

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • NOVEMBER 2, 2023 • VOL. 2 • NO. 19 • 25,000 CIRCULATION



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Performers from Yirí Dance Studio, Evolución Latina Dance Company and Keri Simonson Dance celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with a flash mob showcasing Salsa and Bachata dancing in the streets. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

## Yirí Studio creates connections through Latin dance

By **Jill Boogren**

More than a dozen dancers took their show on the road, literally, Oct. 8, 2023, by bringing a flashmob to Open Streets Lyndale. In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, performers from three studios – Yirí Dance Studio, Evolución Latina Dance Company and Keri Simonson Dance – rehearsed together at Yirí earlier in the day before heading

over to Lyndale at 29th Ave. With music cranked up on a portable speaker, they delighted passersby with the rhythm and sway of Salsa and Bachata dances.

"It was a great opportunity to interact with other studios who have been very influential here in the [Latin dance] scene," said event organizer and Yirí instructor Tommy Valerio, who wanted to showcase

the dynamics of Hispanic culture through these dances. "It was just a great time here to share this moment with everyone."

Making connections and growing the Latin dance community is one of the core values of Yirí, whose website proclaims, "Community. We are always, always stronger together."

One student, Lyton Guall-



## PAVILION REOPENS AFTER FOUR YEARS

'We have created something so beautiful out of something that was so devastating,' says park commissioner of new Bde Maka Ska pavilion

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

"Oct. 20, 2023 is when Minneapolis changed in a different way. We're never going back," said chef Tomme Beevas of Pimento on the Lake, the new restaurant inside the rebuilt Bde Maka Ska Pavilion at 3000 E Bde Maka Ska Parkway. "Thank you for being an instrument of liberation. On Oct. 20, 2003, Minnesota said 'forward forever, backwards never.'"

In 2023, there is still segregation in the financial world, said Beevas during a ribbon cutting ceremony at the pavilion. He observed that it was easier for his grandmother to access capital to build her business in Kingston, Jamaica than it is for Black people in America.

"We don't need charity. We need access to capital. We need leaders who believe in us," said Louis King of Lola on the Lake and Lola's Cafe. He and his wife, Beverly, were the food vendors at Bde Maka Ska pavilion when it burned down four years ago, and they partnered with Pimento to create Pimento on the Lake.

"We could not be more excited to

open the new Bde Maka Ska Pavilion and provide another welcoming, open space in our park system," said Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Superintendent Al Bangoura. "As beloved as the original pavilion was, I believe this new building will quickly become a favorite gathering space and a Minneapolis icon."

It's been a long wait, acknowledged MPRB President Meg Forney, who lived for much of her life in the neighborhood around the lake.

"This is a phoenix," said Forney. "We have created something so beautiful out of something that was so devastating." She added, "It took us 515 days to create this, but it was worth it."

A team led by Cuningham worked on the design. Two design concepts were presented to the public in March 2021, and refined into a single concept the next month. The MPRB Commissioners approved the design in May 2021. A construction contract was awarded to Morcon Construction in May 2022, and work started later that month. The site was under continuous construction for 17 months.



## HERC TO BE CLOSED

Next up: creating a plan for what happens to Minneapolis and county trash that is currently being burned

By **Cam Gordon**

The Hennepin County Board has set a time frame to end operations at the downtown garbage incinerator. With unanimous agreement on Oct. 24 2023, they directed staff to provide them with a closure plan by February 2024 with options to shut down the facility sometime between 2028 and 2040.

Hennepin County Commissioners Irene Fernando from District 2, Angela Conley from District 4 and Jeffrey Lunde from





# EL SAZON OWNERS: 'WELCOME TO OUR CASA'

**Karen and Cristian De Leon bring elevated Latin American cuisine to former El Jefe location in Tangletown**

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Karen and Cristian De Leon welcome the community to their casa, the new El Sazon Cocina and Tragos at 5309 S Lyndale Ave.

Their dream was birthed during the hard times of COVID-19 when they found themselves out of work after the restaurant they were at closed. They realized that their busy schedules had prevented doing regular family meals, and they made it a focus.

They started cooking more and selling it to family and friends.

One day, they ran into someone who had been managing a taco stand inside a BP gas station in Eagan (1815 Diffley Rd.) and was ready to move on. They decided to take over.

The concept was simple and they enjoyed it, but Cristian found he missed the art of plating a meal. So, they decided to do something crazy.

The concept: a five-course meal served inside the gas station. The gas station agreed to close early one day. They brought in long folding tables and chairs, pushed everything inside the gas station to the edges of the room, and set up tables with disposable dishes and silverware.

"It sold out in 24 hours," recalled Karen. They even added 10 more seats.

After that first event in August 2022, they did a couple more. And they realized they wanted to operate their own restaurant where they could have sit-down service every day.

They learned that for a Latino couple trying to start out as restaurant owners, it was a tough environment. First one place and then another fell through. They were going to locate inside Keg and Case in St. Paul. That didn't work out. Several others didn't pan out either.

In April, the agent they were working with brought them to 5309 S. Lyndale where El Jefe had been for about five years. El Jefe wasn't moving out until the end of August (to 2916 S. Lyndale inside the James Ballentine VFW), but the De Leons signed the lease and then waited.

On Sept. 1, they got right to work, painting and organizing. They purchased many items from El Jefe, such as the ta-



ABOVE Friends and family members stand with Karen and Cristian De Leon as they officially open El Sazon Cocina & Tragos at 5309 S. Lyndale Ave. on Oct. 18, 2023.



LEFT Cristian De Leon serves tacos.



RIGHT Karen De Leon and her mother, Patricia Hernandez, welcome the community into their casa. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)

bles, chairs, flat top stove and other kitchen items, so setting up the new restaurant went quick. Artist Charlie Landa journeyed from Florida to paint the distinctive pieces of art that tie into those at the gas station.

They celebrated with a ribbon-cutting on Oct. 18, 2023 and officially opened at 11 a.m. that day.

El Sazon is known for its innovative takes on Latin American cuisine. Their most popular item is their birria – birria ramen, birria pizza, tacos, and even brunch menu items.

"The idea behind the menu is it has things that we eat at home but with an elevated twist to them," explained Karen. She is from Mexico and he's from Guatemala – and they've served a variety of cui-

sine styles over the years they've worked in restaurants.

They haven't been approved yet for their liquor license by the city, but until then bar director Zoilo Ruacho has created a non-alcoholic cocktail list.

"We're excited to have another restaurant back here," said Roger Worm of the Southwest Business Association. "It's a great location. It's great people and I've loved the food."

"We started with three people on staff," pointed out Karen. Between the two locations, they have 15 staff members in the front and back of the house.

Karen and Cristian met while working at the Mall of America 17 years ago. They worked at separate restaurants that shared a kitchen (Famous Dave's and Kokomo

Island Cafe).

Why 5309 Lyndale? "We wanted to find a place that was a community place, a neighborhood place," explained Karen. "We want people to come on a regular basis."

Plus, they live in Richfield and were hoping for a location close by to make it easier to work and raise their family. The De Leons have three children: Christian (age 16), Sofia (11) and Santiago (9).

Ryan Braski runs the nearby Malt Shop at 809 W 50th and dropped by for lunch at El Sazon on their first day to welcome the De Leons to the neighborhood.

"We're excited to be here," said Karen. "Thank you for believing in us."

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**PAVILION HIGHLIGHTS**

- Outdoor seating for up to 250 people
- 3,000 square feet of outdoor covered space with ceiling-mounted heaters
- New community table designed by a Youth Apprentice with Juxtaposition Arts
- Small performance stage
- Improved trail safety and 51 bike parking stalls
- All-gender indoor restroom area with six stalls, including one fully accessible stall with an adult changing table that will be open year-round
- Redesigned landscaping with native plants, trees and flowers
- Rebuilt boat launch

**BELL AND WHEEL**

Two naval artifacts – the wheel from USS Minneapolis and bell from USS Minnesota – have returned to the shores of Bde Maka Ska. The American Legion gifted the bell of the USS Minneapolis to the MPRB in 1928 and the wheel from the USS Minnesota in 1932. The Navy Memorial at the northeast corner of Bde Maka Ska displayed these naval artifacts for decades, where annual Memorial Day services were also held.

The wheel from the battleship USS Minnesota went missing in 1975 from Navy Rock. The bell from the armored cruiser USS Minneapolis vanished in 2014. The Southwest Journal tracked both to Minnetonka High School in 2020. Minnetonka school leaders resisted returning the items initially, but facing increasing pressure, eventually agreed to. The bell and wheel are now on display in Pimento Market on the south building at the Bde Maka Ska pavilion.

**PIMENTO MARKET**

Pimento Market offers a curated selection of goods, gifts and treats from local BIPOC businesses and entrepreneurs. It is open year-round in the south building at the pavilion site.

“We’re proud to support BIPOC entrepreneurs, celebrate their talents, and offer a platform for their products to shine,” said Tomme Beevas of Pimento. “Our market will be more than just a place to shop; it’s a cultural experience to foster unity and showcase the rich tapestry of talent in Minnesota.”

**ABOUT PIMENTO JAMAICAN KITCHEN**

In 2012, using a \$99 pop-up tent and Tomme Beevas’ backyard grill, Pimento hit the streets of the Twin Cities. In 2013, they won Pimento’s first brick and mortar on Food Network’s reality competition show, “Food Court Wars.” In 2016, Pimento opened its flagship location on Minneapolis’s Eat Street (2524 Nicollet Ave.). Then they expanded into TCF Stadium in 2017, Pimento Rum Bar & Cultural Event Center in 2018 (2524 Nicollet Ave.), and Saint Paul’s Keg & Case Food Hall in 2019 (902 7th Street W.). Pimento has been featured on “Andrew Zimmern’s Bucket List” on the Travel Channel as well as “I Heart Food” on Food Network.

In addition to the new location at the Bde Maka Ska pavilion (3000 E. Bde Maka Ska Parkway), Pimento will soon be expanding into the former Taco Libre location at 354 Wabasha St. N. in downtown St. Paul.

Pimento Jamaican Kitchen offers authentic Jamaican street and comfort food using family recipes, fresh ingredients, and love.

**▶ 1 PAVILION**

“We’d like to thank the partners who contributed to make this project possible, including Louis King, Tomme Beevas and the Pimento Jamaican Kitchen team, Cunningham, Concrete Pig with Juxtaposition Arts, Hennepin Theater Trust, Native American Community Development Institute and the muralists, artist Adrienne Zimiga-January, who created the ‘We are on Dakota / Native Land’ decals, Morcon Construction, and, of course, the dedicated MPRB staff members who spent countless hours making this a reality,” said Forney. “It was truly a team effort.”

District 4 Park Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer pointed out that 7.5 million people visit the Chain of Lakes each year, making it the second most popular destination in Minnesota, second only to the Mall of America. “We now have a space for the neighborhood, the region and the state to enjoy,” said Shaffer. “I’m glad we took the time to do it right.”

**FOOD, DRINK, MARKET AND MURAL**

The \$6.5 million project features two new buildings totaling 4,400 square feet that 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 with ceiling-mounted heaters, a small performance stage, upgraded landscaping and trail safety, and a six-stall, year-round restroom area.

Menu items include rice and plantain bowls with jerk chicken, braised oxtail and other Pimento favorites, alongside a new beach menu with mac ‘n’ cheese bites, fried shrimp, fries, hot dogs, jerk burger and a black bean veggie burger. Beer and wine are also available for purchase from a self-serve kiosk.

Pimento will remain open in the north building at the pavilion site for as long as demand will sustain it this fall/winter.

In the south building, there is the Pimento Market, which serves hot food and drinks, and includes an indoor seating area. It also houses items from 20 local BIPOC entrepreneurs.

There’s a new mural on north building thanks to a partnership with the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI), and Hennepin Theatre Trust (HTT). It’s part of the We Are Still Here project. Working on the mural were Thomasina Topbear, Racquel Banaszak, Summer Cohen and Jearica Fountain. Dakota language signs are found on steel columns throughout the buildings, including decals designed by artist Adrienne Zimiga-January.

**‘I’VE BEEN WAITING’**

The nearly 90-year-old pavilion caught on fire on May 16, 2019 after embers from a hookah were left behind trash cans on a windy night at about 3 a.m., as shown on surveillance footage. The building was fully engulfed in flames by 3:42 a.m. The fire caused an estimated \$2 million in damage. A 23-year-old man was charged with one count of negligent fire causing property damage of more than \$2,500. He pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in the Hennepin County Work House that was stayed for two years.

Originally called a “refectory,” the pa-



Tomme Beevas of Pimento (at right) and Louis King of Lola’s on the Lake share an emotional moment during the ribbon cutting for the new Pimentos on the Lake that they created together at the rebuilt Bde Maka Ska pavilion. At left is Dara Beevas. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



“This is a phoenix,” said Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board President Meg Forney. “It took us 515 days to create this, but it was worth it.” District 4 Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer (behind at right) pointed out that 7.5 million people visit the Chain of Lakes each year, making it the second most popular destination in Minnesota. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



A mural adorns the side of the building near East Bde Maka Ska Drive and the year-round bathrooms. (Photo submitted)

vilion was operated seasonally before it burned down. “I live across the lake and I’ve been waiting for this to come back,” said Barry Hastings. He’s missed grabbing a beer and a bite to watch the sun set. “I’m excited.”

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waiting for this to come back,” said Barry Hastings. He’s missed grabbing a beer and a bite to watch the sun set. “I’m excited.”

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# THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

## Research shows that long prison sentences don't actually improve safety.

I am reading an excellent book. It is called "Until We Reckon" and was written by Danielle Sered, the executive director of Common Justice, a unique program in New York City that offers alternatives to incarceration for violent crimes.



By Eric Ortiz

In her 2019 book, Sered "asks us to reconsider the purposes of incarceration and argues that the needs of survivors of violent crime are better met by asking people who commit violence to accept responsibility for their actions and make amends in ways that are meaningful to those they have hurt – none of which happens in the context of the criminal legal system today."

As Common Justice states, "Community is what keeps us safe, not prisons. Something else is possible."

That something includes listening to the needs of survivors and doing what they want, not what we think they want, which often is not what people expect.

This doesn't mean there is no accountability for wrongdoing. It means we think about crime, punishment, and justice in a way that is more restorative than punitive. Solutions meet the needs

of those harmed, create paths for rehabilitation, and foster racial equity without relying on incarceration.

The United States incarcerates nearly 2 million people and locks up more people per capita than any other nation, at the rate of 573 per 100,000 residents. According to Vera, a national organization fighting to end mass incarceration, as of 2019, 57 percent of the prison population was serving sentences of 10 or more years. And as of 2020, one in seven people in U.S. prisons was serving a life sentence, more than the country's entire incarcerated population in 1970.

What we are doing is not working. If it was, the U.S. would be the safest country in the world. Instead, we are one of the most violent and conflict-ridden.

As Vera explains, research shows that long prison sentences don't actually improve safety:

Concepts that have been central to sentencing theory, policy, and practice to date – such as retribution, deterrence, and excessive incapacitation – have been backed by paltry evidence of success, demonstrating, instead, more evidence of harm. States and the federal government have leaned on these principles to justify as much prison time as possible. But doing so has not been effective in delivering accountability and building public safety. Instead, this system has caused harm that has disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx communities.

Vera's 2023 report, "A New Paradigm for Sentencing in the United States," shows how we arrived at this dismal reality and charts a path forward. They explain

why our system can, and must, shift away from its overreliance on incarceration and toward community-based sentences, outlining seven key sentencing reforms that could end mass incarceration and increase public safety.

1. Set a maximum prison sentence of 20 years for adults and 15 years for young people up to age 25.

2. Allow people to earn one day off their sentences per day of positive behavior.

3. Remove extensions of sentences based on prior convictions.

4. Abolish mandatory minimums.

5. Allow any conviction, regardless of severity, to be considered for a community-based sentence, including restorative justice.

6. Create a "second-look" sentencing review.

7. Mandate racial impact assessments for crime-related bills.

It's not too late for the U.S. as a country, and us, as citizens, to change course. Public safety starts with accountability. And accountability needs to start with humanity and a community approach to stop the violence, start the healing, and make things right.

Common Justice is doing this. In Minneapolis, Restorative Justice Community Action (where I am a board member) also is building and implementing practical strategies to hold people accountable for harm, break cycles of violence, and secure safety, healing, and justice for survivors and their communities.

A restorative process can do more than dismantle the prison industrial com-

plex. It can help us restore – and redeem – our humanity.

It won't be easy. Nothing transformative ever is.

An important piece of the restorative puzzle is forgiveness. All human beings are imperfect. Everyone makes mistakes. Forgiving those mistakes is how we elevate our humanity and turn pain to power.

Forgiveness can be difficult. Psychologist Robert Enright, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Wisconsin and expert on forgiveness, is the author of "8 Keys to Forgiveness" and explains where to start.

1. Know what forgiveness is and why it matters.

2. Become forgivingly "fit."

3. Address your inner pain.

4. Develop a forgiving mind through empathy.

5. Find meaning in your suffering.

6. When forgiveness is hard, call upon other strengths.

7. Forgive yourself.

8. Develop a forgiving heart.

No one is disposable. Everyone has value. We need to determine what alternatives to incarceration benefit the whole community and enact them. This is a journey that affirms humanity. This is a journey we all can take.

Because we are all human.



**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.

# MINNEAPOLIS PERPETUATES POVERTY THROUGH CAMP EVICTION POLICY

The City of Minneapolis is perpetuating a humanitarian crisis against our neighbors who cannot afford housing. We are all witnesses to the tragedy. Instead of enacting common sense programs to support our neighbors, the city—led by Mayor Jacob Frey – is bullishly enforcing fiscally irresponsible and downright inhumane policies.



By Daniel Schmidt

On Sept. 30, the Star Tribune published an opinion piece written by former Minneapolis Planning Commissioner Nick Magrino who advocated that "a significant portion of the chronically homeless need to be horrifyingly ignorant of the genocide that state-sponsored institutions have perpetuated in Minnesota for more than 200 years. Stunningly, the piece was published on the Minnesota-wide Day of Remembrance for The Children Who Died While Attending United States Indian Boarding Schools in the State of Minnesota.

This is significant because these boarding schools were genocidal institutions. What began as a military fort on the most sacred land of the Dakota people in 1806, became the federally-mandated expulsion of all Native people from Minnesota in 1863 (an exile that remains legal in Ameri-

can law-books). But this wasn't enough for the colonial settlers, and soon they enacted the policy of forced assimilation, using Catholic-run boarding schools with the explicit mission to "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." These institutions were disgusting places where physical and sexual abuse was common, and the cold-blooded murder of Native children occurred frequently. These boarding schools were in operation until 1969; many who survived the trauma are alive today.

Magrino's opinion, which is ignorant of history and focuses on such an ambiguous scape goat as "social media," puts on full display how government officials enforce colonial policies.

Nicole Mason, a resident of Little Earth, and member of the Red Lake Nation who is a leader of the peaceful, community-oriented and health-focused Camp Nenookaasi in south Minneapolis, said in response, "Magrino wrote about institutionalizing our people, and that is the cycle of boarding schools all over again. He wants to forcefully lock our people up when all we're asking for is our lives back, our culture back, music back, and our language back. Magrino wants to steal that from us and lock us up."

Magrino's piece tries to appear empathetic; the subtitle reads "we need to help people" and the cover image shows a sign in front of a camp that boldly states, "SHELTER RESOURCES." But anyone who

lives or volunteers at a camp knows that there are not enough shelters and resources for all of our neighbors without housing.

Vinny Dion, a camp outreach worker with the American Indian Community Development Corporation and Little Earth Defender, said in an interview with the Red Nation Podcast, "When they evict [our relatives] out, [the city is] throwing everything away. If they have IDs, medications, any kind of food, clothing, then they have to start over... If there is a camp, we know where [our relatives] are at. We can go check on them every day, we can do a housing assessment with them, and... I can get them on the list [for housing]... Sometimes it takes three to four months." Encampments offer a level of stability that supports people getting housing, staying sober, and working together to remain safe.

In fact, while the city offers absolutely no resources directly to folks without housing, the city has spent roughly \$500,000 on camp evictions between May 2022 and April 2023— a majority of costs coming from police presence. (Source: Legislative Directive Response on Homeless Encampment Closures) This money could be used to help our neighbors rather than throw their hard-won progress in the trash. As a point of reference, through community-based donations, Camp Nenookaasi spends \$1,000 a day to feed

and house 175 people on a plot smaller than one acre. From the perspective of the camp, the city is the main perpetrator of violence and disruptor of security.

The most important question we have to ask is, What does the city expect people to do once they're evicted from the camps? Every time the city bulldozes a camp, it is destroying their protection against the elements and predators like drug pushers and pimps. The city's eviction policy actively perpetuates conditions in which people end up living in the shadow of civilization where drugs and crime run rampant. Through their ignorance, and prejudice, city officials like Magrino and Frey use tax dollars to build the infrastructure that imprisons and institutionalizes our neighbors.

What afflicts the Native unhoused citizens of Minneapolis is not widespread and inherent mental health crises or drug addictions (such that Magrino writes in his Star Tribune article). The problem is the state-sponsored systematic theft of land, languages, and families; the criminalization of cultural practices, food systems, and right to Life; and the pillaging and destruction of clean soil, air, and water that has been sacred and pristine for over 10,000 years prior to Christian year 1492. Overlooking history is a classic conservative tactic, and a favorite of Mayor Frey and his conservative allies, like Nick Magrino.

## SOUTHWEST Connector

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# GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE'S BRASS SOLIDARITY GOES TO HONK!

## TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

"THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ACROSS THE GLOBE, A NEW TYPE OF STREET BAND MOVEMENT IS EMERGING – OUTRAGEOUS AND INCLUSIVE, BRASS AND BRASH, PERCUSSIVE AND PERSUASIVE – RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACE WITH A SOUND



By Larry LaVercombe

THAT IS IN YOUR FACE AND OUT OF THIS WORLD. CALLED EVERYTHING FROM "AVANT-OOMPAH!" TO A "BRASSROOTS REVOLUTION," THESE BANDS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM SOURCES AS DIVERSE AS KLEZMER, BALKAN AND ROMANI MUSIC, BRAZILIAN SAMBA, AFROBEAT AND HIGHLIFE, PUNK, FUNK, AND HIP HOP, AS WELL AS THE NEW ORLEANS SECOND LINE TRADITION, AND DELIVER IT WITH ALL THE PASSION AND SPIRIT OF MARDI GRAS AND CARNIVAL."

- HONK! WEBSITE

"This was our first year, and we really made a splash," said Daniel Goldschmidt, about playing with Brass Solidarity at the 18th annual HONK! Festival of Activist Street Bands in Boston Oct. 6-8, 2023.

"People liked our energy, they liked what we were doing, and they really liked how we are grounded in what we do. We're not just playing concerts. We play gigs that are congruent with our values. We don't need to be paid; we will play for free if it's in our values."

The band Brass Solidarity came together in the immediate aftermath of the murder of George Floyd.

It's hard for anyone to describe the energy and feeling of that momentous period, but speaking for myself, having visited the site several times, what I have noticed is that there has been a consistent practiced consciousness-raising effort going on there since the very beginning.

My experience at George Floyd Square – as a mourner, a tourist, an occasional insider – is that there is profound cultural work going on there. There is, at George Floyd Square, a "happening" – and one that I predict will last forever. It is Ground Zero in my opinion, in the same way that in New York, there is the Ground Zero of 9-11.

I see George Floyd Square as hallowed ground. I'm proud as a realtor to have recently sold homes to two buyers within blocks of the square. I believe in GFS, and I hope it continues to be a place where we go to learn, and to feel community with each other.

The day I visited to research this column, I arrived as a group conversation was just ending. A guy named Daniel Goldschmidt was telling a heartfelt and personal story about Israel and Palestine. Later, I found out that Mr. Goldschmidt is in charge of the Shop Talk that grounds every Brass Solidarity practice.

"We take some time out of each rehearsal to talk about issues such as racism, White supremacy. We needed that to be part of this. We needed consciousness-raising to be part of rehearsal. We couldn't have it be an accident."

"We've always been grounded in being right here, and in the movement that is grounded here. Literally right here at 38th and Chicago. For the last two and a half years, meetings have taken place here twice a day. Brass Solidarity plays here every Monday."

Goldschmidt continues: "One thing at Honk! that they were most interested in is



Brass Solidarity performs in Boston during HONK! Oct. 6-8, 2023.



Brass Solidarity performs every Monday at George Floyd Square (38th and Chicago).

how we are integrated into the community. We are a part of this space, and part of the occupation of this space. We are sonic space taker...

"When a siren goes by, that's a sonic use of space that affects all of us in different ways. In Brass Solidarity, we use an organized version of sound to take space in a way that's... in the movement."

As the shop talk was ending, band leader Butchy Austin announced that he was going to take a one-month sabbatical from leading the rehearsals. As lead trumpet, Butchy plays a key role in the style and tenor of the band; he is also one of the executive and spiritual leaders of Brass Solidarity.

"I need a month to recharge, and pursue a couple interests," Butchy says, "and so this is a great time for any of you to step up into a new role in the band... If you want to bring a song, great, if you wanna take on leadership role, or conduct a song... Whatever is good for you, whatever gifts you can bring... Now is a good time."

And with that – the band started to play.

And I was treated to one of my favorite things – the chance to be right on stage with my iPhone camera. Check out some super cool videos on my YouTube channel that I made that day.

"One thing I love about George Floyd Square..." said RayCurt Johnson, "There's a redemption vibe. And we cause people to stop, and listen, participate..."

"Some people bring their kids, to learn about music... We have new brass players, 10 years old, community people... It's always growing..."

"It's a diverse, welcoming crowd... and now people know we're here... There are tourists, journalists, people from all over the world, writing dissertations, creating action groups... It's a worldwide movement."

Some of our Connector readers may recall the recent column I wrote about meeting RayCurt that printed in the April 9, 2023 edition. ("Finding Friendships Across Cultures")

I asked him to tell me of his experience with Brass Solidarity.

"Being part of the Brass band has been a wonderful surprise for me in my life's journey as a musician, and as a musician activist... I've been busking on the streets, out there advocating for live music, and live music spaces for a long time – and now I'm part of this activist band."

"I'm a music teacher. Music is my spiritual practice, it's my way of praising and worshiping, and, for me, it's all in accordance with what's going on... In fighting for justice, and the maturing of America. Our

### CHECK OUT THESE VIDEOS OVER AT THE LARRY LAVERCOMBE YOUTUBE CHANNEL

- 1) Brass Solidarity plays "This Little Light of Mine" at George Floyd Square
- 2) Brass Solidarity plays "Bella Ciao/ Stand Up for Revolution"
- 3) Brass Solidarity plays "Love Train"
- 4) Ngange and the Masses plays Palmer's Bar



Sam Brooks and Brass Solidarity play a park in Boston during HONK!

country is coming to terms with itself, and growing up.

"As I grow and live and create my life and mission, I've been blessed enough to live outside of the United States and to be able to see it from the outside, and noticing how I fit in, seeing all the challenges that we are all collectively going through... especially COVID, and then coming out of that, the George Floydact, the murder, and everything, we all collectively are seeing who we are."

P.S.– if you want to see a really cool side project from Brass Solidarity, check my YouTube channel for a video of Ngange and the Masses at Palmer's Bar. It's great stuff. (And I'm proud of the filmmaking – all created with iMovie and one iPhone.)

**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.

## 1 EVICTION POLICY

Any solution that will truly improve the conditions of life for our houseless relatives will not occur quickly. We need to support the basic blocks of Life – shelter, food, water, education – and take a ho-

listic and direct approach to city services. Our "Strong Mayor" is taking a destructive, expensive, and illogical approach to housing policy.

**Daniel Schmidt** is a south Minneapolis resident.





**FLASH MOB**

pa-Naula, who is the director of the Ecuadorian folkloric dance group Away Runakuna and is taking a Bachata (from the Dominican Republic) course at Yirif, appreciates learning different dance styles. And Yirif has supported his work to provide opportunities for the Ecuadorian community to learn traditional folk styles of Ecuador.

"The environment is just such an awesome place to be at... to learn the etiquette of what it is to be part of a social dance group but also to have fun," he said. "It's just been an amazing collaboration to keep the arts alive here in the Twin Cities. Folkloric arts and Latin arts, as well."

Sofia Arisian, another student and lifelong dancer, just started taking Latin dance classes at the studio this year and has begun helping out with the kids teams. She appreciates the connections she's made through Yirif, including two of her best friends.

"The connections are really meaningful, and it's nice to just go out in the Latin dance community and have my Yirif family wherever I go," said Arisian. She likes that dance is taught authentically, with traditional music.

"It's about the feeling when you're dancing and the connection with your partner and the music. It's not about 'Can I get the steps - Can I do this combination - Can I do this turn?' None of that. It's just connection, listening to the music and having a good time in social dancing. So that's why I come," she said.

Yirif, which means "movement" in the dialect of owner/instructor Eda Kachiri's Indigenous tribe in Costa Rica, opened in the Seward neighborhood in 2021 - during the height of the COVID-19 shutdown. Kachiri was the only instructor and offered two footwork classes and a kids team (no partner classes due to COVID-19). Now the studio has seven instructors and more than a dozen weekly classes geared to all experience levels. There are group classes for those who want a hobby or to learn the basics, as well as teams for dancers who really want to train.



Yirif Dance Studio's Eda Kachiri (front) and Tommy Valerio share their love of Latin dance on Lyndale Ave. during Open Streets in October. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

"Everyone's a fit," said Kachiri, including beginners.

**THAT'S MY 'WHY'**

Born in New York and raised in Costa Rica and Minnesota, Kachiri began dancing in high school and explored different styles of dance before finding her way to Latin dance. She earned her teacher training at Social Dance Studio in Minneapolis in 2010, and has been teaching and performing ever since.

Creating a welcoming culture is deeply important to her. About six years ago while Kachiri was teaching at another studio, a friend told her, "You never know why someone's walking through that door." This friend had been in an abusive relationship, and her words changed Kachiri's outlook on teaching. Whether people come to work on their confidence

or to meet people or because they want a challenge, they need to feel safe, happy and comfortable in the space.

Often within 30-45 minutes of working with someone, Kachiri knows what they struggle with in their personal life, because it reflects in their dancing.

"They work through it through dance. I watch them transform," she said. "I always tell people, 'That's my why.' That's why I do it." Kachiri performs, social dances and teaches, but if she had to choose, teaching is what she would do because as she put it, it's "amazing" to watch somebody transform.

Kachiri also wants her studio to be as accessible as possible, especially for her kids teams - whom she calls her "Littles" (ages 7-12) and "Bigs" (ages 13-17) - for whom these opportunities aren't always available. She gears the kids toward per-

formance, to give them an end goal. Five of her seven current "Littles" have been on the team before and love performing, so she tries to give them more opportunities to do so.

"Because they believe that they are famous dancers now," Kachiri said.



The idea is just come as you are.

Eda Kachiri

Two kids teams and three adult teams who have spent months learning choreography will now be performing around the city. Their debut was at the Bailame Festival Minneapolis Oct. 26-30. They'll

also perform in the studio and likely do a night at La Doña Cervceria brewery (241 Fremont Ave. N.).

Kachiri and Valerio teach and perform at other festivals. In August, they took their Salsa and Bachata teams to Arkansas so students got to perform somewhere else.

This is not the aim for everyone who joins the studio, though. Their partner work classes are geared toward social dance, not performance.

"We have people that just want to be able to go out and dance, so we have students who do that," said Kachiri.

Above all, Kachiri strives to maintain a culture of being very relaxed, laid back, a place where anybody can come and feel comfortable - and find whatever they need through movement. Students don't have to have years of experience or speak English (all but one of the instructors are Latino, and all speak Spanish) or dress a certain way or look a certain way.

"The idea is just come as you are," said Kachiri.

Yirif Dance Studio (2621 28th Ave. S.) in Seward offers drop-in and cumulative classes. They also host monthly socials and Wine Down events, which include a one-hour lesson followed by a social hour with wine and appetizers. More information is at yirifdance.com.



People walked, biked, danced, wrestled and rolled on a car-free Lyndale Ave. during Open Streets on Oct. 8, 2023. (Photo by Jill Boogren)



Bratz Dance Team free styles an impromptu dance for the camera. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

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# ACCEPTANCE, KINDNESS AND SUPPORT

**SAATH celebrates South Asian cultural traditions, trans joy in recent production**

By **Jan Willms**

With a whirlwind of color, choreography and music, the South Asian Arts & Theater House (SAATH) brought the stage to life with a recent performance at the Cowles Center (528 Hennepin Ave.) to celebrate trans joy.

SAATH presented the dance drama Acceptance, Kindness, Support (AKS), a story told primarily in dance about the challenges facing members of the LGBTQ community. Performed in four acts, a cast of over 70 engaged in dance and acting to tell the audience about the day-to-day rejections from family and others when they try to be themselves.

"This is especially a topic that South Asians particularly shy away from, and we want to make sure it's a comfortable space for everyone to learn and grow," stated SAATH Board Member Vandana Sharma.

Act 1 focuses on the dancer, a person who was born male but strives to live as a woman. The mother thinks it is a phase her child may be going through but the father wants the child out of the house.

The warrior is the title of Act 2. Powerful dance sequences reflect the struggle to be who you are.

Act 3, the dreamer, shows how acceptance can make one feel. The importance of connecting with others is emphasized in this act.

The final act points out the morality and rules imposed on everyone, allowing no one to march to a different drummer. But a mirror, present in each act, serves to provide a sense of freedom and confidence to the individuals who look at it, and in the end acceptance, kindness and support prevail.

The show's superb technical work, with lighting and backgrounds, comple-



Over 70 cast members perform in "Acceptance, Kindness, Support" at the Cowles Center as part of a production by the South Asian Arts & Theater House. (Photo by Vishwanath Somashekar)

mented the dancers' movements.

The presentation of AKS is a reflection of SAATH, an organization that offers acceptance, kindness and support to all who participate in its classes and programs.

"SAATH's core mission is to celebrate diversity and foster social harmony through the joyful mediums of dance, performing arts and South Asian cultural heritage," said Sharma. "At SAATH, we are dedicated to achieving artistic excellence and making a positive impact within our community."

SAATH, which in Hindi and other Indian languages means togetherness, was founded in 2012 by three dancers. At that time it was known as Bollywood Dance Scene and classes were taught at Tapestry Folkdance Center (3748 Minnehaha Ave.). In 2014, they produced a 50+ member cast show called "Hi! Hello! Namaste?". It was

the first Bollywood dance drama ever performed at the Minnesota Fringe Festival and became the highest selling show of the festival.

"We originally started the program with the art form of dance," Sharma said. "We began with our weekly dance classes. We then expanded to include acting, improv shows and fashion shows allowing local designers to create clothes while incorporating Bollywood music and dance along with a runway walk."

"We also hosted dance competitions with the twist that competitors had to dance to South Asian music. And we have produced story-telling shows," Sharma said. "Our dances are primarily South Asian, but we do infuse a fusion element if the music is Western."

Sharma explained that promoting dance as a way for folks from differ-

ent backgrounds to connect is a fantastic idea. "Dance is like a universal language that brings people together, and at SAATH we are about being inclusive," she stated. "Many of our members join us because they are looking to make new friends and be part of a community and dance, especially Bollywood dance, is a fun and easy way to connect."

Sharma said it has been an incredible experience watching the evolution of SAATH's performers. "There is a reason why we refer to our group as the SAATH family," she said, "as it has truly become a close-knit community. Many of our members are immigrants who have found a family here. Some have even found life partners within the group, and a few have started families of their own." She added that SAATH has also provided a platform for its community members to take on leadership roles.

"This is a 100 percent volunteer-run organization, so we depend on the support of our community to continue the important work we do."

She encouraged people of any race, age, gender identity or sexual preference to join SAATH.

In-person drop-in classes are every Thursday from 7-8:30 p.m. at Studio Time Out (6001 Lyndale Ave. S.).

SAATH is led by Executive Director Divya Maiya and board members: President Jinal Vakil, Vice President Narasimhamurthy Kulgod, Treasurer Madhu Bangalore, Secretary Srivani Harish, Stephanie Alexander, Nikita Basandra, Jeanette Chalgren, Jarrod Downy-Beard, Gopal Haregopappa, Darshan Maiya, Gautham Raja, Niyotha Reddy, Prachi Sansare, Vandana Sharma, Arun Velliangiri, and Allison Verma. More at [www.saathmn.org](http://www.saathmn.org).

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**Why go to the pumpkin patch, when the pumpkin patch will come to you? Serious display of pumpkins on 50th and James.** (Illustration by WACSO)



By **Jan Willms**

An experimental film presentation has been part of the monthly MN Made film series at the Main Cinema, 115 Main St in Minneapolis. The series is presented by MSP Film Society, FilmNorth and Minnesota Film and TV.

Two films, "The Great Refractor" and "Vostok, Faretheewell," directed by Andy Graydon, were shown and discussed recently.

Graydon describes himself as an artist and filmmaker whose work is concerned with natural and social ecologies and with sound and listening as creative practices.

His film "Vostok, Faretheewell," follows a Japanese designer as he bikes and walks around Berlin, where he is vacationing. But he has also just received notice that he is to design a space ship, the Vostok, for a Korean science fiction movie. Throughout the film, he is on his cellphone talking to the faraway producer about the project and its increasing absurdities. He is also taking camera close-up shots of surface details and materials.

"Vostok, Faretheewell" is intended to be followed from beginning to end," Graydon said. "It has also been shown in installation form, but it is preferable that

## AN EXPERIMENTAL FILMMAKER

Andy Graydon featured during MN Made film series

it be watched." The film is described as being about vision as forms of power, and about the formations and re-formations they endure on encountering the material world.

"The Great Refractor," according to Graydon, was very much an exploratory process for him. It is a collaboration with Irish poet and neuroscientist Laurence Dwyer. The film charts the undulating terrain of our attempts to understand the world through both scientific and poetic inquiries. "The Great Refractor" was built to be an installation and loop around with the expectation that someone will not see the whole thing," Graydon said. "I'm trying to make a map of the world figuring out what the environment is doing with a chorus of voices. The film reaches the end of one little chapter, and instead of progressing to the next chapter, it turns 90 degrees to something that is markedly different but resonates." He said the work tries to understand the universe. He described characters vocalizing and also listening to the environment, sometimes sitting in rooms and mimicking with their voices.

"I always have two hats on when I am editing a film as to whether it will work as a sit-down screening versus how it is going to be read in a gallery or installation environment," Graydon said. "It can be like a sculptural tableau, with someone walking by or someone sitting and soaking it in or someone coming back three times to view it."

Graydon claimed it is a great mistake to think the most important part of

a film is what is in the director's head that should be transported (to viewers). "The most important thing is to conjure something so the audience can engage in the satisfying task of putting the pieces together," he said.

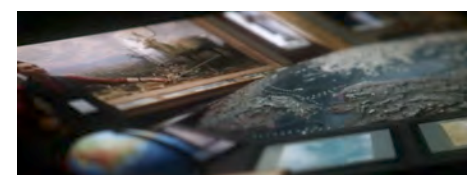
Graydon has spent much of his career creating and directing experimental films. He was born in Hawaii, but has lived in Berlin, New York and Cambridge, Mass. before moving to Minneapolis in 2020 when his partner obtained a job as chief curator at the Walker.

"I got into film early on," Graydon said. He recalled that between elementary and high school he became interested in creative writing, and during his high school years worked on light and sound. "I went to college to get a critical theory degree, but I was always interested in film. I got an MFA in radio, TV and film from Northwestern.

"I found myself working on imageless sound tracks. I got more interested in installation art and environmental production and interacting with live video performance. I was working with music and performers and did a lot of collaborating with musicians and other video artists interested in these processes."

Graydon did a narrative film for his master's degree. "It was a typical Indy film, and it was deeply unsatisfying. It took five years to complete, and it totally bankrupted everyone involved with it."

At that same time, he had just moved to New York. "I realized I could get 20 people in to see anything I could do. I started working more consciously with



things that in school were minors rather than my major. I flipped that around and did not make another feature," Graydon said.

Graydon has presented his films in visual arts exhibitions in a black box and running through a loop. They have also been shown on monitors, and at art festivals and in screening programs such as the MN Made series.

According to Graydon, Susan Smoluchowski, the director of the MSP Film Society, and Kelly Nathes, programmer and public relations manager, have a real vision for bringing different kinds of film to the Main Cinema. He said they offer an interesting invitation for audiences to rethink where they start off.

Graydon said the recent presentation of his films at the MN Made series was wonderful and a pleasure to present. "There is a lot of richness in the Twin Cities with artists working with film and sound media. The goal is to see what kind of initial conversations we can get going." He said he is hopeful there may be quarterly programs in experimental or other forms of film-making.

MN Made films are shown monthly with a reception and discussion, as well as the film. See [mspfilm.org](http://mspfilm.org) for more details.

Graydon has received a McKnight grant to help make a new film, a feature. He will be making the kind of film he has not worked with since 2001. "It will be in the vein of Vostok," he said. "It will have to do with listening. The film is called 'Echo's Answer.'"

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**HERC**

District 1 authored the resolution. "As a North Minneapolis resident, I have advocated for closure of the HERC since long before I was in elected office," wrote Fernando. "I believe there is a path to stop burning trash as soon as 2028, but aggressive action is needed from government partners to achieve this timeline."

The Hennepin County Energy Recovery Center (HERC), as it is called, is in the North Loop neighborhood and burns roughly 1,000 tons of garbage each day. The garbage is collected from the entire county, and includes all residential waste collected by the city of Minneapolis.

"I support shutting down the HERC on the quickest timeline possible," wrote District 3 Commissioner Marion Greene, who represents the residents of Southwest Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. "Establishing a suitable alternative to incineration should be the number one priority of all stakeholders and communities that currently use the HERC, and, importantly, the first priority of our partners in state government."

County staff have reported that roughly 75% of what is burned at the HERC comes from Minneapolis, and the other 25% comes from Bloomington, Champlin, Deephaven, Excelsior, Hopkins, Loretto, Maple Plain, Medina, Minnetonka Beach, Osseo, Robbinsdale, Richfield, St. Bonifacius, St. Louis Park, Tonka Bay, and Wayzata.

All the materials disposed of in the city's trash bins in Southwest Minneapolis are taken to the HERC. Some metals are removed to be recycled, but nearly everything else is burned there. Some of the heat is used to produce steam and generate electricity, and the remaining ashes are sent to be buried in a landfill.

**TOXIC SMOKE**

According to the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), the HERC releases carbon monoxide, hydrochloric acid, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter that contribute to health problems such as asthma, heart conditions, and cancer. The facility also emits lead pollution, which can cause organ and brain damage, particularly in children.

Incineration has likely become more harmful in recent years as more plastic is burned. Plastic creates dioxins, a major carcinogen that is toxic as well as the active ingredient in Agent Orange.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates the HERC released 173,254 tons of carbon dioxide, 404 tons of nitrous oxide, and 44 tons of particulate matter (or soot) in 2019.

**AIR POLLUTION CAUSES HARM**

Evan Mulholland is the director of the Healthy Communities Program at MCEA, lives in Tangletown, and is one of Greene's constituents. "I'm glad the Hennepin County Board finally started the process to shut down the HERC trash burner," he said. "Our understanding of the grievous public health impacts of air pollution has advanced since the HERC was built in the



Protestors support the closure of the HERC garbage incinerator in downtown Minneapolis. (Top photo by Devon Young Cupery, bottom by Cam Gordon)

1980s, and we now know that even very low levels of air pollution can cause harm. The air pollution across the city needs to be reduced, but particularly in North Minneapolis where we have concentrated both highways and major polluters."

Opposition to the facility was intense before it was built and has grown recently. The Zero Burn Coalition was formed earlier this year and has been leading community efforts to close down the facility.

It includes MCEA, the Minnesota Environmental Justice Table (MEJT), MN350, Sierra Club North Star Chapter, Rusty & the Crew, Sunrise Twin Cities, UMN Students for Climate Justice, Clean Water Action MN, Teamsters 320, Minnesota Nurses Association, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate, East Phillips Neighborhood Institute and others working "to end toxic trash burning at the HERC so that the county can fully invest in moving to zero waste."

**COALITION ASKS FOR 2025 CLOSURE**

The facility opened following passage of the Minnesota Waste Management Act of 1980 that established waste-to-energy as preferable to landfills. In February 2023, the Minnesota State Legislature redefined HERC as a non-renewable energy source starting in 2040 and required the county to make a plan for closing the facility.

"While this is still not what the community demanded, a 2025 closure, or at

least a much sooner timeline, it is an important step," wrote Nazir Khan and Krystle D'Alencar of MEJT after the vote. "We lodged ourselves into the small opening that came out of last legislative session and pried it into a major opportunity just as the county was trying to close that opening in the last couple of months."

In August, the coalition helped turnout over 100 people who attended a county board meeting to advocate for a shutdown. This included health practitioners from North Minneapolis who delivered a letter calling for closure due to the health impacts of air pollution. The group asked for a shutdown by 2025, greater transparency around a closure plan and restitution for communities harmed by the burning.

**WHAT COMES NEXT FOR TRASH?**

On Sept. 21, county staff recommended setting a closure date sometime between 2040 and 2050. Then, on Oct. 10, Fernando, Conley and Lunde introduced their resolution for a closure between 2028 and 2040.

By the board meeting on the 24th, the commissioners had received a letter supporting a rapid shutdown signed by 22 state legislators, including Southwest legislators Frank Hornstein, Jamie Long, Scott Dibble, Esther Agbaje and Emma Greenman. They offered to meet "within days of the county's passage of this resolution to discuss new legislative initiatives, so that Hennepin County will have ample time and opportunity to develop a legislative agenda to meet

your Dec. 1, 2023 goal to finalize next year's county legislative platform."

The resolution calls for the county administrator to develop a plan by Feb. 1, 2024, for the closure of the facility between 2028 and 2040 with contingency plans for a sooner closure if required by the state legislature or the county board.

"I am really looking forward to the report, and I have faith that our administrator has the tools and the brilliance to bring us a plan that will bring about dignified closure of this facility," said Conley. "My eyeballs are on the shorter time frame."

Staff have also been instructed to propose state legislative priorities by Dec. 1, 2023, to support the county's Zero Waste Plan, clarify waste management responsibilities, and help fund the closure, as well as the county's waste reduction and climate action efforts.

The board also authorized hiring a consultant to help find replacement energy sources for the energy HERC supplies, and directed staff to meet with elected officials from the cities that use HERC to gather their feedback on the closure plan and potential state law changes by Jan. 1.

"Finding a solution to trash incineration on an accelerated timeline will only be possible with coordination from all relevant entities, which includes providing adequate funding and resources to address this urgent manifestation of environmental racism," said Greene. "A zero-waste community remains our shared goal, and as we work together towards that goal through reduction, composting, recycling, and reusing, we need the state and cities that use the HERC to join in coordination to find a suitable alternative as quickly as possible."

Fernando wants to ensure that the energy the HERC provides now is replaced with a renewable option, and that cities adequately staff recycling and organics programs, particularly for multi-unit dwellings. She is also calling on cities to establish organized collection systems for multi-unit apartment buildings, require large waste generators to have diversion plans, raise standards for haulers, and require recycling on construction and demolition projects.

"We need to be working with each other to ensure that each partner and each player is working as boldly and aggressively as we can to meet the zero waste and climate action goals, as well as to meet [those of the] racism is a public health crisis declaration," Fernando said. "So, there is a commitment to stop burning trash, and we look forward to doing the heavy lifting along with community and partners to achieve that goal."

"The next few months leading up to the county staff's closure plan release by Feb. 1 is crucial," wrote Khan and D'Alencar. "Our pressure and organizing has moved the county so much. And it still feels like we are just getting started."

"The HERC is one of the largest single polluters in the entire county. And, burning trash is not a climate solution, either, and I doubt it ever was one," said Mulholland. "We should move as quickly as possible to shut down the HERC. A shutdown date of 2025 is entirely possible."

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## BUSINESS BRIEFS

## CLANCEY'S CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Clancey's Meat & Fish at 3804 Grand Ave. S. in Kingfield celebrated 20 years in business with beer, brats, and live music on Oct. 28. Clancey's Meat & Fish closed its shop in Linden Hills last year after 19 years there, and moved to a larger location on the other side of Lake Harriet (former Grand Cafe space).

## IN GOOD COMPANY SPIRITUAL CARE LAUNCHES

Minneapolis resident Gina Norman announces the launch of In Good Company Spiritual Care. "I'm enthusiastic about establishing a fresh avenue for mental wellness focused on spiritual direction," said Norman. "Presently, in our society, spiritual direction lacks the same recognition, prevalence, and acceptance as counseling. Yet, the value we provide is just as significant. I've observed the considerable workload and respect accorded to Chaplains, often leading to a high burnout rate. As spiritual directors, we can share some of that burden. Our capabilities extend to many of the tasks Chaplains undertake, particularly outside the typical institutional settings where they are commonly found. We can work together to make a positive impact."

Norman, a lay counselor with over 20 years of experience, has dedicated herself to helping others navigate the complexities of life. With a commitment to inclusivity, In Good Company challenges traditional approaches and provides a breath of fresh air for the LGBTQIA community, BIPOC, and highly sensitive individuals. More at [ingoodco.org](http://ingoodco.org).



## 'BRING WARM CLOTHES' AT HISTORY MUSEUM

On Saturday, Nov. 11, from 2-3:30 p.m., Hennepin History Museum (HHM) will host Peg Meier, longtime and award-winning reporter for the StarTribune, for a talk about the recently released new edition of her beloved book "Bring Warm Clothes: Letters and Photos from Minnesota's Past." Meier's classic work uses vintage photographs, newspaper clippings, letters, as well as excerpts from secret diaries and personal journals to give today's readers a firsthand account of life in those early, challenging days.

In her presentation, Meier will explain how she went about researching these archives and, in doing so, some of the people



she encountered - whom she calls "simply amazing." The event will include a question-and-answer session and will be immediately followed by a book-signing event.

Copies of the new edition of *Bring Warm Clothes* are available for purchase that day or can be ordered ahead of time at Hennepin History Museum's online store.

Admission for this event is Pay As You Can - any amount is appreciated. Reservations are required. Go to [hennepinhistory.org/events](http://hennepinhistory.org/events) to register.

## ART SHANTY PROJECTS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Art Shanty Projects is returning to the frozen water of Bdé Umá / Lake Harriet in south Minneapolis Jan. 20 - Feb. 11, 2024.

One big change this year: classic shanties are back! Artists have followed exterior-only guidelines for their structures in the past two programs with shanties taking on open air shapes and forms that responded to the necessary safety precautions of the pandemic. This year artists have a choice to continue that design directive or go back to classic shanties with interior experiences. Artistic Director Erin Lavelle, in her position since pre-pandemic, comments, "We've got a 50/50 mix - so if you've been waiting to cozy up inside with us again, this is your year! And if you're still not comfortable with that, we got you!" A new requirement for classic shanties: in an effort to remain as accessible as possible, they must have complementary exterior activities or experienc-

es to accommodate anyone who prefers to remain outside.

The full program offerings this year include 18 Shanties that stay up all month, and more than 20 performances + art actions that pop up throughout the village at different times throughout the run.

Lavelle also says, "We're extremely proud to enter our 20th season - and we've got a mix of new artists and ideas coming forth as well as some throwbacks. There will be a few nods to our founders and our origins." This includes a recreation of the first ever art shanty, with the concept and design attributed to Peter Haakon Thompson and David Pitman, the organization's founders.

They're also working to collect candid origin stories from founders and will host a rotating set of programming each week-end.

More at [www.artshantyprojects.org](http://www.artshantyprojects.org).

## CITY BRIEFS

## CITY BUDGET HEARINGS

The first public hearing for the city of Minneapolis budget was held on Oct. 25. There are two more upcoming hearings for people to provide feedback on the proposed city budget for next year of \$1.8 billion and tax levy increase of 6.2%. The hearings will be held at City Hall, Room 317, 350 Fifth St. S. at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 1 and at 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 5. The budget will be voted on by the council after the hearing on Dec. 5. Feedback and can also be provided online at <https://fluence-media.co/3Q0ovfp>.

## COUNTY BUDGET

The proposed county budget is \$2.65 billion with a net property tax levy of \$991.3 million, an increase of 6.5 percent. The operating portion of the proposal totals \$2.3 billion, a decrease of \$34.0 million from the 2023 budget. There is a proposed capital budget of \$343 million, which is \$118 million less than in 2023. The county board is currently reviewing the proposed budget. On Nov. 1, they began considering administrator amendments. On Nov. 28 at 6 p.m, they will hold a public hearing, on Nov 29 they will consider commissioner amendments, and on Dec 12 they will vote to approve the 2024 budget.

## CITY CLIMATE LEGACY FUNDING

The city council approved funding

for their Climate Legacy Initiative on Oct. 19 to help implement the recently passed Climate Equity Plan. The proposal was authored by Southwest council members, Lisa Goodman of Ward 7, Aisha Chughtai of Ward 10, and Linea Palmisano of Ward 13. Both also serve on the city's Clean Energy Partnership. The initiative will raise \$10.2 million next year for the city's climate action work through increases in electric and gas franchise fees. These fees are paid through each customer's utility bills and are a percentage of a company's annual gross revenues. For residential customers, the increase went from 5 to 6 % for natural gas and from 5 to 5.25% for electricity. More specific program funding will be approved as part of this year's budget approval with implementation starting in January.

## NEW COMMISSIONER OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

The city council meeting, on a 12 -1 vote, confirmed the mayor's nomination of Toddrick Barnett to become Commissioner of Community Safety to manage the Office of Community Safety that includes the Minneapolis Police Department, Minneapolis Fire Department, Emergency Management, 911 and the Office of Neighborhood Safety. He is replacing Cedric Alexander who resigned earlier this fall after serving only one year.



## GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE

The city plans to hire a consultant in the months ahead to assist with redevelopment at 38th and Chicago where George Floyd was killed. Next year the consultant will help develop "community priorities and vision," and begin a "process to identify future community-centered owner for the Peoples Way," and define "locations and goals for future memorials and clarifying the city's role in these memorials." In 2025, they will work on design and lay out how the infrastructure will work with construction expected in 2026.

## SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICTS

The council has approved the 2024 operating plans, special services, and service charges (shown in parenthesis) for the Eat Street (\$215,000), Linden Hills (\$35,400) Lowry Hill (\$89,000), and Uptown (\$400,000) Special Service Districts. More details can be found at <https://lms.minneapolis.gov/File/2023-00780>.

## 550 WEST LAKE ST.

There will be a public hearing on Nov 9, to consider the Tax Increment Financing Plan for the 550 Lake Street Apartments affordable housing project being done by an affiliate of Lupe Development called 550 West Lake Street Apartments, LP. The funds will be used to cover some of the costs of the proposed new apartment building that will include 80 units of rental housing and retail space.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

## NATIVE AMERICAN AUTHOR NOV. 15

Duluth author Linda LeGarde Grover will be celebrating the publication of her newest novel, "A Song over Miskwaa Rapids" with Birchbark Books at their new downtown Minneapolis event space, Birchbark Bizhew (1629 Hennepin Avenue #275, Minneapolis) on Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2023 at 7 p.m. Beginning with her award-winning debut story collection "The Dance Boots" and continuing with her novels "The Road Back to Sweetgrass" and "In the Night of Memory," both published by University of Minnesota Press, Grover has created and explored the imaginary Mozhay Point Ojibwe Reservation in northern Minnesota.

## BEING BRAVE ON NOV. 15

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, at 6:30 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church in Linden Hills will host a conversation between the Right Reverend Craig Loya, 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, and the Right Reverend Mariann Budde, 9th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, about Budde's new book, "How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith." The conversation will be hosted by R.T. Rybak, President of the Minneapolis Foundation and former mayor of Minneapolis. The conversation will center around the themes in Budde's book: finding and leaning into the decisive moments in our lives when we're called on to push past our fears and act with strength. Budde's book teaches people to respond with clarity and grace even in the toughest times. Being brave is not a singular occurrence; it's a journey that people can choose to undertake every day. The event is free and open to the public, and will be livestreamed. Register at [episcopalmn.org/brave](http://episcopalmn.org/brave).

## HENNEPIN AVE. MEETINGS NOV. 14, DEC. 13

The city of Minneapolis will be reconstructing Hennepin Ave S from Lake Street W to Douglas Ave. The street reconstruction project will begin in 2024. In advance of the street reconstruction project, utility work has begun along the corridor. Public works will hold monthly virtual construction stakeholder meetings on Nov. 14 and Dec. 13 at 6 p.m. The purpose for the monthly meetings will be to provide construction updates as well as answer questions and concerns. Browse the project website page or contact Project Engineer Adam Hayow: (612) 673.2172; [adam.hayow@minneapolisismn.gov](mailto:adam.hayow@minneapolisismn.gov).

## FRANKLIN AVE. PROJECT COMING 2025

Hennepin County, in coordination with the city of Minneapolis, has developed a proposed design for Franklin Avenue (County Road 5) between Lyndale (County Road 22) and Chicago avenues. The plan includes:

- Three-lane design with center turn lanes and possible medians
- Removal of parking
- Sidewalk and bike or shared used path on both sides
- Boulevards with green space

Work will be done in 2025. Learn more about the project at the project website page or by contacting at [nathan.ellingson@hennepin.us](mailto:nathan.ellingson@hennepin.us).

## LAKE HARRIET BANDSHELL ROOF

The Lake Harriet Bandshell roof is being repaired in sections this fall and winter. In September, workers successfully tested the new cedar shingles on a trial section of the roof. Now they are in the process of hand-dipping approximately 75,000 cedar shingles in a special coating at an offsite location so that the shingles match the blue sidewalls painted earlier this year and are able to last longer than the previous shingles. The east side of the Bandshell roof is currently being replaced and work will continue in sections, clockwise around the building throughout fall and early winter. The refectory building is expected to be re-roofed over the winter. Bread and Pickle closed for the season on Oct. 15.

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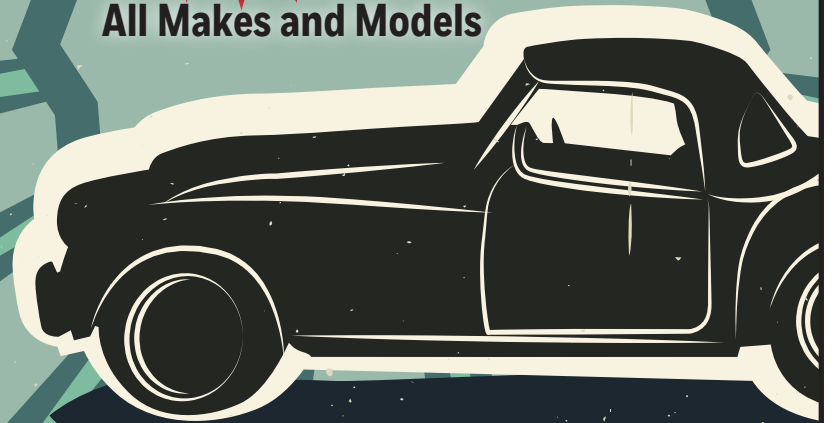
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