Custody, Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children, report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, Its Causes and Consequences by Reen Alsalem

forum." The ruling didn't address how the poor, young woman would find representation in another state, afford to take off work to drive five hours one way to attend hearings, or find lodging in another state. Nor did it lay out how Twin Cities-based court professionals would manage working on a case where almost all the people they needed to talk to and visit were in another state.

Bryan didn't meet his daughter, Faith\*, until she was eight months old, although he was notified right away of her birth. He had given up a child for adoption 1.5 years earlier. "I begged him to come meet his daughter whom he was in court fighting for," said Dani.

"We all tried to be very supportive of Faith's relationship with her dad," said Cindy. The early visits happened at their home, where Dani lived for a few years, and were at a hotel when they included Bryan's parents.

On Dec. 11, 2014, the Minnesota court granted the parties joint legal custody, with sole physical care to Dani subject to parenting time for Bryan following a custody evaluation by Minneapolis psychologist Susan Phipps-Yonas. She recommended that Dani have sole physical custody to maintain continuity for two-year-old Faith, whose life was in Iowa, and that the parents share legal custody.

Bryan has some relatives in Iowa, and exercised parenting time there when Faith was young, although he was often hours late. He's never attended a doctors appointment, school conference, school play, recital or other event. However, his brother and his father have. "I think that's really telling," said Cindy.

A second custody evaluation was done after Bryan again filed for sole custody in 2020 when Faith was eight. Again, the custody evaluator, this time Kareem S. Braxton of Minneapolis, affirmed that the parents share joint legal custody and that Dani have sole physical custody.

### FIRST CHILD ABUSE CASE AGAINST DAD

Things changed quickly after they acted on that report through mediation in the fall of October 2021.

After she visited her dad, his wife, and two younger step-siblings for Christmas in

2021, Faith began saying she didn't want to go back to her dad's house in Minnesota. She was supposed to visit one weekend a month, and her dad was court-ordered to plan those visits ahead of time by the first of each month. He had done so in November and December 2021, but then canceled last minute before exercising his holiday time.

In January 2022, there was a bad snowstorm that prevented the visit. In February, Faith was vomiting and Dani asked that the visit be rescheduled to avoid putting a vomiting child in the car for a five-hour drive. In March, Bryan's weekend overlapped with spring break, which was Dani's holiday and took precedence. They had been using a family text message thread that included Dani's parents and Bryan's parents to keep conversations civil, but after Bryan engaged in abusive language directed separately at Dani, her step-dad and her mom, Dani stated that she would be using the court-ordered Our Family Wizard app for all future correspondence. Bryan did not check his messages there.

"The messages that have come through to Dani are generally negative, accusatory and not demonstrative of mutual respect for Dani as the other parent. [Bryan] has expressed frequent concern about Dani's ability or fitness to parent, and there has not been evidence that Dani is not a fit parent," wrote Dani's therapist Marcy Schrum in an August 2022 report.

Meanwhile, Faith had begun having night terrors.

Dani was stymied in her attempt to get Faith therapeutic treatment. Bryan spoke to his daughter's therapist via telephone, and stated that he wanted her to record all conversations with his daughter and send them to him, which the therapist was not comfortable doing and did not believe was appropriate. Per court testimony, he also told the therapist that he did not agree to let his daughter be in treatment.

In April 2022, the Iowa Department of Human Services got involved and concluded that dad caused a denial of critical care for his daughter. A Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) case was opened. Bryan was placed on the Central Abuse Registry. Faith resumed therapy.

"Faith was very good at articulating

what was bothering her, but she got to the point where she would start crying and shut down, and she would not disclose anything further. I do believe she has more to say, but she was unable to disclose at that point," wrote DHS investigator Jean Entz in her report. Entz made it clear that Faith did not want to see her dad and that Dani struggled with being in the position of following the court order or trying to figure out how to force Faith into the car to see him.

Bryan did not request parenting time for May, June, July, or August 2022.

Faith's school counselor reported to a child protection worker that Faith had talked about concerns at her dad's house and did not want to visit him there. There have been concerns about how Bryan has interacted with school staff, and now only administrators will speak to him.

Faith's therapist noted that Bryan had called her an excessive amount of times, and described Bryan as "aggressive and rude."

However, his interactions with his child's school, therapist and maternal grandparents has not been factored into the case by the various professionals making recommendations on custody and parenting time. The fact that Bryan makes adults uncomfortable has not been considered relevant to how he treats his daughter. This is despite specific language in court orders (commonly known as Appendix A in Minnesota divorce decrees) that neither parent disparage the other.

When interviewed by a child protection worker, Bryan blamed Dani for problems with his daughter, and denied that he had done anything inappropriate, according to the written report issued by DHS. Notably, he did not express concern about his daughter's mental or physical health. Meanwhile, Dani, who grew up with divorced parents, affirmed the position she has taken throughout Faith's life – that a relationship with her father is important. She also asked about resources available to help the family.

### SECOND ABUSE INVESTIGATION

In June, Faith's therapist, Kim Montgomery, noted that she was showing signs of a child who had been sexually abused. She had told multiple people after the Christmas visit that her dad locked her in her room and body-shamed her.

As the days got closer to when she was court-ordered to see her dad in September, Faith began disclosing more information about her past experiences with her dad to those around her whom she has established relationships with. Her mom. Her maternal grandmother. Her school counselor. Her therapist (until treatment was stopped by Minneapolis-based parenting consultant Susan Lach following a conversation she had only with Bryan).

According to court documents, Faith told her grandmother Cindy that her dad had threatened to kill her mom and her if she told anyone what her dad had been doing to her. Once he stomped his foot on an ant, grinding his foot into it, to demonstrate what he would do to her if she told the secret.

Another child protection assessment began. Bryan declined to participate in any CPS interviews, although his Minnesota attorney, Katie Jendro, called to talk about dad seeking sole custody of Faith and requesting that the court approve him moving Faith to Minnesota. Dani cooperated fully with all CPS requests.

The child protection investigation in Iowa was halted because Faith broke down and could not give any more details to the STAR Center investigator. The CPS report states that because the child is not seeing dad, they did not feel like there needed to be a second STAR interview. However, they also wrote that it was imperative that ongoing discovery work be done. Despite that statement and a high risk assessment rating, the same CPS report made a finding that the sexual abuse could not be confirmed and closed the case.

CAUGHT BETWEEN >> 13

## CAUGHT BETWEEN >> From 12

"Am I to understand you sat in a room with Faith and she told you her father touched her private parts and you are going to do nothing about this?" Dani asked a CPS worker.

Since some incidents happened in Minnesota, Iowa CPS said they could not address them.

Minnesota stated that it would not look into the Iowa incidents. St. Anthony Village Police Department wouldn't proceed because there was an open family court case, a detail they learned when Bryan's attorney called them.

The Iowa court declined to bring back in the guardian ad litem who had worked previously with Faith.

An Iowa judge approved an order for protection that Dani made on behalf of Faith on Sept. 23, 2022. However, after Judge Yunker contacted him and insisted that he had no jurisdiction, Judge Paul Scott set it to expire in December. He observed that Dani could seek another one in Minnesota.

To do so required Dani to go through the entire process a second time, forcing her to find and hire a new Minnesota-based attorney and try to negotiate CPS workers across state lines.

### A PC BROUGHT IN

A parenting consultant, known as a PC, was appointed in Minnesota last summer, but the case has not gotten clearer with her involvement.

Susan Lach of Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell in Maplewood has not ever met Faith. Nor has she journeyed to Iowa to meet those involved in Faith's daily life. Lach testified that she has not spoken to the child protection workers in Iowa, nor staff at the center where she was evaluated for sexual abuse.

A lawyer, Lach is neither a licensed therapist nor social worker, but her authority on the case is vast and equal to a judge. Whatever decisions she makes are considered orders and must be followed. In Minnesota, PCs are not required to have training on domestic violence, victim and perpetrator behaviors, long and short-term impacts of domestic violence and child abuse on children, child sexual abuse, child abuse, coercive control, implicit and explicit bias, or trauma. There is little oversight. (See sidebar)

Lach required \$2,000 up front, and charged \$500 an hour. Within a few months, she had charged the family \$4,700. Currently, she says Dani owes her about \$7,500.

Lach ordered that Faith discontinue work with her therapist and instead begin seeing a therapist in Minnesota. She also recommended a custody flip – moving Faith from Iowa where she has lived her entire life to Minnesota, changing her school, taking her away from the family and friends she has had her entire life, and switching all her medical providers. She

testified: "I don't think Faith cares where she lives. I mean, what does where she's lived her entire life have to do with where she gets therapy?"

Lach has opined that Faith was "coached" by her mother to make allegations against her dad – despite never having talked to Faith herself. Hearings have focused on Dani's credibility versus the facts of the case and Faith's safety. *Lach did not respond to a list of questions about her work as a PC.*

### ISSUES WITH PC

Lach accused Faith's therapist of picking sides and said she could not be impartial in her treatment. Statements made to the court by Montgomery, however, focus on listening to the child, and helping her work through things.

Lach's testimony includes the following statement in reference to Montgomery, who is a school-based therapist with a master's degree in social work: "It doesn't look like she has any qualifications to be doing this at all."

Cindy said she was alarmed when she testified in Yunker's courtroom by the behavior of the people working there. "In my 23 years of working in a courtroom, I have never seen a judge behave this way," stated Cindy. "She was so unprofessional. She'd look down at me and make a face and roll her eyes. She said, 'That wasn't the question. Do you need it repeated for you?' It really affected my testimony." Plus, "she would make the objection and prompt Bryan's attorney, 'Do you want to object?'" She said Yunker interrupted people.

"It's like you're embarrassed to be part of that community," said Cindy. "I have never seen anything like it."

Dani's mother and stepfather have worked in the court system their entire lives. Neither understands what is happening in their daughter's case. They're losing sleep. Their health has been affected.

"It's surreal," said Cindy. "It's like you can't believe this is happening."

Her own professional work involved writing the court transcripts for many DHS cases of abuse. "This is the most alarming case I have ever seen. I can't believe they can look at themselves and say this child doesn't deserve to be helped," said Cindy.

"You don't just up and move a 10-year-old child," said Dani. "Why would you be willing to roll the dice that big? It's unbelievable to me."

### AN ORDER FOR PROTECTION

One judge approved the order for protection (OFP). Another required that she drop it.

An OFP was granted in Iowa on Sept. 23, 2022.

Every year, U.S. child protective services referrals involve 7.2 million children.

91% of perpetrators are parents.

77% of child deaths involve at least one parent.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2017). Child Maltreatment 2015. Available from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ct/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

Judge Yunker, who is facing a lawsuit for her role in the Autumn Hallow case, retired on Nov. 15, 2022 – but not before issuing a scathing order with hefty purge conditions for Dani. Among them? An order to pay \$160,000 in fines and drop the OFP.

Additional sanctions aimed to financially target this single mom who is on government health care, per Yunker's court order, include the issuance of a \$100,000 bond. Dani was ordered to pay Bryan's attorney's fees and a fine of \$200 for every day Faith did not visit her dad since Oct. 29, 2022. The order concludes: Dani "is expressly warned future willful failure to comply with the orders of this court may result in incarceration."

Judge Yunker's order did not address the pages of abusive messages that Bryan had sent Dani and her parents.

### PREDICTABLE ARC

Those with the National Safe Parents Organization say cases like Dani's follow a predictable arc, one that is backed by research.

When an abuse is brought up in family court, 73 percent of moms lose custody if they've been labeled an "alienator" – even when the courts believe that the father has abused the mother and/or child. If that abuse is sexual abuse, then a mom loses custody 97 percent of the time if a dad counters that the mom is alienating him from his child. This research was done by the Joan Meiers team out of Georgetown University, and was funded by a \$500,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice.

Domestic abuse advocates are increasingly talking about how abusers successfully use DARVO in the family court system. DARVO – which stands for deny, attack, reverse victim and offender – is a reaction perpetrators of wrong may display when being held accountable for their behavior, and has been studied by Dr. Jennifer Freyd of the University of Oregon. In assuming the role of victim, the perpetrator attacks the accuser's credibility. In family court, this is often done by accusing the protective parent of being an "alienator" and accusing them of "crazy" behavior.

"While gaslighting in the context of an abusive relationship is destabilizing and painful, nothing can prepare a survivor for the gaslighting that takes place in family court," observed national advocate Tina Swithin of One Mom's Battle, who is a member of the National Safe Parents Organization. "Worse, the court professionals often want survivors to gaslight their children by forcing them to encourage and

facilitate a relationship with a parent, who may be very unhealthy or abusive. We are teaching our children to override their instincts and truth because we are in a court system that believes relationships with both parents trumps everything else."

The United Nations has recently released a report on the link of parental alienation and domestic violence. "Research and submissions received demonstrate that perpetrators of domestic violence can also misuse family law proceedings to continue to perpetrate violence against their victims, resulting in secondary traumatization," reads the report. "In this context, parental alienation may be employed as a useful tactic."

The report urges family court professionals: "In the context of domestic violence, there is a duty to listen and respond to children's accounts of violence, with a view to validating these experiences, ensuring that decisions are better informed and that the child's safety and welfare are promoted."

The UN Special Rapporteur recommends that states legislate to prohibit the use of parental alienation or related pseudo-concepts in family law cases, the use of so-called experts in parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts, and the use of reunification camps. Colorado is the first to do this with the passage of a new law in May. The UN also urges states to mandate training on gender bias, dynamics of domestic abuse, and the relationship between allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation.

### 'SHE JUST WANTS TO BE HEARD'

In late May 2023, Dani was ordered by her 10th Judicial Court Judge Kristi Stanislawski to pay the entire PC bill and related bond fees of \$7,500 within three days or go to jail. She has also been ordered to appear in Minnesota in person for court one time a month.

An child protection case remains open in Iowa. Faith is not currently seeing a therapist because the PC has stated she needs to be the one to pick one out.

Dani points to a notebook on her desk. "This whole notebook is filled with numbers of people I've tried to call for help. No one will listen. No one will help," she said.

"I don't trust the system anymore. I don't know why everyone wouldn't err on the side of caution. When children are involved, safety should be your first priority. I guess I'm really confused."

"You can't look at that little girl and not know that she's telling the truth. She's so scared. She just wants to be heard."

*\*Editor's note: In writing this story, I reviewed dozens of court documents, and reports by professionals. In recognition of the sensitive nature of this article, we have opted to refer to people by their first names or aliases. We have named the professionals working on this case as their work affects other families.*

**✱ READ MORE STORIES in this series at [www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com](http://www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)**

### WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A PC?

Parenting Consulting is an alternative dispute resolution process authorized by MN Statute Rule 114.02 (a) (10). A Parenting Consultant (PC) is an individual agreed upon by the parties and court ordered to work with divorcing parents. The process includes attempts to facilitate agreement, coaching and deciding. PC decisions are binding.

Often, PCs are attorneys but some are licensed therapists. Prior to Jan. 1, 2023, PCs were not required have training to be a parenting consultant other than to be a qualified neutral. They were not required to have training in child sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, coercive control, implicit and explicit bias, trauma, long and short-term impacts of domestic violence and child abuse on children, or victim and perpetrator behaviors. Since the change to Rules 114 and 310.03, PCs are now required to have at least 18 hours of training in developmental needs of children, addressing domestic abuse in the PC process, and emotional and psychological dynamics of separation and divorce. Existing PCs are not required to adhere to the new training requirements.

The contracts with PCs require families to share their medical records. It is not a confidential process and is not protected under Rule

114. PCs are not mandated reporters of child maltreatment. A parent who disagrees with a PC decision may bring a motion to family court to contest it, and then must pay another bill for the PC to participate in the court hearings (along with attorney fees).

### SCOPE AND AUTHORITY OF A PC

A parenting consultant can:

- Authorize trading time when parents do not agree
- Award compensatory parenting time to one parent
- Interpret unclear provisions in the decree
- Decide parenting issues and alterations in the parenting time schedule, including transportation
- Decide holiday and vacation schedule
- Decide school and day care absences, activities, vacation, holiday and summer camp issues, including dates and times
- Decide appropriate school and child care placement
- Consult with outside sources, including teachers, therapists, physicians, attorneys, family members, etc., and review relevant records
- Require independent evaluations and psychological testing, as well as substance use assessment, testing, monitoring and treatment
- Require therapy, anger management services, and/or parenting classes, and select the provider
- Communicate with, obtain information from, or provide information to any person without securing a ROI authorization from the parents

- Require a Safe Harbor agreement and then not share information with the parent/s. The PC may merely state, "I have considered input from a child's therapist."
- Decide issues with input from only one parent
- Make recommendations and decisions

Their rulings overrule existing court documents, including agreements parents previously made with each other.

Families using a PC are often paying fees for attorneys, individual therapists, and family therapists in addition to the PC bill. A PC's hourly fees are about that of an attorney, and range from \$250 to \$500 an hour. They typically require a retainer not to fall below \$2,000. Families can pay a PC \$5,000 or more a month. One parent can rack up the bills by asking a PC to rule on a multitude of issues even if the other parent has not agreed to pay for work on those issues. Most PC bills are split 50/50 by the parents, without factoring in who asked the PC to get involved on a specific issue. If one parent does not or can't pay for the PC, the PC can ask a judge to order payment.

Complaints about a PC may be sent to the ADR Ethics Board, 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55155-1500. Complaints and sanctions may or may not be public.

# COMMUNITY INK

**NOKOMIS EAST  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOCIATION**

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



"Growing up 'white trash,' I never thought I would ever own my own home." Metal Mike Welsh said in a thoughtful tone as if unaware he was also sitting in his own business. Looking around the Nokomis Tattoo (4933 S 34th Ave.), I slowly realized every inch of it had some sort of original detail that showed his depth of knowledge of Minnesota. He showed me two of his tattoos – one of Minnesota and one that said "Nokomis." I was so impressed by his knowledge of the area.

I have been intrigued by Nokomis Tattoo ever since I first saw it. It is the only tattoo parlor I've ever seen with a Little Free Library in front of it. What I didn't realize was that Mike has worked with The Irreverent Bookstore, Grande Sunrise, Nokomis Surplus, and Nokomis Life for the last three years to ensure that the Little Free Library is always stocked with both Spanish books and English books, dog treats, and sometimes children's toys.

There are two large murals on the side of his tattoo parlor. One of them proudly states "Nokomis MPLS." The other is an artistic rendition of his two dogs and says "Nokomis Life." Adopt a Bull, a local dog rescue, often uses it to take photos of their dogs for people to adopt. I later found out Nokomis Tattoo also has a community space that Rent A Bull, Makers Market, and Alcoholics Anonymous use regularly. He even uses it to host his own events – such as tv showings and blood drives – along with other events that overall build the community. The Nokomis East Business Association Nokomis Days planning committee meets there each month. "We don't care if it brings people in, we care if it gives back to the community," Mike said about the community space. I was so impressed by how much he is willing to give back.

He is insistent that Nokomis is such a successful neighborhood because it allows businesses to "do their own thing." He pointed to the flowers in the front. He and his neighboring business petitioned to be able to mulch and plant their own flowers because it was the environmentally conscious thing to do. He then showed me his giant gardens in the back. He traded a guy a



(tattoo) sleeve for five giant garden boxes. He hires a high schooler part-time to take care of them, then gives the fruits and veg-

Mike Welsh, or Metal Mike, owns Nokomis Tattoo at 4933 S. 34th Ave. As a local business owner, he's a member of the Nokomis East Business Association and helped reboot Nokomis Days.

etables away to people who need them. I would have never believed that watermelons grew behind a tattoo parlor. He then casually mentioned Nokomis Tattoo is also a CSA drop-off point. "I think we're a wholesome tattoo shop... We're not perfect, but the two receptionists and four tattoo artists come together and it's as close to perfect as we would need it." He never mentioned it, but his tattoo parlor also donates 5% of all profits to the community.

That is what struck me most about Mike. His humility. He made sure to introduce me to every tattoo artist and receptionist that walked through the door, and tell me a few kind things about each person as they started setting up the

shop for the day. One tattoo artist in particular, Chris, started as a receptionist, but in Mike's opinion, had been overlooked for most of his life. Chris spent years apprenticing under Mike. He started by having to solder needles together. To do this, one needs to lay seven needles perfectly on a piece of glass before using a soldering iron to melt them together. Chris described it as "going through hell on earth in a dark basement with little ventilation" for three to four months. Mike looked him dead in the eye and, in a grave tone, said that is when he knew Chris was serious about becoming a tattoo artist, and the training really began. "I did a lot of things in my life that I don't know if I did the right thing or the wrong thing, but with Chris I know I did the right thing," he said.

I never realized the amount of dedication it takes to become a tattoo artist, but it was easy to feel the pride in the room. Mike spoke about hardly being able to go out in public without people waving to him to say hi, and thanking him for their tattoos.

I don't know what I'm getting for my next tattoo yet, but I know where I'm getting it.



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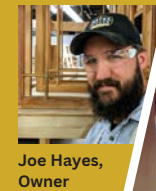
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