



VOICES against VIOLENCE

This series puts a face on domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

'She must have done something wrong'

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Broke.
Homeless.
And in danger of losing custody of her children.

That's where Bonnie Roy found herself while trying to get a divorce in Minnesota 10 years ago.

Because of her own experience and the stories she's heard, Roy has dedicated herself to positive change in the laws around family court that prioritize the safety and well-being of children.

She's attended the New York Battered Women's Custody Conference, and events by the Center for Judicial Excellence and Protective Mothers Alliance International. She's worked to bring well-known domestic violence advocates Barry Goldstein, who authored the Safe Child Act as well as "The Quincy Solution," and Lundy Bancroft, who authored "Why Does He Do That: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men" to Minnesota to provide trainings to therapists and other family court professionals.

And she's worked hard to counter this statement made by so many: Well, she must have done something wrong to lose custody.

Of the moms she knows who lost legal custody and got reduced parenting time, none had criminal convictions or had been in criminal court. There was no determination of negligence or endangerment. "They hardly had a speeding ticket," said Roy.

"People just assume lawmakers and judges are looking out for children – and they're not.

"The public needs to get informed."

'SHE MUST HAVE' »» 6-7

TRANSFORMATION

Frogtown Community Center rebuilt into one of city's best



Ayanna Jones, age seven, and Mayor Melvin Carter III cut the ribbon at Frogtown Community Center during the official opening of the \$2.1 million field project on Tuesday, Sept. 22. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The recreation center at Como Ave. and Marion has been transformed, and people came together to celebrate with a ribbon-cutting on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2020.

"Look what we got," stated Caty Royce of the Frogtown Neighborhood Association as

she looked around at the new building that is four times as big as the old one and has triple the fields. "It's beautiful."

"Invite your friends and your families to use this facility," encouraged Ward 1 Council Member Dai Thao. "This is a place where your family can gather. We wanted to create a

place where people can belong."

"It's yours to take care of. It's yours to play on and enjoy and have a good time," stated Mayor Melvin Carter, who formerly represented the city's Ward 1.

FROGTOWN CENTER »» 18-19

Melvin Carter Jr.
driven to help youth

Why he does it, and why he won't ever stop

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Melvin Carter Jr. is a natural-born mentor. The Summit-University resident said, "I mentor young people everywhere I go. I focus on my natural realm of travel these days: between my house, the YWCA, the boxing gym. I see young people that I recognize in the neighborhood, and I take my time checking in with them. I'm always mentoring."

Carter is a 29-year veteran of the Saint Paul Police Department, from which he retired in 2003. He served in several different capacities there: patrol officer, foot beat, SWAT, and detective. He was one of a handful of African Americans hired when the department was forced to integrate in 1974. In addition, he was part of another distinct minority: an officer who patrolled the streets of the city he grew up in, and chose to raise his children in.

Born into St. Paul's historically-black Rondo neighborhood, Carter said, "Nobody ever got killed there when I was growing up. The lethal violence we see now in communities of color is something fairly recent. With the advent of the War on Drugs, mass incarceration, and the willful destruction of neighborhoods like Rondo, it was clear that Blacks were being targeted."

WHY HE DOES IT »» 13

Take action with League of Women Voters

Nonpartisan group informs and engages citizens for a healthy democracy

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The League of Women Voters St. Paul works to make voting less intimidating for people.

It is part of the larger national organization, the League of Women Voters, a civic organization in the United States that was formed in 1920 to help women take a larger role in public affairs after they won the right to vote.

For Como resident Amy Perna being involved in the League is a natural extension of the civic and community engage-

ment that began in high school, when she organized students and faculty to support Diversity Day.

In 2016, she was hired as the LWVSP candidate forum coordinator. She worked seasonally for the next three years, and then joined the board in July 2017 as Voter Service Chair. Last year, she was elected as Co-President.

Perna believes that a healthy democracy requires informed and engaged citizens, open and responsive government and the opportunity to take action.

For more on the League, read the Q & A below.

What is the value of LWVSP?

The value of our work lies in that we engage and educate people in a strictly nonpartisan manner. Folks know that when they show up to a candidate forum – a program like January's Presidential Nominating Primary event with Secretary Simon or to volunteer with us in area high schools – that they will be

walking into a nonpartisan, safe environment in which they can learn and ask questions. Additionally, we bring value to our community by engaging folks in the democratic process by registering them to vote, hosting candidate forums, engaging youth and holding relevant educational programs. Registering voters looks a little different this year, but we are out registering in person in select locations!

TAKE ACTION »» 3



OPINION
America needs
local journalists

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HOME IMPROVEMENT
On the job with local
companies during COVID-19

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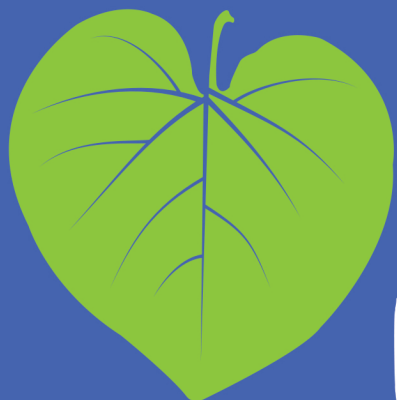
2 Scoops Ice Cream
opens during pandemic,
civil unrest

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DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS 6TIMES LESS GREEN SPACE
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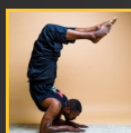
THOUGHT HEALING



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EVERYTHING MOVES
EVERYTHING VIBRATES

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spiritual experience, We are spiritual
beings having a human experience.

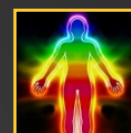
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Take action with League of Women Voters

>> from 1

Who is LWVSP for?

The LWVSP is a welcoming organization and is for every one looking to engage in democracy at the local level in a nonpartisan way. We welcome folks who want to learn more about the people running for office, engage in relevant topics, those who might be interested in working with area high schools to encourage youth participation in elections or joining one of our book clubs. Many people join LWVSP because they want to help register voters, which is great! You can also join the League and become a member or make a donation to help support our work!

How does LWV further democracy?

A democracy requires that people vote. A lot of what we do at the local level is help make that process less intimidating for people by showing them what it will look and feel like at the polls.

Lifetime member Sig Johnson holds mock elections all over the city, our Youth Vote team teaches youth about how to vote and why it is important by employing Student Leaders in Saint Paul high schools, and we register voters wherever we are asked.

We believe it is essential for the public to understand the views, opinions and commitments of people running for elected office and to understand issues facing our nation, state and city and that is where our Voter Service Committee and Program Committee come in.

We organize candidate forums, produce a voter guide and hold free programs on issues people care about like election security and the Presidential Nominating Primary and voting during a pandemic. It is this understanding that better equips voters with information they need to make informed decisions.

How can people be involved in politics during this pandemic?

I would highly encourage people to check out Vote411.org to learn about candidates in their districts. Use this time to read or listen to trusted news sources and to really dig into a candidate's history, work and volunteer experience;



Members of the St. Paul League of Women Voters celebrate 100 years. (Photo submitted)

don't just rely their campaign website and literature or social media feeds to make a decision about who to vote for.

If you notice a candidate hasn't filled out their Vote411.org questionnaire, reach out to them and encourage them to do so!

I would also encourage everyone to talk to people in their circles about voting. Ask people what their voting plan is. Studies have shown that this is a highly effective way to encourage voter turnout.

I would like to encourage people to vote from home by absentee ballot. You can apply online right now for absentee ballots, so you get an easy, vote-from-home experience. Ballots need to be postmarked by Nov. 3, but we are asking folks to turn those ballots in by Oct. 20, a full two weeks before election day. The last day to pre-register in MN was Oct. 13. If a person isn't registered by then, they can do so at their polling place on election day.

Meet other members

What is the value of LWVSP?

Dr. Cheryl Bailey of Merriam Park, LWVSP Youth Vote Team: Nothing could be more clear to me that voting, educated voters and promoting access via legislation (instead of obstructing voting) are the most important issues of our times. If climate change, COVID 19, or partisanship concern people, then more citizens simply have to vote!

Claudia Dieter of Highland Park, LWVSP program chair: For me, the value of the League is its non-partisanship which gives it credibility. The League does take positions on some issues, but the

position is on the issue, not the politics or the party.

Helen Losleben of Mendota Heights, LWVSP secretary: LWV helps me and many others know that getting involved with the election process is vitally important to the growth of our country. LWV works diligently to help make it easier for people to register to vote answering questions and providing information in a clear message on the importance of voting.

How does LWV further democracy?

Bailey: In order to get smart and able politicians, they have to know that the populace is going to be watching them and will hold them accountable. That needs to be much more pronounced now, especially in the face of a pandemic, to keep bad policies and naughty elected officials from taking advantage of a tragedy. Attention is turned elsewhere...

Dieter: The LWV furthers democracy by providing information to the voters, information that is presented without spin. And, as a member of the Program Committee, I/we take this very seriously when we plan and execute a program. For example, we were working on a program for April that was going to be a debate on the National Popular Vote Compact. The League of Women Voters at the national level has a position on the NPV. Regardless, arguments both for and against Minnesota joining this compact, were to be presented.

The goal, or mission, of the League is to provide information so that the community members can make an informed decision,

be that a candidate, a school referendum, etc.

What tips do you offer to those who want get involved in politics?

Losleben: Join a local group, know your community and what they stand for, volunteer, be informed. LWV has sponsored great informational events, giving folks information in a unbiased manner to help promote healthy elections and transform voter turnout to an even higher point than every before.

Bailey: Be patient. I continue to be hugely bothered by the snail's pace of political activism, but I think it's the only way. Be direct - say what you think, while being respectful of the opinion of others. I hope *Monitor* readers will join the League of Women Voters! We need young people, people of color, people in the disability community, etc to join us and fight for an educated citizenry! The more we can diversify our membership, the more our message will remain relevant for the next hundred years.

Dieter: If there is something that has impacted your life, either positively or negatively, and you want to understand it better - dig in! Reach out to people you know who are involved or impacted by it as well. Find out who the decision makers are. Ask questions!

The LWVSP is one of many organizations, including our neighborhood newspapers, in our community that are interested in making our city and neighborhoods better. The more that we can collaborate and support one another, the better our chances to succeed and make a difference.

100 YEARS

1920 - The League was officially founded in Chicago in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified and women won the vote. Formed by the suffragists of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

1944-45 - After World War II, the League carried out a nationwide public support campaign, at the request of President Franklin Roosevelt, to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. One of the first organizations officially recognized by the UN as a non-governmental organization (NGO), the League still maintains official observer status today.

1972 - Shortly after congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), LWV voted officially to support "equal rights for all regardless of sex." The League followed this vote with a nationwide pressure campaign that continued through the 1970s. That national campaign ended in 1982, but LWV continues to push for ERA ratification today.

1980s - The League sponsored televised general election Presidential debates in 1980 and 1984, as well as presidential primary forums in 1980, 1984, and 1988. The debates focused on nonpartisan issues with a main goal of informing voters. As candidates demanded increasingly partisan conditions, however, the League withdrew its sponsorship of general election debates in 1988.

2002 - When the 2000 election exposed the many problems facing the election system, the League began to work on election reform. Working closely with a civil rights coalition, LWV helped draft and pass the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which established provisional balloting, requirements for updating voting systems, and the Election Assistance Commission.

2006 - The League provided a dedicated website for voter information as early as the 1990s. In 2006, the League launched the next generation of online voter education with VOTE411.org, a "one-stop-shop" for election-related information. Today, VOTE411 provides both general and state-specific nonpartisan resources to the voting public, including a nationwide polling place locator, a ballot look-up tool, candidate positions on issues, and more.

2019 - In June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering cannot be solved by the federal courts. In response, the League initiated People Powered Fair Maps, a coordinated effort across all 50 states and D.C. to create fair and transparent, people-powered redistricting processes to eliminate partisan and racial gerrymandering nationwide.

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Reopening and rebuilding update

As we fully embrace the fall season, two statements about the rebuild of University Avenue appear true: 1) Progress has been made; and 2) We still have a lot to do.

Going up and down University Ave., one still sees the boarded-up buildings and rubble in need of a clean-up. This unfortunately causes a perception the corridor isn't open for business and is unsafe. For some building owners, they have chosen to keep plywood on their windows in case there is another incident. Would another act of social injustice occur? What happens if some cannot accept the election

results?

Those feelings are a good reminder plywood on windows does not equate to a closed business. Some plywood has been kept up because of the artwork and positive messaging displayed. Others have kept the plywood up because they are in the process of getting their windows replaced.

But progress has also been made. The Midway Chamber hosted a walking tour along University Ave. recently and noticed new glass getting installed on a newly reopened Furniture Barn. At another walking tour earlier in September, we saw rubble getting

Building a stronger Midway

By CHAD KULAS,
Midway Chamber
of Commerce Executive Director
chad@midwaychamber.com



removed from the former Sports Dome site.

As time goes on, we are also hearing more definite plans from businesses seeking to reopen – in both their previous space or a new site if they are unable to rebuild.

At least four funds have been

established to support those businesses and nonprofits facing damage. The Neighbors United Funding Collaborative is accepting applications until December and will award grants up to \$50,000. Businesses can learn more at midwayunited.org.

African Economic Development Solutions raised \$320,000 for a rebuild fund and awarded 30 businesses in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, ranging from around \$4,000 to \$40,000. Asian Economic Development Association also raised funds, sending grants mostly either \$5,000 or \$10,000 to over 20 businesses.

The Midway Chamber has partnered with the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and the Saint Paul Downtown

Alliance and has given out over \$430,000 to impacted businesses, with over \$1 million committed.

For many businesses, they needed time to think about next steps. Some have found new homes, while others continue their search. If one of your favorite businesses isn't open yet (or you can't tell) reach out to them and let them know you care and hope they return. The support from our community has been what's kept many dreams alive as they work to rebuild.

It is our hope the Midway will fully come back and work for more of our residents than ever before.

We need your voice on HMC

The Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) engages the voice and power of the community to serve the neighborhood. HMC plays a specific role representing the Midway in the City of Saint Paul, but we also collaborate on numerous initiatives with community organizations and businesses, and seek always to support and amplify the work of community leadership.

I first got involved with HMC, long before becoming a Board member, in a project that directly supported emerging leaders. The LISN initiative (Leaders in Support of Neighborhood) recognized that many neighbors had vital ideas (about community gardens, art at intersections, and the rich history of this neighborhood) but weren't sure how to make those ideas real, or how to shape a project. HMC helped devise a program that provided resources and built a network to empower those leaders to achieve their goals. This mission has continually brought me back to serve in the Coalition in the years since. We don't just respond to city needs or react to problems. Being a board member has given me this extraordinary chance to learn more about what matters to my neighbors and about who they are, about their skills and joys and desires, and to help them achieve their goals. HMC empowers neighbors.

And we need your voice.

We invite any and all who share a love and passion for the Midway neighborhood to join the Board of Directors, or to explore other ways to connect with

the Coalition. HMC's annual election begins in October, with applications for the Board due on Nov. 23. Over the next two months, we invite interested community members to join us in social events, to see our work in various initiatives, to reach out for direct conversation with Board members and staff, and to attend the virtual Annual Meeting (on Tuesday, Nov. 10).

What is the Hamline Midway Coalition?

HMC is District Council 11, one of seventeen non-profit agencies separate from but charged by the City of Saint Paul to represent our local neighborhood's needs around transportation, land use, and community development. Like many district councils, HMC's reach is far broader. Our committees (Development, Transportation, and Environment) engage with the city but also created initiatives for safer streets, to develop an investment co-operative, and to support sustainable to-go packaging and reduce waste.

The coalition more broadly has worked to help empower a network of local small businesses, supported the efforts to shape Public Art along Snelling and throughout the Midway, and most recently helped respond to urgent needs in our community in the context of the coronavirus and the murder of George Floyd.

We're more than just a board of directors, but a strong, active board is vital to the health and impact of the coalition. Right now, the board is helping to develop a Neighborhood Plan, a vision for what the Midway wants and will need to be in the next decade, in

Hamline Midway Coalition

By MIKE REYNOLDS,
HMC Board Secretary



ways that support and sustain the diverse needs of our diverse community, and that maintains the strengths of our local identities in the face of economic development and change across Saint Paul. The Board is also, always, defined by and through its members. Your involvement as a Board member would help us to reframe and focus around concerns and opportunities that you see, from your position in this neighborhood.

Why serve on the Hamline Midway Coalition Board?

Our reasons for serving are often grounded in our desire to learn more about the Midway, as well as to help HMC learn more about and better serve different members of the community.

Jen Hadley notes that she "wanted to be more connected to what is going on in the Midway, to see what I can do to connect people in the Midway and to represent the voices of residents who I know."

Emma Kiley has been grateful to enrich her understanding of current issues through a deeper understanding of our history, and particularly in conversation with the many community leaders throughout the neighborhood who have been so vital to the ongoing health of the Midway.

As Garrett Backes puts it, serving on the board allows us to

give back and to grow. A neighborhood is a vibrant, living thing – serving on the coalition is a chance to help nurture the ongoing vitality of our community, while continuing to benefit and learn from it.

How can I learn more?

One of the best ways to learn more about HMC is to talk with the people who are currently working with HMC. And although the pandemic complicates such interactions, we encourage you to make connections to learn more (and to help us think about what HMC can and should be). Reach out to anyone on the Board, or through the Coalition's email (info@hamlinemidway.org) for a chance to connect directly by email, by phone, or over a safe, socially-distanced coffee. You can learn more about us, and how to connect, at <https://www.hamlinemidway.org/about/board>.

We will also host a (safe, socially-distanced) gathering at Burning Brothers on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 5:30-7 p.m. More information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2SsOfTt>.

We will later have a virtual "happy hour" – an open forum accessible by phone or the web on Zoom – to connect with HMC Board and staff members, on Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 6:30-8 p.m. More information coming soon.

You can also (virtually) attend any board or committee meeting, or through various programs or initiatives in process, and see the work of HMC in action. Learn more about upcoming events at https://www.hamlinemidway.org/news_events.

Applications for board membership can be found on HMC's website: <https://www.hamlinemidway.org/about/board>

Letters to the Editor

Justice for Midway?

Dear Editor:

Good news:

Noticed Dey Appliance, Regina Vacuum Repair, Taco Bell, Apollo Lock, Holiday gas, Black Sea, Target and Cub restored, Goodwill, YMCA (partially), Lloyd's satellite opened, Discount Tire, and Caesar's Pizza have opened. Yea! Probably missed some.

We try to patronize these local businesses whenever possible – been to most since invasion.

We now take dog walks during the day and have started to put our American flag out without fear – even half staff for Justice Ginsburg. Lots of people are out walking their dogs in the neighborhood making it feel safer. We also took the bold step of ordering a political sign for our yard hoping we don't get fire bombed.

Monitor had nice coverage of damage and recovery – nice to see that. One shining light in the neighborhood!

Bad news:

Lots of gunshots are still heard and that is not normal and simply not acceptable.

Lots of homeless live in Hamline Park – one guy urinating openly while families use the park. Homeless need help and this is not appropriate – the trash piles are huge. Restrooms? Even semi-truck companies store their trucks along Thomas blocking view of the park from the police and families, and interfering with Jehovah Church activities from parking to children crossing the street.

Arson house on 14xx LaFond looks terrible. Closed Speedway on Snelling by Hamline University is still an eyesore.

Midway Shopping Center is still an eyesore mess as are others

LETTERS >> 5

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! • Submit a guest columnist or Letter to the Editor by emailing Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com. • Deadline for next edition is Nov. 2.

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The Midway Como Monitor is a monthly community publication in the Midway, Como, Hamline and Frogtown 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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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, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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Vote 2020: Let your voice be heard

Voting is how you use your voice in a democracy. Here are a few practical tips for getting ready for the 2020 General Election on Nov. 3, 2020.

Who can vote?

You can vote if you are:

- o A United States Citizen
- o At least 18 years old on Election Day
- o A resident of Minnesota for 20 days (Oct. 14, 2020)
- o Finished with all parts of any felony sentence

You must register to vote. You can register online until Oct. 13 (21 days before election day) or on paper. You can register on Election Day at your voting place.

What is mail-in voting?

Mail-in voting is also referred to as "absentee ballot." You can mail in your vote if you plan early and request an absentee ballot. It is a safe option in light of the novel pandemic, COVID-19. It is also a secure way to vote.

How to request an absentee ballot application or participate in mail-in voting?

You request an absentee ballot application on the Secretary of State's website- mnvotes.org.

This will take just a few minutes,

How to fill it out and absentee ballot?

Please be careful to complete, verify, sign, and seal properly. It will come with an envelope for the ballot. The envelope may have a box for a witness to complete and sign. Due to COVID19, there is no witness requirement for registered voters for the Nov. 3, 2020 election. Non-registered voters will still need a witness, to indicate their proof of residence.

Remember to mail your ballot in early to avoid any delays. It should be postmarked on or before Election Day (Nov. 3, 2020) and received by your county within the next seven calendar days (November 10). You may also drop off your ballot envelope in person - by 3 p.m. on Election Day at the Election Office.

Can I vote in person? Is there an option to vote early?

You can also vote in-person on Nov. 3, 2020. You can vote early now (started on Sept. 18) in person at your County election office.

Who are the candidates?

If you would like to learn more about the candidates, visit

Guest columnist



By DR. ARTIKA TYNER,
dr.artikatyner@gmail.com

the League of Women Voters website: <https://www.lwv.org/elections/vote411>

How can you support voting in your community?

Become an election judges/poll workers: Minnesota has about 3,000 polling places and needs about 30,000 election judges to staff them. This position is open to anyone eligible to vote in Minnesota who can read, write and speak English. You must be eligible to vote in Minnesota and able to read, write and speak English. There are also opportunities for youth to get involved. Students 16 and 17 years-old can be election judge trainees.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoTz46SFxVw>

Through her organization, *Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute*, Dr. Artika Tyner seeks to plant seeds of social change through education, training, and community outreach.



Letters

>> from 4

destroyed in the invasion. I feel bad for the hundreds of people who lost their livelihood and jobs.

Seeing businesses opened and still boarded means either they are still afraid or don't have the money to replace the glass smashed out. Neither are good.

No one seems to care about the Midway - sharing our pain or our steps to recovery. No civic leaders talk about us. Mayor has 17 new appointees making 6 digit salaries - maybe some of that money could help us and cut these new hires? Saw that in the *Monitor*.

How many of these violent people have been caught and prosecuted? The last three years have been horrific here and not the usual safe Hamline Midway we have grown to love. Noted all the violence on light rail and at station stops.

Is there a plan to deal with homeless and violence issues? Is there anyone in government advocating for our neighborhood? Anyone giving updates? When will we feel safe again? Anyone condemning the violence? Or should we just layoff more police officers? What happened to the Ambassadors or homeless solutions? Is there a plan to help police get to know teens

now that they are not allowed in public schools? We need more good news from our leaders.

Jerry Ratliff
Hamline-Midway

We are voting for Judge Pat Diamond

Dear Editor:

I am supporting the re-election of Judge Pat Diamond to the Ramsey County District Court.

Pat has been an excellent judge for eight years. He is wise and fair and is always looking for innovative ways to make the court system fair for all people.

It has been his lifetime work, even before being appointed to the bench. He helped create specialty courts for veterans, the mentally ill and people suffering from drug and alcohol problems that were often manifested in drunk driving arrests. Those courts focus on returning defendants to a productive life, rather than sitting in a jail cell.

The number of children held in custody before their cases are heard in court dropped 45 percent while Pat served as lead judge for the court's Juvenile and Family Division. By pulling together county officials and Native American tribes, he was able to create court time spe-

cifically to focus on the needs of native children under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Judge Diamond treats all defendants with courtesy and respect while maintaining order in the courtroom. He is a lifelong St. Paul resident who grew up on the East Side. I urge you to re-elect this compassionate and innovative judge on Nov. 3.

Chuck Laszewski
Falcon Heights

Dear Editor:

I support Judge Pat Diamond seeking re-election to Ramsey County District Court.

Several years ago, I was called for jury duty in Judge Pat Diamond's courtroom for a serious case that would be challenging for jurors.

Simply stated, equal justice under the law requires hard work by jurors and a competent judge like Judge Pat Diamond.

While I did not know the jury selection process, I expected that fairness, truth, and justice could be upheld by a skillful administration of justice.

In this case, jury selection required questioning Ramsey County citizens - from all backgrounds - about their strongly-held beliefs, and if selected as a "jury of one peers" whether we could listen fairly to both sides so justice could prevail.

Although not selected as a juror, I felt strongly that the selected jurors would work hard to ensure that justice be served because Judge Pat Diamond administered the jury selection process fairly.

Again, as a potential juror, I initially thought that justice could be upheld. Under the skillful administration of justice, I left the Judge Pat Diamond's courtroom knowing that justice would be served.

I urge you to vote to re-elect Judge Diamond on your absentee ballot or on Election Day.

Joe Collins
North End



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Because fit mothers are losing custody and children are being harmed, supporters of Safe Child Act want to make sure family court focuses on child safety over parents rights

'She must have done something wrong'

>> from 1

Evidence ignored as 'heresy'

What is the contributing factor to women losing custody? Not being heard on the evidence they have, according to Roy.

She pointed to cases like that of her friend, Leigh Ann Olson Block, whose evidence of domestic violence was ignored by the Ramsey County Family Court. Having been given joint legal custody and over 50% of the parenting time, Highland High School graduate John Tester murdered their daughter Mikayla the weekend before she would have started kindergarten in September 2004.

This isn't an isolated case. Since 2008, the Center for Judicial Excellence has identified 748 children who were murdered by a divorcing or separating parent. Among those are 11-year-old William and 8-year-old Nelson Schladetzky, who, along with their mother, Kjersten, were murdered by their father and Whittier International Elementary School PTO president David last November in South Minneapolis.

Once you step into family court, evidence that would be heard in a criminal court gets thrown out, said Roy, who has talked to many women in Minnesota over the years about their experiences in family court. The evidence is labeled "heresy." Women are labeled as having made "false allegations" and in some cases children are taken away because they're seen as "alienators" and accused to trying to alienate children from their fathers, a theory that is not supported by research, she observed. Women are even punished for cooperating with child protection investigations.

Minnesota courts are taking children away from their primary caretakers without a determination of neglect or endangerment. You can't do this in criminal court, but it happens in family court, pointed out Roy.

This is a widespread problem, one that researcher Joan



Meiers and team from Georgetown University studied in depth, pointed out Roy. After looking at more than 2,000 custody case appeals involving child abuse, domestic violence and parental alienation nationwide, researchers found that women are losing custody when they bring up domestic violence. When a woman states there was domestic violence in the home (against her, the children or both) and the man counters by claiming she is alienating the kids from him, she loses custody 44% of the time. When claims of sexual abuse are involved, the mother loses custody 81% of the time.

In family court today, claims of abuse by mothers are only believed 23% of the time when alienation is claimed by the father.

This was the case for Block, whose evidence of stalking, abuse and more that was downplayed and ignored in family court. (Read past article on Block online at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com)

Block was told: "You need to stop pushing his buttons."

"His buttons? He was trying to kill us," said Block.

A woman may have an order for protection in place

against her abuser, but she's still instructed by the family court to engage in co-parenting in a joint custody situation. "They don't factor that in," said Roy. "It is shocking to most people."

Current law doesn't make child safety the priority

Minnesota Statute 518.17 lists 13 factors to be evaluated during custody cases. The statute states that the court should consider the best interests of the child and should not prefer one parent over the other, and one factor deals specifically with domestic abuse. But Roy and Block have seen too many cases where domestic violence isn't factored into a judge or referee's decision on a custody case.

Because of that, they're working to replace this language with the Safe Child Act.

"There is no current law that says safety of the child has to be taken first," said Roy.

"We're trying to make children's safety a priority in family court by passing the Safe Child Act," stated Block.

The Minnesota bill needs a sponsor.

"It's not a father's rights issue or a mother's rights issue," said

Block. "It's a people's issue."

"The issue is children not being heard," said Roy.

'No sense to this'

"Abusive fathers are more likely to get custody of their children than mothers," said Roy. "In law and logic - there's no sense to this."

In some of the families, a Guardian Ad Litem had been assigned to the case. The guardian is supposed to assess a child's situation and then make recommendations to the court about a child's best interest.

However, a 2018 report by the Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor found that they are failing children. "There are no training standards," pointed out Roy. "The training they have is a minimal baseline. Those who lack relevant professional education are making critical decisions that create horrific outcomes."

The results of the audit didn't surprise Roy or Block, who have heard story after story of how guardians without training in psychology or domestic violence ignore abuse when a mother or child brings it up. Instead, they're told they need to get along with the father and co-par-

ent.

"You can't co-parent with an abuser," said Roy.

In many of these cases, mothers end up losing custody because the guardian made the determination that a mother bringing up issues of abuse meant she was making false allegations and/or engaged in parental alienation. Decisions are also being made based on the old research that children act out when there is abuse or that women made false claims of abuse to gain an advantage in custody court.

The Safe Child Act would address some of these issues by stipulating that a common intake form is used by all guardians, and that judges would also be educated on how to use the assessment tool. The SAFer Approach has been developed by the Minneapolis-based Battered Women's Justice Project, and helps practitioners screen for and understand the full nature, context and effects of abuse so that they can respond with safe and workable parenting arrangements. SAFer can be used by attorneys, advocates, judicial officers, custody evaluators, guardians ad litem and survivors, and is implemented through the use of worksheets and practice guides.

"The bottom line is that when the Safe Child Act is passed, it will change the dynamics of family court," said Roy. "It will force the court to look at the dynamics that haven't been recognized and the abuse cases that are labeled high conflict."

"It's accountability on everyone's part."

The act builds upon House Congressional Resolution 72, which says child safety is the first priority of custody and visitation adjudications, and that state courts should improve how they manages custody where family violence is alleged.

According to the Leadership Council on Child Abuse and Interpersonal Violence, an estimat-

SHE MUST HAVE >> 7

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involve **7.2 million** children.

91% of perpetrators
are parents.

77% of child deaths involve
at least one parent.

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

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SHE MUST HAVE >> from 6

ed 58,000 U.S. children a year are court-ordered into the unsafe custody or care of abusive parents, over the objections of caring parents.

Right now, too often, "the rights of the father outweigh the health and safety of the mother and child," said Roy. She wishes the system would do away with the word "custody," as it becomes a tool used by an abuser. "The abuser looks at it as a piece of property. They will spend a million dollars to get custody," observed Roy.

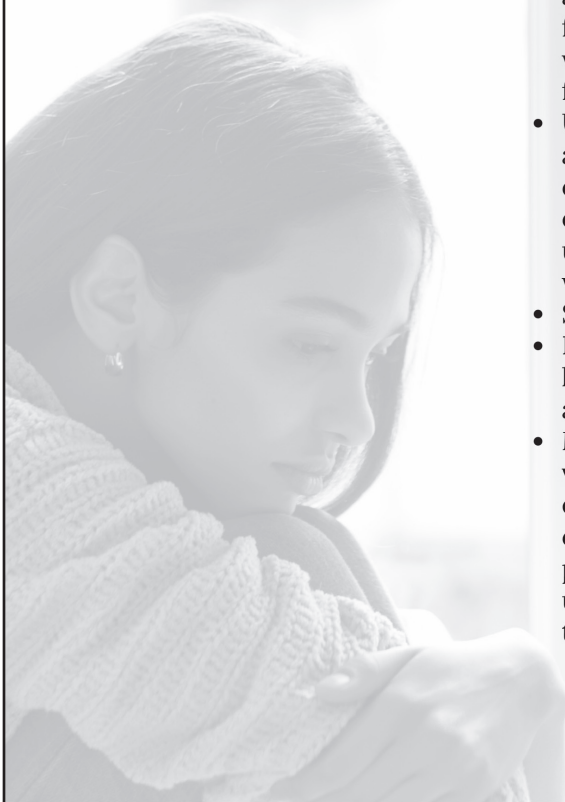
"Why did the mother lose custody when all she did was try to protect the child and try to protect their life?"

The Safe Child Act would prioritize keeping the main caretaker the same, recognizing that this has been shown by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) studies to be better for kids.

"One of the most important findings from the ACE Studies is that fear leading to stress rather than physical injuries cause most of the damage. The essence of domestic violence is that abusers use a variety of tactics to coerce, scare and intimidate the victim to do what the abuser wants. The fear that is engendered in both the mother and children causes a lifetime of health and other problems," pointed out Barry Goldstein, who authored the Safe Child Act and wrote "The Quincy Solution: Stop Domestic Violence and Save \$500 Billion."

Researchers at the University of Michigan along with the National Institute of Justice looked at what happens when the alleged abuser wins custody and a safe, protective mother who is the primary attachment figure for the child, is limited to supervised or no visitation. "The Saunders' study found that these decisions are always wrong because the harm of denying children a normal relationship with their primary attachment figure, a harm that includes increased risk of depression, low self-esteem and suicide, is greater than any benefit the court thought it was creating," pointed out Goldstein. "One reason for the mistake is the courts rarely compare the known risk of separating children from their primary parent with the often-speculative risk they are using to justify the extreme decision."

DV doesn't always include physical abuse. DV often continues post separation & divorce in a variety of ways:



- Ignoring school responsibilities, projects and homework to create chaos and discord for the healthy parent.
- Ridiculing children or former partner and using their wants, needs, fears and feelings to hurt, tease, manipulate, intimidate and control.
- Financial abuse: withholding support and payments, blocking access to financial resources, and interfering with ex-partner's ability to work or find employment.
- Undermining their former partners ability to parent: purposeful contradiction of rules, disrupting child's sleep or eating patterns and using the parenting schedule as a weapon.
- Stalking, harassment and intimidation.
- Destroying social capital: spreading lies and rumors in an effort to isolate and publicly damage their reputation.
- Manipulating children through a variety of methods (financial, emotional, etc) to use them as allies, coercing children to degrade former partner and to act as spies with the ultimate goal of isolating them from the other parent.

#PostSeparationAbuse

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PROBLEMS WITH GUARDIANS AD LITEM IN MINNESOTA

DEFINE IT

Each year, thousands of children in Minnesota are involved in court cases related to abuse, neglect, custody, and other matters. In some of these cases, the courts appoint a guardian ad litem to help ensure the child's needs are not overlooked during the court process. Guardians ad litem assess a child's situation and make recommendations to the court about a child's best interests.

What does it take to be a GAL?

- 40 hours of training and a bachelor degree (field is not specified)
- Training in child psychology, Cluster B personality disorders, or domestic violence is not required.

Key findings of 2018 legislative audit:

- The GAL program has not had sufficient oversight.
- Not all are complying with required training.
- It has established few standards to ensure guardians ad litem provide high-quality services statewide.
- The program needs greater financial oversight and regular reviews.

READ IT YOURSELF

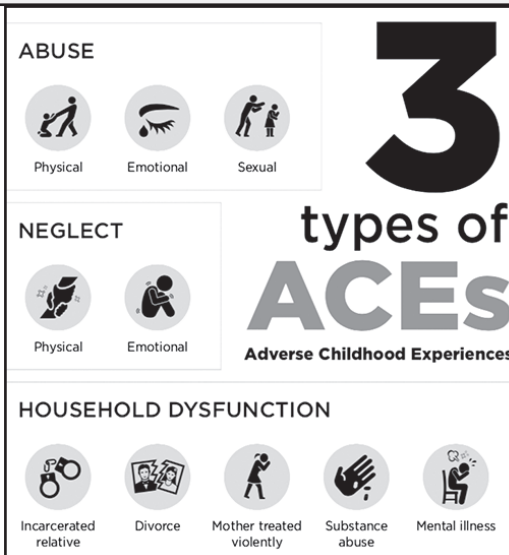
GUARDIAN AD LITEM AUDIT
<https://www.leg.mn.gov/docs/2018/other/180389.pdf>

Fit mothers losing custody under the radar

"If a divorce was not contentious, you would be able to sit down and you wouldn't have to go in front of a judge," pointed out Roy.

Of the 3.8% of cases that require trial, a large majority (75-90%) are domestic violence cases involving the most dangerous abusers, according to Goldstein. "These are fathers who believe the mother has no right to leave so they are entitled to use any tactics necessary to regain what they believe is their entitlement to control their partners."

He added, "Inadequately trained professionals often fail



to recognize the danger because most of these fathers have not committed the most severe physical assaults. But these abusers

are willing to hurt their children by taking them from mothers who are usually the primary attachment figures, abusing the children and in extreme cases killing them. Courts rarely look for patterns to help understand domestic violence, but in the last 10 years over 700 children involved in contested custody have been murdered, mostly by abusive fathers."

Men who abuse women are 40-60% more likely to abuse children physically and sexually, and domestic violence makes child neglect more likely, pointed out Goldstein.

Because the Saunders' study found that the standard and re-

quired training in domestic violence obtained by evaluators, judges, lawyers and guardians ad litem do not qualify them to respond effectively to domestic abuse allegations, the Safe Child Act would require specific training.

It would also requires the use of current scientific research to inform court decisions, instead of the personal beliefs, biases and invalid theories used instead. The idea that a woman makes false allegations of abuse in family court leads to judges imposing punishments and retaliation against the mother – not recognizing the court is punishing the children, pointed out Roy.

"A fit mother is losing custody to an abuser," said Roy. "That's the part that is going under the radar."

25 common dangerous mistakes caused by failing to use current research

- 1) Asking abuse victims to just "get over it."
- 2) Minimizing the full harm caused by domestic violence and child abuse.
- 3) Assuming the end of a relationship ends the risk from an abuser.
- 4) Assuming abuse that is not recent has little impact on children.
- 5) Focusing only on physical abuse.
- 6) Failure to understand the significance of the fear and stress caused by abuse.
- 7) Failure to focus on the assistance and protection children

need in order to heal from exposure to abuse.

- 8) Mistaken assumptions that very young children cannot be harmed from witnessing domestic violence.
- 9) Pressuring victims to interact and cooperate with their abusers.
- 10) Failure to use a multi-disciplinary approach to domestic violence and child abuse cases.
- 11) Using non-probative factors like returning to an alleged abuser or not following up on a request for a protective order or the failure to have police or medical reports to discredit reports of abuse.
- 12) Failure to look for a pattern of coercive and controlling behavior to recognize domestic violence.
- 13) Failure to consider which

party is afraid of the other in adjudicating domestic violence.

- 14) Failure to guard against the ability of abusers to manipulate witnesses and professionals.
- 15) Failure to consider factors that are associated with a higher risk of lethality in resolving domestic violence.
- 16) Failure to consider an alleged abuser's past and future relationships when investigating reports of domestic violence.
- 17) Treating an alleged abuser's good behavior in public as if it provides proof about his behavior in private.
- 18) Treating evaluators who fail to discuss ACE and Saunders or are unfamiliar with the research as if they are qualified to respond to domestic violence cases.
- 19) Treating any professional

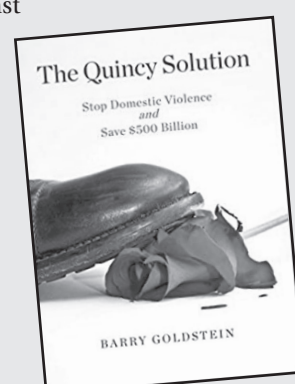
who recommends a harmful outcome case as if they are qualified to respond to domestic violence cases.

- 20) Failure to discuss which parent is the primary attachment figure and how that affects the children regarding the possible outcomes.
- 21) Failure to guard against gender-biased approaches and assumptions.
- 22) Failure to understand the importance of holding abusers accountable.
- 23) Recognizing that court professionals that focus on the myth that mothers frequently make false allegations or unscientific alienation theories

reveals more about their lack of qualifications for domestic violence cases than the circumstances in the case.

24) Failure to understand that child sexual abuse is far more common than previously realized and most abuse is committed by someone the child knows.

25) Assumptions that men who are successful in other parts of their lives are unlikely to abuse women and children.
~ Compiled by Barry Goldstein, author of the Safe Child Act



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ON THE JOB *with Minnehaha Falls Landscaping*

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

Russ Henry started gardening with his mom when he was a kid. His first job was pushing the lawnmower around the neighborhood when he was 10.

He has worked in the landscape industry his entire career, starting in plant nurseries as a teen, and then moving on to landscaping companies. "Eventually I founded my own company, Giving Tree Gardens in 2005. In 2017, I founded the non-profit Bee Safe Minneapolis, and purchased Minnehaha Falls Landscaping, a 60-year-old landscaping company," said Henry, who shares ownership with partner Chesney Engquist. "Our companies have been growing ever since we began and continue to grow robustly today."

Minnehaha Falls Landscaping was founded in 1957, and has been located in the Longfellow neighborhood since 1985. "South Minneapolis is our home base as we build and maintain landscapes all over the metro

area," stated Henry.

Read on for more from Henry.

How has COVID-19 changed how you operate?

We responded to COVID-19 in a number of ways, all designed to provide safety for our clients and staff. Among these changes are our new No-In-Home meetings with clients; we do all our meetings in the landscape with ample social distance. We are lucky to have three families employed in our company with multiple family members each. This means some of our team members live with each other and we pair up family members on teams as much as possible. We instituted hand sanitizing procedures, and we always wear masks in public spaces. For employees who aren't feeling well, we offer paid sick time to ensure they will quarantine safely. Additionally we pay for treatment for injured employees, our employees health and well-being is paramount. We take COVID-19

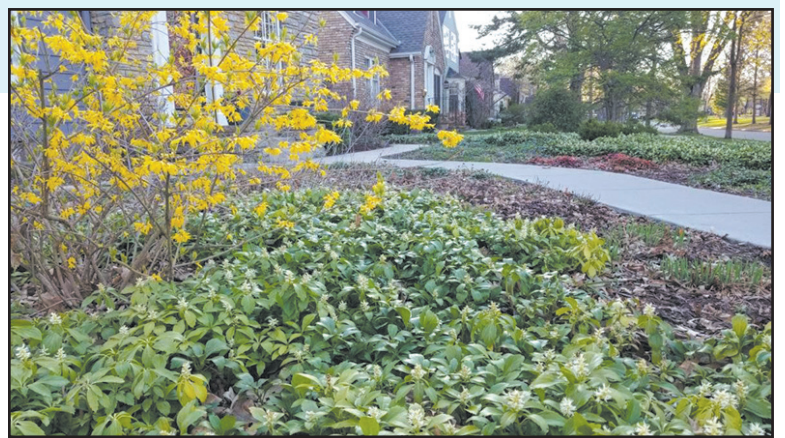
very seriously for the health and safety of everyone we work with and the whole community.

How has demand for your services changed with the pandemic?

Our hearts go out to our friends who own restaurants, movie theatres, gyms, day-cares, and all the artists, cooks, and crafts-people whose livelihoods have been harmed by the pandemic. We are among the lucky ones. Demand for our services has sky-rocketed during the pandemic. With so many folks stuck at home and everyone's vacation and dining-out budgets left untapped, our phone hasn't stopped ringing all season. We started booking for next spring in July because we've been so booked up. We've grown every year since we've been in business and this year we weren't sure if that would be possible.

What trends do you see right now?

People are investing in landscape designs for the long term



Groundcover spreads early in the spring, and forsythia offers an early pollen and nectar source for bees. (Photo submitted)

and transitioning to low-maintenance spaces. We're installing a lot of patios, walkways, and retaining-walls this year as well as converting a lot of lawns into low-maintenance gardens and no-mow Bee Lawns! This year we're also seeing a lot of folks install bee, butterfly, and hummingbird gardens. A lot of people are yearning to do something ecologically beneficial with their landscape, and we're here to help.

How can folks create useful outdoor spaces?

We need to start thinking of turf lawn as a temporary ground cover because it is one of the highest maintenance forms of landscaping. Instead be a hero to local wildlife by adding multiple layers of blooming canopy to your landscape. Grow the urban forest in your own lawn by working from the ground up. Start with composting the soil and

LANDSCAPING >> 10

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ON THE JOB *with Hamernick's flooring*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Facing a global pandemic, Hamernick's has shifted its business model to add a flooring superstore across the street from its main design headquarters (1392 Rice St.).

They were listening to customers who have shifted their focus to improving their homes instead of traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hamernick's has been a part of the North End community for 74 years, and also has two warehouses in Roseville.

Ted Natus was driving back to Montana from a job picking cotton down South in 1967 when his car broke down in St. Paul. "Out of money, the young vagabond decided he needed a job," according to Amy Mauzy of Hamernicks. "Although he'd fought forest fires and mined for copper since leaving home at age 14, he settled on a paint store job at Hamernick's on Rice St. Natus worked his way up to owner when he bought the store from Ed Hamernick in 2000."

The main design headquarters has been on Rice Street since 1946. "It has grown from a paint and residential decorating store to a multi-million dollar business focusing on commercial flooring and paint contracting.

Customers include individual home owners, multi-family business owners, and some of the largest general contractors in the city as well as some of the largest single-family home builders in the country," said Mauzy.

Learn more about how Hamernick's is managing the pandemic below.

How has COVID-19 changed how you operate?

Mauzy: We responded to COVID-19 in a number of ways all designed to provide safety for our clients and staff. When the pandemic hit this spring, most customers chose to stay home and shop virtually for their new flooring or other design product on our web site: www.Hamernicks.com. They would browse the site, and call us to ask us to ship a carpet or tile sample directly to their home or business. If they liked it, they could place an order for installation. This late summer and fall the foot traffic has come back somewhat, but we still have customers who choose to shop online.

From our design and in-office team to our warehouse workers to our flooring installers, all staff are working in a socially distant atmosphere wearing masks and sanitizing their work areas

on a consistent basis.

What trends do you see right now?

Hardwood flooring is one of the most popular flooring solutions taking place right now. The #1 rule local real estate agents tell home sellers is to install hardwood floors before they place their home on the market. Buyers will walk away from homes with bad flooring the same way they'll walk away from homes that smell bad, or have little to no curb appeal. Flooring matters tremendously when selling a home. It immediately influences if the buyer will like the house as they walk into every room and hallway, kitchen, and even exterior patio.

Also, many homeowners who have spent significant time at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic have put the time to good use by starting or finishing home improvement projects. A major benefactor was Hamernick's as we were a major company in town that remained open and sold, installed carpet, hardwood, tile floors and similar surfaces.

We made the decision to open our Flooring Superstore based on the need that we saw coming this summer.

Ted Natus, owner of Hamernick's Interior Solutions and the



The 2020 Saint Paul Winter Carnival Royal Family dropped by Hamernick's during their Rice Street business crawl on Sept. 26, right before the Oct. 1 opening of the new flooring superstore. Hamernick's is the sponsor of the 2020 North Wind Prince. Hamernick's owner Ted Natus was the 2013 Winter Carnival King. The group held signs promoting the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

new Flooring Superstore said, "Luxury vinyl tile and plank is the hottest flooring trend in home decorating and remodeling. No flooring company in Minnesota, and specifically the Twin Cities, was stocking such a wide variety of product and selling it directly to consumers. We transformed our former Mill Direct Warehouse into a showcase for over 100,000 square feet of flooring that can be purchased and installed immediately. Traffic has been brisk since opening the first week in October.

What sets your business apart?

Hamernick's new Flooring Superstore (open now at 1392 North Rice Street) is the only flooring company in Minnesota to showcase the largest selection of in-stock vinyl and plank flooring.

Even though commercial flooring and painting is considered to be a male-dominated business due to the manual labor implications of the work, we have woman and minorities in nearly all positions across our business. Our current workforce represents 21% women and 18% minorities.

Both Ted and wife Lynn are long-time supporters of Saint Paul. When everyone asked, "Why would you build on Rice St.," Ted's response was that Rice St. and Saint Paul have been very good to us and our family so why wouldn't I build here? As a result, Hamernick's has grown to become one of the largest businesses on Rice St. and plans to continue growing for many years to come.

LANDSCAPING >> from 9

then add ground covers, perennials, shrubs, and trees to provide a verdant, attractive space for birds, bees, and butterflies.

How do you seek to be environmentally-friendly in your business practices?

We grow organic habitat in every landscape we manage and we teach hundreds of people every year how they can be heroes to wildlife in their own

yards. Each year we install dozens of pollinator friendly landscapes including rain-gardens, butterfly gardens, hummingbird gardens, bee-lawns and food forests. We've been organic for 15 years and we use the knowledge we've gained to help transition institutions away from the use of pesticides. We started a non-profit organization called Bee-Safe Minneapolis which has helped many organizations (including

Minneapolis Public Schools) eliminate all pesticide use indoors and eliminate round-up from school grounds.

What sets your business apart?

Minnehaha Falls Landscaping is a business rooted in healthy soil. Whether designing and installing enchanting landscapes, educating about local ecology, or advocating for safer landscapes for kids and wild-

life, we spend all our time giving back to the community that we grew up in. We understand that the health of our community, the health of the planet, and healthy soil are one-in-the-same.

You can follow our adventures and learn all about our methods for soil health, organic landscaping, and low-maintenance gardens on our blog at minnehahafallslandscape.com.

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ON THE JOB with Buck Bros.

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Tracy Kruse didn't start out to be one of the few women in construction, but it is a role she has enjoyed. The daughter of a high school shop teacher, Kruse was looking for work after college and ended up building movie sets in the Twin Cities.

After a few years traveling and juggling family commitments, she told her Seward neighbor, Joe Buck, that she was interested in a change. He offered her a job on his crew.

This year, Kruse and fellow long-time employee, Jason Manthey, are taking over from Joe and his brother Bob.

"Our company was started in 1983 by Bob and Joe Buck, with the goal of concentrating on remodeling urban core homes and respecting the historic design and detail of these homes," observed Kruse. "We will continue our commitment to providing high-quality service to our community." She added, "We have worked on older, single-family homes for over 35 years, and understand the challenges that these homes present. Over the years, we've handpicked a project team that can work with homeowners to design the space, anticipate the issues that older homes present and manage the construction of the project."

Read on for more from Kruse.

How has COVID-19 changed how you operate?

COVID-19 has changed many aspects of how we run our jobs. One thing we have always been proud of is running a tight



Longtime Buck Brothers employees Scott Vetsch (left) and Buzzy Napoly return to install new windows at a home where they built a garage previously. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

schedule. With lead times on materials becoming longer and longer, it has created some challenges. We require our staff and subs to wear masks and gloves as possible while on the job site.

We have created washing stations on the job sites. We are not having more than one trade at the job site at a time, which has also increased the length of our projects. Social distancing can



Jason Manthey and Tracy Kruse are the new owners of Buck Brothers.



Scott Vetsch installs new windows on the upper level of a Minneapolis home.

be a challenge in construction as many tasks take more than one person, for example installing windows. While working in homes, we isolate ourselves as much as possible with plastic barriers. At the end of each workday, we sanitize any areas that the homeowner may come in contact with, handrails etc.

What trends do you see right now?

Families are looking for more liveable space in their homes with many people staying

home. We have seen an increase in basement remodels and additions.

How do you seek to be environmentally friendly in your business practices?

We've always been proponents of energy-efficient design and construction, and our projects have won awards from Minnesota GreenStar. We have extensive experience at providing clients with creative options for building projects that conserve energy and promote efficiency.

What sets your business apart?

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URBAN FORAGER

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

As people use public land more and family budgets get skinnier, Tim Clemens of Ironwood Foraging is helping build more resilient communities.

He does that by sharing knowledge about plants that everyone used to know but has been lost.

"Learning the lifeways of trees, herbs, mushrooms, and animals used to be essential for humanity and by many accounts a return to that knowledge has never been more necessary and rewarding. Foraging can be done in the city, countryside, forest, or even your backyard," said Clemens, who moved from South Minneapolis to the east side of St. Paul last year.

He teaches local workshops on wild mushroom identification, edible and medicinal plants, fruit, nuts, and berries, urban foraging, maple syruping and more.

Clemens founded Ironwood Foraging Co. in 2017. He is the president of the Minnesota Mycological Society, a Minnesota Master Naturalist, and a Certified Wild Mushroom Expert. Clemens holds a bachelor of arts in anthropology from the University of Minnesota and a certificate in environmental education from Cornell University.

The Hamline Midway Coalition offered a free foraging tour with Tim Clemens of Ironwood Foraging in early September, made possible by a grant from the Trust for Public Land's 10-Minute Walk campaign.

Read on for more.

What drew you into foraging?

Foraging is the ancient human narrative of finding and gathering food from the land. We all still have those foraging skills ready to blossom within us and we actually use those skills every



Tim Clemens holds a Pheasant Back mushroom that he cut from the hackberry tree behind him during a foraging tour at Lake Nokomis park while Krina Damien snaps a photo. Clemens offers tours in St. Paul, Minneapolis and the greater Twin Cities area. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

time we go to the farmer's market or supermarket. I like showing people how much deeper they can connect with the land using that same skill set.

Growing up I spent a lot of time exploring Minnehaha Falls, Minnehaha Creek, and feral alleyways. Those adventures helped me discover raspberries, gooseberries, and wild plums, but I also got lucky and didn't eat anything toxic, which is the serious risk you take if you don't identify and research everything prior to consuming. My first intentional foraging was for Ojibwe Language and Culture classes at the University of Minnesota where I participated in iskgamiziganing (Sugarbush Camp) and learned to tap maple trees to make maple syrup and maple sugar. I founded Ironwood Foraging Co. in 2017 to bring hands-on foraging education to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area and Minnesota at large.

How/where did you get your training/knowledge?

Finding and learning from experts is always the best way to learn, so in the beginning I took every class and read every book I could find and I took a lot of notes. I've spent countless hours and hiked countless miles observing plants and mushrooms wherever I can find them.

Foraging oftentimes brings to mind pristine wilderness areas, but urban foraging in the green spaces of a city can be just as rewarding. Plant ID apps for your phone, such as iNaturalist, can be a fun start, but never use an app to decide whether to eat something. They are often wrong and could lead to a potentially deadly misidentification.

What do you appreciate most about foraging?

There are more than 20,000 edible plant species, but fewer than 20 plant species account for over 90% of our food.

A forager has access to foods, aromas, and flavors that simply are not available to someone who doesn't forage.

When I first started foraging I thought "Wow, look at all of this free food," but I quickly learned that with greater knowledge comes greater responsibility. My connection with these plants and the land was calling me to also be a friend and steward - a voice for the voiceless green and natural spaces. Picking up trash, planting native seeds, and protecting the land through outreach and legislation makes me feel good.

When you see a new patch of milkweed spreading or a butter-nut tree you planted producing its first nuts, you can't beat that.



Midway resident Ray Neal (second from left), along with his brother, Rob Neal, and Krina Damien observe and taste test during a tour led by Tim Clemens. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



Professional forager Tim Clemens said, "If you want to learn about the trees, herbs, and mushrooms all around you, let's take a walk together. You don't have to travel halfway across the world to discover new experiences of sight, taste, and smell." He offered a free foraging tour at Newell Park in early September in partnership with the Hamline Midway Coalition. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

How do you work to be culturally sensitive to the knowledge you give that comes from Indigenous sources?

I have Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) heritage from my paternal line, and I'm an Ojibwe language learner. I am a 'lineal descendant' which means that I can trace my ancestors through genealogy, but my blood quantum (a controversial law), is too low to enroll for federal status.

Since the rest of my heritage is European-American, I've made a point to approach indigenous knowledge as considerably as possible. Centering community knowledge and historical and cultural context is essential. When benefiting from indig-

enous knowledge, make sure you've given back to the community more than you've taken away.

What benefit does foraging offer in our COVID-19 world?

Foraging is inherently physically distant and occurs outdoors. Discovering new plants and mushrooms allows you to become a tourist again in your neighborhood or state. Planting native pollinator plants for a prairie restoration or harvesting wild cherries is a great way to spend time with friends and loved ones safely outdoors while tending to the health of the land and resiliency of your own health and the health of your community.

I've definitely seen an increase in foraging workshop attendees in the last six months. I think some people have more free time to pursue their interests, and I think others are currently cut off from their typical recreation and they're looking for new outlets.

Why do people take your workshops and what is the value in them?

Some people want to take the edge off their grocery bill and access the most nutritious food on the planet. Others want to grow their understanding for herbal medicine, gardening, dyeing, or photography. Whatever their stated reason is, I think at the heart of it, people take my workshops to connect with the land, each other, and themselves.

How can people safely forage in urban environments?

Always identify every plant or mushroom with 100% confidence before using it to make sure it's not toxic. The best motto to live by is "when in doubt, throw it out." Find an expert and learn from them and when foraging on your own, always compare at least three sources, whether those sources are field guides or trustworthy websites.

Foraging is not legal everywhere and is not uniformly legal where it is. Contact the park you plan to forage at and see if foraging is allowed for what you want to harvest, and also ask them where they spray herbicides and what species they are managing in that way. Never harvest near train tracks, from contaminated waters, and make sure you know the history of the land you're foraging on - i.e., avoid Superfund sites and other hazardous sites.

Go to www.IronwoodForagingCo.com to sign up for public workshops or to inquire about private bookings. Find Clemens @MNforager on Instagram, and Ironwood Foraging Co. on Facebook.

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Why he does it >> from 1

Save Our Sons

In 1991, Carter and some of his colleagues decided to do something about it. They created Save Our Sons (SOS) as a community grassroots movement to reclaim young African American men whose lives were being lost to gun violence or prison. Leaders in the movement included local elders, neighbors, faith communities, school and elected officials, law enforcement and corrections officers, and other like-hearted organizations who shared their vision.

African American males make up a disproportionate segment of incarcerated and institutionalized youth in Ramsey County.

In the last 29 years, SOS staff and volunteers have met with more than 2,500 young men who passed through the doors of the Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) and the former Boys Totem Town facility. Carter said, "Prior to COVID, our presence in JDC every Tuesday ensured that these young men who were separated from family during a critical time in their lives, had access to the compassion and wisdom of the community."

Partnerships with St. Paul organizations including Arts-US (founded by spouse Toni Carter), Circle of Peace, Element Boxing and Fitness, and the Gathering at Dunning Recreation Center have also proved valuable. With these partner organizations, SOS provides the framework for transforming and reclaiming the health, safety, and freedom of young Black men while they are in corrections facilities – and when they rejoin the outside world.

Envisioning negotiators, ambassadors and diplomats

Carter appears reflective these days. He said, "We've been able to impact the



Melvin Carter founded SOS (Save our Sons) in 1991. He knew that the detention system wasn't working for young Black men and that, in fact, it was hurting them. He wanted to find an alternative way to reach out and help young Black men reach their potential. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

lives of so many young people, but the wheel we invented for SOS back in the 90s is wobbling. It's becoming obsolete. Back then, gangs were just starting. Mass

Carter has lived his life according to the chorus of a gospel hymn made popular by Mahalia Jackson:

"If I can help somebody, as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain."

incarceration, as we know it today, was just kicking in. Drugs and guns were only a trickle flowing into the community. Everything is different now."

Carter continued, "I want to do more than get kids out of trouble. I'm dreaming of an institute to cultivate statesmanship. The vision I have now for young African American men is that they would be mentored and coached to become negotiators, ambassadors, and diplomats."

'Sick n' tired of all this dyin'

After suffering a stroke in 2017, Carter had to start slowing down. Recognizing that there are young community leaders ready and able to move forward with the work he started, he is formulating an exit strategy from the helm of SOS.

Giving himself a two-to-five-year time frame, Carter is consulting with his board and other trusted community leaders. In the meantime, he continues pressing on with several initiatives at the core of SOS. First and foremost among those is ending what he calls, "the recklessness of gun violence."

He said, "Lives are shattered on both ends of the gun when it's fired wantonly. If the front end of the bullet don't kill you, the back end will."

Carter advocates strongly for gun violence prevention in the schools. In one the booklets he authored and has distributed widely in the community called, "Dismantling Gun Violence," Carter wrote, "So there I was, time after time, identifying friends and even relatives at the morgue, or sitting in the pew at a funeral. In every

case, it was a waste of a precious young life that didn't have to be."

In both his personal and professional life, Carter has witnessed way too much tragedy related to gun violence. One of his mantras is, "Sick n' tired of all this dyin'!"

SOS does not have a brick and mortar location. Its office is on the streets of St. Paul, especially the Summit University and Frogtown neighborhoods. According to Carter, these neighborhoods are saturated with guns. He said, "No matter how many we take away, there will always be way too many left."

He believes gun ownership has to be de-glamorized, and that collective community action is how that will happen.

Even though the model for SOS is changing, Carter continues to see mentoring as a critical part of changing the way young people think. As Carter knows better than anyone, he was fortunate to be born into a family with two extraordinary parents. His father, Melvin Carter Sr., was an especially strong presence in his life.

Looking back on a formative childhood memory, he said, "My Dad took me fishing regularly when I was a kid. We'd rent a row boat, and sit there facing each other – because that's how it is in a row boat. He always had me take the oars, and he'd put the bottoms of his bare feet up against mine the whole time."

"He taught me how to row the boat. He taught me how to fish. I often got my fishing line tangled up, but no matter how bad it was – he managed to make it right again."

To learn more about the ongoing mentorship work of Save our Sons, or to make a financial donation, visit www.save-oursonsminn.com.

Melvin Carter Jr.'s autobiography, "Diesel Heart", published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press, is available for purchase locally. The Minnesota History Theater has adapted it for the stage. Watch for the upcoming live performance scheduled at a future time.



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Prospective Board Member Social Hour

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Development Committee

Thursday November 12, 6:30-8 pm

Transportation Committee

Monday November 2, 6:30-8 pm

Environment Committee

Monday October 26, 6:30-8 pm

HMC Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 27, 6:15-8 pm

Real Estate Investment Cooperative: Commercial Real Estate 101 October 13th, 1-2:30 pm

Renee Spillum, Midway resident and community development project manager, and Nancy St. Germaine, General Contractor (Raven Construction & Creative Enterprise Zone), will provide an introductory workshop in commercial real estate development.

This is the second of a two-part series on starting a real estate investment cooperative. To register: <https://www.hamlinemidway.org/investment-coop>

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Want ads must be received by the Monitor by Nov. 2 for the Nov. 12 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

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Taco Bell can't rebuild, operations can continue

By JANE MCCLURE

Taco Bell cannot replace its longtime restaurant at 565 N. Snelling Ave. On a unanimous vote Sept. 16, 2020, the St. Paul City Council upheld an appeal by Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) and overturned an August Planning Commission decision approving the planned new restaurant's needed conditional use permit.

The current restaurant, which is in a building dating from 1973, can remain open with its existing drive-through hours. Operations can continue under the current conditional use permit, which allows for closing as late as 3 a.m. on weekends and 2 a.m. on weekdays.

The restaurant has been a flash point over the years, with opponents contending it is a magnet for disruptive late-night behavior. There are also questions about having a drive-through restaurant at a time when many activists are calling for more walkable neighborhoods. Its property was recently rezoned from commercial to traditional neighborhoods use as part of a larger neighborhood-wide rezoning process.

Taco Bell owner Border Foods has tried in recent years to get a new conditional use permit to rebuild the restaurant, but has met mixed community reaction. Border Foods contends its latest plans would meet all of the needed requirements for a new conditional use permit, and that

a new restaurant would be an improvement to the neighborhood with more distance from nearby homes, better traffic flow and a more attractive building. One issue cited in written and Planning Commission testimony is the demand for drive-through food service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Planning Commission Zoning Committee voted to recommend denial of the permit, saying it didn't meet the required conditions. Another issue the committee raised is the difficulty in revoking a conditional use permit if there are violations. That's been the case with the controversial Starbucks at Marshall and Snelling avenues, which has caused traffic backups over the past several years.

But the full Planning Commission approved the permit, with some commissioners questioning if objections were based more on restaurant clientele than on land use issues.

Ward Four Council Member Mitra Jalali said the vote isn't about whether or not people like a particular business, or who goes there. The issue is one of land use and of meeting all five conditions required for the permit. Jalali contends that not all standards are met.

Granting the permit and allowing a new restaurant isn't in substantial compliance with the city's comprehensive plan, Jalali said. The plan calls for the Snelling area to be a mixed-use cor-

ridor, with compact commercial uses and a walkable feel for the area. Building a drive-through and a large parking is contrary to the compact commercial development the plan calls for and doesn't give priority to pedestrians.

HMC's appeal stated, "Border Foods has deliberately chosen an auto-centric, non-conforming building plan. The applicant is also proposing 18 off-street parking spaces, more than 200 percent over the maximum allowed for restaurants within a light rail transit station area. Although this is a reduction from the existing 1973 site plan we expect the city to evaluate development based on the standards in the 2040 St. Paul Comprehensive Plan." The district council urged Border Foods to build a larger structure that would better service more pedestrians and transit users.

Other council members supported the appeal. Ward Seven Council Member Jane Prince, who served as Ward Four council aide for a decade, was surprised that the restaurant can stay open until 3 a.m. noting the business backs up to a residential neighborhood.

The council considered written testimony. No one testified in person due to the pandemic. The permit and appeal drew more than a dozen written comments from St. Paul residents, most in opposition to the new permit and restaurant.

2020 SUMMER MURAL PROJECT



Wes Winship works on The Midway, a six-story mural at 727 Vandalia St.

AT LEFT Reggie LeFlore chats about "The Afrocentric Spectrum" at 2345 University Ave. during an open house on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020.



Artist Xee Reiter stands by "Wonderland" at 809 Carlson St.

AT LEFT Brandon Litman creates posters on the spot during the CEZ Outside Open House on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020. There are now over 20 plus murals in the neighborhood.



The Creative Enterprise Zone added six new murals this summer. After the second annual Chroma Fest was postponed due to COVID-19, organizers used money from the Knight Foundation and the Metropolitan Re-

gional Arts Council to fund six new murals with the Creative Enterprise Zone of Saint Paul, a city-recognized creative district located along University Ave. (Emerald St. to Prior Ave.), north to the railyards and

south to I-94. See a map of locations at <https://creativeenterprisezone.org/2020-mural-project>. Read more on the Monitor Instagram account, Facebook page and website. (Photos by Tesha M. Christensen)

Learn about justice system and racial equity

Series emphasises equity

The Como Community Council's Sunday Series returns this month with topics being explored by the district council's Anti-Racism Work Group. The next presentation, on Sunday Oct. 25, is "Our Justice System and Race Equity."

The presenter is Richard McLemore II, who is a Circle Keeper with Saint Paul's "ETHOS" diversion program, was director of Ujamaa Place (a culturally-specific organization focused on young black men involved with the criminal justice system), and is a board member for We Are All Criminals and the Dispute Resolution Center. Among other restorative justice activities, he leads workshops on mental and emotional healing for practitioners at state and federal prisons, juvenile facilities, and county jails across the nation.

Details: Sunday, Oct. 25, 1-2:30 p.m., via video conference or telephone. Sunday Series presentations are free and open to all; to join in, register in advance at www.district10comopark.org/sunday.html. We'll send you access information shortly before the presentation.

Seeking neighborhood fun in a frightening time

Covid (boo!) makes it risky

to gather as a community and enjoy traditional Halloween. But it doesn't outlaw Halloween fun. So, as a respite in these scary times, the Como Community Council is encouraging friendly neighborhood competition. We are challenging neighbors to get together (from a distance, of course), get as creative and spooky as they dare, and decorate their street! Here's how it works:

- Now: Sign up at www.district10comopark.org/spooky.html. This can be one house or the entire block.

- Beginning Oct. 19: Check District 10's website and Facebook page for a map of all participating houses and streets! Take a stroll or ride, and enjoy our community's creativity.

- From Oct. 19-Oct. 28: Vote for the Neighbor's Choice Award.

- Friday Oct. 30: We'll announce winners, reward them with appropriately themed cookies, and celebrate them on the D10 website, Facebook page, and in our newsletter.

Review parking lot plans

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is looking for more feedback on its design ideas for rebuilding the parking lots outside the Como Golf Course and the Lakeside Pavilion. It now has an interactive map that community

District 10 Como Community Council

By MICHAEL KUCHTA,
Executive Director
district10@district10comopark.org



members can use to enter comments and suggestions. You can access the map through the project's web page: www.stpaul.gov/comoparkinglots.

The proposals go beyond repaving and restriping the three lots. They include better stormwater management, better routing of pedestrians and cyclists near the Pavilion, and even a boat launch into Como Lake. Parking lot reconstruction is scheduled for late summer 2021. You can get more background on the project on District 10's website: www.district10comopark.org

Downtown decisions

- Ramsey County is contracting with the Best Western hotel in Bandana Square for up to 80 rooms to provide emergency shelter to homeless people who had been living on the street. The



Richard Lemore II will speak about "Our Justice System and Racial Equity" during the Sunday Series on Oct. 25, 1-2:30 p.m. via video conference or telephone. Events are free and open to the public.



Benjamin Kowalsky-Grahekwon the special election in September to fill a vacancy on the Como Community Council board. He will represent Sub-District 4, which is South Como and Energy Park.

county is using this site exclusively for couples and women under age 55 who are referred specifically by case managers. The contract with the hotel runs through the end of 2020, and is part of a county initiative to use hundreds of vacant hotel rooms to provide socially distanced shelter. This is different from the county's ongoing efforts to explore opening a family shelter in the Cameroon Community Center space, also in Bandana Square. (County Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo will discuss the county's efforts at the monthly meeting of the Como Community Council board at 7 p.m. Oct. 20.)

- City council has approved

a concessions contract for Como Park Pool with Be Graceful Bakery and Catering for the 2021 season.

- Saint Paul approved two sets of conduit bonds, totaling \$42 million, for Hmong College Prep Academy's proposed middle school addition on its Brewster St. campus. One set of bonds is through the Port Authority, the other is through the Housing and Redevelopment Authority. About \$26 million is for new construction; the rest refinances previous bonds issued on behalf of the charter school. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-November.

CONNECTING WHILE DISTANT

Distance learning for high school students in the St. Paul Public Schools has entered its second month of the 2020-2021 school year. While the scope and sequence of class content is the same as previous years, delivery certainly is not.

Despite challenges, there have been success stories. Many students are gaining familiarity with the mixture of synchronous classes and time built into their day for independent study.

Extracurricular activities have also enriched student experiences. Following safety protocols and state regulations, Como teams, clubs, organizations and individuals are participating in events that keep and build connection.

MCJROTC ranks 4th nationally

The Marine Corps JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) at Como has been recognized as a National Honor School Program for 2020. The award is reserved for the top 20% of all MCJROTC programs across the nation.

In 2019, Como was ranked

eighth nationally. This year they rose to fourth place. The ranking is based on several factors including volunteer campaigns, leadership camps, competition performances, grade point averages, MCJROTC academies, and camaraderie.

"We never really understood just how well we were actually doing because for our team this is normal," said Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Ever Bless. "It's normal for the cadets to be working, pushing, competing, serving, traveling, and just doing what we do, so to see our vision come true again was shocking to all of us even under these turbulent times."

Sergeant Major James C. Kirkland is currently serving his 8th year as the Senior Marine Instructor at Como. He has consistently been impressed with the growth of the cadets and the impact of leaders and their resiliency.

"There's a level of maturity built in, and the 'take charge' attitude of the cadets with high motivation is just kind of refreshing during these overwhelming



By ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher

and tumultuous times," Kirkland said.

Outstanding Refugee Award

Ku Mo, from Como's class of 2020, was selected as a recipient of the state's Outstanding Refugee Award. The Minnesota Department of Human Services honored 10 recipients for their actions.

Ku Mo worked on a project to fix computers and give them to families in need, volunteered on additional community service projects, and tutored younger students. Ku Mo is a Karenni refugee who is now a freshman at the University of Minnesota.

Como junior Saylor Landrum competed in the North American Biathlon Summer Na-



The Como Marine Corps JROTC held a socially-distanced outdoor ceremony to celebrate recent awards and the changing of the guard to the class of 2021's senior leadership.

tional and earned first place in the under-17 age group. The event was timed in different regions with race results posted from approved course routes across the continent. Landrum's intense training commitment led her to the winning result.

Beyond the summer biathlon (which combines roller-skiing and target shooting), Landrum is an avid cross-country skier for Como and a member of

the Cougars track team.

Sports this season

Como athletic teams in action this fall include girls and boys soccer, girls and boys cross country running, girls tennis and girls swimming. Recently approved seasons for football and girls volleyball began on Sept. 28.

{ Development Roundup }

By JANE McCLURE

Zoning changes could bring more density

The revamp of St. Paul's multi-family residential zoning is seen as a way to add housing density, with a focus on affordable housing, throughout the city. The St. Paul City Council Sept. 9 adopted sweeping changes to residential multi-family or RM zoning on a 6-1 vote.

The vote doesn't change the underlying zoning of the properties

but it does change how properties can be redeveloped in the future. There is much more RM2, median-density multi-family housing zoning, than the less dense and higher-density options. According to a city staff report, there are 4,077 parcels zoned RM2, totaling 1,967 acres, compared with 1,182 RM1 parcels totaling 612 acres and 88 RM3 parcels totaling 148 acres. Many of the RM3 parcels contain apartment towers constructed in the 1960s and 1970s that are placed in park-like settings and

owned by the St. Paul Public Housing Agency.

The changes have been touted as opening the door for new, smaller multi-family buildings, including triplexes and fourplexes. Generally developers will have more flexibility to build on small lots than before, as a minimum lot size of 9,000 square feet was eliminated. New buildings could also cover more of a lot. Parking requirements are eased. In return developers have to meet design standards for buildings, and place those buildings closer to the street.

But the ability to assemble several properties could bring larger new buildings.

Guaranteed income moves ahead

St. Paul's guaranteed income pilot program is among the \$19.9 million in coronavirus relief fund allocations approved September 23 by the City Council. The vote allocates most of the city's \$23.5 million in CARES Act funding.

The city will spend \$12 million on response costs for staff, HVAC improvements in city facilities and personal protective equipment for first responders. Economic recovery totals \$9.5 million, including \$293,592 for the guaranteed income pilot. Other funds go to funds to help businesses and cultural organizations, and the city's Bridge Fund. The bridge

Fund provides relief for families and small businesses.

The council earlier in September debated Mayor Melvin Carter's guaranteed income pilot program, which would provide a monthly stipend of \$500 to families in four of the city's poorest areas. Families would be chosen at random.

Another \$1 million goes to various programs to support the homeless. There is also \$950,000 for service delivery modifications during the pandemic. Water utility, parks and library workers are among those who've had to make changes in how they work due to the pandemic.



Tony Espinoza (left) and Raisy Hennenos of Five Star Painting work to repaint the exterior of Furniture Barn along University Ave. on Tuesday, Sept. 22. The business, which was damaged in the civil unrest in late May, also received new windows that day. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

REBUILDING UNIVERSITY

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The damage in the Midway during the civil unrest in late May 2020 was expected and unexpected, according to St. Paul Fire Safety Manager Angie Wiese. "We knew it was coming but not what form it would take," said Wiese during a tour of damaged buildings organized by the Midway Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, Sept. 22.

In the days following, city staff conducted assessments at 334 properties. Of those 14 were deemed unsafe, and 14 placed under restricted use.

"I would say that the most impressive thing is how the community showed up," said Wiese. "It was like going to a festival in St. Paul, but there was no festival. Everyone had a broom and dustpan. Sandwiches. Bottled water. It was a little hard to get around."

While Lloyd's Pharmacy and the building housing Bole Ethiopian Cuisine, Napa and Subway were destroyed by fire, the Big Top Liquor store was questionable. It was not demolished but the Sports Dome across the street came down on day one, observed Wiese.

From the outside, the Midway Center only seemed to be damaged where the fire was in the Footlocker and ?salon, but

the smoke and water damaged much more of the facility. Eleven tenants of the Midway Center were affected and need to find new locations for their businesses as the property owner doesn't plan to repair the existing building.

Complicating the assessment process is that the city staff don't necessarily know what businesses were operating during Covid-19 and what were closed.

Some businesses still have plywood on their windows. This is because it can be hard to get new glass given the high demand in the country, and also that they don't want to take down the murals they have up.

"We want to be very intentional with how we address the plywood," stated Wiese.

As businesses decide whether to reopen or not after the unrest, insurance plays a huge role, noted Wiese. "We try to be supportive to each business no matter what path they choose," she said. If a business wants to expand or change their business model, they need to get new permits and approvals, which can delay their reopening.

"There is progress. It might not be as quickly as we'd like to see," stated Wiese. "We're trying to be patient."

Midway United Fund ready to disburse grants

Debate over who serves on committee and whether there should be paid staff continues

By JANE MCCLURE

The Midway United Fund is accepting applications for small economic justice grants in the Hamline-Midway and Union Park areas. Grants are available until Dec. 20 or until funds are exhausted.

The grants offer two opportunities, a damage recovery program and a rebuild or relocation program. The grant programs are overseen by the Neighbors United Funding Collaborative. As of deadline almost half a dozen businesses had inquired about the grants.

The damage recovery program has more than \$349,000, and the potential to serve at least 21 businesses. Businesses can seek up to \$15,000 for needs including smoke and water clean-up, glass replacement, replacement of stolen goods, lost inventory and any other damages they experienced due to the civil unrest.

More than \$500,000 is available through the rebuild and relocation program, with the potential to serve at least 10 businesses. Businesses can apply for up to \$50,000 for rebuilding or relocation costs due to evictions.

Businesses must meet criteria, with priority given to businesses within a half-mile of Allianz Field. Businesses in the University Ave. corridor within three miles of Allianz Field must prove their businesses were affected by civil unrest. Businesses must have annual sales revenues of \$2 million or less.

People will visit businesses as "small business connectors" to help get the word out about the grants.

Issues about management

The announcement that

funding is available may not stop the weeks of debate over the fund. The notion of a community fund centered on the Allianz Field Major League Soccer stadium first came up years ago, with Ward One Council Member Dai Thao as one of the fund's early champions. It was originally launched by the city council and area district councils as a means to provide funding for community-building, small businesses, arts and other projects in the neighborhoods around the stadium. Union Park District Council (UPDC) and Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) have led fund planning and have oversight, working with the St. Paul Foundation and the collaborative's advisory committee.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the late May civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd's death changed the fund's priorities. Earlier this year the fund allocated grants to small business affected by the pandemic. After businesses were looted, damaged and set ablaze in late May, the fund shifted to provide assistance on that front.

The collaborative and its advisory committee generated debate over the summer, with a clash over who should be on the committee and how it should operate. People of Color contended the committee didn't represent the community and pushed White committee members to resign. The committee is now more diverse, with committee member and community development veteran Isabel Chanslor calling herself the interim fund manager.

Should there be paid staff?

UPDC and HMC questioned the time it was taking to get

grants out, and what were seen as personal attacks on district council staff. HMC bowed out of its fiscal role in July, with the non-profit Nexus stepping in.

The notion of paid collaborative staff has drawn objections, including from Thao. He and some district council members said money should go businesses, not staff.

Chanslor said funds donated for businesses will only go to businesses. The collaborative has raised separate money for administration. "We never intended to use funds donated for businesses for administration," she said.

While saying they are pleased that grant applications are available, city council members Thao and Mitra Jalali are watching the collaborative and the grant process closely. Thao said he wants to see "transparency and accountability" in how funds are allocated.

The city council members are looking at the staff issue, with Thao against advisory committee members paying themselves with donated funds. That's a concern raised by some district council and community members, but Jalali said the district councils lack capacity to staff the advisory committee and that staff is needed.

At a recent board meeting, UPDC board members brought up the prospect of a business development fund spinning itself off, and the collaborative going back to its broader original purposes. Chanslor said that is something the committee has discussed, as it looks at ways to support the Midway, its small businesses and arts community.

Jalali is staying positive. "I feel hopeful about the fund. It feels as if we've turned a corner," she said. "We need to get resources out to the community. That's what is really important."

{ Monitor in a Minute }

By JANE MCCLURE

Neighborhood STAR fund allocated for area projects

Twenty-one small businesses, housing providers and community organizations are recipients of 2020 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grants and loans, awarded September 2 by the St. Paul City Council. The top-ranked project citywide is Elsa's House of Sleep at 1441 University Ave.

The Neighborhood STAR Board this summer recommended a total of \$1,352,777 divided among 16 projects, with \$983,700 in grants and \$369,077 in loans. Mayor Melvin Carter added five projects, bringing the total to 21.

Carter reallocated \$249,866 in unspent project fund balances, to bring the total awarded to \$1,602,643. That results in \$1,194,633 in grants and \$408,101 in loans.

The neighborhood STAR Program is set up to allocate half-cent sales tax proceeds to brick-and-mortar projects. The COVID-19 pandemic forced meetings online. Sixty projects were submitted by the April deadline, with two later withdrawn.

The Elsa's House of Sleep furniture store was awarded a \$49,800 grant to repair stucco, install a new storefront, make ceiling and floor repairs, install a new handi-

capped-accessible door and install new security cameras.

Second was Neighborhood Development Center, which received a \$123,450 grant and \$41,150 loan to build a new business incubator at the northwest corner of University Avenue and Dale Street. The Frogtown Crossroads project will include a small business incubator for up to six businesses. The match is \$13.3 million. The project is part of a mixed-used development with Wellington Management, which will include affordable housing.

Third is NeighborWorks Home Partners, with a citywide project to help 20 low to moderate-income St. Paul homeowners with lead-based painted windows. To be eligible, owners of single to four-unit dwellings must already be involved in a county window replacement program. The \$12,000 grant, which has a \$110,000 match, should help each property owner replace about a dozen windows per dwelling.

Ranked 12th is Sun Foods in Uni-Dale Mall, 554 University Ave. Sun Foods received a \$75,000 grant and \$75,000 loan to install up to 10 new signs, replace windows, do tuckpointing and make parking lot repairs. The match is \$150,000.

The Creative Enterprise Zone's loans and grants for several small businesses in the West Midway ranked 16th. The nonprofit's request for a \$100,000 grant and

\$100,000 loan was trimmed by almost \$40,000 by the Neighborhood STAR Board and then restored by Carter.

Carter used unspent fund balances to partially fund five projects that had been shut out. One is Springboard for the Arts' work to redevelopment a former auto dealership at 262 University Ave. into an arts center with public park space. Springboard sought a \$100,000 grant with \$190,000 match for the park project. A \$50,000 grant was approved.

The Asian Economic Development Center sought a \$205,000 grant with \$205,000 match for improvements including murals, one small business facade improvement, two parklets, benches and other amenities. The project was awarded a \$75,000 grant.

African Economic Development Solutions sought a \$200,000 grant with \$200,000 match for loans for business improvements citywide.

Carter also added a Frogtown project at 625 Charles Ave., with a \$22,000 grant and \$22,000 loan for a parking lot for a business and apartment building. A \$44,000 match is proposed.

An area project that wasn't approved was the Central Baptist office renovation at 420 Roy St. The Central Baptist project, for which Union Park District Council is a partner, called for renovating the 1913 church building into office and retail space.

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Celebrating peace

Hello Hamline/Midway, Como, Frogtown, and Rondo Midway Monitor Readers,

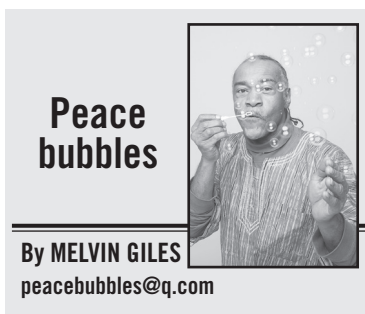
It's a refreshing and uplifting pleasure to share with you this month a few reflections from the innovative Drive-In Peace Celebration that was held on Sept. 19th at the intersections of the Rondo, Frogtown, and North End Communities near the State Capitol. The event was originally plan for June 19 (Juneteenth), however, was postponed like most summer annual events due to COVID-19. Fortunately, a dedicated and compassionate team of Peaceful Love Warriors stepped-up to create a successful safe and meaningful Peace Celebration beyond belief. On behalf of the Peace Celebration planning team, I send us all bright thoughts of better and healthy days and the Global (global & local) Messages of Peace: May Peace Prevail On Earth and May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities.

Drive-in Peace Celebration reflections

• Nancy D. (Member of the MN Alliance of Peacemakers): This was my first time participating in the Peace Celebration, even though I have been a resident of St. Paul for most of my life. My activism has been more focused on Global Problems and Solutions, rather than the needs of my own local community. The murder of George Floyd in the midst of our isolation due to COVID-19, and the many stark challenges thereby highlighted right here at home, created a seismic shift in my heart. I am now planting my feet firmly on the ground of my own home community of St. Paul. This Peace Festival was a most meaningful way for me to start this journey.

While there is an urgent need to protest specific unjust events and actions committed by those in power, there is also a need to hold tight to a vision of what we wish for our future. Through music, dance, spoken word, and messages from community leaders, the spirit of this year's Peace Celebration was so joyful and hopeful and inspiring! And it wasn't just a show on stage; my participation in the planning team and the behind-the-scenes movement of the day manifested this same spirit of community and joy. I look forward to the 25th Annual Celebration next June!

• Deon H. (U of MN Extension Health & Nutrition Educator & Peace Celebration Activator):



Peace bubbles

By MELVIN GILES
peacebubbles@q.com

The Drive-In Peace Celebration was full of life, fun, joy, and community pride. Being a remote event didn't stop anyone from bringing their all. The live crowd may have been small, but everyone - the volunteers, emcee, speakers, and performers, brought enough talent, passion, and sincerity for a crowd of thousands. This carried into the audience: even though we were keeping a safe distance from one another, the energy was palpable. This event was the perfect place to bring your whole self. On everyone's face, you could witness a vision and commitment to a bright, beautiful, and Peaceful future.

• Megan P. (Peace Sanctuary Garden's Children's Garden Coordinator): The resilience, creativity, determinedness, and joy of the Rondo Frogtown COMMUNITY PEACE CELEBRATION planning team was on brilliant display the afternoon of Sept 19th when the 24th annual event was celebrated as a "Drive-in" and live streamed on Facebook for all to see! The Peace Celebration, regularly scheduled in June, had to be postponed due to Covid-19. The planning team, led by Melvin Giles, was at first daunted by the prospect of celebrating during a pandemic, however in short order rallied around Melvin's idea of a drive-in event! I can't speak for all the planners officially but I think we all felt the joy and PEACE on the 19th when we watched dancers, heard the music, singers and spoken word artists and celebrated with the Community as masked, 6 feet apart, virtual, Peacemakers. Cheers to the Planning Team!

• Sarah P. (Executive Director of Northern Lights): I am a newcomer to the Community Peace Celebration; my first year as an attendee was 2018, I think. I was moved by the warmth of the community gathered. I got involved with the planning for the 24th Annual Celebration as an act of reciprocity for all the



State Rep. Rena Moran speaks at the Drive-In Peace Celebration on Sept. 19, 2020. (Photo submitted)

time and energy given by this community to help organize the Northern Spark festival in Rondo in 2019. I've organized some very large events in my time, but I am always a learner. The Peace Celebration team taught me so much about keeping joy close to the process of event organizing. We did a really big thing in a very short time frame. The sun was so bright and the sky so blue the day the performers and speakers met up in the parking lot to glow up our hearts with messages of peace, working it out together and yes, joy! It lifted my soul in a way I haven't felt in a long time.

• Tezikiah (Tez) G. (Executive Director of Pathways To Peace (PTP) - United Nations Peace Messenger Organization Consultative Status with ECOSOC): What an uplifting, positive and energetic event! The Drive-In Peace Celebration inspired a small but enthusiastic audience with a variety of high-quality and local/global performers, including ethnic dancers, musicians, spoken word, and speakers from all walks of life - all bound together in a unified commitment to Peace! Melvin was in his glory and at his best in elevating the crowd energy by bringing laughter, running around the cars and spectators shouting words of encouragement, and blowing bubbles to connect us beyond the bounds of social distancing. T. Michael Rambo was an inspired, funny, and captivating MC, using song, poetry, wisdom, and positivity! All in all, I would not have missed this world class, yet intimate community event!

• Jeff S. (Shoreview): I had never attended St. Paul's Community Peace Celebration before, but I knew about it through colleagues at Bethel University who had helped me to connect students with Melvin Giles and Megan Phinney at the Urban



The 24th Community Peace Celebration Planning Team. (Photo submitted)



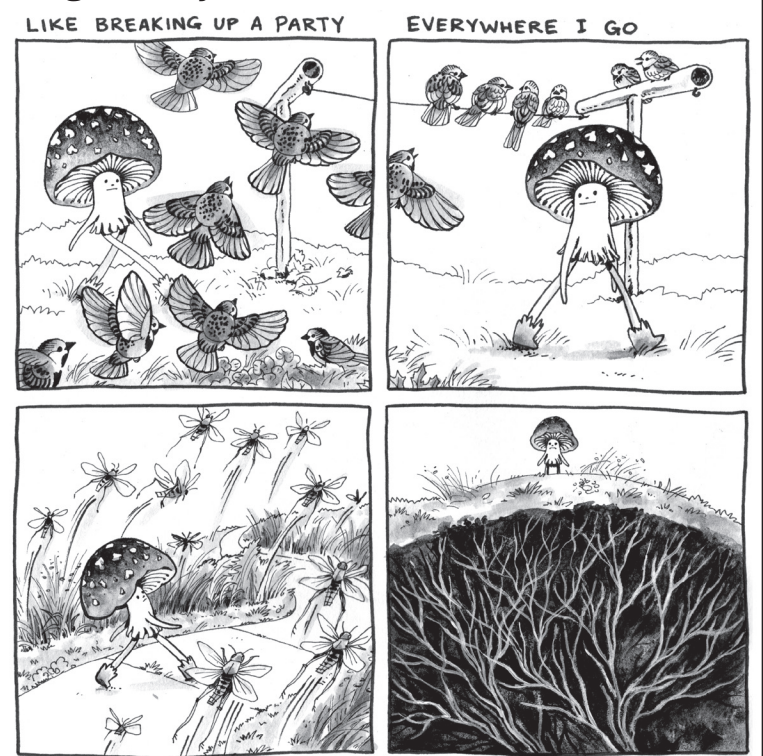
Katharine DeCello (left) and Philip Gracia chat about Frogtown Community Radio, available to hear at WFNU.org. (Photo submitted)

Farm and Garden Alliance. Just a month ago, I called Melvin, simply hoping to catch up a bit. As usual, I found him to be knee-deep in coordinating a team of volunteers for a community initiative - this year's 24th Annual Peace Celebration. Since the original date for the event had been delayed due to the COVID pandemic, when a new date became available, it offered little time to prepare and coordinate all of the essential elements. The list of tasks ahead of Melvin and his team seemed daunting: gaining permission from relevant local authorities, sourcing a stage and a sound engineer, recruiting an emcee, guest speakers, musicians and performers, coordinating safety personnel, social media folks to share the word and stream the event, and gaining the support of Frogtown Community Radio (WFNU 94.1 FM) to broadcast the celebration live. I was delighted for Melvin's

invitation to help where I could, because during my brief involvement, it opened my eyes to what casual observers, like me, often take for granted. And through the coordinated efforts of Melvin's team of caring volunteers, participants and sponsors, it came together with positivity, a genuine love for the community, and a quest for meaningful peace. I'm looking forward to next year's 25th Annual. In Peace.

• Katharine D. (WFNU Frogtown Community Radio 94.1 FM: The Drive-In Peace Celebration was amazing! It was great to see so many happy people enjoying the live music, spectacular performances, and moving speakers giving us all hope for the future. After being isolated and away from community, the Peace Celebration was a way for all of us to come together safely in celebration!

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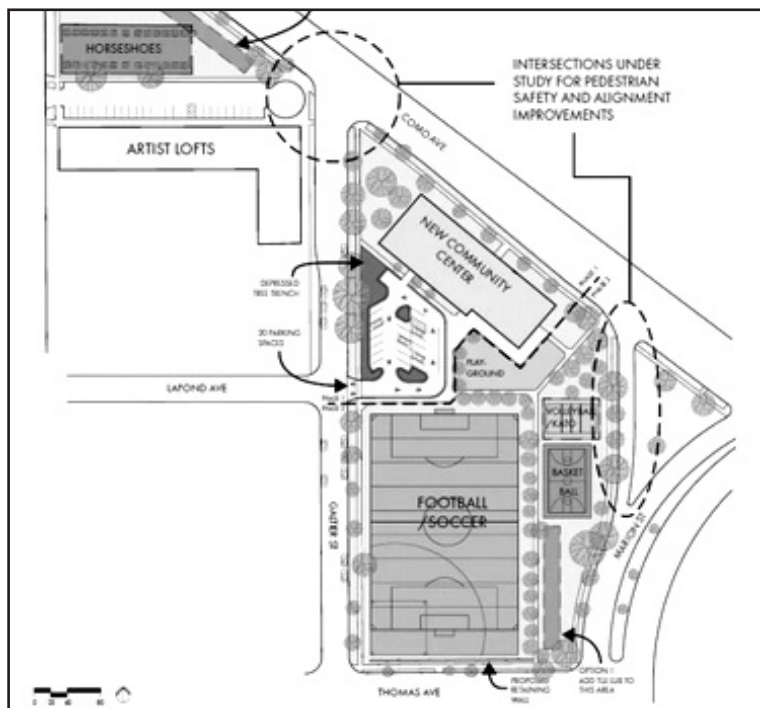
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Wah Lwe (left), Eh Moo, Kaw Ku play on the new kato court at Frogtown Community Center, the city's fourth site. Kato (also called Sepak Takraw) is a popular Hmong sport. The final phase of Frogtown Community Center is complete with the fall 2020 opening of the new fields. The building opened last year in its new spot along Como Ave. on the north side of the 2.5-acre site, and the inside murals were recently completed. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Frogtown Community Center rebuilt >> from 1

Speakers recalled the rodents at the old 6,000-square-foot Scheffer Recreation Center built in 1973, and how they had to stand with one foot on the wall to be out of bounds while playing basketball.

"I was excited when I saw the old one coming down," remarked Sarah Gustafson, who played basketball at Scheffer when she was a girl. She now lives across the street and appreciates the diversity of Frogtown's residents. "I hope it brings a lot of people here to have a safe place to congregate and play sports," added Gustafson.

Her granddaughter Ayanna Jones, age seven, cut the ribbon that day. "I'm glad they built the park," said Jones. Her favorite part is the hammock.

"This place will stand the test of time," stated North End resident Greg Taylor. "I was really impressed when they built it. It's really beautiful."

\$11 million project

The event on Sept. 22 marked the completion of phase two, which included \$2.1 million in outdoor amenities.

The \$11.2 million project began in 2016 with community meetings at the site of the St. Paul's first playground built back in 1909.

Phase one, the new community center, opened in September 2019. Designed by JLG Architects and built by Shaw Lundquist Associates, construction began in

May 2018 on the \$7.7 million project. The new building faces Como Ave. while the old one was at the south end of the site along Thomas Ave.

The new 23,500-square-foot facility includes community rooms, arts space, seniors space, teen room, dance studios, kitchen, Rec Check after school space, full-size gym, fitness room, and an upper level walking track. There is a pair of private washrooms where residents can clean up for prayers, as requested by Muslim residents. And there's a parking lot so people have some place besides the street to park. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not open for regular business hours but limited programming for registered participants is being offered. The old building was demolished in June 2019.

The terrazzo floor and wall-murals, designed in collaboration by local artists, Myc Dazzle, Megan Tate and Tou Yia Xiong, celebrates the diversity of Frogtown.

After getting input from the community, the site was renamed from Scheffer to the Frogtown Community Center. The athletic fields have been named for General Vang Pao, a key U.S. ally during the Vietnam War and the leader of the Hmong resettlement efforts in St. Paul and elsewhere.

'I love this space'

"I am blown away by this space," said St. Paul Park and

Recreation Director Mike Hahm.

He recalled when new mayor Melvin Carter asked parks and recreation what the number one priority was for funding. They told him it was this center as the community had been working on the project for a very long time.

"Mayor Carter said, 'Mike, it is my priority, too, that we fund that project.'"

"I love this space," Mayor Carter told those gathered at for the ribbon-cutting. "I love this neighborhood. We've gotten a chance to watch this space come alive. It takes me back to when I was a kid."

Mayor Carter said he grew up playing in the city's rec centers, and every once in a while they'd be bussed out for a field trip at another city's recreation centers, which were always much better.

"If Frogtown folks don't deserve the best, I don't know who does," stated Mayor Carter, who pointed out that the fields were always full and it sometimes took 45 minutes to get onto the basketball court to play.

"How could we as a city not respond to that kind of use with this kind of investment?" he asked.

"We must provide equitable programs and amenities the communities want," said Thao. "Park spaces are a reflection of the community, and I'm honored to have had a role in securing these new facilities in Frogtown for everyone to access and enjoy."

New building, new art



Tou Yia Xiong stands by the mural he created at the Frogtown Community Center. The St. Paul artist and toy designer also worked on the terrazzo floor with fellow artists Myc Dazzle and Megan Tate, shown below. (Photos submitted)



HAMLIN HEADLINES

sharing campus events with the neighboring community

Community Health, Research, and Trauma: Perspectives from Young Black Scholars

Join the Center for Justice and Law for a virtual conversation on the role of data and research in social change. How can data collection practices be harmful? How does this topic connect with generational trauma, grief, and exploitation? This will be an open panel discussion with Black scholars active in this research.

When: Friday, October 30, 12-2:30 p.m.

Where: Zoom

Register: hamline.edu/CJLevent

Free to attend.

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IT'S POSSIBLE

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Standing on the corner of Selby Ave. and Milton St. with Brian White, Jr., it seems like he knows everybody. Whether passersby are driving or walking, they smile and wave – and he waves back.

White grew up in Frogtown, and spent formative years playing football at the West Minnehaha Recreation Center. He is no stranger to this neighborhood. Now co-owner of 2 Scoops Ice Cream Eatery along with his mother, father, and aunt, he said, "When we got the idea to start our business, we knew we wanted to be part of this community – not just do business in this community."

The family-owned and operated business is doing just that. They had hoped to open in April but because of COVID, Grand Opening Day was delayed until May 30. On the Saturday of the uprising that rocked the Twin Cities and the world, lines had formed down both Selby and Milton while customers waited patiently for their cones. White said, "We thought it might be rough, but we also know ice cream is a universal goodness. People needed to lift their spirits, and they really came out to support us."

6 Black-owned businesses nearby

2 Scoops occupies the space that housed Golden Thyme Coffee and Café for many years. The café has moved just a few doors away, and the block on Selby Ave. between Milton and Chatsworth streets now boasts six African-American owned businesses. If it looks like a resurgence of the old Rondo neighborhood that stood until Interstate 94 barreled through, that's because it is.

White has a lot to say about being an African American entrepreneur in this time and place. He said, "At 2 Scoops, we have a real affinity for youth. We love that African American families bring their kids in to see what's possible. Last month, a non-profit called Male Mentors came with a van full of young men. I told them, 'Look, you're probably not going to grow up to be professional basketball players. Why don't you think about running your own businesses instead?'"

He calls this, "speaking an idea into existence."

Others donate so kids can have free cones

On Opening Day, John Becker, who owns a State Farm business across the street from 2 Scoops dropped off a \$100 check. He said he wanted to earmark it for kids who might not be able to afford an ice cream cone this summer. White is responsible for



Brian White Jr, one of four co-owners of 2 Scoops Ice Cream Eatery at 921 Selby Avenue. His family was able to open their business by pooling resources and being creative. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

social media postings and put word of Becker's gift up on the company Facebook page. They were flooded with donations from as far away as Michigan. More than 1,000 children under

12 have been given free ice cream cones so far, and the donations keep coming in.

In addition to all this, 2 Scoops has developed a reputation for excellent customer ser-

vice. White said, "Our summer staff consisted of mostly neighborhood high school students. For many of them, it was their first real job. A lot of kids these days don't have the best interpersonal skills, because they spend so much time on computer screens. It was great seeing them mature over the summer: they quickly learned how to step out from behind the computer screen, look customers in the eye, and be gracious."

There are other youth-focused initiatives in the works, as well. White coordinates partnerships with several nearby elementary schools including Galtier, JJ Hill, and Adams Spanish Immersion. When students meet their reading goals, they are eligible for an ice cream cone to celebrate.

A future dream is to develop, "Two Scoops Hoops:" a sponsorship program for boys and girls youth basketball in the neighborhood.

Passion fruit Italian ice, raspberry rhapsody, matcha green tea, salted caramel, and banana cream pie are just a few of the 18 flavors featured right now at 2 Scoops, along with timeless standards like chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry. New flavors rotate through twice a week, and holiday-themed ice creams are just around the corner. The hot menu (pizza, sandwiches, soups and more) will expand starting Oct. 1.

Visit www.2scoopseatery.com for business hours and menu options. They are also available for catering.



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