

SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • OCTOBER 5, 2023 • VOL. 2 • NO. 17 • 25,000 CIRCULATION



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NATURE PLAY

“At Lake Harriet Lower Elementary, we believe that learning extends beyond the classroom walls,” said Lake Harriet Lower Elementary Principal Angie Ness. “Our new outdoor learning gardens will provide a setting for our students to explore, discover and connect with the world around them. We are dedicated to nurturing well-rounded, curious and environmentally-conscious students, and this space will be instrumental in achieving that goal.” A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Friday, Sept. 15, 2023. The space features a native rain garden, raised garden beds, tunnel paths, student-created art installations and an outdoor classroom.

Input from public hearings, Minneapolis for a Better Police Contract shared during negotiations with officers

WILL NEW POLICE CONTRACT INCLUDE CITIZEN-DRIVEN CHANGES?

By **Cam Gordon**

The long-awaited and public negotiations between the city of Minneapolis and the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis formally began on Sept. 6, 2023. Three sets of contract amendments have been released: one from the city, one from the federation and a third from a local coalition, called the Minneapolis for a Better Police Contract (MFBPC). New this time is that the federation and the city are holding negotiation sessions in public because of a lawsuit filed by MFBPC and the subsequent settlement agreement. The first two were in September with a third coming up on Oct. 13, at 9

“We believe in our city. We believe we can do better, and we believe this is the time.”
Stacey Gurian-Sherman

URBAN FORESTS COULD HELP MITIGATE EXTREME HEAT

MPRB part of ‘Cooling Cities’ study that found forested natural areas cooler than tree-line streets

By **Allie Johnson**

As one of the hottest summers on record in Minnesota – and the United States – recently came to a close, a new study has shed some light on a way for urban communities like Minneapolis to better deal with extreme heat. The study, “Cooling Cities: Harnessing Natural Areas to Combat the Heat,” found forested areas within cities were significantly cooler than paved or even landscaped areas. The Natural Areas Conservancy conducted the study in collaboration with 27 nonprofits, municipal and county governments, academic institutions and private contractors around the U.S., including the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Over the course of summer 2022, researchers collected data from 40 sites across 12 cities, including three Minneapolis parks: Minnehaha Regional Park, North Mississippi Regional Park, and Theodore Wirth Regional Park. The study analyzed surface and air temperatures at three different sites with-



The Theodore Wirth Park wildflower garden offers cooling areas to combat urban heat islands. (Photo by Allie Johnson)

in a city: both “healthy” and “degraded” forests in natural areas, along with landscaped areas with trees, such as streets or parks, according to a news release. On some hot summer days, the study found a forested natural area was 10 degrees cooler than a nearby tree-lined street. James Shaffer, the natural resources supervisor for the park board, said the study underscores the potential of forests in urban areas like Minneapolis to help address urban heat islands and combat the effects of climate change. Urban heat islands occur when cities replace natural spaces with buildings, roads, and parking lots that absorb and hold heat, raising the surface temperature in the area. It’s why you’ll often notice cities experiencing higher temperatures than surrounding, more rural areas.



FROM THEIR STANDPOINT

Survivors connect with attorneys through free line

Thi Synavone came to the U.S. in 1979 as a Laotian refugee. After living in many states, her family settled in Minnesota in 1988. Synavone said that growing up, domestic and sexual violence was never addressed, and in Lao culture there is no word for domestic abuse. Even now in her adult years, she explained, not a lot of people like to engage in conversations about domestic violence. “The statistics are high, yet we don’t have conversations around it,” Synavone said. Synavone has worked at Standpoint (2324 University Ave. W. Suite 103, St. Paul) for six years. When she first started working with Standpoint, she focused on



Thi Synavone works as the executive director at Standpoint. (Photo submitted)

2

9

3

POLICE CONTRACT

a.m. in the Public Service Building, Room 100, 505 4th Ave. S.

The current contract ended on Dec 31, 2022. The summer before that, the city held a number of community meetings to gather public input focused on three issues: recruitment and retention, mental health, and accountability.

Those are the same issues that Mayor Jacob Frey and Ward 4 Council Member and chair of the council's public health and safety committee meeting, LaTrisha Vetaw, said would be the city's priorities in the upcoming negotiations.

They also said they did not want to include the disciplinary details, with a matrix that appears in the police policy manual, in the contract. "If we were to put it into the contract then we're suddenly opening something to a negotiation that doesn't need to be negotiated," said Frey. "That's handing over leverage. It's handing over authority."

In a report about last year's community meetings the city highlighted three specific ideas that emerged: a preference for two separate bargaining units, one for patrol officers and another for the sergeants and lieutenants; increases in compensation to attract quality candidates; and ongoing mental health evaluations with increased mental health benefits. In July, the state's Bureau of Mediation Services sided with the federation and ruled that the city could not exclude sergeants and lieutenants from the existing unit.

Almost all the federation's recommendations are focused on economic issues. One, however, addresses coaching. They want it to be clear that "anything that is determined to constitute discipline and, therefore, public upon final disposition should be grievable." Coaching is not mentioned in the current contract, and the city is not proposing to add it as a form of discipline. The city is proposing a clarification that discipline only includes a written reprimand, suspension, demotion, and discharge - not coaching.

At the second negotiation meeting, the federation proposed just a one-year contract, rather than the normal two-year. That proposal included across-the-board retroactive pay raises of 5.25, effective last January and 8% effective last July 1.

The city also wants a new pilot program that would offer premium pay for employees who are fluent in certain languages other than English.

The MFBPC coalition drafted 22 recommendations for the new contract. Five coalition members presented them to the city council's policy and oversight committee on Sept. 18.



(Left to right) Kim Millard, Chara Blanch, Ward 2 Council member Robin Wonsley, Stacey Gurian-Sherman, Michelle Gross of Communities United Against Police Brutality, Dave Bicking and Ward 5 Council member Jeremiah Ellison. (Photo courtesy of Ward 2 office)

ANOTHER \$1.4 MILLION TO FORMER OFFICERS

Just prior to the coalition's presentation, the committee also voted to authorize payments for several workers compensation claims of former officers totaling roughly \$1.4 million dollars.

Stacey Gurian-Sherman, a member of the coalitions and the Ward 9 appointed representative on the city's Community Commission on Police Oversight, led the presentation to the committee.

"It is simply not effective or sustainable to keep making payments for workers comp and lawsuits that are preventable," said Gurian-Sherman. "We have to do better for our city. We have to do better for our city officers, and that's what our recommendations do."

USE OF UNARMED STAFF

The coalition's recommendations do not include anything about pay and benefits, but focus instead on harm reduction and transformational change. "We want to reduce harm for people who have bad interactions with police and reduce harm to officers," said Gurian-Sherman. Officer harm reduction and wellness proposals include requiring annual mental health screenings, as well as limiting the hours worked each day and the days worked each week.

There were some areas where the city and the coalition made similar proposals. Both want to ensure that staffing levels are a management right consistent with other city labor contracts, and remove requirements for a certain percentage of sergeants (23.25%) and lieutenants (4.5%). They also agree that unarmed non-law enforcement staff could be used more often.

Gurian-Sherman said that using unarmed staff is a chance to "use the stub-



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Stacey Gurian-Sherman

born low staffing levels to start realizing the promises" made in recent years and "look at safety beyond police." They listed 28 non-emergency calls for service that would no longer be responded to by sworn or armed licensed law enforcement staff unless an emergency arises after initial deployment of unarmed nonpolice responders.

The city is proposing to use non-sworn personnel to conduct background, misconduct and criminal investigations under the supervision of sworn personnel. In exchange, the city is willing to commit to not lay off any sworn employees and establish a three-year hiring and retention incentive program.

"It doesn't make sense to have them doing work that we don't actually need police officers to do," said coalition member Kim Millard, "that other professionals with other training and specific skill sets could actually do a much better job of."

The coalition also calls for making sure all training must be approved by the city, even if it is completed outside of work hours, as well as prohibiting indemnification for things that happen on personal time, and the development of a new race and gender equity plan for the department.

It also calls for contract language to comply with the City Charter to return the responsibility for hiring, misconduct decisions, discipline, and declaring emergencies back to the mayor. Currently the contract contradicts the charter and stipulates that the chief of police has those responsibilities.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD:

- Eliminate the language added to the last contract that requires MPD to notify officers of people who request their personnel data.
- Require officers to be interviewed within six hours of critical incidents, rather than after 48 hours.
- Clarify that discipline will be consistent through use of the disciplinary matrix in the policy manual and that coaching shall not be used for any offense greater than an A-level offense.
- Require officers to affirm they understand the standard of conduct expected every year.
- Clearly define what is required to be eligible to serve as a Field Training Officer.
- Allow psychologists to determine if off-duty work is appropriate for officers returning from critical or traumatic incidents.
- Add anabolic steroids abuse as harmful to the health of officers and test for it annually.

'WE BELIEVE IN OUR CITY'

"If the city is serious about implementing the consent decree and MDHR settlement, we have to maximize these negotiations to change how MPD functions," said Ward 2 Council member Robin Wonsley after the meeting. "The 22 recommendations are incredibly helpful for understanding the specifics of how we do that. Several MFBPC recommendations are common sense policies that are already in place at police forces around the country."

The coalition provided a 33-page report detailing their recommendations that includes specific wording that could be used in the contract and over 70 footnotes with links to additional information. <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2023-00895>.

They encouraged council members to follow the negotiations carefully, set criteria for themselves, read the next proposed contract agreement when it is finished, and to conduct public hearings before any vote is taken to approve it. The contract, the report stressed, "must deliver what the last contract did not."

"We believe in our city," said Gurian-Sherman. "We believe we can do better, and we believe this is the time."

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▶1 **STANDPOINT**

doing outreach within the Laotian community, creating spaces for women to talk openly about experiences of domestic and sexual violence. Synavone centered the gatherings around things like cooking, and would ease into bringing up conversations that would engage her community. Synavone wanted to offer women support by communicating a perspective that championed their safety and comfort.

"The message was, if this is happening to you and you feel unsafe, there are people to talk to about it for you to feel safe," Synavone said.

She started at Standpoint as an advocate support program manager, then transitioned to the director of organization and staff development. She is now the executive director of Standpoint. Since the late 90s, she has worked to curb domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking. Her work began in rural southwest Minnesota until 2016, when she moved to the Twin Cities. She has a masters from Metropolitan State University in nonprofit and public administration. A large focus of the work she does alongside the domestic and sexual violence advocacy is finding ways to provide access to resources and services for marginalized communities.

The organization offered training and support for Synavone when she was a legal advocate. She expressed that Standpoint was a huge supporter for advocates in keeping them informed about how updated laws impact domestic violence and sexual violence survivors. She communicated that joining Standpoint was a perfect fit for her.

"Standpoint had always been an organization that I had looked up to and an organization that I knew supported advocates in finding justice for domestic violence and sexual violence victims," Synavone said.

Synavone explained that domestic and sexual violence cases are unique and complex, which is why Standpoint attorneys and advocates are vital as they are able to walk victim survivors through the process of hearings, and the criminal justice system. They explain specific terminology to help inform and empower.

There are many barriers victims have to face, especially those in BIPOC and marginalized communities, Synavone said. These barriers are especially prominent in reporting, in court cases and during trials. She explained that it is important to understand what justice means to each individual person in order to serve them well.

"For some survivors, justice looks like having their perpetrator doing time behind bars," Synavone said. "For some survivors, justice looks like them healing and regaining their ability to be free from that person, so justice looks different for everybody."

Raising awareness for domestic and sexual violence was not the work Synavone imagined she'd be a part of in her younger years. Over time her passion grew and she dedicated time and attention on trying to make a difference in the field.

"When I started doing the work, I started seeing the need."



Standpoint staff Ann McFarland (left) and Michelina Lucia (right) help survivors navigate through a complex legal system. (Photos submitted)

As a parent, Synavone explained she believes that change starts at home in educating children about how domestic violence and power and control dynamics are learned behaviors. She explained that determining whether someone is going to be tolerant or not of violence starts at home. She actively teaches her kids what healthy relationships look like, and challenges the social and cultural norms of traditional gender roles.

"It's not to say that this is something that happens overnight or anything, but as a parent I was very intentional on how I modeled that message to my kids," Synavone said.

ATTORNEY WORK

Ann McFarland has been involved at Standpoint since 2020, and has been the housing and supervising attorney since fall 2022. Before Standpoint she worked at the Volunteer Lawyers Network, and learned of Standpoint from a partnership between the two. Within the housing program, McFarland handles action line housing questions, provides training for system professionals and advocates who provide emotional and social support for survivors and families, and creates resources surrounding housing needs for victims/survivors.

"Standpoint's expertise is the intersection of domestic and sexual violence and the justice system," McFarland said.

Standpoint started in 1984 as "The Family Law Project," and aimed to raise awareness of legal services for women and children in low income circumstances. They also monitored the Domestic Abuse Act in southern Minnesota. In 1986, it was renamed the "Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project," and expanded across the state. In 2016, they became Standpoint. The mission is "to promote justice for domestic and sexual violence victims." Standpoint currently has 15 staff members, and offers assistance with family law,

EVERY1 KNOWS SOME1
Domestic Violence Awareness Month

1 in 4 WOMEN	1 in 7 MEN
will experience domestic violence in their lifetime	

protective orders, housing, immigration and other legal services.

Growing up, McFarland's mother was a social worker and worked often with domestic violence shelters. McFarland expressed that she was very inspired by her mother's work, and over time as she learned more about domestic and sexual violence, she felt called to the work.

more about domestic and sexual violence, she felt called to the work.

"I take so much pride in what we do and I am inspired everyday by the victims/survivors that we work with," McFarland said. "My coworkers are amazing, and I'm inspired by them, too."

A challenge McFarland experiences within the housing program, and with domestic and sexual violence work as a whole, is a lack of funding. With more funding, she feels that Standpoint would expand, do more in depth work, and provide more training to field professionals. As the need is high, she feels the work is extremely valuable.

Hennepin resident Michelina Lucia began working as an attorney within the Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) grant in 2023. While studying as a paralegal, Lucia worked at a law firm that focused on severe domestic violence family cases. The experience sparked her interest in working with domestic and sexual violence cases. After graduating from the University of Minnesota law school, she worked for Anoka County for three years, and then moved to Standpoint. The LAV grant is primarily for non intimate partner sexual violence in Ramsey County.

"I knew from the start of my work in law that they [Standpoint] were the go to entity for learning the new or current laws of domestic or sexual violence," Lucia said. "They just created a really good name for themselves for the cases that they take on and the work that they do."

Through LAV, survivors can request protective orders. They work with schools and employers to get accommodations, and ensure that systems are following the right steps to protect survivors. Working

within LAV and the appellate court brief committee, Lucia often works with children. She expressed that the experience of supporting children and their guardians through the process is very rewarding, and she admires the resilience she witnesses in young survivors. Before becoming an advocate at Standpoint, Lucia wanted to learn more about representing survivors of sexual violence. Working with the attorneys at Standpoint has taught her how to represent survivors well through informed care and representation practices.

Lucia, like Synavone, had not originally imagined herself working in the field, but views the work as necessary due to the amount of cases and survivors in need of support and representation. Her work, especially in working with child survivors, bears a lot of emotional weight. Lucia expressed that it is important that she actively cares for her own mental and emotional health.

"Standpoint is very good at encouraging and modeling healthy habits to make sure that you can continue to work in this field," Lucia said.

GETTING INVOLVED

During the early stages of the pandemic in 2020, Standpoint experienced an increase in calls to their action line, which operates from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The organization did not have to shut down their services during the pandemic as this system allowed them to continue doing their work remotely. The lockdown also inspired the organization to create a text line, as many were forced to live with their abusers. As the number of callers increased, the amount of Standpoint staff increased as well to accommodate the need.

"With the growth of our organization, we're able to participate more and provide more of our insight, experience and Standpoint's expertise around domestic violence and sexual violence and bring that voice to our collaborations and partnerships," Synavone said.

Despite increased awareness of domestic and sexual violence, Synavone said that the numbers of victims/survivors has not decreased. She expressed that funding of resources is a large issue, and that for the most part in Minnesota domestic violence shelters are full every day.

"We [Standpoint employees] say, 'This is a job that we want to work ourselves out of,'" Synavone said. "I've been doing this work since 1997, and I don't see us being able to work ourselves out of a job. It is an issue that continues to happen and there's still a lot of work to be done."

Synavone encourages people to call local domestic and sexual violence organizations to find out how they can get involved. Most organizations need volunteers, she said, and there are many ways to get involved, including donations of time, funds, and advocacy. Tickets are available for Thursday, Oct. 12, at the Day Block Center (1103 Washington Ave, Minneapolis) as Standpoint is hosting its annual "Stand with Standpoint" fundraising event which celebrates the work of their advocates, attorneys and professionals. The event features live entertainment, a silent auction and "Journey of Hope" awards ceremony.

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HOW WE CAN HELP YOUNG PEOPLE BE HAPPIER

There is an art and science to getting happier, and it involves giving.

We have a crisis. Mental health issues for young people are skyrocketing, and the need for mental health treatment is not being met.



By Eric Ortiz

According to the National Library of Medicine, nearly 20 percent of children and young people ages 3-17 in the United States have a disorder (mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral), and suicidal behaviors among high school students increased by more than 40 percent in the decade before 2019. Mental health challenges were the leading cause of death and disability in this age group. These trends got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Surgeon General's Advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health has recommendations to improve youth mental health across 11 sectors, including young people and their families, educators and schools, and media and technology companies. Topline recommendations include:

- Recognize that mental health is an essential part of overall health.
- Empower youth and their families to recognize, manage, and learn from difficult emotions.
- Ensure that every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.
- Support the mental health of children and youth in educational, community, and childcare settings, and expand and support the early childhood and education workforce.
- Address the economic and social barriers that contribute to poor mental health for young people, families, and caregivers.
- Increase timely data collection and research to identify and respond to youth



Young students work with restorative practices leader Manu Lewis during a team building exercise at the Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation's Community Solutions With Youth workshop at Walker Library in Uptown. (Photo by Eric Ortiz)

mental health needs more rapidly, including more research on the relationship between technology and youth mental health. In addition, technology companies should be more transparent with data and algorithmic processes to enable this research.

When young people aren't happy – when they are not optimistic, doing positive things, and hopeful about the future – life can get pretty grim for everyone else. And young people today, on average, are unhappier than they have ever been.

A Harvard-led study in 2022 measured overall well-being among adults (18 and older) in the U.S. and found Generation Z (ages 18-25) felt worse in every category: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, financial and material stability.

The senior author of the study, Tyler VanderWeele, a professor of epidemiology at Harvard's School of Public Health and director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science, has some theories on why young people are so miserable.

There are a combination of causes. Some of them are financial and the econ-

omy. Jobs and the prospects of career advancement are not where they once were. Debt from education and rising housing costs also don't help. Throw in the unhealthy effects of social media, increased family dysfunction, decreased participation in faith communities, political polarization, environmental concerns, and a pandemic. And we have a recipe for existential hopelessness.

But there is hope. "It's pretty clear that these domains of well-being are interrelated," says VanderWeele. "If you improve on social relationships, you're also more likely to subsequently improve on happiness and health and to find meaning. If you have a sense of meaning, find new purpose, you're likely to become happier and also have better health. So we need to work on each of these aspects: We need to promote relationships and communities. We need to address the financial conditions that young people are facing. We need to help them find systems of meaning."

Now more than ever, we need to help youth develop good health and well-being. There is an art and science to getting happier, and it involves giving to help youth find enjoyment, satisfaction, and meaning in their lives.

A poem by Alberto Ríos captures the essence of this mission:

When Giving Is All We Have

*One river gives
Its journey to the next.*

*We give because someone gave to us.
We give because nobody gave to us.*

*We give because giving has changed us.
We give because giving could have changed us.*

*We have been better for it,
We have been wounded by it –*

*Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.*

*Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:*

*Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,
Mine to yours, yours to mine.*

*You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.
Together we are simple green. You gave me*

*What you did not have, and I gave you
What I had to give – together, we made*

Something greater from the difference.

Two places in my life where I am giving are Big Edition, a digital media company where we are developing a teen well-being program, and the Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation, where we are developing community solutions with youth.

I encourage others to find ways to support youth. What we do in the next few years will shape future generations.

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

POLICE OVERSIGHT NOT HAPPENING



Recent investigations by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) detail the Minneapolis Police Department's violations of our and our neighbors' civil rights. Both agency's reports provide detail about the inadequacy of Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) accountability processes as a root cause of these violations.

The DOJ states: "Effective police accountability requires timely, thorough, and objective investigations into alleged officer misconduct, as well as meaningful discipline. People deserve to have their misconduct complaints investigated fairly. Community trust in law enforcement suffers when officer misconduct is tolerated." (Investigation of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Department)." Importantly, the MDHR Consent Decree identifies

"Strong Accountability and Oversight" that is "... well-functioning, including conducting quality and timely investigations."

I attended the Sept. 11, 2023 meeting of the Community Commission on Police Oversight (CCPO) and was shocked and appalled. The improper alignment of the Office of Police Conduct Review (OPCR) with MPD as identified in the MDHR Report, has allowed MPD to continue to stonewall accountability processes. Because of MPD's tactic of delaying accountability, the DOJ had to rely on complaint cases prior to 2016. In the Sept. 11, 2023 meeting, OPCR Director John Jefferson stated that it had not had a complaint panel review for six months, much less forwarded material to the CCPO. The reason given for this delinquency was that MPD hadn't provided adequate training yet for its participating personnel. In the same meeting, a CCPO Commissioner complained that CCPO was given permission to begin their review prior to receiving training and complained about this discrepancy in standards for the two groups.

anycy in standards for the two groups.

This is precisely the pattern that needs to immediately change if MPD is to comply with MDHR and DOJ consent decrees. I recommend being in touch with MDHR Commissioner Lucero, info.mdhr@state.mn.us and with the Minneapolis DOJ team, community.minneapolis@usdoj.gov

**Bryon Richard
Lynnhurst**

ABBOTT GUTTING STAFF

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey declared Sept. 14, 2023, "Abbott Northwestern Hospital Day", as hospital management broke ground on a new building that same day. What the public doesn't know is that Abbott Northwestern is spending thousands of dollars on outside consultants to compare our staffing levels to those in other states and municipalities and implement a plan to gut nurse staffing levels. The current proposals increase workload and pa-

tient care assignments by 20% or more. There is a large amount of research that shows cutting hospital nurse staffing increases patient complications, morbidity, and mortality and even more research that shows already unsafe staffing levels are the predominant factor in why nurses are leaving or not coming back to hospitals.

Frey's declaration is profoundly out of touch and appears to be a cover-up for what is happening inside the walls of the largest hospital in the Twin Cities. Our patients – the residents of Minneapolis and its surrounding communities – deserve high-quality, safe patient care provided by experienced nurses. Minnesota's reputation as a leader in healthcare is once again being threatened by highly paid corporate bullies who are prioritizing their own pocketbooks over patient care and driving nurses away. Without nurses, who will care for you?

**Rebekah Nelson, RN
Abbott Northwestern employee/elected labor leader**

SOUTHWEST Connector

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TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

“Four years ago, I realized we needed a model for an urban CSA,” says Craig Neal, founder and chief gardener of the Neighborhood Sponsored Garden (NSG) located in a backyard on Beard Ave. in Linden Hills.



By Larry LaVercombe

Many of us have welcomed the delivery of fruits and vegetables that arrive each week when you own a share of a CSA. Usually, the growers own farms about an hour away, and for a fee to each subscriber, or “shareholder,” the farmers buy the seeds, grow the produce, and deliver each week into the city.

“Why not a Neighborhood CSA?” Neal asked. “You eliminate the environmental and financial expense: the driving, the gas, the time. Instead, your neighbors walk over on Saturday afternoon, so we all see each other once a week, catch up on the kids, you know, and then you walk home with a bag of groceries. Plus a bouquet of flowers.”

The concept is this, he says: “Hyper-local, zero waste, everything recycled and repurposed. No pesticides of commercial fertilizers and we use biodynamic compost. And all the while we create community – because all of the shareholders live within 200 yards.

“NSG’s can be started by those who own their own home, love to garden, and want to be in community.”

How does it work?
“Friday we harvest; Saturday we wash/bag/bundle and deliver.”

He goes on to explain the details: the water bath, the sorting tables, the reusable bags that have lasted four years. He gives a tour of the plants: broccoli, kale, carrots and peas, micro-greens, tomatoes arugula, eggplant and cucumber... And flowers. There are flowers everywhere.

He points out one of the tall-growing orange blossoms. “Mexican Sunflowers. Monarchs love them more than anything. You’ll see a Monarch before you leave,” he says, and sure enough, before he can finish his next sentence, he points one out. Then he points to the garlic chives, which are buzzing with hundreds and hundreds of honeybees. “Garlic chives, they love them like no other plant.”

In September, when I ran into Craig at Woofstock, I was not surprised to hear he had a new endeavor; he and his wife Patricia Neal have been doing interesting and valuable things for years, including their work as co-founders of the Center for Purposeful Leadership.

I was also not surprised that this winter they’ll be creating a how-to manual and a website to start growing the concept of

LOCAL MODEL FOR AN URBAN CSA



Patricia Neal works with children to tend their neighborhood sponsored garden. (Photo by Larry LaVercombe)



Craig Neal stands in the urban garden growing on his city plot that feeds nine neighboring families. (Photo by Larry LaVercombe)

the NSG – the Neighborhood Sponsored Garden. “Patricia is very involved,” he says.

“We’re partners. I’m ‘point’ for the vegetables, she’s point for the flowers and weekly



newsletter.” And together, they have created a model that serves in three ways:

- Community
- Food Sufficiency
- Youth Involvement

The Kid’s Program welcomes their younger neighbors, who often show up on Fridays and Saturdays to learn and contribute. “The older kids have been coming for three/four years now,” he says, “and they get it. They now know more about the garden and where their vegetables come from. We spark lots of conversations.”

Neal estimates that a double-city-lot of this size maxes out production at about nine shares per year. These nine shares serve 40 people.

So, how does this pay? “Well,” he laughs, “we don’t get paid.”

“The economics of the deal is this: For \$225 shareholders get a full share for one year. So, for 21 weeks in a row, you’ll get a bag of produce, and a bouquet of flowers. It’s roughly \$10 a week. We try to break even at that number.”

“That \$225 times nine equals roughly what I spend on seeds and water,” he says, with a smile.

Okay! So, who else can run a Neighborhood Sponsored Garden like this?

“Neighbor Sponsored Gardens are usually run by those who own their own home, who love to garden, and who want to be in community,” he says. “Patricia and I reap lots of benefits other than money, and we love it. It’s gardening. Sharing. Teaching. Welcome and belonging with our neighbors.” Feel free to call or text 612-281-1192.



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

WE NEED CITY INVESTMENT TODAY ON CLIMATE

Thank you to Leah Robshaw Robinson for spotlighting climate justice resources (“How we win: Organizing for environmental and climate justice” in the Sept. 21 edition of the Connector). I found myself answering yes to Leah’s questions: yes, I care deeply about environmental justice. Yes, I feel increasingly paralyzed by the enormity of the cli-



mate emergency. As I watch \$23 billion worth of U.S. climate disasters this year unfold on the news, as I keep my kids inside on precious Minnesota summer days because of wildfire smoke – yes, I crave tangible, local, strategic action and organization.

If you feel the same way, I want to share a simple, immediate call to action you can take today. On Oct. 19, city council will vote for a franchise fee increase that will raise \$10 million in 2024 to launch a neighborhood by neighborhood, fully supported transition to clean energy homes. The federal In-

flation Reduction Act and Minnesota’s 100 percent clean energy legislation give us a precious gift – an opportunity to take bold, ambitious, critical steps toward decarbonization – but we need city investment to move quickly and ensure these resources are accessible to everyone. We cannot let this opportunity slip through our fingers.

If you too feel numbed by the enormity of the climate crisis, use your voice to push for this funding. It is time for Minneapolis to lead by example on what courageous climate action looks like. We need

\$10 million next year and then we need to scale that number up quickly in the years to come.

Call your council member, e-mail them, tell them how you feel about funding the Climate Legacy Initiative and what it means for you, your children, your grandchildren. And then hold them accountable when they are up for re-election in November – our future depends on it.

Kelly Sanderson Kingfield

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HOW TO ADD ART TO YOUR HOME

Local artists share tips on how to find pieces that complement your home best

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Longfellow mosaic artist Chris Miller believes that art is like jewelry for your home.

"I made this piece in glass a few years ago and I display it each September during LoLa Art Crawl. It says 'Earth without art is just eh.' I believe that!" said Miller, of shatterandglue.tumblr.com.

Miller makes a variety of different size mosaic items, including light boxes that can be set in a living room and treated like furniture and windows.

He encourages people to consider the light in their homes when they think about what kind of art they'd like to have.

"One of the best things about art in my opinion is that there is no right or wrong. I may fall in love with a style that another person can't stand. That's OK. That's how art works," stated Miller.

"Art can turn a house into a home," agrees fellow Longfellow artist Bob Schmitt of Laughing Waters Studio. "Selecting art to hang or have in your home is a simple way to surround yourself with pieces that can say something about yourself. Bringing art into your home can also energize a space, calm a space or turn a dull space into one of interest."

For art lover and painter Suzie Marty, adding art to a home brings a personal touch both from the artist and art appreciator. "Original art holds an energy and soul



These small lightboxes made by Longfellow artist Chris Miller can brighten tables and shelves. Other larger ones function as furniture. (Photo submitted)

TIPS FOR SELECTING ART

- "Start with an open mind and be willing to look at pieces of art you didn't think you'd like. Ask questions. Sometimes there is a hidden connection unveiled between a piece of art and the client that triggers the selection. That's fun to watch! Another approach is to move towards what makes you comfortable and happy. Art can be an investment and may be in your home for years so you want to be sure you get along with each other." - Suzie Marty of Everett and Charlie art gallery

- "Pick out a wall for a painting/print/photo and/or a space/shelf for a piece of sculpture and start there." - Kenneth Wenzel, www.kennethwenzel.com

- "Buy what you like. Find room for it. Constantly move stuff around." Lisa Arnold, www.instagram.com/xola_arts

- "As a practicing artist, I create many original pieces in a year. But over the years I find that many people are not ready to make a major purchase for their home. Many artists, like myself also offer prints of their original work. I have found that a lot of people can start with a print or even just a note card to begin to put beauty into, bring life to their own environment. Some of these early purchases can lead on to creating a personal connection with a particular artist. There are few things that are as personal as choosing art for your home. There is no right way to do this. Start small. Start local." - Bob Schmitt, www.shopatlaughingwatersstudio.com



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TIPS FOR SELECTING ART

• “When someone comes to my studio to purchase art, it is not unusual for them to go through every piece I have, narrow it down, and then slowly whittle it down to the one they like best. The happiest people are the ones that come back and who become a “collector” of my work – I have collectors who have purchased multiple paintings, several who have purchased upwards of five or more if they have large homes. I have two collectors who have purchased more than 10 paintings. I also have purchasers who return to the studio tour every year, and talk about the single piece in their home that they have treasured and enjoyed for many years. You know they are happy with it. The only unhappy people are those who have looked at a piece, considered purchasing, and then wanted to think about it... only to come back days or weeks later and find out that the one they want has been purchased by someone else.” – Calvin deRuyter, www.calsportfolio.net

• “For someone who would like to start buying art for their home I would encourage them to hit several of the art shows held throughout the year. This is a great way to get a feel for what is out there. One can easily attend a few of these and start sorting out what they like and don't like. Then when comfortable doing so, begin making purchases. One of the best things about art in my opinion is that there is no right or wrong. I may fall in love with a style that another person can't stand. That's OK. That's how art works.” – Chris Miller, shatterandglue.tumblr.com



During the annual LoLa art crawl every September, Longfellow artist Bob Schmitt invites people into his garden. The design and decor complement the artwork he creates in the manner of Asian brush painters. (Photo submitted)

▶ 6 ADD ART TO HOME

like none other,” she observed. “It evokes a feeling, an expression, and a sense of connection. It can make a bold statement or quietly coexist. Either way, it can be a beautiful extension of your home and you.”

“Art works are very personal because they usually provide a direct communication from the artist to the purchaser, which creates a certain feeling or memory in the viewer,” remarked painter Calvin deRuyter, who formerly owned the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger and Midway Como Frogtown Monitor and currently serves on the Lake Region Arts Council Board. He earned his bachelors in fine art from Hamline University, and creates ab-

stract watercolors. “People who buy original artwork have a feeling of connection to the artwork they buy. It may ‘match the couch,’ but you still don’t go out and buy just any old painting with those colors in it... people want more than that.”

HOW DOES ONE BEGIN?

“In terms of starting out, it’s easy. There are so many artists in this city, in this neighborhood,” remarked Schmitt, who has been using ink and brush in the manner of Asian brush painters for over 60 years. “Pay attention to what gets your attention.”

Schmitt added, “Art crawls like LoLa, buildings like Northrop King, The Casket Arts Building, The California Building offer many opportunities to both see what

is out there and also to actually meet the artist. When considering purchasing art, the goal is not to impress someone else, but to feed yourself.

“Buy things that you love. That may help tell the story of who you are. If you need more energy, bring a high energy piece into your home. If you need calming from the world outside, look for something that relaxes you.” He pointed to www.LoLaArt.org as a great place to visit to see the range of choices available.

Marty, who owns Everett & Charlie art gallery in Linden Hills, and also sells newspaper advertisements for TMC Publications CO, agrees that selecting art can be simple. “Let the art choose you,” she recommended. “If you work too hard to find the perfect piece based on the right size, color, medium, or price, you may be disappointed. Relax. Let it speak to you. You’ll be pleasantly surprised.”

TIPS FOR SELECTING ART

For LoLa artist Lisa Arnold, adding art to a home helps one feel alive. “I let my art find me. When I feel that ‘zing,’ I know I have to have it,” said Arnold. “Buy what you like. Find room for it. Constantly move stuff around.”

Art in a home enriches all who live and visit there, observed LoLa artist Kenneth Wenzel. “Choose what you respond to and keep open to learning more about art to develop your sense of taste,” he suggested. “Pick out a wall for a painting/print/photo and/or a space/shelf for a piece of sculpture and start there.”

Know the spaces in your house where art would be desired, advises deRuyter. “Knowing your space is the most important part before you actually start your search for art.” Don’t forget the ‘odd’ spaces in your home that may be used, i.e. the space above the thermostat, the narrow space between that window and a door, or on top of a corner glass case that would be perfect for a

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INSIDE THE HEAD OF MINIMALIST STATE ICON ARTIST

THE ART OF...

Christy Johnson, founder & CEO of United Goods started working as a graphic designer and artist in 2003 in Minneapolis. A life-long creative, she's loved to draw since she was a kid. Over time Christy developed a unique style of illustrating, and began creating minimalist, graphic prints.



By **Suzie Marty**

Christy draws her State Icons with a computer and mouse, then prints them in using archival-grade paper and inks. She places the high-quality giclées into wood frames handcrafted by her parents.

I'm sharing a recent blog post of hers:

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO DRAW?

You recently helped me choose which Minnesota State Fair landmark I'd draw next. My email subscribers and social media followers were asked to decide between a Pronto Pup booth or a Corn Dog stand – Team Pronto Pup was victorious! It was a really fun way to crowdsource the new State Icon that I illustrate annually in the weeks leading up to the fair.

When participating in art shows and chatting with fellow makers, one question gets asked time and time again: "How do you decide what state icons you draw?" With more than 500 mini prints (to date) in my collection, I understand your curiosity!

While I haven't yet drawn a landmark from all 50 states, that's been my goal since I started this work. Currently, 43 states have been covered, plus a few international options (not to mention the TV show and movie prints). So, you've gotta know I've not personally seen with my own two eyes all of the signs, statues, buildings, etc., I've illustrated. I wish!

But you're likely curious about the other ways I choose which of the many, many past and present-day landmarks from the United States that will turn into tiny, graphic art:

1) Pick favorites.

When I first started drawing my mini State Icon prints, I sat down and chose some of Minneapolis landmarks that were



Christy Johnson of United Goods does minimalistic, graphic prints in small sizes. (Photos submitted)

personal favorites. The very first one I illustrated was the Spoonbridge & Cherry Sculpture. From there, I completed First Avenue, Stone Arch Bridge, the Grain Belt Beer Sign, the Gold Medal Flour Sign, and Foshay Tower. After that, it's a blur – I can't recall what came next! But these were the ones I felt compelled to create from the onset of my idea. As an artist, I find drawing objects I'm interested in makes the process more enjoyable and fulfilling.

2) Look around.

Inspiration is everywhere! I started scanning the landscape every time I drove anywhere or explored a new city or state. I still do this today, especially when traveling. My phone is filled with quick snaps of buildings, signs, statues, and more that I've seen while out and about. When you pay

attention, you'll usually discover something that catches your eye.

3) Welcome suggestions.

This is my favorite! I've been all over the Twin Cities and Minnesota in general, since I grew up here, and I do travel a lot around the country. But there's no way I can see (or have seen) it all. That's where you come in. I love it when friends, family, and fans propose ideas on what landmark I could turn into a State Icon. This is the best because oftentimes your ideas are things I've never heard of – or sometimes they're businesses that have been closed for years so I likely wouldn't have stumbled upon them with an online search. If you've ever shared an idea with me at an art show, you've seen my little black notebook that's

crammed with ideas from all 50 states. When I have a chance to sit down at my computer to draw, if I don't already have a focus in mind I'll whip out this notebook and scan the pages until a submission grabs my attention. So keep 'em coming!

4) Experiment with themes.

Sometimes the suggestions I receive aren't for U.S. landmarks, but instead based on entirely different subject matter. Fans reaching out with thoughts on topical, trendy, and meme-worthy moments have sparked a couple of prints, including my illustration of Bernie Sanders after his iconic, mitten-clad moment at the 2021 Inauguration. And the idea for my TV Show and Movie Prints came from a friend, who hinted and hinted until I finally took the leap. I don't know that I ever would have produced these prints if not for the support of people like you.

5) Set a goal.

This is something I do annually with my State Fair prints. Each year I illustrate a new Minnesota State Fair-themed state icon, which challenges me to come up with a landmark you'll get excited about. It helps that I typically look to you for input on what you'd like me to create.

6) Draw on emotions.

I make my art to celebrate the places, people, and memories you cherish. Because of that, the state icon prints that resonate the most are ones you have deep connections with. So, I'll lean on my own feelings when considering what landmarks to illustrate next, or I'll think back to the stories you've told me at events, in emails, or on social media. These are so satisfying to design.

Overall, the most important thing I keep in mind when deciding what to draw next is to have fun. I don't usually worry too much about whether or not others will buy what I create. Instead, I draw things that excite me or that mean a lot to you. It's all an experiment, and I try to learn from my mistakes and listen to you, my fans (aka the people who matter the most). United Goods icons are available at Everett & Charlie. More at www.united-goodsusa.com.



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

▶7 ADD ART TO HOME

piece of sculpture or a lit glass vase.

Ask, do you want one piece that just dominates the space and makes a solo statement? Or, do you want multiple pieces that you love in a "create a gallery" kind of feeling in your home?

"And don't forget that art comes in all forms and sizes to cover walls, sit on the floor, cover at table or a desk, or even hang from the ceiling... Art belongs everywhere," said deRuyter.

"Of course, many people love to look at art, decide they love it, and then 'make' the space in their home to place it – that is the sign that you are moving from being

a home designer, to an actual collector of art. A few times in my career, when I have asked someone who is seriously considering one of my paintings if they had a place in mind, and the response was 'Oh, the living room (or bath or bedroom), but we are choosing the art we love first and then building the rest of the room around that.' Now, that is the very most perfect complement to any artist."

Marty sees people come into her gallery, fall in love with a piece immediately but then debate whether they have any more wall space. They may also not know exactly why they like the piece as it isn't their typical style. When they come back and tell her that the piece has been

"haunting" them and they can't stop thinking about it, "that's when we both know they are meant to be together and give the piece a 'Forever Home.'"

She features only Minnesota artists in her gallery. "Minnesota is so lucky to be overflowing with talented artists," she observed.

"Buy local art and stay in touch with the artists who have made it," urges Wenzel.

"In the Twin Cities there is a thriving artist community with all kinds of art shows, studio tours, and artists who are willing to open their studio for people to look and talk with," agrees deRuyter. "There are smaller tours or art fairs, and

there are bigger events. During an event like Art-A-Whirl (in May) or like Art Attack (in June), you can check out literally hundreds of artists in one building – certainly more artists than anyone could visit in a weekend." These art crawls enable people to ask themselves if they want art that is abstract or realistic, landscape or still life, impressionist or non-objective. Do they want art that screams or art that calms?

Don't feel pressured to fill a space right now, said deRuyter, or you might get something that won't speak to you for long. "Take the time to find the pieces that ... survive in your mind and heart the longest, and just enjoy the journey as you look," he stated.



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SAVE DEMOCRACY - EMPOWER YOUNG VOTERS

Young Americans have been gathering strength and exerting more influence in recent elections, but need help realizing their full political force as voters. For the health of our democracy, we want them to do so. While, historically underrepresented



at the polls, more 18-29 year-olds voted in the 2020 presidential election nationally than in 2016, close to 50%. Even 2022 midterm turnout was better than expected, inching toward 30%. A positive trend - but a far cry from the electoral clout the second-largest age demographic in the U.S. could have.

Generation Z (for Zoomer) are those born between 1997 and 2012, with Gen Z young adults expected to make up 17% of all eligible voters by 2024 and 35% by 2036. Combine Zoomers (sometimes called Plurals) with their older siblings and largest generation, Millennials, and the Brookings Institution expects them to account for a majority of all potential voters within this decade and 60% by 2036. It benefits us all that they are civically educated and engaged.

Pew Research Center describes our youngest voting block as more racially and ethnically diverse, progressive, and with positive attitudes toward government. Research also proves Gen Z's low voting numbers are not due to a lack of interest on their part. Studies from CIRCLE, the

Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University's Tisch College, consistently show that outreach, even one interaction, correlates with higher youth voting. When that doesn't happen, barriers for young voters - particularly first-time

voters - remain in place, perhaps for a lifetime. Although highly concerned about the issues in the 2022 midterms, less than half of the young voters CIRCLE surveyed were ever contacted by any civic or political organization, candidate, or party.

Voter outreach, education, and access to the ballot is the primary mission of the League of Women Voters. Locally, LWV Minneapolis holds voter registration drives twice yearly in the city's high schools. In our unscientific survey of the students we met this past spring, the barriers to voting they cited match some nationwide responses. Although a few said they doubted their vote would matter, most said they simply didn't know how to vote, were confused about registering, needed information about candidates, or were unaware of their eligibility.

The great news is the North Star State has made voting easier, rather than harder, while still securing elections. Sixteen and 17-year-olds can pre-register to be ready to vote in their first election as an 18-year-old. They can register right at the polls on Election Day or get the ball rolling by checking

the box on their State ID or driver's license application, a form nearly every 16-year-old is itching to fill out! By next year, it will be automatic.

Understanding that classes and work schedules may conflict with voting on Election Day, Minnesota offers early voting, and absentee ballots are the solution for college students away from home. There Secretary of State has a helpful College Students Fact Sheet at www.sos.state.mn.us. These policies have paid off with 15% more young voters in 2020 than the national average.

However, that still leaves a big segment of the Minnesota youth vote on the table with too many teens and young adults in the dark about registration and voting options.

This is a shame because the Minneapolis high school students we met have strong feelings about the issues facing them and this country and want a say in what happens. Their top two concerns, overwhelmingly and across gender and ethnic lines, were the livability of the planet and the rights of all humans. Climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss came up in nearly every conversation, including mentions of specific regions of vulnerability and pipeline controversies. These young people were well-informed and passionate. They cared deeply about vulnerable groups calling for protections of LGBTQ+ rights, policies to end racism and women's inequality as well as the restoration of reproductive healthcare. They

expressed concern for immigrants' rights and the Indigenous community.

Close behind were quality of life issues, with safety leading the conversation. These students were clearly fed up with the specter of gun violence, being scared in their schools and communities, including a lack of trust in the Minneapolis police department. Concerned about the homeless, affordable housing, and safe and reliable transportation, they value their education as key to a successful life. They criticized book banning and called for free/affordable college.

They also displayed a pretty good "baloney" detector, so politicians beware. Your young constituents and future voters reject unfulfilled promises and lies. They demand honesty, credibility, and adherence to the law from those who make them.

Civically educating and empowering this sleeping giant of a voting block cannot begin too early, and a good example is invaluable. Several students told us they would vote because their families do. CIRCLE offers many ideas to grow the youth vote at circle.tufts.edu, and its research reminds us of the power of even a single interaction encouraging a new voter. When it comes to the power of the vote, you can pay it forward with information and guidance, and LWV Minneapolis is here to help. Our democracy depends on it.

For information on voter registration and eligibility, voting deadlines and locations, questions about Ranked Choice Voting, and more, go to: vote.minneapolismn.gov. For education on this new law and to develop a voting plan contact vote@lwvminpls.org.

▶1 URBAN FOREST STUDY

"We're seeing these greater heat events within our city, within the country," Shaffer said. "Having these forested natural areas within urban environments can help the city deal with and mitigate some of the extreme urban heat island events that we've been getting and maybe even potentially provide some refuge during these events."

The study also found that the quality of the forested area matters. A forested area with more canopy cover, vegetation layers, and native species performed better than an area lacking those characteristics. For instance, an area in Theodore Wirth Park where the park board is performing restoration work to remove invasive species may have a greater cooling effect than an area that has not yet been restored, Shaffer said.

"Overall, the trend is that if you invest in your natural areas like this, you're going to see this cooling effect in those zones," Shaffer said.

Shaffer said the park board will most likely look to the findings of this study in determining which areas of Minneapolis' park system to focus on and prioritizing



Minnehaha Falls (Photo by Allie Johnson)

their resources.

"Knowing this effect potentially exists is potentially something we can take into account when we're planning out our management activities," he said.

LOCAL AUTHOR PUBLISHES HORROR BOOK

David Greske and Black Bedsheet Books is proud to announce the release of Greske's latest work, "Road Trip And Other Highway Horrors." Greske resides near Lake Bde Maka Ska with his 35-year partner.



"Road Trip And Other Highway Horrors" is a 13-story collection of terrors waiting on seldom traveled roads. From desert highways to hidden backroads, these haunted ribbons of asphalt are best to be avoided.

A quartet of high-schoolers returning home from the movies encounter a strange man on the side of the road... A murderess who journeys into the desert to dispose of her husband does battle with strange beings from the sand... An over-the-road trucker tells a tale of alien road kill... A family embarks on a road trip that ends with dire consequences.

Mark Allan Gunnells, author of 2B and LUCID said: "Greske is a great wordsmith, but above all that, he's a great entertainer...a storyteller at the top of his game."

"Road Trip And Other Highway Hor-

rors" is available at amazon.com, blackbedsheetbooks.com, or wherever fine books are sold.

Greske is the author of over 30 short stories and six novels. His stories have appeared in Black Ink Horror, The Literary Hatchet, and Nothing's Sacred.

"Next" and "Cyst" were featured podcast on The Wicked Library.

"Blood River," his fourth book, was adapted into a full-length film by Christopher Forbes. Greske, along with Forbes, wrote the screenplay. It premiered in January 2013 at the Georgia Poison Peach Festival. The annual event, organized by Forbes, showcases a variety of films and animation by local and international filmmakers. "Blood River" is available on Amazon Prime Video and DVD. More at www.davidgreske.com.

Based in Antelope, Calif., Nicholas Grabowsky, owner of Black Bed Sheet Books publishes primarily in the horror genre, but also considers fantasy, science fiction, suspense, thrillers, and anything else with a dark theme. Visit BBS at: Blackbedsheetbooks.com.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

TRIO TURNS FIVE

In 2016, Louis Hunter was one of the protesters who was wrongfully accused of violence at a protest against police brutality. He was facing 20 years in prison if convicted and it took him over a year to fight those charges. In August 2017, with widespread community support, the charges were finally formally dropped. Despite his innocence, Hunter lost his truck and his landscaping business and didn't have a way to support himself and his family. He didn't give up; instead, he trusted and leaned into the community. He channeled his love of cooking and passion for giving back, and with the help of friends, started hosting pop-ups to serve healthy and delicious plant-based food in Minneapolis. Every pop-up sold out!

So, it was clear that these pop-ups



could turn into something more permanent. Hunter worked day and night to bring his vision to life, and, in 2018, Trio was born as a brick-and-mortar restaurant at 610 West Lake St. in Minneapolis.

Hunter's love and care for the community hasn't stopped. In that spirit, Trio

threw at five-year birthday bash on Saturday, Sept. 30 with food, fun, music, and community. For more information, contact: info@trioplant-based.com.

GOLDEN EXHIBIT AT GALLERY 360

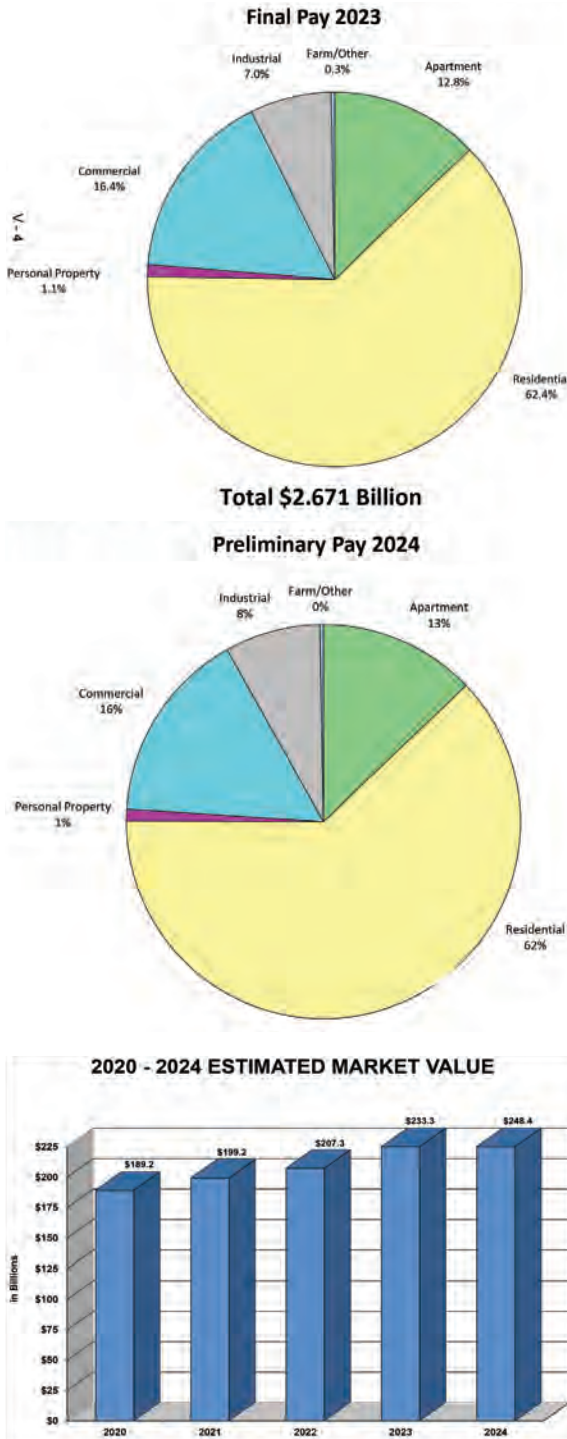
Gallery 360 at 3011 West 50th St. is proud to welcome back local artist Nicholas Harper in an exhibition touched by the goddess of all things golden, entitled "Theia". This luxurious suite of masterful paintings showcases a variety of female ingénue and anthropomorphic figures aggrandized in Harper's signature portrait style. Inspired by the mythological symbolism of the show's namesake Greek goddess, Harper exalts his subjects in gold leaf to further the lavishness of these fine artworks. Opening is Saturday, Oct. 7, 6-9 p.m. The show runs through Nov. 5.

Volunteer In Your Community

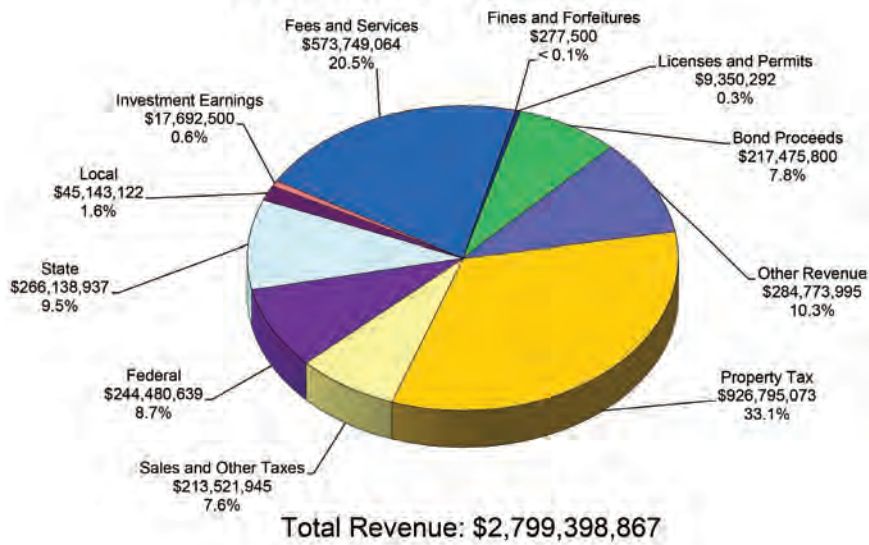
Lutheran Social Service of MN is seeking volunteers age 55+ in your area to provide companionship to older adults or mentor school-age children. Volunteers commit to regular weekly hours for a tax-free stipend and mileage reimbursement. Please contact Tina at 651-310-9425 or Tina.Voss@lssmn.org for more information and to make an impact in your community.



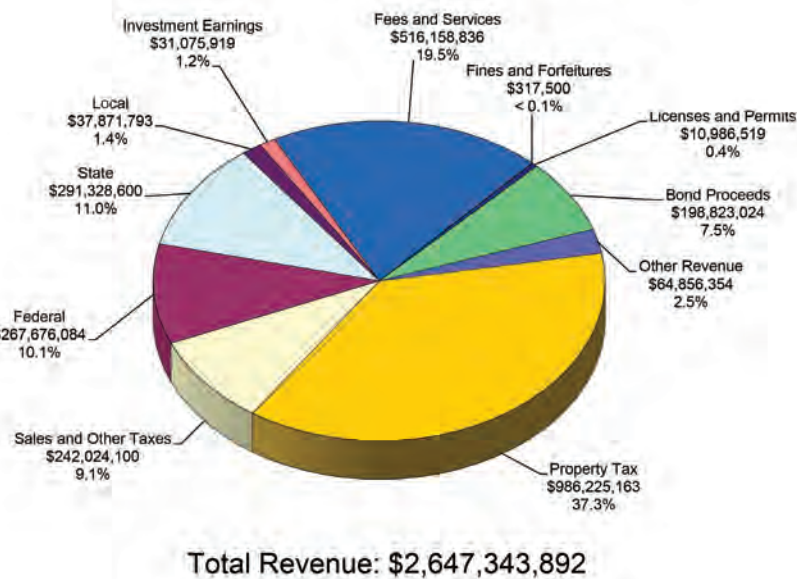
HENNEPIN COUNTY BUDGET & TAX LEVY



2023 ADJUSTED REVENUE



2024 PROPOSED REVENUE



HENNEPIN COUNTY PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

On Sept. 12, David Hough, the Hennepin County Administrator, proposed a 2024 budget of \$2.64 billion to the Hennepin County Board with a net property tax levy of \$991.3 million, which is an increase of 6.5% from 2023. Property taxes cover roughly 36% of the overall county budget with federal and state funding, fees and services covering most of the rest. The Hennepin County Board used the recommendation when it set the maximum tax levy on Sept. 19 and the final levy, which could possibly be lower, will be

approved with the final budget adoption set for Dec. 12, following a series of budget presentations and a public hearing, where people can make comments on the budget to the board, on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at 6 p.m. Find the administrator's recommended budget and a schedule of hearings at www.hennepin.us/budgets.

BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION LEVY

The Board of Estimate and Taxation held a public hearing on Sept. 13 to consider setting the maximum property tax levy for 2024. The board sets the maxi-

mum tax levies for the city, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, and will adopt the maximum levy for later this month. The proposed 2024 budget is \$1.8 billion with a proposed tax levy of 6.2%. The city council has started reviewing the 2024 budget and will approve and likely amend it in December after public hearings on Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, along with a final hearing before the final budget adoption Dec. 5.

CITY BRIEFS

NEW NICOLLET DESIGN OPTIONS

The city has developed preliminary design options for the street reconnection of Nicollet Ave. at Lake St. and will be sharing them at a community event on Tuesday, Oct. 10 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. These include options for the street and new public space layouts for the 10-acre site. There will be family-friendly arts activities, music, food trucks, and more. In the event of poor weather, the event will take place the following day, Wednesday, Oct. 11 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. The Whittier Alliance communications channels will provide updates as needed.

VOTING OPEN

Early voting has begun for the Nov. 7 city election of all 13 City Council members. People can vote by mail or in person at the Early Vote Center at 980 E. Hennepin Ave. All mail-in ballots need to be received by Nov. 7 and may be delivered in person to the Elections & Voter Services office by 3 p.m. on Election Day. They may not be dropped off at precinct polling places. The Early Vote Center's hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. The

center will extend its hours for the final two weeks of voting, including Saturdays and Sundays. Find more information at <https://vote.minneapolismn.gov/voters/>.

PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The city has approved the projects it will request to get funded through the state legislature in 2024. They will be asking for \$44 million for the Nicollet Ave. Bridge renovation, \$8 million to replace the 36-inch water main through the Northside Green Zone, \$5 million to continue remodeling sidewalk corners to be ADA compliant, and \$4 million to replace the Bossen Terrace Sanitary Sewer that not only serves the Bossen Park area, but the Metropolitan Airport Commission building.

TREE FUNDING

The Minneapolis Health Department was awarded \$8 million in federal funding for their Equitable Tree Canopy Management Program to fund private property tree removals. Hennepin County was also awarded \$10 million to assist with this issue and urban forestry. More information on the grant funding, application process, and how the funding can be specifically allocated will be available in the coming weeks.

NEW SIDEWALKS

The city has announced plans to install a sidewalk along Richfield Road to provide access from existing paths to future Metro Transit stations located on both sides of the road near the southeast shore of Bde Maka Ska from William Berry Road to W 36th St. Over the coming fall and winter, city staff will share plans with neighborhood associations, Lakewood Cemetery, the Como-Harriet Streetcar and others. A more finalized layout is expected in 2024 with construction in 2025.

CITY APPEALS LATEST 2040 PLAN RULING

The city has appealed the recent Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan ruling of the Hennepin County District Court that stopped implementation of some of it. The city announced that it is "appealing the ruling in order to avoid reverting to the expired 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which would make the city noncompliant with state law, increase uncertainty in the housing development process, and slow the production of multi-unit affordable housing."

Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

SERIES ON PLANNING FOR END OF LIFE

Diamond Lake Lutheran Church (5760 Portland Ave. S.) is hosting a series titled: Spoiler Alert - We All Die in the End: Resources for Being Ready on Wednesdays in October. On Oct. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Rev. Andrea Roske-Metcalf will cover everything people need to know about organizing a funeral, whether it's for themselves or a loved one. Kris Pearson, SERS (Senior Real Estate Specialist), will speak on Oct. 25, 6:30-8 p.m. about options for senior living, differences in communities, and how to get your home ready before moving. She will be joined by Allison Fraiser, elder law attorney of Maser, Amundson & Boggio, to discuss protecting assets, government programs to help pay for it all, as well as potential issues to watch out for. Community dinner served at 5:30 p.m.

BRYANT BRIDGE OUT IN OCTOBER

The city of Minneapolis is planning to repair the Bryant Avenue Bridge over Minnehaha Creek this fall. Repairs are expected to begin in the second half of October and take about three weeks. The bridge has been closed since Aug. 23, when structural issues were discovered during an inspection. It will remain closed until repairs are complete.

SIP AND STROLL OCT. 10

The annual Sip and Stroll in Bryn Mawr will be on Tuesday, Oct. 10, 6-8 p.m. Check in at Spruce Salon (404 Penn Ave. S.) or ModernWell (2909 S. Wayzata Blvd). Pick up your checklist of participating businesses, check out the prizes donated by local businesses and the new BMNA swag.

ART ON EXHIBIT OCT. 13-15

Local nature photographer Joseph Donovan will be displaying his works in the gallery across from Park Siding Park, Oct. 13-15, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The gallery address is 3112 West 28th Street and will be open to the public.

BDE MAKA SKA PAVILION REOPENS OCT. 20

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will open the Bde Maka Ska Pavilion area on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023. This high-profile lakeside attraction at 3000 E Bde Maka Ska Parkway has been completely rebuilt and expanded over the last 15 months. The \$6.5 million project features two new buildings totaling 4,400 square feet that will host a restaurant and market from the team behind Pimento Jamaican Kitchen, Indigenous art, and the return of naval artifacts that were previously displayed at the lake. The project also includes improved outdoor seating with 3,000 square feet of open covered space, a small performance stage, upgraded landscaping and trail safety, and a six-stall, year-round restroom area.

ADOPT A STORM DRAIN

The East Isles Neighborhood Association (EINA) was awarded an MWMO Community Grant to focus on water quality. Their first goal is to increase Storm Drain Adoption with the Adopt-a-Drain program. EINA is asking residents to Adopt A Storm Drain and keep it clear of leaves, trash and debris to reduce water pollution.

KINGFIELD POLLING PARTY VOLUNTEERS

Kingfield Neighborhood has a great voting tradition of KFNA (your community-supported and community-supporting nonprofit), hosting an outdoor Polling Party at MLK Park to greet neighbors and thank them for voting. Continuing a tradition started in 2012, there will be three tents outside on the park grounds all day from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. with warm beverages and warmer fire pits. Sign up to be a volunteer greeter, crossing guard, treats baker or firewood bearer for your neighbors for this year's Nov. 7 election. All of Kingfield (and Kingfield only) votes at MLK Park. Kingfield has had an 85% turnout for federal elections, but for local elections, Kingfield has seen those numbers cut in half.



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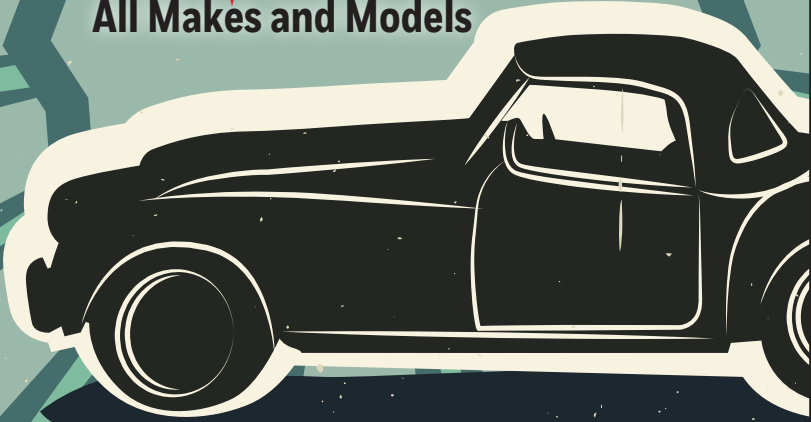


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