



WELCOME Frogtown readers

From Editor and Owner Tesha M. Christensen:

The *Monitor* is expanding into the Frogtown neighborhood.

If you're a regular reader of *Greening Frogtown*, you know that Tony Schmitz and Patricia Ohmans (shown at left with their daughters 25 years ago and today) are retiring from the business of putting out a newspaper every two months, and they are passing the torch onto the *Monitor* staff. We're delighted to add over 5,000 new readers, and have set aside monthly space in our publication that will be clearly labeled *Frogtown*.

We are committed to bringing the community together in our section of St. Paul.



Is there enough parking at former Sholom site?

*City staff, neighbors
and board members
debate whether 80
spots is enough for
150 apartments*

By JANE MCCLURE

The former Sholom Home, which has been vacant for more than a decade, will be redeveloped as a 150-unit apartment building.

The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Feb. 24, 2020 unanimously approved two variances needed by developer Midway Community Group LLC for the conversion. That decision is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council within 10 days. As of the *Monitor* deadline no appeal had been filed.

Sholom closed in 2009 when a new facility was built in the city's West End. Its old complex consists of four buildings, the oldest one dating from 1922 and the newest from 1970.

Several developers have looked at the property since the Sholom moved out. A conditional use permit allowing 170 dwelling units was granted in



2015 but has expired.

How such a new use will coexist across the street from the Minnesota State Fairgrounds and just a few blocks west of busy Como Park, remains to be seen. The developers contend that the new housing will be an option for people who want a vehicle-free lifestyle, with its proximity to A Line rapid bus service and other transit. Project foes are skeptical.

Parking, unit size variances

The former nursing home, which is on a site zoned for RM2 multi-family residential, needs two variances for the project to go ahead. One is for unit size. The zoning code requires a minimum lot size of 1,500 square feet per unit. The developer is proposing 882 square feet of lot area per unit, for a variance of 678 square feet per unit.

SHOLOM SITE >> 11

Truce Center opens in Summit University

*Community conflict
resolution center
is response to gun
violence*

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

It's no secret that the city of St. Paul has been hard hit by gun violence in the last several months, and that the victims have been disproportionately African American.

Miki Lewis, an African American man who grew up in the Summit University neighborhood, felt called to do something about the violence.

He started formulating a plan last summer, and opened the 8218/Truce Center on the northwest corner of Lexington and Selby avenues in December. He said, "This is a place where kids ages eight to 18 can come to learn, to relax, and to figure out how to settle their differences peacefully."

Understanding value of their own lives

Walking through the door, visitors are welcomed into a room filled with African artifacts. Lewis explained, "Africa is where we came from, so it seems like the right place to start."

The 8218/Truce Center is both a space for conflict resolution and an African American museum. Lewis created the dual mission because he saw a multitude of needs going unmet for young people.

The center offers classes in community awareness, conflict resolution, health and wellness, entrepreneurship, leadership, self-respect, depression, suicide prevention, and African American history. Lewis and his team of volunteers mentor African American youth in gaining more self-knowledge and understanding.

Students earn a certificate of leadership when they complete all of the courses. Lewis said, "We teach them things they aren't being taught in school."

Leaving the reception area, a visitor walks through a doorway



Miki Lewis is the founder and director of the 8218/Truce Center. He is shown standing in the Reflection Room, where photographs of more than 50 Minneapolis and St. Paul residents who died of gun violence or drug overdoses line the wall. He tells young people, "This is one wall I do not ever want to see your picture on." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

over which a sign is posted, "For Colored Only," a remnant from the Jim Crow era of segregation. Every inch of the African American Museum shows images of the African American experience – images that speak both to great struggles and to great accom-

plishments. Lewis said, "There is no substitute for our kids knowing the reality of who they are. We've got to help them understand the value of their own lives, and that starts with learning their history."

TRUCE CENTER >> 11



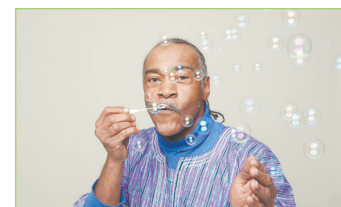
HOME: All Energy
Solar celebrates
10th anniversary

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AGING WELL: swimming,
Inspired Journeys,
Menopause Center

PAGES 7-9



Peace like bubbles
around him: Meet
Melvin Giles

PAGE 11

Home Improvement

All Energy Solar celebrates 10-year anniversary



Richard Franco's home as seen from the back yard. His 12 solar panels generate between 20-24 kilowatt hours on a sunny day. On a typical day, his family uses between 5-7 kilowatt hours. The surplus is sold back to Xcel Energy for .08 cents/kilowatt hour. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



Richard Franco has an exterior Smart Meter that measures his home energy use in 15 minute increments. He also gauges his family's energy consumption (and availability) using an indoor meter and a smart phone app. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

"We're proud to be part of this economic sector based on renewable energy. With Governor Walz calling for statewide carbon-free energy by 2050, awareness of the benefits of solar energy will continue to grow."

~ Michael Allen

Benefit this year

If you install a solar panel system in 2020, 26% of your total project costs (including equipment, permitting and installation) can be claimed as a credit on your federal tax return. If you spend \$10,000 on your system, you owe \$2,600 less in taxes the following year. The solar tax credit will be less in 2021, and will expire in 2022.

'The time is now' for solar power, according to co-owner Michael Allen

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The numbers are in. The U.S. Department of Labor's statistics predict that over the next decade, solar installer jobs will grow more than any other occupation.

All Energy Solar is a company in the Midway that designs, installs, and monitors solar power systems for homes and businesses – and they've been doing it for 10 years. Their new, expanded headquarters in Energy Park made it possible for the company to stay in St. Paul during a time of significant growth.

The solar energy industry is booming, which is good news for the environment and for the economy. The jobs that are pro-

duced can't be outsourced or done by robots – the work has to be done by local people.

President and co-owner Michael Allen said, "Last year, we installed more than 1,000 solar power systems. This year, our goal is 1,250 installations. While our company has a six-state reach, the lion's share of our business is right here in the Twin Cities."

'They did the heavy lifting'

Richard Franco was an All Energy Solar customer in 2019; he had 12 solar panels installed on his home last spring. He said, "I'd been interested in solar panels for a while. There were tax credits and rebates in place, it

seemed like a hedge against energy costs continually rising, and, of course, there are the obvious environmental benefits."

Franco had seen signs for All Energy Solar in his neighborhood, and appreciated that they were a local company. When one of his neighbors had solar panels installed by All Energy Solar, Franco knocked on his door. The neighbor described his experience as extremely positive, and Franco's would turn out to be as well.

In Franco's words, "They came out and evaluated everything, determining that my steeply-pitched, south-facing, relatively unobstructed roof was perfect for solar panels. They did all the

heavy lifting, and got the logistical stuff set up with Xcel Energy. While I was making sure my homeowner's insurance would cover solar panels, All Energy Solar didn't pressure me in any way."

Individualized assessments set them apart

Michael Allen was working in the solar energy industry for 10 years before he started All Energy Solar with his brother Brian a decade ago. He said, "It's easy enough to buy a solar energy system over the internet, but it will likely end up costing you more in the long run. We believe that individual attention is essential

for having a system work optimally. If it isn't installed properly, it might not be up to code or pass the insurance inspection."

He added, "We model every home or business we work on in 3-D imaging, and interpret exactly how the panels will be integrated with smart, efficient design. There are trees and structures that get in the way of the sun. If the south side of a property is shaded, maybe the panels will have to be placed on the east or the west."

ALL ENERGY SOLAR >> 3

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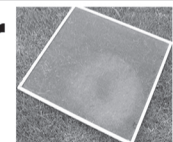
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~ Ashley Robertson

DID YOU KNOW...

✓ For every degree you drop your programmable thermostat when you're at work or sleeping, you'll see a 1% savings in your gas bill per year (source: US Department of Energy). CEE suggests a setback of eight degrees.

✓ There are tax credits and rebates for energy upgrades such as adding insulation, high-efficiency furnaces, and more.

✓ A bathroom fan is an inexpensive alternative to an air exchanger. A healthy home requires good air flow between inside and out.

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Last year, the Home Energy Squad made 750 visits to homes in St. Paul – helping homeowners reduce their energy bills by using gas and electricity more wisely.

Center for Energy and the Environment (CEE) Senior Marketing Account Manager Ashley Robertson said, "We deliver the Home Energy Squad services. CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy created the program, and anyone who is a customer of theirs is able to participate. We'll send two energy consultants to your home to evaluate energy saving opportunities, and we'll install energy saving materials as needed on the spot."

These materials can include door weather stripping, a water heater blanket, a programmable thermostat, LED light bulbs, high-efficiency water fixtures, and insulating water heater pipe wrap.

Air leaks are a major source of heat loss in older St. Paul homes. During a Home Energy Squad visit, a technician will perform a blower door test to measure the severity of home air leaks. They will also complete an inspection of attic insulation and all exterior walls using an infrared camera.

Jarad Miles is an Energy Auditor and Field Supervisor with CEE. He said, "If a home needs air sealing or insulation, we can provide a quote on-site and



Jarad Miles, CEE Energy Auditor and Field Supervisor, in one of the Home Energy Squad vans. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

connect the client with qualified contractors. All of this can really increase the comfort of an older home in winter.

"We also test heating systems (furnace and boiler) for combustion safety. These heating systems should be checked every year by an HVAC professional for optimal performance. A malfunctioning gas heating or cooking system can leak carbon monoxide gas into the air."

Usually the cost for a Home Energy Squad visit is \$100. A home visit takes two and one-

half to three hours. For a limited time, CEE is offering readers of the *Monitor* a reduced price of \$50; mention this article when scheduling.

If a homeowner is income eligible (50% of the state median income or 110% of the federal poverty guidelines), there is no charge for a Home Energy Squad visit. A scheduler can help determine if a low-income waiver is appropriate.

For scheduling assistance, email hesscheduling@mncee.org or call 651.328.6220.

Better for your home

Home Energy Squad is provided by CenterPoint Energy and Xcel Energy. The program is delivered by CEE. What are the benefits?

- Energy-saving products installed by skilled technicians for a cleaner environment
- A healthier, safer, more comfortable home
- Information and solutions personalized for each home or business
- Reduced energy bills

CEE provides financing for a range of home improvement loans with competitive rates, including financing for solar panel installations. Robertson said, "We also run programs for small businesses interested in optimizing their energy efficiency. Our energy advisors can help clients choose energy upgrades for their homes. We really want this to be a start-to-finish process."

The St. Paul location of CEE houses the fleet of 25 Home Energy Squad vans and services, and is located in the Midway at 1754 University Ave. W.

All Energy Solar celebrates 10 years >> From 2

"Our consultants are highly skilled at site design, and every site is different."

All Energy Solar helps homeowners choose a system that is appropriate not only to their site, but also to their energy needs. Energy use is evaluated on a 12-month cycle, and those numbers inform the design of each solar power system.

Community solar gardens are growing in popularity, and Allen supports the idea – to a point. He explained, "When you

look at it carefully, it's a continuation of the idea of renting electricity. Somebody builds a solar garden in an outlying area, pumps a lot of energy into the grid, and customers get a slight credit on their Xcel bill."

He believes the motivation for installing a home solar energy system is the same as what gets people to buy, rather than rent, their home. It's empowering to generate your own electricity -- and it's a sound investment."

'The time is now'

According to Allen, the technology of solar panels hasn't changed much over time. They use the same technology developed by scientists at Bell Laboratories in 1954. What has changed tremendously is the inversion technology that converts DC (direct current electricity collected from the sun) into AC (alternating current electricity that can be used in the home).

Solar panels typically come with a 25-year warranty. Once they're installed, they are relatively maintenance free. There is no need to keep them clear of snow and ice. The panels are dark colored, and will clear themselves on their own. Allen said, "Don't go up on your roof to check on them!"

The solar industry is a global industry, with the U.S. being – so far – a very small part of the market. According to Allen, "Not even 2% of the energy used in this country comes from renewable sources. Collecting energy

from the sun is a simple, safe technology that we just haven't adopted in a big way. We have the opportunity to move forward with the Green Economy in this state and in this country, and revolutionize our infrastructure to be truly renewable. All of the technology is ready. The time is now."

For more information on installing solar panels on your home, or to learn about job opportunities with All Energy Solar, visit www.allenergysolar.com. Company headquarters are located at 1264 Energy Lane, St. Paul.

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The Motley Conversation

Monitor

Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse and varied thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to news@MonitorSaintPaul.com or call 612-345-9998.

What's with the zebra?

You may have noticed a zebra show up on the front page of the *Monitor*. Maybe you noticed a smaller one at the bottom of page four in our information box with a little notice:

The Monitor 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. 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.

Yes, I've been binge listening to the podcast ZigZag with journalists-turned-entrepreneurs Manoush Zomorodi (Fast Company's 100 Most Creative People in Business) and Jen Poyant (Executive Producer Note to Self, 2 Dope Queens). This season has hit upon so many of the issues I'm thinking about as a journalist and entrepreneur that I'm glued to the speakers.

I've been pondering the distinction of for-profit and non-profit for some time. Here, in the Twin Cities, we have a few non-profit newspapers, such as the *Bugle* in St. Anthony Park, the *Alley* in Phillips, the *Community Reporter* in the West End of St. Paul, and *Access Press* (statewide). And then we have the neighborhood for-profits including the *Midway Como Frogtown Monitor* and its sister newspaper the



Too Much Coffee

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN, Tessa@MonitorSaintPaul.com

What's up with the zebra?

Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, Greening Frogtown, the Northeast, North News, the Villager, and Southside Pride.

What is different between us? There's the obvious distinction that the non-profits have a board of directors who set the direction for the organization, while the for-profits have a single owner or two who make decisions. But aside from that, both structures pay editors, publishers, freelance photographers and writers, and sales staff. Pages are paid for primarily through advertising revenue, of which some is through grants and some via neighborhood groups. And both types of newspapers exist to educate and inform, serving that vital role in our democracy that's integral to our First Amendment rights as American citizens.

When I set up TMC Publications, I considered going with a new(ish) form of corporation, the B (or benefit) Corp. Locally, Peace Coffee is a certified B Corp. At the end of their 20th year when they switched from non-profit to for-profit status under the helm of new owner Lee Wallace, Peace Coffee began searching for ways to further so-

lidity their mission to creating good by supporting small-scale farmer cooperatives with industry-leading prices and committing to earth-friendly practices along the way (as explained on their web site). They learned about the B Corporation movement, a global initiative of businesses in every industry that see profit as secondary to the importance of people and planet, and they signed up.

However, as TMC Publications is a relatively small company, I wasn't sure that B Corp really made sense for us, as it would increase our paperwork while not really changing how we do business.

Then I heard about Zebras.

Zebras believe in cooperation versus competition, sharing versus hoarding, mutualism versus parasitism. They are both/and, black and white. The point is to be sustainable, to offer good jobs at living wages, but not to grow so exponentially that we break apart. (Learn more at www.zebrasunite.com.)

According to Zebras United founding members Jennifer Brandel, Mara Zepeda, Astrid Scholz and Aniyia Williams, this alter-

native model balances profit and purpose, champions democracy, and puts a premium on sharing power and resources. "Companies that create a more just and responsible society will hear, help, and heal the customers and communities they serve," they explained over at Medium.com. (I resonated so much with that line that I pulled it for our informational box on page four so that I can continue to be inspired by it.)

Interestingly, zebra companies are often started by women and other underrepresented founders, they point out. The statistics about who gets large, venture funding is terrible but maybe not surprising as we see how sexism and racism is still ingrained in our society. Three percent of venture funding goes to women and less than one percent to people of color. Women start 30 percent of businesses, but they receive only 5 percent of small-business loans and 3 percent of venture capital. Yet when surveyed, women say they are in it for the long haul: to build profitable, sustainable companies.

These four women who

began Zebras United believe that developing alternative business models to the startup status quo has become a central moral challenge of our time. "Think of our most valuable institutions – journalism, education, healthcare, government, the 'third sector' of nonprofits and social enterprises – as houses upon which democracy rests," they wrote.

Ah, yes. There's the place for journalism.

That's where I see this field that is so important to our society.

Here at the *Monitor*, I'm not planning to make millions as an owner, and I'm content telling the stories of these neighborhoods. I believe it is important to provide connection, battle the anxiety and depression so prevalent today, and educate ourselves on the issues we face.

That requires cooperation. We can't run quality articles without solid information from residents and organizations. And we can't print pages, pay workers decent wages, and inform without solid financial backing from local businesses who support our work.

We're in this together.

I'd love to hear what you think as you wrestle with these ideas. Send in a letter to the editor.

(Psst - Mention this editorial and your support for zebras and get 20% off your next ad purchase.)

Recently, a group of community-minded people met at Urban Growler Brewing to talk about the merits of the part of Saint Paul west of downtown. Initially, they called it "Midtown" but the name may change, perhaps to "Capitol West."

At the meeting, as well as follow-up conversations, a diverse group of community leaders have participated which have included developers, small business owners, district councils, construction companies, nonprofits, elected officials and others from local government. The group is led by Dr. Bruce Corrie, a member of the higher education community and local community supporter. A steering committee is made up of community organizations including the Union Park District Council, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, local government, nonprofits and business.

What are they trying to accomplish?

The two big questions are 1) How can we encourage economic activities in the region? 2) How can we connect residents, espe-



Building a Stronger Midway

By CHAD KULAS, Midway Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

What's brewing west of downtown?

cially low-income residents, to jobs and wealth building opportunities in the region?

How can they accomplish these goals? One viable option is a jobs board (or job exchange) where employers can search for job candidates and job seekers can find out what jobs are available. The exchange may also be able to connect with other job boards already in use. The exchange would be free to users and would feature resume uploads with the ability to receive notifications for new opportunities. A user could search for jobs by zip code or region, and resumes could get matched with jobs.

One potential benefit of the job exchange is getting more residents to work near their home.

It is estimated around 32% of the employed residents in this area work in Saint Paul. Getting more residents to work in their community means reducing their carbon footprint, travel time to work and residents will feel a closer connection to their community.

Why focus on this area? There are an estimated 3,900 businesses with over 81,000 employees, with an annual payroll over \$3.4 billion (in zip codes 55103, 55104, 55105, 55108, 55114, 55116 and 55117). It includes major commercial corridors including University Ave. and Snelling Ave., and major redevelopment sites including the Ford site and near Allianz Field. The area is diverse (35.5 percent minority) and 46 percent of the resi-

dents rent.

Being able to connect more businesses with residents can help raise income levels and create more stability. Another point of interest for the Midtown group is to help job seekers acquire skills which will lead to career advancement.

What's next for the group?

- Getting into more detail on how to better connect job seekers with local employers.

- Determining what the job exchange needs in order to be successful and get it functioning.

The group will be meeting again in the coming month – those interested in learning more or wishing to participate may contact Dr. Bruce Corrie at bruce-corrie@gmail.com.

Letter to the Editor

Thanks for sharing story on overlooked dark side

Dear Editor:

I wanted to thank you and Leigh Ann Block for her bravely for coming forward to share her story about her daughter Mikayla Olson Tester.

It is such a sad story and of course Leigh had to relive it all over again. How brave of her!!

Thank you, Tessa, for reporting carefully and eloquently an often overlooked dark side of our society.

Corinne S. Rockstad

Got an opinion?

Write to us about it!

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News for you!

The *Midway Como Monitor* is a monthly community publication in the Midway, Como and Hamline neighborhoods of St. Paul, owned and operated by TMC Publications, CO. Visit our website for our calendar and publication dates.

Story ideas always welcome.

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

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Printing by: ECM/Adams Publishing Group

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

TMC
PUBLICATIONS CO



Delivery provided by: Fresh Heir

If you have a problem with delivery, call 612-345-9998 or email the editor. Mail subscriptions are available at \$40 a year.

Design & Layout:

Tessa M. Christensen

Contributing Writers & Photographers:

Jane McClure, Jan Willms, Jill Boogren, Margie O'Loughlin, Matthew Davis, Stephanie Fox, Terry Faust, Chad Kulas

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Letters to the Editor

Consider MN Tool Library

Dear Editor:

It will be sad to see Hamline Hardware Hank close their doors after serving the community for so long. We wish Jim, Jan and all their staff success and happiness in their next endeavors. We realize this may be unhappy news for people with ongoing or upcoming projects, but we'd like you to know there is another resource close-by that can help local residents obtain the tools they'd need to continue maintaining their homes and property. It is the Midway branch of the Minnesota Tool Library.

Our library has thousands of home-repair, yard-work, and other tools, including power tools, available to lend out. Our knowledgeable staff and volunteers can help you select the tools you need and plan your project. We teach classes on home-repair and other topics, and we also have a shop space with larger equipment members can use. We're located in the same building as Can Can Wonderland near Prior and Minnehaha. Please visit us Friday evenings or Saturday and Sunday during the day, or at www.mn-toolibrary.org.

Thank you,
Bruce Willey
MN Tool Library Member and Volunteer

The latent cost of potholes in Saint Paul

Dear Editor:

"Pothole-related auto repair costs average \$306, but some unfortunate drivers wind up paying more than \$1,000 to fix the damage," according to AAA Exchange website. This is a hefty price for drivers to pay, even in a great economy, and especially in Saint Paul, where potholes seem ubiquitous.

Currently, the city of Saint Paul has a pothole problem, and this problem impacts more than just the citizen driver. These potholes impact the government drivers as well, local, city, and state vehicles. This includes (but is not limited to) public works vehicles, city buses, school buses, police and fire vehicles, etc.

Perhaps, the cost of repairs and maintenance on these vehicles, let alone the cost to the average citizen of Saint Paul, add up to huge losses for our state and local government. Count the number of government vehicles you see in a single day.

The price we pay for potholes also impacts what we don't use that money for, this is basic economics. The cost to repair damage caused by potholes this year, depletes funds for government vehicles next year, and for years to come. Money not spent on these repairs could go to something else, name any of the multitude of policies the mayor and city council can think up.

Neglecting our pothole-covered streets costs us all in extra services to our vehicles, all encom-

passed, citizen and government vehicles alike. The latent costs of pothole-related repairs may be measured by increased taxes each year, as requested by the leaders of our city; furthermore, it may be measured in higher taxes statewide, requested by our state government. Minnesota has the fifth highest tax burden nationally.

Think about that cost the next time you hit a pothole on your commute through Saint Paul, you aren't the only one taking on damage. City and state vehicles are hitting them, as well. And this is hitting their pocketbook, which is hitting your pocketbook. The two are correlated, as are the costs of repairs and the amount you pay in tax dollars.

That money could have gone into our schools, lowering our crime rates, or into programs that help our neighbors experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.

Pothole related damages are costly to all in our city, especially in future costs. Waiting to repair these potholes will have a greater less obvious cost to all: higher taxes for things those repair costs could have paid for but don't.

Terry Scott Niebeling

Responsibility for taking gender out belongs to men

Dear Editor:

I'm writing this letter in response to one published in the February *Monitor*.

Mr Mark Brandt wrote, in response to your article "It should never have happened," to suggest a "slight rewrite" to a sentence on page 2, column 3: "Like many men, he didn't really start showing his abusive side until..."

Mr Brandt suggested "Like many eventual abusers...", claiming that "would take the gender out of it," as he felt the sentence you wrote "was a little unfair to my gender."

I suggest the responsibility for taking the gender out of domestic violence belongs to the 71% of abusers who are men. They are the only ones who can do this, by stopping their abuse of women, children, and other men.

There are, of course, two genders involved. The gender of the victims is mostly female, except for half of the children.

Reading about domestic violence often elicits automatic reactions from women ("If my partner ever raised a hand to me, I'd be out of there immediately.") and men ("But what about women who abuse men?").

Please, before shutting off what you're reading with an automatic response, listen to the end of the story. Then look for more information about domestic violence. These excellent articles include a lot of information. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is another good resource.

Helen Hunter
St Paul

{ Monitor in a Minute }

By JANE McCLURE

Billboard can go up

OutFront Media will be allowed to erect a large digital display billboard near Highway 280 and Interstate 94, as a result of St. Paul City Council action Feb. 19. On a 6-1 vote the council rejected a citizen's appeal and upheld a Planning Commission decision allowing the new 14 by 48-foot digital billboard.

Ward Four Council Member Mitra Jalali, who represents the neighborhood where the new digital sign will be located, said that while she understands the emotions around the billboard issue, she also didn't find that the planning commission erred in its decision. Upholding the appeal would have meant finding that the commission made a mistake.

"I do understand the concerns," Jalali said, noting that she lives near the sign in question. But she didn't see enough evidence to warrant overturning the planning commission decision.

Ward Seven Council Member Jane Prince voted against denying the appeal, citing the potential distraction and public safety concerns a digital sign could create. That was among the arguments made by sign foes. OutFront Media has countered with studies stating that digital signs haven't been found to create traffic hazards.

The planning commission in December 2019 approved a change in nonconforming use relocation to allow one of two sign faces to be moved slightly and converted to digital use. The new sign will be visible from the highways at its location at 2516 Wabash Ave., just west of Highway 280 and north of I-94. Billboard relocation and conversion ordinances mandate that OutFront Media remove six square feet of illuminated billboard space or eight square feet of non-illuminated billboard space, for each square foot of dynamic display space created. City and OutFront Media staff negotiated the list of smaller billboards to be moved, of about 5,500 square feet.

The planning commission decision was appealed by St. Anthony Park resident Keith Hovland.

The appeal was supported by Scenic St. Paul and the St. Anthony Park Community Council.

In exchange for the new digital sign face, New York-based OutFront Media will take down 38 smaller billboards. Twelve will be in Ward Four, where the new digital sign will be erected. Num-

bers vary in other wards.

Some city council and planning commission members expressed support for the taking down of smaller, neighborhood sign faces. But Jeanne Weigum of Scenic St. Paul said it isn't much of a trade in some cases, showing the council pictures of neglected sign faces and even one instance where only a sign support posts, and no sign face itself remained. A peeling billboard she showed was surrounded by trees and bushes.

John Bodger of OutFront Media said the company believes the Planning Commission didn't err. He disputed contentions that digital signs distract drivers, saying that snow and ice create bigger problems.

The sign faced to be moved will be only moved about one foot, Bodger said. "Every ward gets at least two sign faces removed. He described the signs to be taken down in the exchange as smaller, older signs."

10 Minute Walk grants

The Trust for Public Land has given five St. Paul nonprofits \$10,000. Each group is to use the funds for parks access.

The 10 Minute Walk grants will allow five district councils to work on parks planning and public engagement focused on parks. Union Park District Council, Hamline Midway Coalition, District One Southeast Community Organization, District 3 West Side Community Organization, District North End Neighborhood Association each received \$10,000.

The grants are meant to help the councils connect residents to existing parks resources. Outreach to underrepresented and marginalized communities is also required. A third aspect of the grant process is that recipients are expected to empower people to become advocates for parks and green spaces.

Another focus is to make parks safer and more accessible to people of all cultures, and to raise awareness of parks funding needs.

Another area park goes a boost in February when the city council accepted \$250,000 in Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership dollars for the Midway Peace Park on Griggs Street between St. Anthony and University avenues.

Permits allow, bike, ped trail

The city of St. Paul and Minnesota Department of Transpor-

tation (MnDOT) have reached agreement on a small piece of a bike-pedestrian trail. On Feb. 26, the St. Paul City Council approved the limited use permit with MnDOT for use of right-of-way on Snelling Ave., which is also Trunk Highway 51, at Snelling and Como avenues.

The city plans to build and maintain a bike and pedestrian trail along Como between Raymond and Hamline avenues. A short portion of the trail is within the Snelling right-of-way. That means the state permit requirement kicks in. The permit requires that the city indemnifies the state from all claims for injury to or death of persons or loss of or damages to property occurring on the trail, or connected with the city's use and occupancy of the area, except when such injury, death, loss, or damage is caused solely by the negligence of State of Minnesota.

The permit is for the street segment of Como below the Snelling overpass.

On Feb. 19, the city council approved a similar permit with the University of Minnesota, to allow for temporary construction activities to take place on U of M property.

Clean-up, development funds approved

In February, the city of St. Paul accepted state and regional funds for redeveloping several sites around the city. The sites include proposed development locations in the *Monitor* coverage area.

Metropolitan Council recently approved a Livable Communities Demonstration Account Development grant of \$392,500.00 for 262 University Ave, the Springboard for the Arts/SpringBOX; a \$100,000 Livable Communities Demonstration Account Pre-Development grant of \$100,000.00 for Little Saigon Plaza at 365 University Ave. and a Livable Communities Act Tax Base Revitalization Account grants of \$49,200 for 1222 University Ave. The site at 1222 University Ave. was built as a casket company. It has housed a wide range of retail uses and is eyed for affordable housing development.

The city applies for the funding, through Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. It then must formally accept the funds and amend the city budget. The city then works with developers to utilize funds in the project.

The funds are used for site cleanup and transit-oriented developments.

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Menopause Center Administrator Coleen Boeckman (left) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse/Certified Nurse Midwife Catherine Mascari (right). The center is at 576 Minnehaha Ave. W. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Menopause Center guides women through transition

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Menopause doesn't get nearly the attention it deserves. The word is derived from Greek and means, literally, "the end of the monthly" – but it's a long process, and it just isn't that simple.

The Menopause Center of Minnesota offers education, counseling, and resources to help women 35 and older deal with issues and symptoms caused by perimenopause and menopause.

Becky Mendoza has been with the practice since it started 20 years ago. She is an advanced practice registered nurse and certified nurse practitioner with a focus on women's health. She said, "Perimenopause and menopause can be very hard for women, but they don't have to be. There are many ways we can help women be more comfortable, healthy, and symptom-free."

Catherine Mascari was one of the Menopause Center's first clients. She now works alongside Mendoza, and is an advanced practice registered nurse and certified nurse midwife. Mendoza and Mascari's clients are healthy, low-risk women experiencing the physical, emotional, and psychological challenges of hormonal fluctuations during perimenopause and menopause.

Perimenopause is a transitional phase which typically begins in a woman's late 30s or early 40s. It is the precursor to menopause. Ovarian function declines, and levels of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone rise and fall unevenly.

In menopause, the ovaries are no longer producing estrogen or progesterone. Menopause is defined, in hindsight, as 12 consecutive months without a period. The average age for reaching menopause in the U.S. is 51 years.

Beginning in perimenopause, women may have hot flashes and night sweats – both of which can leave them wringing wet with sweat day or night. Many women experience something unaffectionately referred to as menopause fog: frequent lost trains of thought, lack of word recall, and cognitive dullness. Hormonal imbalances can trigger irritability, mood swings, depression, anxiety, and for some, a loss of libido (sex drive). Approximately 40% of women will continue to have symptoms years after menopause has occurred; the frequency and intensity of symptoms can range from pesky and infrequent to almost constant.

Mascari said, "It is a rare woman who has no problems or frustrations as she enters this time of significant change. An important aspect of self-care is to surround yourself with understanding, helpful, and courageous people."

"Sometimes women don't

Tips from Catherine

Life style choices for better health in perimenopause and beyond:

- ✓ Consider a Mediterranean approach to food choices, more plant-based and fewer animal-based items.
- ✓ Stay flexible, balanced, and strong as you age. Try weight-resistance activities like swimming, interval walking, yoga or pilates for a minimum of 75 minutes/week.
- ✓ Limit caffeine intake and alcohol consumption.
- ✓ Stop cigarette smoking/vaping.
- ✓ Make yourself and your health a top priority.

Source: Catherine Mascari, Menopause Center of Minnesota

"The changes of perimenopause and menopause occur spontaneously as women age. These changes bring opportunities for growth and new self-awareness - and they can be challenging."

~ Menopause Center of Minnesota



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feel understood by their partners as they go through these changes. Men have a corresponding male menopause, but it usually isn't as significant. We encourage all couples to take the effects of menopause seriously, and to work on having open, clear communication with each other."

Personalized care

The Menopause Center is for women only, and limits its scope to a consulting practice. The clinicians do not perform physical exams, and there are no lab services available.

Mendoza explained, "Clients receive personalized guidance and counseling to help them manage their menopause transition with ease. Some women choose hormone therapy, and some do not. Some choose to take supplements such as calcium, magnesium, and vitamin D, and some do not."

"We are here to give clients the personalized care they might not get from their primary doctor, because this is our sole concern."

The Menopause Center of Minnesota is located in the same building as Lloyd's Pharmacy at 1576 Minnehaha Ave. W. They accept Blue Cross Blue Shield and Preferred One, and are able to arrange payment plans. Their telephone is 651.698.0891; web address is www.menopausemn.com.

Suggested resources: *The Ultimate Guide to Dealing with Menopause* by Robin Marantz Henig; *Oprah Magazine* (September 2019); *The Wisdom of Menopause* by Dr. Christiane Northrup.

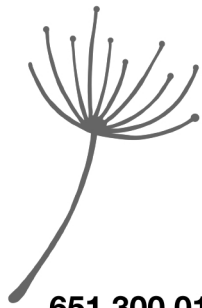
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Get help at end-of-life

Midway mortician starts business to help families take an inspired journey together

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

A Midway woman is breaking ground by launching the first woman-owned, family-centered natural deathcare company.

Angela Woosley of Inspired Journeys offers innovative end-of-life doula services, home funeral education, and funeral celebrant services in the Twin Cities area.

She enjoys breaking down the walls around death and dying, educating people about their choices at the end of life, and generally busting myths about death and morticians.

Woosley has been a licensed mortician for over 15 years, and has taught in the Program of Mortuary Science at the UMN for the last 10 years. She is a trained end-of-life doula through the International End of Life Doula Association (INELDA), a certified celebrant (an officiant who is a more secular alternative to a pastor or preacher), and a seasoned educator.

She is also a hospice volunteer through Allina, as well as a member of the National Home

Funeral Alliance (NHFA).

What prompted you to start Inspired Journeys?

As a mortician and educator, I have seen the rise in both hospice deaths and cremation rates, and I worry that families are falling through the cracks between the health care system and the funeral profession.

I want families to feel partnered with and cared for across the spectrum at the end of life, instead of feeling handed off from one stranger to the next. As dying increasingly comes home with the hospice movement, it is more important than ever before that families feel informed and supported, and that those facing the end of life feel empowered and heard. Hospice sets the stage for people to face the end of life on their own terms, and families are learning that the transition from this world is beautiful, powerful, and sacred. I want to honor that sacred space and allow people to continue to care for the person they love even



"By combining doula work, funeral education work, and celebrant work, families can benefit from continuity of care that no one else is offering," stated Angela Woosley of Inspired Journeys. (Photo submitted)

after death to give this profound occasion the time and space that it deserves. Decisions that flow naturally from approaching death on your own terms include wishing to minimize your impact on the Earth, so there are many affinities between hospice, death at home, home death care, and natural burial and other natural forms of disposition.

I am dedicated to empowering families toward natural death care through individualized consultation, partnership, and expert guidance.

What is an end-of-life doula/midwife?

An end-of-life doula is a paraprofessional who, like their birth counterparts, provides emotional and spiritual support to a dying person and their family. Similarly, a death midwife is often someone who helps families learn how to care for the dead in their home.

Doulas and midwives are not meant to be a replacement for hospice or palliative care at the end of life, but they can fill in the gaps and help support both the terminally ill person and the family so that everyone is better able to approach the end with more grace and less fear or confusion.

The work of a doula is highly individualized based on the wishes of the dying person, but it often involves curating and creating the physical space around the dying person to be the most peaceful and calming environment. It also often involves working on a legacy project that allows the person to see, feel, and create a project that captures their essence and honors their impact on the world. Additionally, this work often involves holistic care for the dying that includes natural pain management, caregiver support, companionship, and personal advocacy.

How does this vary from hospice?

Hospice care is often a multidisciplinary, team-based approach to care that focuses on pain management and comfort, and is funded by Medicare. Care providers include nurses, social workers, chaplains, and volunteers who are generally able to visit patients about 1-3 times a week. Generally, patients on hospice at home have a family member who serves as a primary caregiver, and hospice employees and volunteers supplement their care and submit paperwork and billing to Medicare.

A doula can fill in the gaps in care, support family caregivers, help families navigate the complex system of care that hospice provides, and maintain presence with the terminally ill patient with no preconceived agenda. For example, end-of-life doulas could offer the patient guided

END-OF-LIFE >> 9



HISTORIC ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH
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FREDDIE IS SWIMMING

By CAROL MAHNKE

The hardest part of learning to swim is putting your face in the water — especially if you're 77 years old and have never learned to swim.

But Freddie Lissimore has the courage and determination to do it. She decided she wanted to swim and so she is.

She has an extraordinary teacher in Mitchell Lallier who offered lessons after Lissimore wished aloud that she could swim.

"I always wanted to learn to swim before I was 60," Lissimore said, "but somebody has to push me," said Lissimore.

And Lallier was right there ready to push.

Lallier teaches some classes at the Midway YMCA. He was a junior high physical education teacher, but has taught swimming for some 50 years. Currently he runs S & L Team Cleaners based in the nearby Griggs Building.

Lissimore has had a variety of jobs since she started doing piece work, sewing sleeves, for Twin Cities clothing manufac-

turers after she graduated from the former Mechanic Arts High School in St. Paul. Much of the time she has cared for children as a daycare center teacher or as a nanny.

She was born in Valdosta, Ga. Her family moved to the Twin Cities when she was 11 years old.

"I'd always watch Olympic swimming and tell myself one day I'd like to do that, too," Lissimore said. "One day I'll do it."

Tim Hurley, who has been honing his skill at the front crawl with Lallier's help, said, "kids just jump into the water." They don't seem to have the depth perception adults have.

But seniors have to be encouraged. Fear of drowning, built up over decades, hovers constantly.

Lallier provides a sense of safety and continual confidence in each student's ability to swim. And Lissimore recently swam the back crawl for 50 yards.

He kept saying, 'I gotcha, I gotcha'," Lissimore said of her first efforts.

"For an older person to take the chance, they have to have the

desire and they have to trust," Lallier said.

"Once you feel safety," Lallier added, "you push yourself to do things."

Hurley said swimming has changed his life, helping him recover from a disability.

Ruthann Ryberg says walking in the current pool has helped her gain strength after a serious traffic accident. She, too, is taking lessons from Lallier and thinks Lissimore's progress has been wonderful.

Many seniors find the YMCA pools are good for recovery from a variety of physical complaints.

"It's an invaluable resource for the community," Hurley said.

Lissimore now swims under water. Hurley gave her his extra goggles and she bought a swim cap.

"You've gotten past your fear," Lallier tells her, "And you've brought others in."

Lallier volunteered to teach Lissimore, and now he has other students including Hurley and Ryberg as well as David, a man from Ethiopia and Luz, a woman from Mexico.



Mitchell Lallier (center) volunteered to help Freddie Lissimore (left) learn to swim, and has found his student list growing. (Photos submitted)

END-OF-LIFE >> from 9

visualization, rub their hands or feet, talk them through worries they have, help them brainstorm ways to reconcile with family members, sing with them, pray with them, and most importantly, truly, deeply listen to their needs and concerns.

How can end-of-life be family-centered?

When families have been caring for a terminally ill family member for months or even years, they have learned to care for that family member in an intimate way. They have bathed them, given them food and medicine, helped them brush their teeth, comb their hair, and use the bathroom for all this time.

Once death occurs, suddenly they are expected to turn all of this care over to a stranger, and that just doesn't make sense to me. You were able to bathe Mom before death, and she's still your mom now. It just makes sense to continue caring for her.

All I offer is the patience and affirmation that you can do this, along with some practical education. Many people think it's illegal to care for your own dead, and this simply isn't true. I am able to guide families through the practicalities, legalities, and show them that this is a simple and natural extension of their care and love.

Many people share that a terminal diagnosis is a sort of wake up call to live in the present moment and take stock of their life. As a mortician, I am a firm believer in living in the present moment as much as possible, regardless of your health!

But especially at the end of life, it can feel like so much is out of your control. It can be confusing and overwhelming. Remember that this is your life and you get to choose how to live it. Douglas can help you get answers, set priorities, and make plans for your care.

More information about the company's services may be found online at inspiredjourneymn.com, or by calling 651-300-0119.



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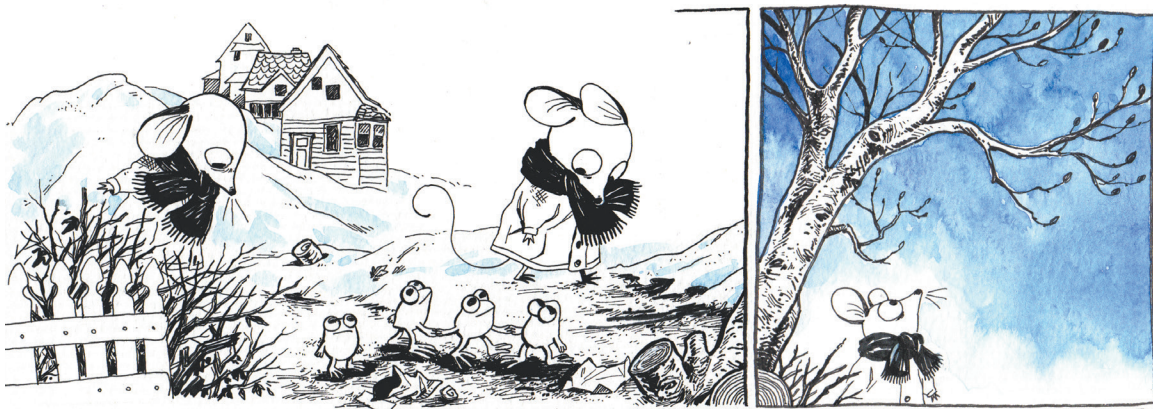
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Frog Food by Z Akhmetova



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Show support for Victoria Theater at Capitol

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Support the Victoria Theater Arts Center on Wednesday, March 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"We need your help visiting our representatives to thank them and encourage their continued support of the Victoria Theater Arts Center (VTAC)," encouraged VTAC Executive Director Tyler Olsen. "This is will be a fun and exciting way to meet other VTAC supporters, and let your voice be heard."

The governor, the House, and the Senate all have bills in supporting this project.

"Now, we need to ensure that legislators know just how passionate we are about creating a home for community and arts in Frogtown and Rondo," stated Olsen. "So, on Wednesday, 3/18, we're going to gather and take the Capitol by storm, so our elected officials get the chance to meet their neighbors."

The group will gather at the State Office Building room 300 South at 8:30 a.m. From 9:15 to

10 a.m. there will be speeches by Representative Rena Moran, Senator Sandy Pappas, and community artists and leaders.

From 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., community members will visit with representatives and senators at the capitol.

"No experience necessary—part of this day will be learning about the process of how to make the change you want to see happen and making friends and allies around the project!" said Olsen.

Governor Tim Walz included \$2.4 million for the 105-year-old building in his bonding recommendations this year, as he encourages a significant investment in community organizations that serve people of color.

The center's Facebook page had this announcement after hearing the news: "Victoria Theater Arts Center is thrilled to be included on this list! How amazing to have champions like Representative Rena Moran, Senator Sandy Pappas, and now Governor Tim Walz for our project. Be



VTAC Executive Director Tyler Olsen-Highness served the Victoria Theater project for seven years as a project manager, events producer, advisory board member, board chair and member of the executive, building, and fundraising committees before becoming executive director in 2019.

sure to send them your support and thanks!"

The theater was nearly paved over as parking lot in 2009.

~ Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com



Colorful past at 825 University Ave.

- The Victoria Theater opened in 1915 for movies and live performances, but became a nightclub less than a decade later. The nightclub was known as the Victoria Café and later Casa Grande.
- The nightclub itself was a speakeasy during Prohibition and was raided at least twice by federal agents during that era.
- It became a target of political leaders who wanted it shut down. Some suspected anti-Semitism in the attacks on the club and its ownership.
- In 1927 the recording "Moonshiners Dance: Part One" was recorded there, by the Victoria Café Orchestra. Moonshiner's Dance is the only one of 84 recordings in the Anthology of American Folk Music not recorded in the American South or Chicago.
- The Victoria Theater, at 825 University Ave., was one of three University Avenue movie theaters that catered to Frogtown children and families.
- It was designed by noted architect Franklin Ellerbe.

Information courtesy of Jane McClure and Historic Saint Paul.

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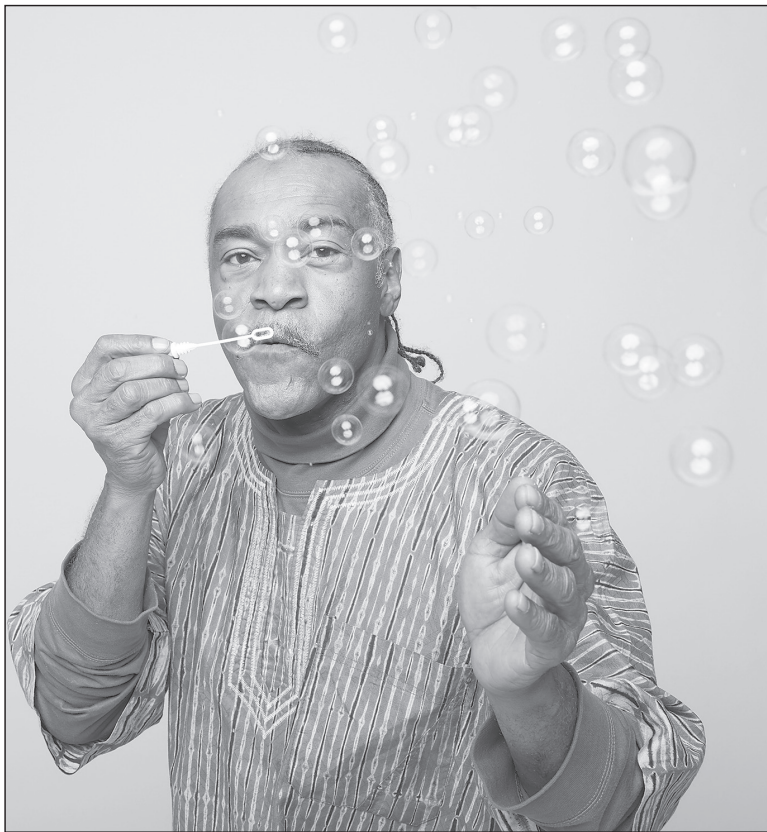
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By MELVIN GILES

Peace Bubbles for Peace Makers

When you blow these Peace Bubbles you transcend all limitations! As you blow- bubbles, or you find yourself surrounded by bubbles, Visualize & Energize the Circle of Connectedness: with other Peacemakers! By blowing these bubbles, you will be spreading the seeds of Peace and Hope; which when nurtured, will

sprout & flourish! When used, these bubbles create a favorable atmosphere that reduces tension & violence in the world. Become aware of others who are making Peace.

Blessed are the Peace Makers!

By Grateful Wolf (aka: Mary G. Salter)

May Peace Be In Frogtown, May Peace Be In Rondo, May Peace Be In Hamline/Midway, May Peace Be In St. Paul, May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities, and May Peace Prevail On Earth!!!!

ShotSpotter program will help city's response to gun-related crimes

As your Ward 1 City Council member, I am proud to continue to serve the hardworking people of Ward 1. I have a lot of ambitious, but necessary plans and proposals that I am working on to ensure that St. Paul remains the best place to live and work. Coming out of the budget discussions at the end of 2019, I heard loud and clear that public safety is a priority for residents.

I am encouraged and inspired by the conversations I have with residents and have always believed that community building and working together is our best path to success. During budget conversations last year, I had hoped to secure more money to provide support and funding to more of our small, local organizations that work directly with youth and communities of color. I am excited that in 2020 we will be able to utilize Community Organization Partnership Program (COPP) money to provide funding to more organizations that were previously being left out of funding opportunities. Working with my city council colleagues has given us the opportunity to bring more people and organizations to the table and really help support the work already being done to address the root causes of violence in our community.

Another key component of this issue that I hear about frequently is getting ShotSpotter in

Ward 1 St. Paul City Council

By
DAI THAO
ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us



our city. This month I hope to introduce a resolution that will seek private funding for a two-year pilot program for ShotSpotter. I believe there is significant value in including a gun-shot detection program as part of our public safety tool box. If we can track and collect data in real time about shots fired, we provide St. Paul Police the ability to more effectively and efficiently patrol and respond to gun-related incidents.

Public safety is a multi-faceted issue that requires a multi-pronged solution. Funding organizations that are doing intervention work and community building on the ground is a necessary and valuable endeavor. We also have an immediate duty to stop gun violence in its tracks and that's where tools like ShotSpotter come in. I am willing to do everything we can to demand a safer St. Paul. Lewis is fond of saying, "Just do what your heart allows you to do."

{ Development Roundup }

By JANE McCLURE

University and Dale

Redevelopment work continues on the northwest corner of University Ave. and Dale St. The St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, voted Feb. 26 on measures for the project. A five-story, mixed-use building with 20,000 square feet of commercial space and 40 affordable housing units is planned. The project has a value of more than \$28 million.

The HRA Board approved the convergence of 621 University Ave. from city ownership to the Neighborhood Development

Center (NDC) Entrepreneur Training Center. NDC is working with developer Wellington Management on the project.

Apartments planned for the building will be studios to three-bedroom units.

The property has been owned by the city since 1989. It was owned by the Alexander family. Patriarch Ferris Alexander owned and operated an X-rated theater at the corner, the Flick. The Flick and its neighbors, the Belmont Club and the Faust Theater, generated debate for years over adult uses in neighborhoods. The theaters were especially criticized and were the site of several protests. The Faust and

Belmont sites were redeveloped several years ago.

The former Flick site was green space and has been used for many community gatherings over the years.

The HRA Board also took other action tied to the project. The board approved restructuring of two existing loans into one loan totaling more than \$94,000. The board also released HRA mortgages on 625 and 627 University Ave., and obtained a new mortgage on 501 N. Dale St. The changes affect loans dating back to 1997 and 1999, as the city worked with NDC to redevelop the properties. The University sites will be part of the new mixed-use development and 501 Dale St. will be renovated.

Truce Center opens in Summit University

>> from 1

Space to be safe in

Lewis was born just a few blocks away, on Hague and Milton. He said, "Gun violence always had its mark in this neighborhood, but it has gotten so much worse. I've been mentoring kids out in the community for more than 20 years, and I knew it was time to create a space where they could come and be safe. I feel like, if you don't know who your neighbors are – it's a lot easier to get in trouble. And there are just fewer places for kids to go these days."

Youth come to the center to learn about themselves, and they also come to learn about each other.

Reduce violence in community

If there's an argument happening out in the community, or bullying, or threats, Lewis and his volunteers can help. He said, "Because I'm from this neighbor-



hood, I'm a known person. We're here to help parties mediate their differences, and to get conflicts resolved safely. This is our effort to reduce community violence."

While the center is dedicated to mentoring African American youth, anyone is welcome and encouraged to take a tour. The 8218/Truce Center is located walking distance from several schools at 175 Lexington Ave. N. Hours are Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; call 651.340.4081. Visit www.8218trucecenter.org to learn more.

Stand out quote from the wall in

the Reflection Room:

"Another day, another chance."

'We're in this life together'

Lewis is finalizing the details of getting non-profit status for the center. Since it opened, he has paid the bills himself. He said, "I believe we're all put here to assist in saving the world. I can't do it by myself, and neither can anyone else. We're in this life together. If someone wants to make a donation to the center, they're welcome to. But what would light me up more than anything would just be for people to come down to the center and learn some African American history."

As Lewis is fond of saying, "Just do what your heart allows you to do."

Is there enough parking at former Sholom site?

>> from 1

Another variance, which sparked the most debate, is for parking. The zoning code requires 166 off-street parking spaces, but 80 enclosed and lot spaces are proposed, for a variance of 86 parking spaces. Parking was a flash point during the Feb. 24 debate. City staff recommended denial of the variances. Matthew Graybar of the BZA staff said that adding more than 80 vehicles "would flood the area."

Planning staff, in a memo, also recommended denial. City staff suggested a smaller, 80-unit building but the developers said that didn't make sense financially.

One wrinkle in the issue is this: the property's underlying RM residential multifamily zoning could face changes as a result of an ongoing St. Paul Planning Commission study. The study and a future city council decision to change the zoning code could mean the site could accommodate a new five-story building with more than 350 apartments if the Sholom complex came down and a new multi-family structure went up. That study, and a second study calling for relaxed parking standards citywide, could compound the area's parking problems

BZA members debated the issues at length and voted on the variances separately. They made requests including asking the developers to provide incentives for transit use. Some Snelling Ave. developers in recent months have given tenants a bus card at the start of their leases.

"The problem is where this site is," said board member Luis Rangel-Morales. "You can provide all kinds of incentives, but people will still drive."

"That area really struggles with parking issues," said board member Daniel Miller. But board members ultimately agreed that the project should go ahead, noting that if parking is a problem the developers will have to find a solution or lose residents.

Will lack of parking affect how many rent?

The community development corporation, Northeast Neighborhoods Development Corporation, is a development partner. Its executive director, Chuck Repke, said developers wouldn't be moving ahead with the project if they didn't think it was viable. The developers met four times with neighbors to discuss the project.

The developers raised several arguments, including financial viability and building reuse, in

making their case for the variances. Plans call for 22 studio apartments; 97 one-bedroom apartments; 24 two-bedroom apartments of 800-900 square feet; and seven three-bedroom apartments. Apartments would be market-rate. Repke describes prospective residents as empty nesters and graduate students.

He predicted many residents won't own vehicles but will rely on transit and possibly a shared-use vehicle or vehicles at the building. "You're not going to find better transit than Snelling Ave.," Repke said.

"Clearly there are limitations on parking," Repke said. "I've been there during the state fair and it is insane."

Como Community Council/District 10 recommended approval of the variances.

One neighbor, Kathy Kelly, appeared in opposition to express concerns about parking. She said her block of Midway Parkway is already greatly affected by spillover parking from the frequent uses of the fairground and park activities. "Now summer weekends will be every single day of our lives," she said.

Repke said the developers would personally work with neighbors on parking issues and even help them submit applications for residential permit parking.

Hamline Midway

Neighborhood needs your voice

The Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) has begun work on the 2020-2030 Neighborhood Plan, a roadmap for the next 10 years of transportation, development and environmental initiatives in Hamline Midway.

All community members are invited to share their thoughts and ideas for the future of the neighborhood at Newell Park on Saturday, March 21 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Children are welcome and the working meeting will be followed by a light lunch and socializing.

HMC started work on the neighborhood plan in the fall of 2019 by establishing a committee and hiring an intern, Emma Kiley. She is in charge of implementing the ideas of a steering committee that includes Mike Reynolds, Christine Weeks, Garrett Backes, Steve Samuelson,

Seema Kairam, Don Raleigh, HMC Director Kate Mudge and HMC Community Organizer Melissa Michener.

"We are committed to including as many community members as possible into a single vision for our neighborhood and we've been planning how best to do that," said Mike Reynolds who is on the HMC Board of Directors.

So far, the committee has created lists of businesses and organizations to partner with, developed a plan and timeline for outreach events, and Kiley has created a toolkit to use to gather ideas from the community.

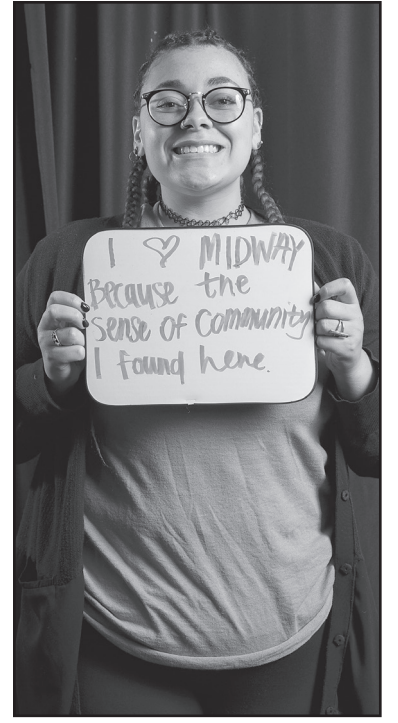
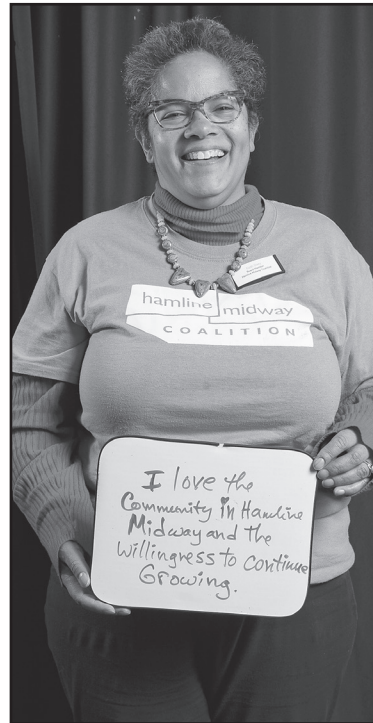
Kiley researched community engagement methods and compiled the most promising in a document that will be accompanied by the materials, such as markers and paper, to complete

the toolkit. The toolkit will allow any member of HMC to obtain community input for the neighborhood plan.

"The toolkit has options for all group sizes and ages of participants," said Kiley.

The toolkit will debut at Newell Park (900 Fairview Ave N.) on March 21 during the first of three community engagement events for the neighborhood planning process. Next up will be an online survey via the HMC webpage and a second meeting on Saturday, May 9 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Hamline University's East Hall.

For more information about the neighborhood planning process please see the website: <https://www.hamlinemidway.org/neighborhood-plan>.



Faith Dietz (at left) and Tachianna Charpenter share what they love about their neighborhood. (Photos submitted)

Murray Middle School students at state science fair



Murray students get ready to board the bus to the Minnesota State Fair's Rose & Lee Warner Coliseum where the Twin Cities Regional Science Fair was held Feb. 28, 2020. The State Science Fair will be held at Benilde - St. Margaret's School, St. Louis Park March 26-28, 2020. Chittra Xiong (Senior) has submitted a research paper, "Formation of Nanopores in a Polymer Monolith Through Cleavage of Bulky Side-Groups" and qualified for the Junior Science and Humanities Symposia (JSHS) Program. (Photo submitted)

Briefs

LEARNING TO GIVE BACK

The Friendship Club was started by Gary and Jean Ales over 50 years ago. Gary and Jean both graduated from Central High School. Now a new Central Sophomore student Satya Mamdani from Central and her sister Rosanna decided to be a big part of the Friendship Club by giving out roses to the community.

For the past four years, Joseph Lallier, a junior at Eagan High School, organized with Eagan Sam's Club to collect roses not sold on Valentine Day and give out to the community.

Satya and Rosanna Mamdani wanted to get involved in bring a little smile to people in their community. They asked if they could pass out roses at the Midway YMCA.

After they pass out roses at the Midway YMCA, the group went on to reach out to about 1,000 people by delivering them



to 11 Senior Centers, police, fire and five schools.

People receiving a rose from either Satya or Rosanna could not believe that these girl took the time to give back to their community in this very special way of kindness.

Database of mass shooters released for public use

The Violence Project, a non-partisan think tank has released the largest, most comprehensive database of mass shooters in the United States.

This new database, funded by the National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, was developed by professors Jillian Peterson and James Densley and a team of students at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. It includes 171 mass shooters from 1966 to 2019, each coded on 100 pieces of life history information. The entire database is downloadable for free at www.theviolenceproject.org.

"Mass shootings are a complex issue, requiring multiple avenues of prevention," says Dr. Jillian Peterson, "The goal of this project is to ground our public policy discussions in data and develop evidence-based policies to prevent these tragedies."

The mass shooters in the database each shot and killed four or more people in a public space, including schools and houses of worship. They are 98% male and 52%



Hamline University professors James Densley (left) and Jillian Peterson helped create the new database. (Photo submitted)

white, with an average age of 34.

Most mass shooters were in crisis prior to the shooting and suicidal, and almost half of them leaked their plans in advance. 62% of mass shooters had a criminal record and 57% had a violent history. 70% of mass shooters knew at least some of their victims.

This database is the first to look closely at the mental health histories of mass shooters. Among the 171 mass shooters, two-thirds had a mental health diagnosis or presented mental health concerns. This is only slightly higher than the 50% of people in the general population

who will meet the criteria for a mental illness in their lifetime. However, a mental health diagnosis does not mean that the actions of mass shooters are directly motivated by their symptoms. The database shows that 16% of mass shootings are at least partly motivated by psychosis – which is less than the percentage of shootings motivated by domestic issues, employment changes, interpersonal issues, and hate.

This is also the first database to look closely at how many shooters obtained their guns. The majority of mass shooters used handguns (77%) and 25% used assault rifles. Of the known data, 77% of shooters purchased at least some of their guns legally, 13% made illegal purchases, and 19% stole guns.

"Mass shootings have increased in recent years, both in the number of incidents and the number of people killed", Dr. James Densley explained. "Mass shootings are rare but routine events. We now have the data to understand that routine and disrupt it before it's too late."

Get to know local organizations

Monthly Luncheons – Second Tuesday of each month, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m., at Hamline Church United Methodist (1514 Englewood Ave.). Chef Erik Hendrickson will prepare a wonderful meal, blood pressure checks will be provided, and new attendees are always welcome at our "Second Tuesday" luncheon events. Suggested donation \$7.

• April 14 – Panel of area organizations: Animal Humane Society, NeighborWorks, Veterans Services, Handi Medical

Jody's Documentary Film Series: March 25, 1 p.m. at Hamline Midway Library. Check website for film description (www.hmelders.org/events.html).

Cards & Games: Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m. (after luncheon), Hamline Church United Methodist.

Tai Chi for Health with Bruce Tyler: Mondays, March 30 – May 11, 11 a.m.–noon, Hamline Church United Methodist. Students will practice an easy-to-learn set of Tai Chi movements that can be done both seated and standing. This gentle, flowing exercise fosters mind-body connection and coordi-

Hamline Midway Elders

By LAUREL COLLINS
laurel@HMElders.org
651-209-6542

nation; build strength and flexibility; improves balance and cultivates mental clarity, awareness and calm.

Gentle Exercise Class Series: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30–2:30 p.m., March 19 – May 7, Hamline Church United Methodist. Joni leads this arthritis-friendly exercise class for older adults, utilizing her unique Irish sense of humor to create a welcoming and motivating atmosphere. New attendees are always welcome.

Knitting & Crochet Group: Mondays from 1 to 3 p.m. (ongoing) at Hamline Church United Methodist. Hamline Midway Elders provides the yarn and needles, tea and cookies.

Como

D.C. close up, MCJROTC retreat, teaching honor

Twenty-seven seniors currently studying AP Government and AP Macroeconomics spent the last week of February 2020 in Washington D.C. The participating students were part of the national Close Up program, which promotes civics education and participation in our democracy with the capital city as a living classroom.

Como student highlights included study visits to national monuments and memorials including Jefferson, FDR, Martin Luther King, Jr., Lincoln, World War II, Vietnam and Korea. There were also study visits at museums of the Smithsonian, the Supreme Court, U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, Holocaust Museum, and unique Washington neighborhoods.

Students met with Congresswoman Betty McCollum in her House of Representatives Office and also discussed policy with staff and legislative aides from Senator Smith's and Senator Klobuchar's Capitol Hill offices.

While observing the House of Representatives in session from the House Gallery, Como students witnessed Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez present the Green New Deal Resolution. For several students who enthusiastically advocate for and support the proposed legislation, it was inspiring to see a Congresswoman they know speak passionately about the

issue.

Throughout the week, Como students were engaged in policy discussions and simulations with peers from across the nation and beyond in workshop groups. A total of 150 students represented the states of California, Texas, Louisiana, Utah, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, as well as Puerto Rico and Panama.

The annual adventure to Washington D.C. for Como AP Government students is made possible through student and school-sponsored fundraising activities, with generous scholarship support from individuals in the Como community. The Como Park Booster Club, Rice St. Athletic Club, and Friends of Como Athletics (FOCA) are also significant contributors.

Fifty-seven cadets from Como's Marine Corps JROTC spent the weekend of Feb. 21-23 at Camp Ripley in Little Falls, Minn. and Camp Shamaineau in Motley, Minn. The Winter Cadet Leadership Camp included evaluations in the standards of cross-country skiing, ice wall climbing, rock wall climbing, hiking, horseback riding, winter survival skills, zip lining, broom-ball and even sledding.

Cadets meeting or exceeding standards in those or any of the other five activities earned a Distinguished Military Training Award (DMT). All cadets performed exceptionally well - rising

Como Park Senior High School

By **ERIC ERICKSON**
Social studies teacher

to challenges and strengthening bonds. They returned to Como with great stories of adventure.

Family and Consumer Science teacher Courtney Gbolo was selected as a semifinalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award. Of 134 nominees, 36 were selected as semifinalists.

Ms. Gbolo teaches Culinary Arts and has developed an International Cuisine course that incorporates knowledge she gained from a grant to study at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. She values the opportunity to create a classroom culture which allows students to explore and collaborate.

"Teaching CTE (Career and Technical Education) classes provide students with real-world opportunities to explore career paths," Gbolo said. "I have former students who are thriving in fields that our programs have exposed them to, which is really rewarding."



Como AP Government students spent six days in Washington D.C. from Feb. 23-28 as participants in the national Close Up program. (Photo by Eric Erickson)



Cadets from Como's Marine Corps JROTC spent Feb. 21-23 at their annual Winter Cadet Leadership Camp in central Minnesota. (Photo by James Kirkland)

Classifieds & Service Directory

Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by April 6 for the April 16 issue. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 5139 34th Ave. S. #17097, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@monitorsaintpaul.com, or call 651-917-4183.

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In Our Community

Merriam Park Library events

Fitz & Friends: This Side of Paradise, Sunday, March 15, 3 -4 p.m. Mark Taylor, an educator and interpreter with the Minnesota Historical Society, will discuss F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *This Side of Paradise* and Fitzgerald's relationship with his eventual publisher and editor, Maxwell Perkins, of Charles Scribner's Sons.

Health Care Fraud—Preventing Medicare Fraud and Avoiding Scams, Tuesday, March 24, 10:30 a.m. -noon. Learn how to detect Medicare fraud and what to do if Medicare Fraud is suspected. A representative from the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging will discuss the top scams directed towards seniors, offer tips on how to avoid falling for scams and where to get help if you or loved one is scammed.

Read Brave with John Coy, Sunday, March 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Join us as author John Coy introduces his new book, *If We Were Gone: Imagining the World Without People*. After the story, stay for a family-oriented landscape-design

project created from recyclable materials.

Read Brave Conversations with Eric Holthaus, Tuesday, March 31, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Join us as we discuss our climate crisis, share stories about how it has impacted our communities, and work together to brainstorm solutions. Eric Holthaus is a meteorologist and journalist for The Correspondent, covering climate science, policy, and solutions. He has previously written for the Wall Street Journal, Slate, and a variety of other publications.

Senior LinkAge Line, Tuesday, April 7, 10:30 a.m. The Senior LinkAge Line® is Minnesota's free statewide information and assistance service. Attend this free program (offered by the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging) and learn more about the Senior LinkAge Line and how it can help you!

The Merriam Park Library is located at 1831 Marshall Ave. For more information, call 651-642-0385 or visit www.sppl.org.

Upcoming parks events

Summer sports registration is March 1-31 for t-ball, machine pitch, softball, and baseball ages 3-17. First five registration days are discounted.

North Dale Recreation Center. Call 651-558-2329 or visit www.stpaul.gov/northdalerec

- Saturday, March 28, Home Buying, 10-11:30am, adults
- Monday/Wednesday, April 6-May 13, Tai Ji Quan, 1-2pm, adults
- Saturday, April 11-18, Conflict Resolution for Adults, 11:15

a.m.-12:45 p.m., adults

• Breakfast With The Bunny, Saturday, April 4 from 10-11:30 a.m.

Northwest Como Recreation Center. Call 651-298-5813 or visit www.stpaul.gov/northwestcomorec

- Monday-Friday, March 30-April 3, Internet Broadcast Training, 1-3 p.m., ages 10-13
- Thursday, April 9-30, Spoken Word, 2:15-4:15 p.m., ages 7-11
- Friday, April 17-May 8, Grafetti Street Art, 2:15-4:15p.m., ages 7-12

Partners and spouses support group

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) is sponsoring a support group specifically for partners or spouses of someone who lives with a mental illness. The Partners & Spouses support group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8 p.m., at Falcon Heights United Church of Christ, 1795 Holton Street (Holton & Garden), in Falcon Heights. For more information, call Melissa at 651-354-0825 or Sara at 763-350-6502.

Build skills at home maintenance series

Rethos: Places Reimagined and the Minnesota Tool Library are teaming up to host a five-part basic home maintenance class series through the month of March. Topics include updating old electrical systems, basic toilet repairs, drain maintenance and replacement, and more. These are beginner-level classes, ideal for brand new homeowners, aspiring DIYers, and anyone needing a refresher on basic household maintenance and repair. No experience necessary. *Feeling Frayed? Updating Old Electrical* on Tuesday, March 17, 6-8p.m., Minnesota Tool Library - St. Paul Branch. *MTL Basics: Fix It (Electrical)* on Tuesday, March 24, 6-8 p.m. Minnesota Tool Library - Northeast Minneapolis Branch. *If Walls Could Talk...* on Tuesday, March 31, 6-8 p.m. at Minnesota Tool Library - St. Paul Branch. Classes are \$25 each. Registration is available online through the Minnesota Tool Library website: mintoollibrary.com. Tool Library members receive 20% off registration.

'We're all going to be okay' at Hamline

Hamline's award-winning theatre department presents, "We're All Gonna Be Okay" on March 12, 13 and 14 at 7 p.m. in the Anne Simley Theater (1530 W. Taylor Ave.) The play confronts the fear and hysteria around the events of 1962 while exploring the false security and conformity of the era. It was written by gender-conforming playwright Basil Kreimendahl and directed by Laura Dougherty, and produced and performed by Hamline students. Email tickets@Hamline.edu for tickets. Prices range from \$2 for students to \$8 for community members.

Guitar society show

The Minnesota Guitar Society will present Minnesota-born-and-raised,

New York-based, widely praised classical guitarist Austin Wahl in concert at the Sundin Music Hall (1531 Hewitt Ave.) on Saturday, arch 14, 7:30 p.m. His program includes classic works by Joaquin Rodrigo, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and J. S. Bach as well as contemporary compositions by Roland Dyens, Sergio Assad, and Robert Beaser. Tickets \$10-\$25 at the box office and in advance at www.mnguitar.org.

Free concert set

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, at 3 p.m. the East Metro Symphony Orchestra (EMSO), will present The Orchestra Family, a concert highlighting the EMSO family of musicians, at Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University in St. Paul. Admission is free. For more information, go to www.emsorch.org.

How's the economy?

How is Minnesota's economy doing? What trends will impact the state over the next 12 months and more? Find out answers, outlooks and more from Minnesota DEED Commissioner, Steve Grove. during the Midway Chamber of Commerce monthly meeting and luncheon on March 18, 11:30-1 p.m. at Bethel University's Anderson Center (2 Pine Tree Dr.).

Learn to drum

Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave., will offer a class in hand drums for beginners on March 24, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$10. Drums are provided. Visit womensdrumcenter.org.

Spaghetti dinner set

Attend the spaghetti dinner at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, 739 Lafond Avenue, on Saturday, April 4, 2020 from 5 to 7 p.m. Adult \$10, Children ages 5-12 \$5; take out available.

Amharic-English worship set for April 11

Mekane Yesus and Jehovah Lutheran Church will conduct a bilingual Easter Vigil worship service at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 11, at the church they share, 1566 Thomas in St. Paul. An ancient liturgy in a family-friendly form — Service of Light, readings, baptism and Eucharist — will be spoken in English and Amharic, an Ethiopian language. At 6 p.m. Maundy Thursday, April 9, a Seder meal precedes a brief Communion worship

service. Christians borrow Seder, the traditional Jewish Passover meal, to commemorate Jesus' last supper with the disciples. To reserve a place for one or more participants, contact the church by April 7 (jelcoffice@gmail.com, 651-644-1421). A free-will contribution will be accepted at the event.

Theosophical Society plans events

Rick Saxton will present slides and a video to illustrate many mysterious powers of sacred sound 7 p.m. Monday, April 13, in third-floor conference room S-330 at the Griggs-Midway bldg., 1821 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Sponsor of this open public meeting is the Theosophical Society. His presentation on the mystical power of sound will demonstrate the effects of vibration on the physical, mental and spiritual planes. The Theosophical Society offers a free public showing of "LightSource: A Sacred Geometry Experience" 7 p.m. Monday, April 27 in third-floor conference room S-330 at the Griggs-Midway building, 1821 University Ave. W, St. Paul. The program features a deep dreaming soundtrack and guided imagery. It is based on out-of-body exploration by Robert Monroe of the Monroe Institute and sounds and feels like a shamanic journey. Refreshments. Requested donation. (651) 235-6645. www.mntheosociety.org.

Textile garage sale

Beginning as a modest fundraising event 20 years ago, Textile Center's World's Largest Textile Garage Sale has grown into an extraordinary sales event, serving artists, makers and nonprofits across the region with textile materials at bargain prices. The sale is set for Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University of Minnesota ReUse Program Warehouse (883 29th Ave. S.E.). Admission is \$3. Shop the preview sale on Friday night, April 17, 5:30-8 p.m. Admission is \$30/\$25 members.

Professor Carolyn Pressler retires

Honor United Theological Seminary Professor Carolyn Pressler at the time of her retirement. On April 27 1-9- p.m.: Worship, dedication of the James B. Nelson classroom, banquet to celebrate our distinguished alum and anniversary classes. April 28 8:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m.: Plenary session address by Carolyn Pressler with comments by her faculty colleagues. Registration information will be available soon.

your Lutheran Church on the

- Lenten Services - Wed - 6:30 pm through 4/1/20
- Palm Sunday - 4/05/20 - 9:30 am
- Good Friday - 4/10/20 - 3:00 pm
- Easter Vigil - 4/11/20 - 8:00 pm
- Easter Sunday 4/12/20 - 9:30 am
- See website for more detail



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♦ **Monthly Membership Meeting**
March 18 featuring MN DEED Commissioner
Steve Grove @ Bethel University

♦ **Economic Development Meeting**
March 24 on Workforce Development @ Co Motion

♦ **Lunch on the Line – April 2 @ U Garden**

♦ **Economic Development Summit**
April 15 @ Midpointe Event Center

Micro theater series highlights women filmmakers

Moonplay aims to be radically generous, celebrate creative energy and feature do-it-yourself approach

By JAN WILLMS

Jes Reyes is an artist who wears many hats. She founded the Altered Esthetics Film Festival at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis and directed it for four years. She teaches at Springboard for the Arts. She is a program coordinator for Avivo Artworks, a multi-faceted studio for artists living with mental illness. She is a painter and filmmaker who also creates poetry.

But now she has taken on a new hat as curator for Moonplay Cinema, a series of films by female and non-binary filmmakers that will be screening at Dreamland Arts, 677 Hamline Ave. N. The first film will be shown June 28.

According to Reyes, the project has been in her thoughts for some time.

"I led the Altered Esthetics Film Festival and was also a member of the working board of directors for that organization," Reyes said. "My term as a board member ended in 2017, and so I was able to hand over that program to a whole new body of artists. I always have dreams for something else and am working on things."

She said she sat for a while with her ideas. "I'm not somebody who just dives right in," she explained. Reyes said she had been working on another film program that involves community focus, and is small and more intimate. "I was not sure at that time it would be for women filmmakers specifically," she said.

Then a colleague who runs Dreamland Arts asked if she would be interested in curating a program in film for that venue.

"I thought that would be beautiful," Reyes said. "It's in my neighborhood and it's the kind of micro-theater with 40 seats that's more intimate. Micro-cinema is something that has always interested me. You actually get to talk to people. I had dreamed of turning my garage into a micro-cinema, but who wants to sit in a cold garage in the middle of winter?"

Reyes still bided her time, even after the curating offer. "I wasn't ready. I work full-time, teach and am a practicing artist. But the time came, and I was applying for grants here and there. I knew I would try the grant route first, and if I wasn't able to get one, I would launch the program myself."

Women-specific because...

"So I knew 2020 was the year, and I decided the film program would be women-specific because we live in a world with a lot of gender disparities."

She said there are opportunities for women artists, but as they move up in their careers, those opportunities are more limited in

terms of access.

"My goal is to provide a safe place for women to be honored and their stories to be told and recognized," Reyes stated. "I want a film program that is set up to support gender-marginalized individuals, and that includes women and those non-binary identities who are gender non-conforming."

Reyes said most of the filmmakers she has scheduled for Moonplay Cinema for 2020 are Minnesota-based. Kiera Faber, Andrea Shaker and Molly Parker Stuart are all filmmakers she has curated before and that she has gotten a lot of inspiration from.

These three who are scheduled for the 2020 showings explore topics around mental illness, home and family, according to Reyes. But they do it in different ways.

"Kiera does stop-motion animation, which I have an affinity for," she noted. "Andrea is a photographer and filmmaker in what I call slow cinema. And Molly works in digital pixilation."

"The films will explore non-traditional cinema, but will also be close to what we experience. They will end with a Q and A, so folks can get to know the filmmakers, and they can get to know their audience."

Why 'Moonplay'?

Reflecting on how she chose the name Moonplay, Reyes said the moon has always peaked her interest as an artist. "I have actually been working on a short narrative film for a couple years now called Moonland. It's a semi-autobiographical film, centered on the loss of a mother to a terminal illness," Reyes said. "The moon represents that longing and also uncertainty and night time, and how anxiety can come out at night. I have had other projects related to the moon," she added.

She said she thought Moonplay was a good metaphor for the screen itself and watching films. "Also the moon is open and inclusive," she said.

And one of her favorite filmmakers, Marie Menken, was an experimental filmmaker who made short, very quick abstract films on celluloid. "She made a stop-motion short in the 1960s, and it's called Moonplay. So I wanted to honor her," Reyes said.

Planted in community

Reyes described her own work as an artist as multidisciplinary. She does abstract paintings and video poems and diaries. She likes doing experimental films.

"I generally am a filmmaker who works by herself," she said. "If I collaborate with one other person, that person is usually not another filmmaker." Reyes

attended film school in Long Beach, Calif. and then moved to Minnesota, where her mother grew up, to spend a year. She has now been living in the Hamline-Midway and Frogtown area for the past 15 years.

Reyes attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota, getting her master's in liberal studies, focusing on creative writing, feminist theory and film studies. She noted that as an artist, and particularly a filmmaker, she and her colleagues usually have to go to Minneapolis to practice their craft. "It's just not fair," she commented. With Moonplay Cinema, she said one of her goals is to establish an ongoing film program in her community.

She is currently raising funds through indiegogo.com, which is set to run through March 17. Her film program has already been 41 percent funded through it. Reyes said she also wants to be able to pay the filmmakers and the venue.

Upcoming: short films by local residents

"Dreamland Arts is a neighborhood treasure, and I want to make sure the theater is appropriately paid," she said. "And I want participating artists compensated for their time."

"As an artist, if you feel like your voice is not being heard or your work is not being represented, you do it yourself and go from there," Reyes said. She already has something in the works for 2021, and she would like to develop an educational component to Moonplay. Her idea is to have people who are interested



Jes Reyes has taken on a new hat as curator for Moonplay Cinema, a series of films by female and non-binary filmmakers that will be screening at Dreamland Arts (677 Hamline Ave. N.). The first film will be shown June 28. (Photo by Terry Faust)

in exploring their neighborhoods in Hamline-Midway, Como or Frogtown be able to go out and create short films about their areas. She hopes to use a Minnesota Arts Board grant to fund this.

Reyes said Moonplay Cin-

ema definitely comes from the perspective that patriarchal priorities do not dictate the efforts made by female and non-binary artists. "Our mission is to be radically generous and requires creative energy and a do-it-yourself approach," Reyes said.

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AREA C NOT DEEMED EMERGENCY

People urged to stay off site for safety

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Over 150 people turned out to hear the latest findings about Area C from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in a packed meeting room at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on Feb. 20, 2020.

The topic of discussion, called Area C, is a dumpsite where the Ford Motor Company dumped unknown quantities of industrial waste, including solvents and paint sludge, on the floodplain of the Mississippi River below the bluff near its St. Paul assembly plant between 1945-1966.

MPCA hydrogeologist Amy Hadiaris has been monitoring ground and surface water in Area C since 2007. She presented the most recent data and summarized the position of MPCA by

saying, "Clean-up is needed, but we do not see this as an emergency situation."

Community concerned

Community members expressed a deep level of concern about the dump site during the meeting, submitting a half-inch-thick stack of index cards with questions for MPCA staff to address.

Friends of the Mississippi River Executive Director Whitney Clark asked the last question of the evening. He asked, "Is it right for the Ford Corporation to leave their waste for future generations to clean up?"

Someone then called for a show of hands for how many people would have Ford remove it all if they could – and nearly everyone in the room raised theirs, including MPCA staff.

Testing being done

In this investigative stage, nine groundwater monitoring wells will be added to the existing 10. Friends of the Mississippi River and the Capitol Region Watershed District requested and support this increase in monitoring activities.

Hadiaris explained, "MPCA has a set process for evaluating the safety of ground water. We are testing for 65 volatile organic compounds, and 80 semi-volatile organic compounds. One of the big concerns is lead, which was added to all paints of that era."

At the request of MPCA, the Minnesota Department of Health reviewed site data to assess health risks related to Area C. It was determined that only minimal threat exists if trespassers contact contaminants in soil or other physical hazards. There are no other ways for people to come in contact with contaminants, unless they trespass on the site.



Area C (background), as photographed from the opposite bank of the Mississippi River, is just south of the Ford Bridge. The Ford Motor Company dumped unknown quantities of industrial waste, including solvents and paint sludge, on the floodplain of the Mississippi River below the bluff near its St. Paul assembly plant between 1945-1966. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

To further discourage trespassing, MDH recommends repairing broken fence segments and adding signage between the Hidden Falls Regional Park walking trail and the southern boundary of Area C.

Waiting for two+ floods

Hadiaris said, "This is a contemplative process. We will wait

for at least two flood events before making a clean-up decision and presenting it to the Ford Corporation."

There will be another community information meeting once MPCA completes its feasibility study. To be placed on the email update list for Area C, contact Sophie Downey at sdowney@fmr.org.



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