

SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • DECEMBER 2024 • VOL. 4 • NO. 1 • 25,500 CIRCULATION



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CITY LABOR STANDARDS BOARD DERAILED

Mayor Frey's veto stands after Jenkins and Osman change November votes

By **Cam Gordon**

Despite months of research, hours of debate, and a 9-3 city council vote of approval, a new Minneapolis Labor Standards Board will not be established, at least not this year.

On Dec 5, the city council failed to override Mayor Jacob Frey's veto of the resolution they approved to create it.

"Today is a victory for small businesses and the economic future of Minneapolis," a joint statement from the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, Downtown Council, Hospitality Minnesota, Minnesota Retailers Association, and the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association said after the veto was upheld.

The establishment of the board was supported by many unions, labor groups and other organizations, representing 1000s of workers and residents, including CTUL, Kids Count On Us, Unite Here! Local 17, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, TakeAction Minnesota, MFT 59 – the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, New Justice Project MN, ISAIAH, Faith In Minnesota, SEIU Local 284, and LIUNA Minnesota & North Dakota.



Murder mystery written by Scandia man turned into film by local director, local actors



"Unholy Communion" leads include (left to right) Laura Robards, Vincent Kartheiser, Adam Bartley, and Irena Flury. Bartley, an Eden Prairie High School graduate, plays Washington County investigator Chris Majek. Bartley is best known for his role as Ferg in the Netflix series "Longmire." Kartheiser, Minneapolis native who played Pete Campbell in AMC's "Mad Men" series, also stars as a close friend of the investigator. (Photo submitted)

'UNHOLY COMMUNION' SEEKS ACCOUNTABILITY

By **Jan Willms**

When Thomas Rumreich was a freshman at St. John's University in Collegetown, Minn., he was sexually abused by

a priest at the men's college. The year was 1960, but the incident greatly affected his life then and still causes him moments of anguish today.

A couple of years ago, the retired dentist from Scandia put his thoughts on

paper and wrote the novel "Unholy Communion." The book cites actual incidents of abuse but is written as a mystery, with a small-town investigator pursuing a serial killer who is going after priests.



PEDESTRIAN MALL PLAN FOR GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE MOVES FORWARD

New direction aligns with community's alternate plan presented in November

By **Jill Boogren**

On Dec. 5, 2024, the Minneapolis City Council voted to develop a pedestrian plaza at George Floyd Square. It was one of three concepts shared by the Public Works Department, who had recommended a different option that would open the streets at 38th and Chicago to all traffic in all directions. The pedestrian plaza would instead prohibit vehicular traffic on a small segment of Chicago Ave. north of 38th St., between Unity (formerly CUP) Foods and the Peoples' Way (formerly Speedway), while creating a cul-de-sac to allow access to businesses on the rest of the block.

The street concept is part of a broader resolution that supports a community-led vision for the Square that includes the Peoples' Way and memorials, and supports investments in the neighborhood, healing, truth and reconciliation. It largely reflects actions outlined in an alternate plan proposed in November by community members, but moves up their time frame from next October to June 2025 to create a vision for the space. This work would be done while moving forward with a pedestrian plaza.

In introducing the resolution, Council Member Jason Chavez (Ward 9) said he was "speaking on behalf of a big portion of the community that has gone unheard and unnoticed, a community who feels the pain from the lack of action on police accountability and reform from this administration, and a community that believes in a vision that is comprehensive and respects the dignity of the area...."



TOY LIBRARY ADDS LOCATION

Members save money on toys while reducing waste

By **Margie O'Loughlin**

The Minnesota Toy Library (MTL) is a toy lending program for families with children ages birth to five years. Members can check-out up to five toys at a time, and take them home for 2-4 weeks. And now, thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, there's a new location on the east side of St. Paul.

The mission of the toy library is threefold: to reduce waste, promote development, and build community.

Rebecca Nutter is MTL's executive director. She said, "We started lending toys nine years ago, using public library meeting rooms. When our toy inventory got too big to be mobile, lending events were held in my garage. In 2017, we established our first brick and mortar in South Minneapolis."



The south Minneapolis location is at 8 W 60th St. inside Richfield Lutheran Church (Door #11), and there's a space at 2510 Cleveland St NE. The newest location recently opened at 1505 Burns Ave. in St. Paul thanks to a MPCA grant.

REDUCE WASTE

In the last generation, the state of Minnesota has seen a



1 GF SQUARE PLAN

“This vote should be about more than just infrastructure, and it should not gloss over or erase what happened here. It should be about healing, growth and honoring the voices of those who advocate for progress,” said Chavez, who was in his apartment six blocks away when George Floyd was murdered.

“I believe that we have one shot to get this right,” he said.

Council Member Andrea Jenkins (Ward 8) said it’s a delay and that staff already determined a pedestrian mall was not suitable in this scenario.

Council Member Katie Cashman (Ward 7) pointed to a new state statute that allows cities to create pedestrian-only spaces, provided they are not on trunk highways, among other criteria.

“I do think we have not played out the scenario of whether it’s possible to create a pedestrian mall here,” said Cashman, indicating her understanding that the city pursued that legislation specifically to try it at George Floyd Square.

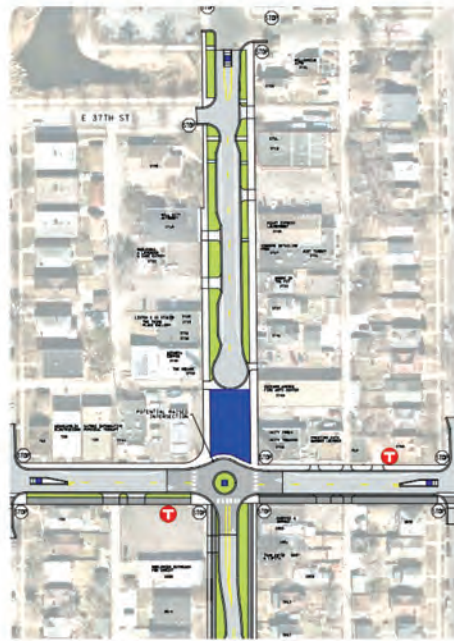
At a Nov. 13, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Minneapolis City Operations Officer Margaret Anderson Kelliher said public works started with a pedestrian plaza.



This vote should be about more than infrastructure, and it should not gloss over or erase what happened here. It should be about healing, growth and honoring the voices of those who advocate for progress.”

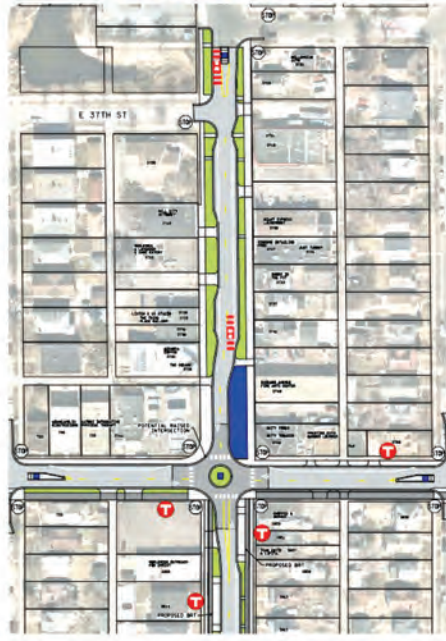
Jason Chavez

PEDESTRIAN PLAZA

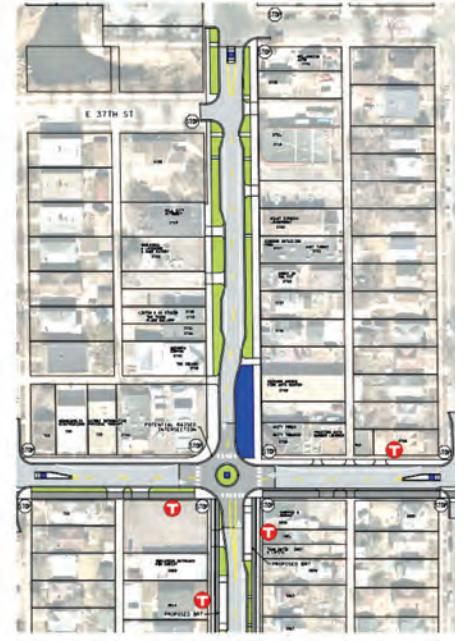


The Pedestrian Plaza concept for reconstructing 38th and Chicago creates a cul-de-sac on the 3700 block of Chicago Ave. to provide access for businesses there. It would be pedestrian only in the segment between Unity Foods and the Peoples’ Way.

TRANSIT MALL



FLEXIBLE



“What you’re seeing here is a pedestrian plaza option that would potentially work,” she said, and acknowledged the legislative effort which brought the statute. “We [the city of Minneapolis] sought expanded authority because potentially of this project. It could be used on this project.”

Anderson Kelliher described touring the Lorraine Motel in downtown Memphis, Tenn., where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Now a historic site and National Civil Rights Museum, the motel is located on a street that at first wasn’t closed to traffic but is now. It was from across the street that Dr. King was fatally shot.

Notably, on Dec. 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released its

findings that the Memphis Police Department uses excessive force and discriminates against Black people, similar to the findings by the DOJ in Minneapolis. The Memphis investigation was launched after Tyre Nichols, who was Black, was beaten by five Black police officers after a 2023 traffic stop and then died in the hospital three days later. The ongoing protest at George Floyd Square calls for justice for all lives – not just George Floyd’s – taken through police violence.

City staff first unveiled their preferred option at an open house on Oct. 29. This was followed by a Nov. 6 Town Hall “In Defense of Black Lives” that drew hundreds of people in support of an alternate plan that would prioritize community needs over street reconstruction. The Com-

munity Visioning Council submitted a letter in support of the community’s alternate plan to the council prior to the Dec. 5 meeting.

The resolution was approved on an 8-5 vote, with Council Members Katie Cashman, Jason Chavez, Aurin Chowdhury, Aisha Chughtai, Jeremiah Ellison, Jamal Osman, Elliott Payne and Robin Wonsley voting in favor. Voting no were Andrea Jenkins, Emily Koski, Linea Palmisano, Michael Rainville and LaTrisha Vetaw. The project was sent back to the Climate & Infrastructure Committee, which next meets on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025.

Full text of the resolution can be found at swConnector.com.

Fa-la-la-la- LOCAL

Post and tag photos of your favorite local gift ideas or celebration spots for your chance to win weekly gift card prizes!

Holiday Gift Card Giveaways

Take a photo of yourself when you frequent a local shop or restaurant.

Tag the business and use hashtag **#CelebrateSouthwest**, and make sure your post is public on Instagram and Facebook.

Each post gives you another weekly chance to win a gift card prize, compliments of the participating local businesses featured on this page.

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News for you

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MICHAEL DOWLING AND THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL

Namesake of south Minneapolis school also known for establishing first road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound

By **Scott Tedrick**

Mud up to hubcaps. Gumbo so slippery it felt like an ice rink. Dust so thick in the summer, travelers wore long duster coats, goggles and hats. Roads were so bad in most of the nation in 1912 that private citizen grassroots groups formed to “get out of the mud,” which was a national cry. Automobile sales were burgeoning but there were no connected, long distance roads out of town (mostly in the West) on which to drive the new black beauty. State and federal governments were doing nothing about auto road building. The time had come.

The Yellowstone Trail Association (YTA) was one of many groups pushing for long-distance roads, and it was the first group to create a transcontinental route through the northern tier of states. In 1912 a small band of men in Ipswich, S. D., envisioned a road “from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound.” They called it the Yellowstone Trail (YT) to honor the national park.

The YTA did not build roads with pick and shovel. Its 8,000 members persuaded governments to build a single road that connected to a single road from adjoining counties. Thus, a long-distance road resulted, piece by piece. They promoted cross-country tourist traffic, marked the route with yellow signs, and provided maps. It was a grassroots effort, not a governmental effort, and not the effort of a few wealthy business leaders, as was the Lincoln Highway through the Lincoln Highway Association, which was formed a year after the YTA.

Communities along the route paid a membership fee to the YTA to be advertised in its travel literature. People fought to get their towns on the Trail, envisioning tourist trade, economic development, and an efficient way to get farmers’ produce to rail heads.

The YT quickly expanded. The Trail was three years old by the time it reached Wisconsin in 1915. By 1919, the entire route was firmly established coast-to-coast. It shadowed the route of the Milwaukee Road Railroad from the Twin Cities into Montana, and then the Union Pacific further out west.

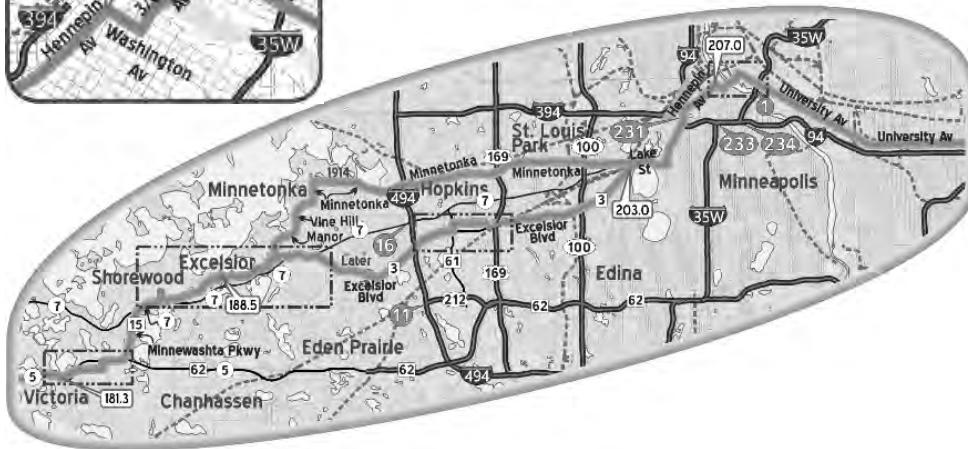
YTA PRESIDENT DOWLING

When Michael Dowling died in 1921, it mattered to the thousands who paid their respects and it mattered to the old YTA because he had been a robust, recent association president. Dowling had also been a teacher, newspaper editor, banker, mayor, auto salesman, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence tidewater commissioner, inspirational speaker for the World War I veterans, Speaker of the Minnesota House, congressional and gubernatorial candidate and friend of U.S. presidents. Of course, he also founded a school for physically handicapped children (Dowling school in south Minneapolis). And he performed all these accomplishments in spite of the amputation of both legs, an arm and all but the stub of his thumb on his other hand following severe frostbite as a child.

While president of the YTA (1917-1919), Dowling visited military hospitals here and in Europe after World War I, inspiring wounded veterans to self-reliance. Whether he spoke to one vet alone or to 5,700 at New York’s Hippodrome, his message was the same: Don’t spend your time thinking about the things that are gone. Think of what you have left. He was,



ABOVE Michael Dowling in his automobile.



unaffectedly, leading by example.

The YTA caught Dowling’s imagination. As an auto dealer in Olivia, Minn., and the first to own a car in Renville County, he had foreseen the role of the auto in the development of early 20th century of America. He knew the value of roads as an absolute economic and cultural necessity that the federal government was ignoring.

Dowling determined to assist the YTA by driving the Trail along the whole of its barely discernible 1913 route from Minnesota to the Yellowstone National Park. The trip was immortalized in the book “We Blazed the Trail” as recounted by Dowling’s daughter Dorothy Dowling Prichard to book author, Barry Prichard, her son.

Dowling led a three-car caravan with his Oakland 660 with a right-hand wheel and electric starter. Forging streams, wading through mud and fixing punctures while parked in the tall prairie grass occupied the party, but they did it!

Anxious to expand the trail east, in 1914 he shipped his car through the Great Lakes to Buffalo, N.Y., and began looking



for a space to locate the Trail on the popular Rochester-Albany-Boston corridor. He was told that “there was no more room for colored markers on poles on that route.” Indeed, 11 different colors festooned some poles already. He then blazed a more southern route: Plymouth Rock to Hartford, Conn. and southern New York to northern Pennsylvania.

During his tenure as YTA President, Dowling oversaw the establishment of at least 10 tourist bureaus; he saw the northern route through the East, which was refused to him in 1914, become a reality; and he spoke at all state and national YTA conventions.

The calamity of the blizzard that took Dowling’s limbs would have diminished lesser men, but instead it brought out his strength of character. This remarkable man invigorated the Yellowstone Trail Association as no other had. His very appearance inspired resolve amongst the membership.



YELLOWSTONE TRAIL IN MINNEAPOLIS

The Yellowstone Trail cuts through Minneapolis and St. Paul. Follow it east on Lake Street, north on Hennepin Ave. to Washington to Third/Central to University Ave.

DOWLING SCHOOL

Dowling Community School at 3900 West River Parkway marked its 100th anniversary at a community-wide celebration on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Michael Dowling lent his name to the school when it was established in 1920 in a North Minneapolis church. Originally known as the Michael Dowling School for Crippled Children, the school offered programs for the physically handicapped. As a youngster, Dowling suffered severe frostbite after being caught in a winter storm. Both of his legs below the knee were amputated along with most of the fingers on his right hand and his left arm below the elbow. Despite his disabilities, the school’s namesake created a successful political career for himself, serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives and rising to the post of Speaker of the House.

Newspapers often referred to him as the world’s most optimistic man.

RETURN OF THE YTA

With the onset of the federal highway system, the YTA disbanded in 1930. Then, 25 years ago, a pair of retired professors from Eau Claire, Wis., John and Alice Ridge sought to revitalize the organization, inviting historical enthusiasts, economic development entities and others to again raise the banner of the YT brand and legacy.

In 2018, the Yellowstone Trail of Minnesota (YTMN) was formed.

In 2021, coincidentally on the day after the 100th anniversary of Dowling’s death, YTMN was awarded a Minnesota Historical Society grant to develop a Cultural Heritage Tourism Master Plan for the state of Minnesota.

The document has aided YTMN in developing connections along the trail from the Twin Cities to Ortonville. Additionally, YTMN seeks to model proactive, state affiliations, that work cooperatively with the national YTA.

The Ridges recently retired from their roles as the leaders of the YTA, handing off the organization to a reformed board.

The group is working on several initiatives to grow the organization and modernize its operations. Individuals interested in learning more or getting involved can visit the YTA’s website at <http://www.yellowstonetrail.org> and the YTMN website at yellowstonetrailmn.com.

Scott Tedrick of Granite Falls is the editor of the Renville County Register, the newspaper that Michael Dowling started. He drives to work on the road Dowling built. In 2018, he formed the Yellowstone Trail of Minnesota (YTMN) after becoming captivated by Dowling through a historical theatre project (yellowstonetrailmn.com). He is also president of the national Yellowstone Trail Association. Reach him at STedrick@yellowstonetrail.org.

We gather for music, meals and more despite (or because of) heartbreak, wars, climate disasters, violence, poverty and hopelessness in this world.

Recently I spent two nights at Gigi's, the café at the corner of 36th street and Bryant. In a way, nothing much happened. Yet these were some of the best moments I have had in Minneapolis in a long time...

Let me tell you why.

First evening was on Friday and the surprisingly perfect duo of singers/songwriters David Dvorak and Vittorio Raimondi was offering a free concert to everyone who managed to leave their comfortable couch and addictive Netflix serial at home. The room was full of people... eating, drinking and talking even before the show started. It was a pleasant scene of neighbors (and not) gathering together to have good time immersed in an ambiance of thoughtful, colorful, intriguing paintings. And then the music began and added so many more layers to the experience. David's songs with cerebral and witty lyrics easily brought an unexpected tear or a smile while describing our everyday struggles and challenges. Bob Dylan could have been proud and perhaps even challenged. Later the handsome, charming Vittorio offered a lyrical take on our emotional lives and sang in both Italian, Napolitan and English making us feel somewhere on



By Anna Bonavita

JOIN ME AT GIGI'S, OUR OWN 'CHEERS'

the way to Italy but somehow without the need of translation. I found his rendition of the classic Pino Daniele's song Napule very moving. And I was not alone, a group of young Italians sitting in the back, joined the singer in his soulful longing for a place and time... both impossible to reach yet fascinating.

The concert continued, people kept coming and before too long there were no more seats and some were sitting on the floor next to the musicians. Soon – to my amazement – the guest singer Philippo got everyone to join him in singing Bella Ciao – the Italian antifascist song from the WWII.

From my little corner table I looked at the audience in astonishment. Former Mayor RT Rybak was there with a group of friends. Not far from them was an African American legend, Mary Moore Easter, a poet, dancer and choreographer so full of life and beauty to admire. At the same table were other extraordinary people of all ages from various walks of life: non-profits, health care, politics, florists, social work, landscaping, and journalism. Plus a group of 20 somethings who did not mind being next to young senior citizen.

We were all there together in spite of and because of heartbreaking wars, shocking climate disasters, continuing violence, poverty and hopelessness in this world. David's last song was about a road trip and got everyone dancing. I briefly remembered how afraid we were of each other just couple of years ago and the joy of the dance tripled. Among the dancers I saw a woman, no more depressed as she just turned 80; another one in the middle of a nasty divorce was dancing, using percussions and forgetting about all of this; a man, who saw his career go away in a blink of an eye, was there taking it all in;

a woman, who had recently lost her dad and son in a matter of a month joined as well; somewhere there was also someone going through a series of medical tests and thinking about mortality but wanting to celebrate every moment. They were all dancing... together at Gigi's.

I thought this was an evening to remember and then just five days later at the same place, at the same tables, another miracle happened.

The Communal Table, a weekly gathering of friends and strangers seeking social connection in a quiet, inspiring environment, had a special event. Instead of the regular appearance of local talents (musicians, dancers, writers, photographers) that time, everyone was invited to bring a poem and share it. It was a totally spontaneous evening and left me in awe. There is so much talent and desire to share and be seen. AI-written poems were mixed with Rumi's shorts and Robert Frost's "The Road Less travelled" – but also the poem an eight-year-old wrote together with her father. The melody of poems in many languages were heard – Russian, Bulgarian, Italian, Hebrew, English. Someone wrote and then sang her poem in the style of Spiritual gospel, others joined a singer in an poetic song about Jerusalem. Haiku, exchanged over the first year of a relationship of a real couple present right there, reminded us of the abundance of beauty in every single moment if we just stay still and listen.

As we were leaving and hugging each other since we knew much more about each of us thanks to poetry, I could not believe my luck.

So it is possible to feel you belong after all even if you are an introvert, single, foreigner... It is possible to happily call Minneapolis home in spite of the pro-

found alienation we all felt due to COVID, George Floyd, and the now ubiquitous loneliness... all because I found my tribe right here at Gigi's.

P.S. Gigi's phenomenon did not happen by chance. A young, passionate, empathic woman, Laura Stigen had a dream and another woman, Kim Bartmann, believed in her. This is how Gigi's came to represent "everything the heart of community should be." Not only the food is made from scratch on site using the best local ingredients one can find, the prices are contained. The ambiance is welcoming, unpretentious, but intensely inspiring thanks to the many, many paintings of local artists and children, too, covering all walls.

Tuesday is a game night to invite younger generations to connect, Wednesday welcomes The Communal Table social experiment, and Fridays are reserved for musicians.

Everyone is welcome, everyday from early morning to early evening and the kind, friendly staff (my favorite is Laura originally from Honduras, now a proud local) often knows your name.

I think Minneapolis' Gigi's is better than Boston's Cheers, try it. I will be there next Wednesday.



Anna Bonavita is a former physicist with a passion for culture, cuisine and environment. Born in a small village in Bulgaria

but swept up in the waves of globalization, she claims several countries as the source of her cultural identity. Her travel nonprofit, Esperienza, provides small-scale, immersive experiences. She is also the founder of the Italian Cultural Center of Minneapolis/St. Paul, the Italian Film Festival, and The Communal Table.

STORIES & JOURNEYS

As I start writing, it is as if my words are having to push through feelings of fear and a sense of something being lost. It feels like I am wanting to cry. I'm grieving as I write.

It's Nov. 14. I'm at the second annual All Elders United for Justice general membership meeting. It's at the Neighborhood Development Center in St. Paul. A few things have changed over the past year. Not only do I serve on the Board of Directors, I have been elected chair of the Care Giving Committee. Within the committee, I am referred to as the shepherd, which is simply another word for chair. The focus of the Care Giving Committee is the quality of care in nursing home and home-based care settings. The person sitting across from me asks me for my response to the presidential election. I offered one word that being scared. He seemed to resonate with that feeling.

ELECTION 2024

WE JUST RE-ELECTED DELUSIONAL DONALD TO BE PRESIDENT OF WHAT'S LEFT OF THE BEST U.S. DEMOCRACY MONEY CAN BUY AND GOVERNMENT OF THE BILLIONAIRES, BY THE



By Donald L. Hammen

SCARED AND HURTING BUT HOPEFUL LOCALLY

BILLIONAIRES AND FOR THE BILLIONAIRES.

World's most dangerous man, according to Donald Trump's niece Mary in her book "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man" – and now according to me – has been re-elected president. On my own I have already observed that he is a child in a man's body. Among the other sources continuing to form my view of Donald are "All In the Family: The Trumps and How We Got This Way" by Fred Trump. Also, there is the PBS Frontline program called "The Choice 2024: Harris vs Trump" investigative biographies.

From these and other sources, my view of Donald continues to take shape as someone who is a con artist and performer who has just conned an entire country into electing him president twice. His insatiable need for affirmation makes him a patsy for some evangelical Christians plus White Christian nationalists who stroke his fragile ego by telling him he has been called by God to be our leader.

He seeks to portray himself as good for the working class, yet he has never worked a day in his life – unless you count his fake photo op serving fries at McDonalds. He is no friend of the working class. According to Economist and former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, "In April,

the Biden-Harris Labor Department expanded overtime pay rules. Roughly 4.3 million more workers would have been eligible for overtime pay under the new rule. A Trump-appointed judge blocked it yesterday. Go ahead and keep telling me that Republicans are the party of workers."

Bottom line for me is Donald Trump is a deeply flawed human being who needs professional help, but he is not going to seek professional help because he doesn't have the self-awareness to know he is a deeply flawed human being. Instead we keep feeding his delusions and his need for affirmation by electing him to high office under the guise of Making America Great Again.

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ME IN TRUMP'S AMERICA

I just bought a copy of "Project 2025: A Mandate for Authoritarian Leadership." This appears to be Trump's playbook. I can't find myself in this playbook. He says Social Security and Medicare are safe. They are my earned benefits. That remains to be seen. I take solace in that I live in south Minneapolis. How will my life be impacted by four more years of the Trump cult which I call Not My Mother's Republican Party. So, dear reader, what are you feeling as you contemplate the next four years? Are you scared like me? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me via tesha@tmcpub.com.

And if you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river (flow) of life experiences which is Stories and Journeys.

DR. DEWAYNE DAVIS FOR MINNEAPOLIS MAYOR. A HOPEFUL SIGN LOCALLY?

This was announced in an email I received recently. Dr. DeWayne Davis for Minneapolis Mayor wants to bring all of us together. I wonder if that includes all elders like me? I wonder if he believes that Minneapolis is for a lifetime?

ELDER VOICES (TELLING OUR STORIES/SHARING OUR JOURNEYS) IS SCHEDULED TO MEET DEC. 29, 10-11A.M., AT TURTLE BREAD, 4205-EAST 34TH STREET.

Look for the table with the All Elders sign. Southwest Connector reader John showed up in October. He shared that as a member of Veterans for Kamala he is very concerned about the outcome of the coming election. Turns out he was right to be concerned. If you are concerned or hopeful about anything do show up. **IN GRATITUDE ALWAYS.**



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

SOUTHWEST Connector

The Southwest Connector is a monthly community publication in Southwest Minneapolis, owned and operated by TMC Publications CO. Visit our website for calendar and publication dates.

Owner & Publisher:

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Story ideas always welcome.

Keep in touch with the Connector. Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail to news@swconnector.com. Unsigned letters will not run.

Advertising & Marketing:

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Denis Woulfe, 651-917-4183, denis@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

Design & Layout: Tesha M. Christensen
Billing: billing@swconnector.com

Printing by: House of Print

This issue of the Connector is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink. Approximately 95-97% of material that enters the print facility is recycled.

Delivery: 612-235-7197, Delivery@TMCPub.com
Mail subscriptions available at \$80/year.

Contributing Writers & Photographers:

Brian Gabriel, Jan Willms, Jill Boogren, Cam Gordon, Eric Ortiz, J.D. Fratzke, Terry Faust, Suzie Marty, Larry LaVercombe, Donald Hammen, Michele Rae, and WACSO.

Member of Minnesota Newspaper Association, Midwest Free Community Papers, Uptown Association, and Southwest Business Association.

The Connector is for profit and for a purpose – and we don't sacrifice one for the other. We consider ourselves a zebra company, one that is both black and white, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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TMC
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READ THEN REUSE

A COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO ENDING GUN VIOLENCE

A Minneapolis doctor has a pragmatic and nonpartisan solution for the most pressing issue facing American kids.

Guns kill more children in the United States than anything else.

It's a shocking statistic. But it's true.

In 2023, firearms killed 4,456 children and teens ages 1 to 19 (out of 46,728 gun violence deaths overall in the U.S.), according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Since 2013, gun death rates in children ages 1 to 17 have increased by 106 percent, the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions reports, and guns have been the leading cause of death among this group since 2020.

It's why United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared gun violence a public health crisis this year.

So how do we solve it?

Where can we find common ground on one of the most divisive issues in America?

The solution, according to Dr. Marc Gorelick, the president and CEO of Children's Minnesota, is in public health.

Dr. Gorelick wrote "Saving Our Kids: An ER Doc's Common-Sense Solution to the Gun Crisis" to provide a roadmap that everyone can follow.

The key is taking a fresh look at the issue of guns through the lens of public health, leading the debate away from partisanship and toward practical steps and reasonable policies that will save children's lives.

Dr. Gorelick is a father, pediatrician, and leader of one of the largest independent pediatric health systems in the U.S. He has viewed the issue of gun violence up close, from many angles, for many years.

All that experience has brought him to one conclusion: We can solve this crisis if we prioritize our children's health.

The Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation's Youth Community Journalism



By Eric Ortiz



Dr. Dziwe Ntaba, far left, an emergency room doctor in Minneapolis and director of the Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain, looks at Dr. Marc Gorelick, center, with youth community journalists, left to right, Yareli Peña Howard, Cal Ortiz, Jesús Rojas, and Christian Flores after their community conversation on solutions for the gun violence crisis. (Photo by Carmen Robles)

Institute, in partnership with Conversaciones de Salud and Jovenes de Salud at Carmen Robles and Associates LLC, hosted a community conversation with Dr. Gorelick on Nov. 19 at the Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain in Minneapolis to discuss gun violence and what we can do.

Four youth (ages 9-15) from the youth community journalism team led the conversation, in English and Spanish, including a Q&A with an audience of public health experts, policymakers, health service providers, educators, community leaders, families, and youth impacted by gun violence.

Yareli Peña Howard is one of those youth. She is a 13-year-old eighth grader and was one of the youth co-hosts for the program with Dr. Gorelick, who began by reading a few passages from his book about the trauma that results from gun violence.

A few months ago, Yareli saw her father shot to death due to domestic violence. Traumatized, she acted out, was arrested, and had to do community service. She was introduced to the Youth Community Journalism Institute Jovenes de Salud team and has grown in so many ways as a young journalist and developing community leader.

Her abuela (grandma) Aracely Martinez was in the audience for the community conversation and shared the story of her son's (Yareli father's) death in Spanish.

Adriana Cerrillo, a Minneapolis Public Schools board member and youth community journalism partner, summarized what was said.

We need more information about gun violence, specifically when it comes to the schools, perhaps talking about the consequences of gun violence and also the critical importance of psychological help. Her family is dealing with a lot after her son was killed by gun violence. We need to talk to our kids about the consequences of gun violence. They end up in prison or dead.

Adriana stopped there: "I'm trying to

summarize without getting emotional."

Princess Titus, a Minneapolis community leader also in attendance for the conversation, earlier shared how her teenage son died from gun violence and told Adriana it was OK to be emotional.

"We have to be emotional," said Princess. "They have to see that it hurts."

Princess is a mentor for youth and brought a few of her mentees to the conversation. One of them, a young man in his 20s, shared a comforting message with Yareli.

"My heart goes out to you and your family. I'm sorry," said the young man. "But understand that life is like a balloon, and every person you meet you get a little bit more air. But what happens when a balloon gets too much air? It pops. And that pop for us in life is death. But what happens to that air in the balloon when it pops? It goes back to the air that was around it. So that death for us, our soul is eternal. That's why it's everlasting. So your energy is just going to go back to what's around you. So you carry your father with you. You stand strong. Because he's never gone."

The public needs to start hearing more of the human stories of gun violence and stop moralizing guns.

Children are our greatest resource. Gun violence is a health issue that has put a huge burden on them and society. We can create a safer world for kids.

Dr. Marc Gorelick has a blueprint.

Buy Dr. Marc Gorelick's book at savingsourkidsbook.com. All proceeds from the book will be invested back into Children's Minnesota gun violence prevention work.

Eric Ortiz lives in the Wedge with his family. He is executive director of the Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation, a national youth and community development nonprofit based in Minneapolis.

LUMINARIES ON CHRISTMAS EVE

This year marks the 26th anniversary of luminaries on Dupont Ave. The annual event has raised nearly \$58,000 for the Minneapolis-based Domestic Abuse Project (DAP). Mickey O'Kane and Kathryn Ringham have lived next to each other for years. It was in 1999 when they decided that a luminary along Dupont Ave. would be a fine way to ring in the new millennium. The lummies now stretch from the original 42nd-46th streets and then go round the King's High-



way corner for another four blocks towards Lake Harriet Boulevard on Christmas Eve. Neighbors walk up and down the block, socializing and singing carols. "Kathy and I have received numerous notes over the years from our neighbors. We really love the joy and feeling of community that we hear about in those notes. This tradition has made all of us feel closer and more grateful for what we all have," said O'Kane. Join the Dupont Luminaries to help "shine a light" on domestic violence (DV), urge O'Kane and Ringham. "As DV rates increase during the holiday season, the luminaries continue to increase awareness for those impacted by DV." They are glad to be in a community that has brightened not only their neighborhood but the lives of families struggling with domestic violence.

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"I have been thinking about this book on and off for some years, and occasionally the circumstances were a bit painful to revisit," Rumreich said. "But as I heard more and more about abuse cases, I finally decided to tell my story. It might be cathartic for me, and this behavior on the part of the Catholic clergy has to stop."

He said that with the practice of moving abusive priests from one parish to another, he wanted this behavior to be in the forefront of people's minds.

"I grew up with a very Catholic father," Rumreich said. "He thought priests were as close to God as you can get on this earth. And given that, there was no way in the world I could have told my father what happened to me at St. John's. I would have been punished for lying about a priest."

Rumreich said that was not uncommon in those days. There was really no one to talk to about such incidents.

"I couldn't go to the dean of college, and did not want to tell my roommate. I wondered what it was about me that attracted this guy, and this caused me to question my own sexuality."

Rumreich was starting a pre-dental program, intending to go to dental school. "I got sidetracked because of the abuse situation and basically flunked out my sophomore year," he said. "I had failed chemistry and math and did not do well in biology, so I never qualified to get into dental school. I transferred to the University of Minnesota-Duluth and then went to the U of M in Minneapolis. I did very well academically and got my bachelor's degree in psychology, perhaps in an attempt to learn more about myself."

Rumreich then moved to Oklahoma and got his master's in psychology. He went to work for a corporation in Minneapolis and stayed there two years. "I still wanted so badly to be a dentist," he said. "So I quit my job, went back to the U of M, enrolled as a freshman and started over. I got my physics, chemistry and math and at age 29, I entered dental school."

He opened a practice in Forest Lake and was a dentist there for 40 years. "While practicing in Forest Lake and for several years after I retired, I was the forensic dentist for the Ramsey County Medical Examiner. I also became certified as a trial expert witness."

A full life, but his abuse while a young man and the emotional trauma it caused never left him. And he still felt anger at the Catholic Church for what they were allowing priests to do to kids. So he started writing.

"It took me five years to write the book, because I had to revisit some emotions I would rather have left buried," he said.

"Unholy Communion" is a mystery, but Rumreich said the book is also an expose of the goings on internally of the Catholic Church. "I wouldn't say it is a book about revenge, but it's a story that I want people to hear. And think about the effect that this abuse has on the victims. That is brought out in the book."

Rumreich said that after his book was published in 2022, a number of readers told him they felt it should be on screen. His book had been published by Beaver Pond Press, operated by Lily Coyle, Patrick Coyle's wife. She suggested that Rumreich connect with Coyle. "I sent him the book, and he read it a couple of times. He agreed to do the screenplay. I was impressed with him, and felt very comfortable working with him."

Rumreich said he helped on some of the medical and forensic information for the screenplay, but otherwise Coyle was responsible for most of the writing. "I watched some of the filming, but only as an observer. It was very, very interesting," Rumreich said.

"The characters in the film matched up to those I wrote about in the book," he added. "Patrick did a phenomenal job of

ADAPTION PUSHES LOCAL FILMMAKER IN NEW WAYS



Director Patrick Coyle and cinematographer Greg Stiever consult over a scene in "Unholy Communion," a murder mystery adaption by a novel by the same name written by Thomas Rumreich. (Photo submitted)

'Unholy Communion' marks first time Patrick Coyle adjusts another's work

By Jan Willms

Twin Cities filmmaker Patrick Coyle has just completed his fourth film "Unholy Communion," based on the book by the same title written by Scandia author Thomas Rumreich.

The film about a serial killer going after priests and focusing on sexual abuse is the first one that Coyle has done as an adaptation. His previous works have all been written by him.

Rumreich sent a copy of his book to Coyle asking him about the possibility of making it into a film. Coyle read the book twice, and he and Rumreich had several discussions.

"A lot of changes were needed to make it a film, and he gave me carte blanche to adapt it," Coyle said. "We agreed to do a couple readings of the adaptation, and had friends, family and a few investors come to the readings. The

casting."

When he watched the film for the first time, Rumreich said he cried. "I couldn't believe we had accomplished this. And when I watched it the second time, I cried. They were happy tears, though."

Rumreich said he wanted to affirm that there are a great many very good priests. "I'm not condemning individual priests as much as the behavior of the administration."

He said he still has occasional flashbacks about the abuse. "I'm a little bit ashamed that it happened, but at the same time I realize now that it was not my fault."

With the response he has received for "Unholy Communion," the first book he has ever written, Rumreich said he has considered writing more. "I have a number of ideas, but probably the biggest issue is time."

The book has won the Cadmus award, a world-wide competition in the

result was instantaneous, and all of a sudden the project was a go."

Coyle said that the project was fast-tracked because of the reception to the story. "It is a sensitive theme," Coyle said, "And there were some who had experienced abuse who felt that it was a story that needed to be told."

Coyle admitted it was not the sort of story he would have opted to do on his own, but he is glad he did it. "It pushed me in ways that directing my own original script could never do. I had to go outside my comfort zone on this one."

Coyle's previous films are "Detective Fiction," "Into Temptation" and "The Public Domain." Like his previous films, Coyle used mostly crew and actors from the Twin Cities and shot "Unholy Communion" locally. "I have brought in a handful of actors from New York and LA, but otherwise used local talent," Coyle said.

The film stars Eden Prairie High School graduate Adam Bartley as Washington County investigator Chris Majek. Bartley is best known for his role as Ferg in the Netflix series "Longmire." Minneapolis native Vincent Kartheiser, who played Pete Campbell in AMC's "Mad Men" se-

Mystery-Thriller genre. The novel is available at bookstores: Once Upon a Crime in Minneapolis, Lake Country Booksellers in White Bear Lake, The Marine General Store in Marine-on-St.-Croix and Amazon.

Profits from the book are being donated to Survivor's Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

Thomas Rumreich (right), author of "Unholy Communion," and his wife, Ruth Ronning, who is an executive producer of the film. (Photo submitted)

ries, also stars as a close friend of the investigator.

Coyle said that actors, whether they are famous or not, want to act. "They are drawn to great material," he noted. "You also have to have enough money." Coyle said that if there is a great script, money in the bank and a track record as a director, actors will be attracted to the project.

Each film has its own challenges, and there can be many, according to Coyle.

"When you don't have a ton of money, locations are incredibly important. To find the right locations you have to go the extra mile, and then the next 10 extra miles," he said. "It is a great effort to go after and shoot places."

Much of "Unholy Communion" was shot on West 7th Street in Saint Paul. Coyle said Keenan's Bar on West 7th said no to shooting there three times. The fourth time they said yes. "Then they were incredibly gracious," he said. "You have to take no as nothing personal and remain indefatigable," he said.

"Then you have to go and find art direction, and get permits and make sure everything is legal," Coyle continued. He said he also did a lot of shooting in the West Seventh neighborhood because that is the area where he lives. "At the end of a 12-hour day, I wanted to be close to home so I could crawl into bed."

Coyle said that every time he makes a film, he can't wait to get to the next one and apply what he learned. With four films under his belt, he said that if he is in the right mood he feels very, very proud of that. "They're like my kids, very different from each other and I love them all," he said. "I can also think about it and get very tired."

"I love everything about filmmaking, but I'm not crazy about the bookends of the process." He said he does not enjoy raising the funding at the beginning and selling the film at the end. "Having a good business person to work with is really a great plan," he stated. "You need to put the right people in place."

Coyle recalled a Woody Allen quote: "You keep thinking it's going to get easier, and it never does." Coyle said he is already planning his next film, however, called "Leavenworth Street." "It's set in my home town of Omaha, and I'll be shooting in Nebraska."

As for "Unholy Communion," the film premiered in September at the Riverview Theater in Minneapolis. "We are getting some really great response for this film," Coyle said. He has a producer's rep with a very good reputation who only takes on movies that he loves, and he is taking it straight to distributors. "We plan on taking it to a couple film festivals, and we're waiting to hear from Sundance."

"Festivals are fun, and you meet people and network. It would be great to get it in the Dublin Film Festival. But I would like to get right into distribution."



CHALLENGING THE ART STATUS QUO

When I met Trace at Speshel Project, L.L.C., his gallery at Seven Points mall, it was the day before Thanksgiving and on the eve of a straight, 30-hour drive to Miami Beach where he planned to show his work at Art Basel, an annual, international art fair based in Switzerland.

By **Brian Gabriel**

Large, hand-drawn frames on the gallery's walls that once drew attention to his paintings now only highlight empty spaces.

The 34-year-old Minnesota native, who prefers to use no last name, grew up in Minneapolis and the south metro, playing high school football and graduating at "PLHS."

He tells me he's been doing art his entire life and only original art – no prints.

On the day we met, he had on a gray vest splattered with various splotches of Neon-esque orange and other colors, his long, dark hair tucked under a black "Adidas Original, Est. 1949" that that accentuated dark, old-soul eyes.

"I want to make people happy with what I do," he tells me.

After an eight-year stint in the National Guard, both in Minnesota and Arizona, he devoted his full attention to his career, this after first living in Miami, being homeless and having one brush with the law, he explains.

The 2020 pandemic and aftermath of George Floyd's murder interrupted his growing local success, and commissions dried up. He says, at one point, he made ends meet by selling his art (cheaply) on the light rail.

Trace opened Speshel Project about a year ago after working out an art-work-for-gallery space agreement with Northpond Partners, the mall's owner. That work is displayed on its parking structure's north-facing side.

"No, I didn't go to school for any of this because I'm living life," he says. "In order to be an artist, I have to live life!"

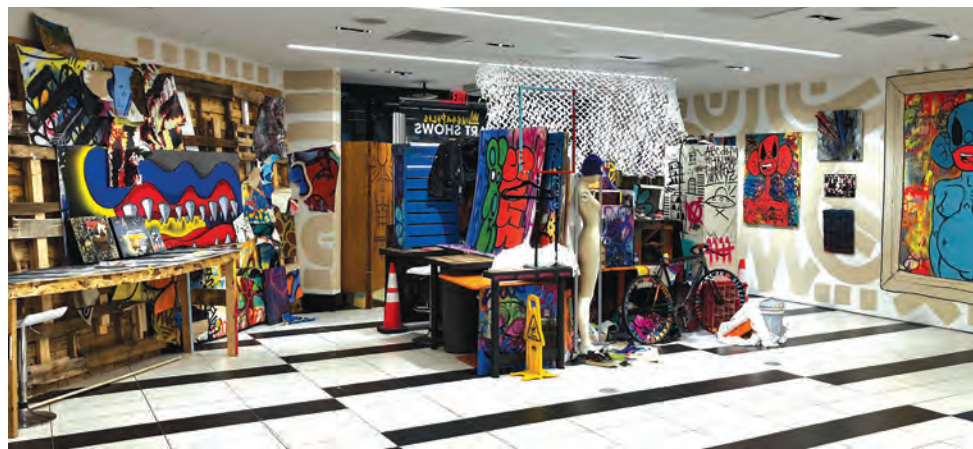
Trace started Minneapolis Art Shows (MAS) with a partner about six months ago. This initiative is an online artist collective that bills itself as "the pulse of Min-



Trace (top right) created the large painting on the side of the Seven Points mall parking garage. He opened a gallery space, Speshel Project, inside the mall. (Photos by Trace and Brian Gabriel)



Hints of Matisse and colorful expression by Speshel Project L.L.C. founder Trace.



neapolis' underground art scene."

MAS along with Speshel Project want to challenge the gallery-as-gatekeeper model by providing a non-curated space for local artists and a place where they receive a 100% of the money when they sell their pieces.

"They [galleries] don't allow you to just come in without any sort of reputation and try to sell your stuff," he says. Here they can.

Galleries are just one aspect of a creative world he calls brutal, likening it to "the weed wrapping around your ankle when you are swimming in a lake," he says. "Just enough to breathe every once and awhile, but you still get pulled down."

He explains: "If anything, I want to keep uplifting other artists and telling them that everything's going to be all right."

Trace wants his gallery and Minneap-

olis Art Shows to clear a path for local artists to gain recognition more easily. "Because I do believe instead of filling out 50 applications for one opportunity, you can fill out one application [at MAS] for 50 opportunities."

"Making it work is probably the most important part of my career," he says. "I just want to make it work."

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SOUTHWEST Connector

South Minneapolis resident Mary Haugh's battle with aggressive cancer launches a new career

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

Mary Haugh got a second run at life and decided to give vintage homes a second life, too.

After surviving an aggressive form of cancer in the prime of her professional marketing career, Haugh launched Second Stripe.

She aims for homes that function as though they're new but have the authentic feel of their original construction along with elements of joy infused throughout. It's work that has given her new ways to apply the skills she's developed over the last 30 years, and has infused a new sense of purpose into her career, inspiring those around her.

DIAGNOSIS: AGGRESSIVE BREAST CANCER

Haugh always knew that cancer was probably in her future in her 60s or 70s. Her maternal great-grandmother died of cancer in mid-20th century, her maternal grandmother had breast cancer four separate times in her 70s and 80s, and her mother had it at age 68. "It was a surprise to be diagnosed when I was, in 2018," she remarked.

"With my family history, the decision between lumpectomy plus radiation versus a double mastectomy was wrenching. I went with the lumpectomy, thinking radiation afterwards was the right way to go." But they found evidence of cancer, a different kind, in the sentinel lymph node. That led the medical team to deduce that she had more cancer somewhere. So they recommended a double mastectomy any-

A SECOND RUN LEADS TO A HOME RUN



From the top of her chimney to three feet below the basement, front yard to back, this arts and crafts home on 45th Avenue South got a complete revival by Mary Haugh and Second Stripe to get her ready for her next century. (Photos submitted)

ways. She sought other opinions, going to the University of Minnesota and then Mayo, where they found the second cancer in the same breast, an inch from the first. She had another surgery, followed by radiation. Then there were five years of Tamoxifen. She will have scans every six months for the rest of her life.

"I've had long lasting after-effects which are still impacting me, six years later," Haugh noted. Radiation fibrosis and musculo-skeletal issues ended up con-

tributing to or causing a torn meniscus, broken tibia, Baker's cyst, lipoma, a second torn meniscus, knee surgery and extended PT. "It's been a long, long journey. Frustrating at times for sure. I've had many setbacks," she said. "But I improve and start over. And improve some more. I'm lucky. I really am."

HOUSE FIRE: BURDEN BECOMES OUTLET

Within a month of the diagnosis, they

had a house fire and had to move out for the restoration.

"At the beginning it felt utterly and completely overwhelming," admitted Haugh. "I couldn't take on another burden. But, as things progressed, it became a great outlet, something else to focus on. Something productive and tangible and visible. A creative outlet."

She appreciated it so much that in 2022, Haugh decided to begin her own restoration company, Second Stripe.

"Learning something new is exhilarating," she observed. "Stressful to be sure, but exciting. Being able to take skills I've developed over decades and apply them to a whole different business has been so much fun."

Growing up in Macalester-Groveland, Haugh attended Saint Mark's grade school on Dayton Avenue, and then Derham Hall High School on Albert Street. At St. Thomas, she earned her undergrad in psychology, business, and economics, and then got a master's degree at the University of Minnesota in journalism, where she was also a TA for the psychology of advertising course for three years.

She had spent her entire career in advertising (and still maintains her marketing business, Persuasion Arts & Sciences). As the one on the team who had to understand what the consumer wanted and didn't want, she sought to get inside their head and experience something like they would. These design thinking skills transferred easily into the renovation business.

Haugh positions herself as the user, the mom, the dad, the host, and considers what will make their life simpler and more enjoyable – not what's the easiest, most efficient thing to build. For example, a dishwasher should be next to the sink, preferably on the right, not across the room.

Having worked on branding and design meant years of following consumer trends and differ-



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ences in generations, and developing visual design across a variety of industries and materials.

Her experience in marketing also brought her in contact with dozens of brands and products in home, construction and real estate financing. She worked on windows, doors, cabinetry, plumbing products, Lowe's stores, furniture, appliances, kitchens, décor, garage doors and systems, tools, hardware, millwork and paint.

She's also lucky to have family members in the business. Two brothers are general contractors, one has been in real estate investing for decades, and another is a math teacher by day and a carpenter and furniture maker the rest of the time. One sister is in design. Her mom designs and re-designs her home at age 85 (she recently hung wallpaper from the top of a ladder, and made bench cushions and curtains). Her dad was a lawyer who could fix anything.

"I spent two years researching sub-contractors and partners. I met my current crew leader, JP Lopez, when he was part of the restoration team for our house fire six years ago. He's not only incredibly talented, but is an amazing human being. Anybody he connects us to stands up to his scrutiny. The systems people - plumbing, electrical, HVAC - we work with local, small-moderate sized licensed firms that know code. We absolutely don't mess around with that stuff." Sub-contractors include Highland Electric, Weld Plumbing, Standard Water, and Metro (Hero) HVAC.

A LOVE OF VINTAGE HOMES

Haugh purchased her current home, a 1923 bungalow, in Longfellow in 1994. "I've been able to renovate and restore almost all of it over the years, updating systems, aesthetics, and overhaul the land-



scaping front to back. What I've come to appreciate about the neighborhood, especially the few blocks around us, is the sense of being part of a neighborhood, a community, which has pride in our surroundings, and appreciation and gratitude for each other and the neighborhood."

She added, "We won the lottery in terms of neighbors when we were raising our girls, now ages 16 and 20."

Haugh appreciates being part of the greater Longfellow community "which has a richness of longtime residents, new homeowners and residents, retirees and young families with small children. Being close to the river, to Lake Street, to Minnehaha Park, and to Saint Paul across the Lake Street and Ford bridges gives us almost an embarrassment of riches in natural surroundings, city living, schools, restaurants, retailers, and access. We can be most anywhere in 15 minutes."

She seeks to give back, and has mentored others in advertising, working with The BrandLab, St. Thomas, the 4A's, the University of Minnesota, MadWomen, and other professional associations. Plus she's on the board of Saint Paul Highland Ball.

She advises people to have patience when redoing their homes. "It's hard to do a whole house at once - or quickly. I've

been working on my own Craftsman for more than 20 years, bit by bit. If you can do a room at a time or a floor at a time, do it when you can."

TIPS TO AVOID SUB-STANDARD FIXES

Today, the median age of a home in Minneapolis and Saint Paul is 71 and 69 years, respectively, with more than half nearing their 100-year mark from the housing boom of the 1920s. They represent a classic golden era of house building and craftsmanship that define neighborhoods, and Haugh is passionate about saving them from the wrecking ball.

Haugh appreciates the feel of history in these vintage homes. The solid natural materials that last. The craftsmanship and care that went into their construction. The uniquenesses. And the quirks, like a little hidden compartment or something left by previous owners that tells a story.

To preserving the historical beauty of your home, she suggests keeping up with the maintenance and structural elements. "It's not fun stuff, but taking care of a small problem or doing preventative things goes a long, long way," said Haugh. "Have your sewer scoped regularly so if there are cracks you can take care of them before the whole thing collapses and you're looking at \$25,000 for a new line along with whatever interior damage happens because of sewage backing up into a basement. I speak from experience on that one."

She encourages people to do their research ahead of time before starting anything. "I learned that there are six different ways to repair a sewer line, each with a drastically different cost attached."

Get the best quality, natural materials that you can, Haugh advises, to avoid re-doing something five or 10 years later. Recognize that convenience costs money, sometimes 50 percent or more than other options. This is where a little research can go a long way. Locally, for example, check builders' material outlets and LL Flooring

for deals. "We had some flooring shipped in from Pennsylvania that was 30% less even with the shipping," said Haugh. They wanted a vintage style rug for one of their rooms. It was priced at \$1,700 at a major retailer, but she identified who the manufacturer was (listed in the online specs) and found it online for \$258.

She also recommends people explore architectural antiques suppliers. "Locally we love Architectural Salvage on Selby Avenue or Bauer Brothers in Northeast. And garage and estate sales. You can find fantastic furniture, doors, wood work - all that. Solid wood doors for example can be \$50-150 vintage, and might just need some stripping or sanding, or maybe just a fresh coat of paint. New solid wood doors run \$6-800 or more. Vintage wood furniture pieces can be re-purposed to be sink vanities, dressers, buffets, and bar carts for pretty minimal investment. Old door hardware often just needs a soak to get paint off and then some oil to bring back their patina."

'YOUR HOME SHOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY'

For Haugh, the architecture and solidity of vintage homes is something she values, and she seeks to keep what still functions. At the same time, she aims for a fresh and current feel. She applies these rules to cabinets, doors, windows, and flooring.

"Hex tiles are totally endemic for these neighborhoods' homes. But mixing up sizes and colors balances the age with a fresh twist. Maybe it's best described as classic with some eclecticism and something whimsical here and there," she said.

Some of her favorite light fixtures are from Pottery Barn Kids. Recognizing that Minnesota is gray and overcast from November through March, color is a huge part of her design style.

"It's also about infusing joy where we can. I love a phrase from Annie Selke: your home should make you happy."

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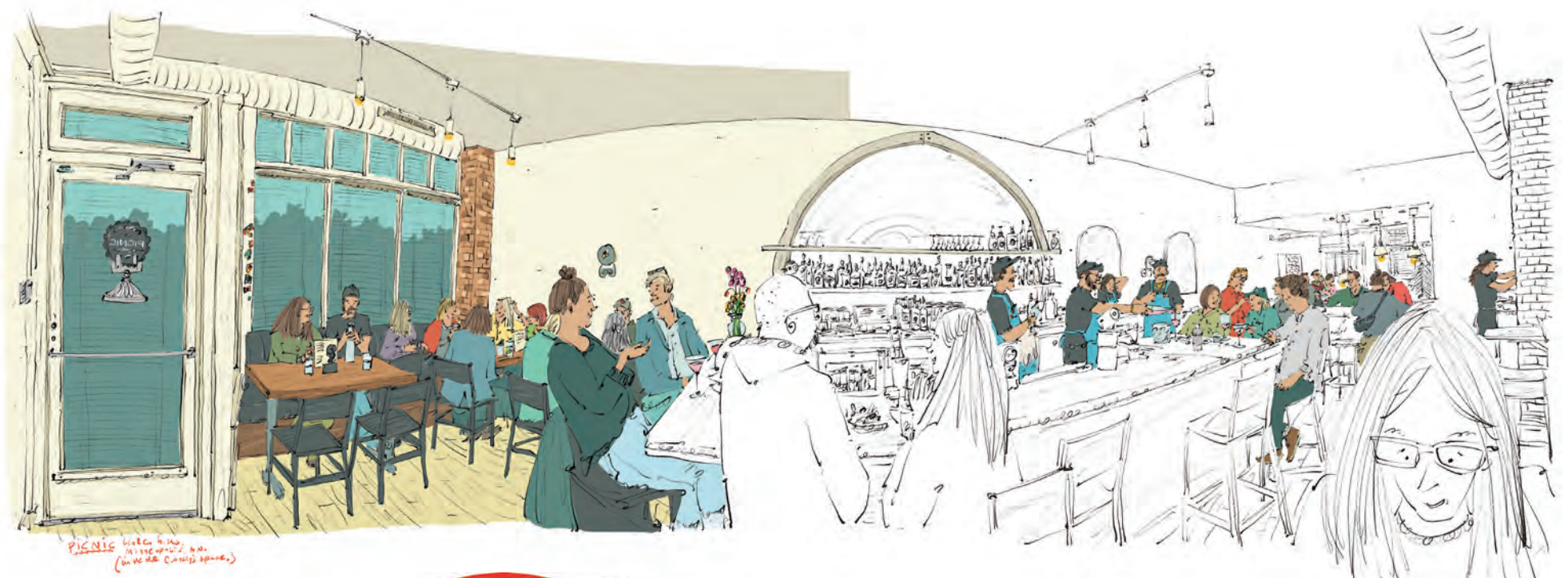
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Picnic. The newest food spot in Linden Hills buzzes on a Thursday night. (Illustration by WACSO)

PANEL PREDICTS CHANGES AHEAD

The DFL trifecta – control of both the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate and the governor’s office – ended with the Nov. 5, 2024 election, ushering in what is likely to be a status quo legislative session and a struggle to come to agreement on a constitutionally required budget by the end of the legislative session.

That insight was one of several offered by a panel of election analysts November 21 at an event sponsored by Mill City Commons, a 55-plus community that “engages members through social, cultural, recreational, and educational programs and connects members to resources needed to maintain healthy and vibrant lives.” The event drew more than 150 attendees to the Mill City Museum in downtown

Minneapolis.

The panel included Katherine Pearson, University of Minnesota Political Science Associate Professor specializing in American politics; Mary Lahammer, journalist, TV anchor, reporter and producer at Twin Cities PBS; and Blois Olson, WC-CO-AM Morning Show Host and author of the political blog “Morning Take.”

With the Minnesota House of Representatives now tied 69-69, a power sharing agreement will replace DFL leadership. The battle for control of the Senate is so close it is likely to end up in court, delaying that body’s work before a final result is decided, according to Olson.

One clear trend is that the GOP increased its vote share outstate in the elec-

tion, closing the gap on the DFL’s recent lead in statewide elections, Olson said. The northern Twin Cities Metro region, once strongly DFL, is now solidly GOP territory.

Lahammer attributed the GOP success Nov. 5 to the feeling of many voters that the DFL majority had been guilty of spending and policy “overreach” in the prior two years. She noted hearing many complaints from voters about the small tax rebate taxpayers received at a time when the state had a large surplus, with the DFL majority using most of the money for new or expanded spending.

Olson said the election was evidence of a “cultural shift” toward populism underway in the country, an anti-institutionalism on the Right and the Left. A clear example, he said, has been the negative response to the restrictions forced on Amer-

icans by their government in response to the Covid pandemic such as business and school closings and vaccine mandates. Pearson noted the significant increases in Republican votes nationally among non-college whites and Latino men.

Lahammer and Pearson suggested that much will depend on actions taken by Republican leaders the next few years.

Lahammer predicted that a “status quo” legislative session is the likely result next year. Lahammer and Olson agreed that the fact that the parties in both houses are now led by women would likely lead to a less acrimonious, more bipartisan environment. “They are already splitting up the committee memberships and leaders; they are three months ahead of where they were two years ago.”

“Less testosterone” will be noticeable, she said.

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▶ **LABOR STANDARDS**

It was not supported by 384 people, most who operate businesses, who wrote in a letter: "This Minneapolis Labor Standards Board was passed without allowing for public testimony, and through a process that ignored what little feedback was allowed to be given from businesses. It's unfair and works against the businesses that keep our city moving. Plus, we believe this board is unfairly weighted against the voice of business while directly impacting how we operate every day, without taking into account how different businesses operate, even within the same sector."

"Two years ago, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and the majority of city council members supported the creation of a Labor Standards Board, which would give workers a seat at the table to talk about the working conditions in their sectors," the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees wrote in November. "Despite also having a seat at the board, the council and mayor have received major push back from businesses because they're afraid of having to share the table with their workers."

"Now is not the time to turn our back on workers, who soon will face an attack from the highest level of government," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski before she voted to override Frey's veto. "I stand in solidarity with all those fighting for fair wages, fair working conditions and a better future for themselves and their families."

VETO OVERRIDE FAILED BY ONE VOTE

The veto override failed by one vote, getting only 8 of the needed 9 votes. Council members Andrea Jenkins and Jamal Osman, who voted for the measure in November, joined with council members Linea Palmisano, LaTrisha Vetaw and Michael Rainville to uphold the veto.

"The conversation does not end here," said Frey in a statement read by Ward 13 Council Member Linea Palmisano after the vote. "I believe we can bring a proposal together in January."

Ward 6 Council Member Osman said that he voted to sustain the veto to pursue "a fair and balanced Labor Standards Board." He said that he is "supporting a public comment for community members to come and let us know how you want to be reflected in this resolution" and "a Labor Standards Board that is fair and balanced and represents Ward 6 and my East African community."

Osman and Ward 8 Council Member Andrea Jenkins had tried to postpone and amend the action in committee. After those efforts failed, Jenkins said "my thought at the time was that I would vote to support the ordinance and then work to improve it over time." The mayor's veto "presented an opportunity for us to work with constituents from the small business community, many of whom are women and people of color. What I've heard from folks is they do not feel they have had a voice in how the Labor Standards Board was drafted."

PURPOSE OF BOARD

Council Members Aisha Chughtai, Aurin Chowdhury, and Katie Cashman authored the resolution.

According to the resolution they wrote, the purpose of the board was to "provide a forum for the city to engage with employers, workers, community stakeholders, and their representatives and to collaborate on matters related to workplace regulations and standards."

If approved, it would have replaced the existing Workplace Advisory Committee, established in 2016, and advised city policymakers and staff on regulations related to workers' rights and employment. It would have been comprised of 15 members, 12 appointed by the council and three by the mayor, with five members representing employees, five workers and five other community stakeholders.

The board could have convened work groups based on sector and geography, and made recommendations on standards related to wages, benefits, and other working conditions, as well as the training needed to educate workers and employers on new standards. Work groups would have presented findings and recommendations to the board for vote before being submitted to the city council for consideration.

"I'm disappointed by this Mayoral veto and my colleagues who flipped their votes," said Ward 7 Council Member Katie Cashman. "The Labor Standards Board would have invited collaborative conversations with holistic representation from employers, employees, and community members who want to co-create recommendations towards improved, sector-specific workplace conditions. Studying and reporting on the working conditions of specific industries must be done with community representatives - they offer key insights as they also use or experience the services, products, and conditions that businesses create."

DISAGREEMENT OVER WHO SHOULD BE ON BOARD

In his veto letter, Frey said that he could support a proposal with an even divide in membership between "employees and employers on the board, ensuring both sides are equally heard and represented." He also said that he wanted to appoint half of the members and require them to have a two-thirds majority supporting any recommendations before being forwarded to the council.

"I have looked at what the mayor has proposed," said Ward 12 Council Member Aurin Chowdhury, "and I want to state that giving 50% of the membership to employees and 50% to workers and giving a two-thirds majority to pass gives businesses veto power over everything."

"This was an opportunity to bring people together, and we missed that opportunity," added Chowdhury.

"I am super disappointed," said Ward 6 Council Member Jason Chavez. The mayor's proposal, he said, "puts corporations over people."

"I am committed to supporting workers of all income levels, especially working-class people," said Jenkins. "I am equally committed to working with the authors, stakeholders, unions, and the mayor to create an advisory board that reflects fair representation and creates a Labor Standards Board we all get behind."

UNCLEAR WHAT'S NEXT

After the years long debate and effort, it is unclear if any council members other than Jenkins and Osman, or any of the organizations who supported or opposed the board, have the energy or interest in working with the mayor to redesign it.

With an election around the corner, some may prefer to wait until a new term begins to revisit the issue. In the meantime, the workplace advisory committee will likely continue to meet and function. Its members representing a cross-section of business and worker stakeholders, with the mayor appointing three and the city council appointing 13 of its members.

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS

LINDEN HILLS

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

BY Vasiliki Papanikolopoulos, coordinator



LHiNC is thrilled to welcome eight new board members: Ben Cooper, Mikaela Casey, RoAnn Cramer (not pictured), Suzanna Mallard, Jennifer Larson-Kelso, Andy Rhode, Amy Watters and Mike Williamson. Their two-year terms began in November.

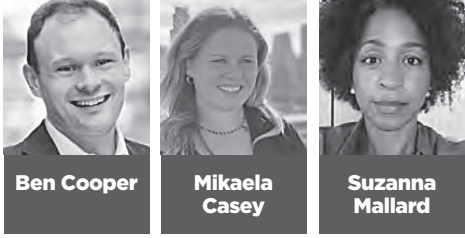
The board's next meeting will occur on Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 7 to 8:45 p.m. at the Linden Hills Recreation Center.

LHiNC has started to compile community events and activities in our neighborhood!

Find all-ages happenings at //linden-hills.org/all-ages

Find activities and events just for kids at //linden-hills.org/littles

If you have an event you'd like added, please email newsletter@linden-hills.org.



Help count birds in the Roberts Bird Sanctuary on Sunday, Dec. 15 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. At the start of the count, the Friends of Roberts will provide hot coffee and cocoa in the visitors shelter at the east entrance (adjacent to the Peace Garden parking lot).

West Lake Harriet Parkway is scheduled to close between 42nd Street and



LHiNC celebrated the opening of Le Burger 4304 with a ribbon cutting alongside Josh Hoyt and Libby Long from the Le Burger team and City Council Member Linea Palmisano on Nov. 22, 2024. Le Burger at 4304 Upton Ave. S is a casual and upbeat place for burgers, fries, and soft serve.

45th Street from Dec. 2-31, 2024. The closure is for CenterPoint Energy to replace gas lines in the area. Traffic will be de-

toured to Sheridan/Upton Avenue S. Local access will be maintained and trails will remain open.

PARK NEWS

LORING PARK TRAIL WORK

This fall, contractors working for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) repaired and rehabilitated about half of the trails in Loring Park. The trails to be repaired for this project were select-

ed based on their condition and because they are not slated for removal in the future, based on improvements proposed in the park's master plan. MPRB recognizes that additional trails within the park will need work as part of a future repair or capital project.

LAKE HARRIET BANDSHELL

The Lake Harriet Bandshell and its

concessions building were repaired, repainted blue, and reopened this summer for concerts and events. Park gardeners and volunteers also spruced up the space with new plantings throughout the Bandshell area this year. Next, repairs are planned at the smaller Bandshell area structures, which include the boat launch building, picnic shelter next to the concessions building, and information kiosk.

These structures will have their roofs replaced and be repainted just like the Bandshell. In addition, the doors at the Bandshell buildings will be replaced and some new builtin seating will be added at the picnic shelter and on the existing planters facing the lake. Work is expected to begin in late winter and wrap up before the start of Minneapolis Music and Movies in the Parks on Memorial Day Weekend.



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NICOLLET AVE. BRIDGE TO BE CLOSED, FIXED

The city of Minneapolis has been awarded \$34.3 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration to rehabilitate the historic Nicollet Ave. bridge over Minnehaha Creek. The BIP (bridge investment program) money will allow the city to replace and fix structural elements of the bridge and roadway.

Over the next several months, the city will finalize plans and complete state and federal project reviews. The bridge will be closed during construction, which is scheduled to begin in 2026. Crews will repair cracks, arches and other concrete deterioration, and the floor beams, deck, railings, drainage system, sidewalks and lighting will all be replaced. After construction wraps in 2028, the bridge will have six-foot protected bike lanes, eight-foot pedestrian sidewalks and two 11-foot traffic lanes.

The bridge, built in 1923 with the last significant repairs in 1973, is the fourth and final large, open, concrete arched bridges designed and built by the city between 1914 and 1929. The first three – Franklin Ave., 10th Ave. and 3rd Ave. over the Mississippi River – have been rehabilitated.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$55.2 million. The remaining \$20.9 million is expected to come from a mix of state and local funds. BIP grants are awarded to municipalities to repair existing bridges that are considered in poor or fair condition. The National Bridge Inventory (NBI) gives the Nicollet Ave. bridge a 4 rating, which means it is in "poor" condition.

FATHER AND SON IN 'NUTCRACKER FANTASY'

Teddy Rockwell (10) and Sam Rockwell (41) of East Harriet are part of the cast of Loyce Houlton's "Nutcracker Fantasy," Minnesota's beloved holiday tradition, which celebrates its 60th Anniversary this December at the State Theatre in downtown Minneapolis. On this historic occasion, the production will feature nearly 100 talented student performers from dance schools across the Twin Cities sharing the stage with a full cast of local and guest professional dancers. Steve Amundson and Philip Brunelle will lead the 44-piece Nutcracker Orchestra, bringing Tchaikovsky's iconic score to life.



Teddy Rockwell, a 5th grader at Barton Elementary and a dance student at Minnesota Dance Theater and School, will perform the role of Fritz and of a young cousin in this year's production. This marks Teddy's third year dancing in Loyce Houlton's Nutcracker Fantasy. Sam Rockwell, Teddy's father, will perform the role of the Grandfather and dance in a second-act feature in this year's production. This marks Sam's fifth year dancing in Loyce Houlton's Nutcracker Fantasy – he danced in the show in 2023, and before that for three years in the 1990s.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**CARITAS VOCAL ENSEMBLE SHOWS**

Caritas Vocal Ensemble, a Twin Cities cappella chamber choir, kicks off its season of Musical Stories with a winter program "Twas the Night... The concert considers the twofold themes of mystery and joy: Mystery is explored through a mix of classical selections in the first half, and joy through lighter fare interwoven with the classic Christmas tale in the second. Sing along with them on some holiday favorites before heading back out into the cold. Suggested donation \$25 online or at the door to be divided between Caritas and a local nonprofit for each concert. For tickets, visit www.caritasvocalensemble.org. Upcoming shows: Saturday, Dec. 14, 2 p.m., First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis; Sunday, Dec. 15, 3 p.m., Lutheran Church of the Redeemer.

SATURNALIA DEC. 14

Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association sponsors Saturnalia on Dec. 14, 4:30 - 9:30 p.m. There's fun for everyone: musical entertainment, hay ride, Santa, bonfires and teats. Enjoy a festive winter evening with neighbors. Sip hot cocoa, roast marshmallows, and shop the latest Bryn Mawr looks throughout the event.

KINGFIELD HOLLIDAZZLE PARADE DEC. 14

Save the date for the 3rd annual Kingfield Hollidazzle. Meet at Royal Grounds Coffee on Dec. 14 at 5:45 p.m. and come dressed in your most festive light-up apparel.

EMPTY BOWLS: PAINT-A-BOWL

Find your creative side while supporting the upcoming Empty Bowls event at Fuller Park Recreation Center 2-4 p.m. on Dec. 14. Paint bowls which will be donated for use at the February Empty Bowls event. Empty Bowls supports partners working to prevent hunger and homelessness in our community: TRUST Meals on Wheels, Beacon Interfaith Housing, and Harvest from the HEART.

KENNY/ARMATAGE HOLIDAY LIGHT TOUR

Enjoy the colorful city streets and light displays of the Armatage and Kenny neighborhoods during the self-guided tour runs from 5-8 p.m. each night from Monday, Dec. 9 through Wednesday, Dec. 18. There will be a random drawing for \$50 gift cards to a neighborhood business for participating homes.

CANDY CANE SCAVENGER HUNT

Find candy canes and clues Wednesday night, Dec. 18 around the Kenny Park recreation center, playground and fields. See how many you and your family can find. Stop on in the building for hot chocolate afterwards and show staff all the candy canes you found.

SOUTHDALE LIBRARY TO CLOSE JAN. 6

Southdale Library will close Monday, Jan. 6, 2025, to make way for a brand new Southdale Library. The project is expected to take around three years to complete.

The new build will include:

- More effective use of library space
- Collection refresh
- More public meeting rooms
- Focus on sustainability and redevelopment of green space
- Space for Edina Art Center

CITY BRIEFS**COUNCIL LOWERS LEVY**

On Dec. 6, the Minneapolis city council amended Mayor Jacob Frey's budget to lower his proposed 8.3% levy increase to 6.9%. This was accomplished primarily through cuts to raises for the 160 highest-paid city staff, technology project deferrals, and delaying the purchase of software.

2025 CITY ELECTION

There will be mayoral, city council and park board elections next year. Emily Koski, DeWayne Davis, Omar Fateh and Jacob Frey have all announced that they are running for mayor in 2025. With Koski's decision, Ward 11 is now an open seat, with one candidate, Jamison Whiting, running so far. The executive director of the Stevens Square-Loring Heights Community Organization, Lydia Millard, has announced her candidacy for Ward 10 council member. She will likely be challenging Council Member Aisha Chughtai, who was elected in 2021 and reelected in 2023.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

The city has authorized agreements for Great Streets Facade Improvement Grants for next year, totaling \$380,000, including to southwest organizations as follows: \$50,000 to the Lake Street Council, \$40,000 to the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, \$20,000 to the Lynnhurst Neighborhood Association, and \$50,000 to the Southwest Business Association. The Facade Improvement Matching Grant Program provides grants to businesses and property owners for building improvements and, according to city staff, has stimulated over \$11.9 million of investment in business facade improvements since its inception in 2008, including \$3,477,044 in matching grants that helped leverage \$8,477,203 in private investment.

vestment in business facade improvements since its inception in 2008, including \$3,477,044 in matching grants that helped leverage \$8,477,203 in private investment.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDED

The city has approved loaning up to \$1,070,000 for Alliance Housing's 2116 Nicollet project and up to \$1,250,000 for the Zaria Apartments project located at 3030 Nicollet Ave being done by Noor Companies.

CITY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The city council has approved a 2025 Legislative Agenda. It prioritizes state funding requests for the Nicollet Ave. Bridge over Minnehaha Creek (\$2 million), renewal of a 36-inch water main (\$12.36 million), three flood mitigation projects, and \$5.7 million toward the community purchase of the Roof Depot site for use as a community-envisioned urban farm. It also calls for funding for programs that support small businesses, entrepreneurs, and local artists; affordable housing and homelessness prevention; and for zero-waste initiatives that will help prepare for the closure of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center.

COUNTY JAIL SPACE

The Hennepin County Board has approved spending \$5.4 million over the next six months to reduce its jail population to 600 or fewer inmates. The money will go to seven other counties to meet a state order to reduce the population at its Minneapolis jail.

HONORING OUTGOING OFFICIALS

In November, the city council passed resolutions honoring the work of south-

west State Representatives Frank Hornstein and Hodan Hassan who are leaving the legislature in January.

COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS

Hennepin County is accepting applications until Dec. 31 from residents interested in volunteering to serve on advisory boards, commissions, councils and special task forces. This includes their Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council, Library Board, Racial Equity Advisory Council, Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and more. People can apply at hennepin.us/advisoryboards.

FOOD WASTE SURVEY

The county is requesting input on a new food waste prevention plan that it is developing. They are seeking ideas and feedback on proposed strategies to prevent wasted food and make progress toward zero-waste and climate-action goals. www.jotform.com/mplshdtpi/Hennepin-County-Wasted-Food

GOLD LINE EXTENSION

To enhance regional mobility, the METRO Gold Line, a bus rapid transit line opening in March 2025, will be extended to downtown Minneapolis in 2027. The Gold Line will become the region's sixth bus rapid transit line when it opens next year, providing frequent, all-day service between downtown St. Paul and Woodbury. Gold Line buses will primarily operate in bus lanes generally along the Interstate 94 corridor, serving 16 stations in St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale and Woodbury.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.



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NEXT AD DEADLINE: Monday, Jan. 13 | PUBLICATION: Thursday, Jan. 23

CRISIS HOTLINE

Call the Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline at 1-866-223-1111 if you or someone you know is seeking shelter due to a dangerous relationship or needs to create a safety plan.

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1 TOY LIBRARY

gradual transformation from a system that manages solid waste – to one that recognizes the complete life cycle of materials. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 80% of toys will end up in landfills or incinerators. This statistic highlights how critical it is to prioritize reduction and reuse strategies.

Nutter explained that the average American family spends \$485 annually on toys, most of which will end up in landfills or municipal incinerators. She said, "Through the toy library, families can access an almost unlimited collection of toys for as little as \$40/year. Annual membership is on a sliding scale from \$40-\$100."

The Minnesota Toy Library is really driven by a commitment to reduce waste. Nutter said, "We are passionate about re-using toys. Many of our toys come from families whose children have outgrown them. The toys are in great shape, and there's just no reason why they can't be reused. Children ages birth to five change so quickly that they don't tend to wear their toys out."

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

MTL has more than 8,000 toys in their inventory, spread across their South Minneapolis, Northeast Minneapolis, and St. Paul locations. Members can visit any of the three locations. However, because it's still getting up and running, toys borrowed from the St. Paul location need to be returned there.

Toys come in as donations, are bought second-hand by staff, or sometimes bought new. If the toys are purchased second-hand, they're inspected for safety and washed thoroughly before becoming part of the community toy box.

Nutter said, "We don't have a large staff, so we educate our members about how to clean toys before returning them. We follow CDC recommendations, and advocate for green cleaners whenever possible. We encourage the kids to get involved, too; they learn about taking care of the planet by helping to clean their borrowed toys."

"No one likes borrowing a dirty toy. Always set aside time to clean toys well before returning them to the toy library."



The Minnesota Toy Library is for parents, grandparents, educators, occupational therapists, and mostly, for kids, to come and choose toys that are fun and that help them learn. MTL Executive Director Rebecca Nutter said, "We can't just keep consuming things. We need to do better." (Photo submitted)



Volunteers from the H.B. Fuller helped ready the space at the new St. Paul location. (Photo submitted)

Wash hands before and after cleaning toys to help keep everybody safe."

The MTL inventory is separated into these categories: Adapted Toys, Board Games, Blocks, Dramatic Play, Fine Motor, Literacy, Large Motor, Math/Cognitive,

Manipulatives, Music, Puzzles, Science/Sensory, Vehicles and more.

There is something for every stage of development in the first five years of a child's life.

GRANT FUNDS NEW LOCATION

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) awarded grant funding to the Minnesota Toy Library as part of their Waste Reduction and Reuse Grants Program. The purpose of the funding is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, reduce demand for resources, and reduce waste sent to landfills. With the \$50,200 grant, the Minnesota Toy Library was able to open a St. Paul location. At its now three locations in the Twin Cities, the Minnesota Toy Library provides families and educators a low cost way to borrow toys that expand play options for kids, and is less wasteful than buying new.

BUILD COMMUNITY

The toy library offers opportunities for families to connect with each other – supporting their children's development through play while reducing their impact on the environment. The new St. Paul location is in the lower level of the Progressive Baptist Church at 1505 Burns Avenue. The toy library is open on the first and third week of each month:

- Sunday 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday 5 – 8 p.m.

In addition to borrowing toys, members can also bring the following items to any of the toy library locations for recycling:

- Broken or whole crayons.
- Squeeze pouches: pouches must be empty, clean, and dry and have caps. All brands are accepted.
- Broken Hasbro toys and games.
- Broken Spin Master toys, games, and packaging.
- V-tech and LeapFrog electronic learning devices and electronic toys.
- Barbie®, Fisher-Price®, Matchbox® and MEGA™ toys.

Check out the new space, become a member, and celebrate with the Minnesota Toy Library as they bring reuse and toy lending to St. Paul. Parking is available in the church parking lot. MTC bus routes 3A, 3B, 62 and 67 serve the area. Contact: stpaultoylibrary@gmail.com with any questions about hours, toy inventory, or membership.

New members can join the MTL on their first visit. No proof of income is required to join at any point along the sliding fee schedule.



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