



## How will homeless weather winter?

By JAN WILLMS

Whether working for the state, the city or on the front lines, workers addressing the homeless situation in Minnesota strongly agree on two things: affordable housing is desperately needed, and the COVID-19 pandemic greatly exacerbates the plight of the homeless.

Especially of concern with winter approaching is the number of individuals living in camps.

"The number of active encampments fluctuates regularly," said Suzanne Donovan, with the Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI) for the city of Saint Paul. "In mid-to-late October, staff counted about 90 active encampments throughout Saint Paul, which can range in size from two to three tents to more."

She said the city does not have a goal to "close" all encampments but is concerned about the welfare and safety of all individuals staying in encampments and in other outdoor spaces not intended as living quarters.

"The city is working with its partners to identify and secure safe indoor shelter space for all of our unsheltered residents," Donovan said.

However, shelter space is decreasing due to COVID-19 spacing restrictions.

"It's a systemic problem in that we don't have enough homes that are affordable for people to live in," said Minnesota Homeless Coalition (MHC) Executive Director Rhonda Otteson. "That is the

*Advocates say affordable housing, more shelters needed*



Niqui, April and Sean of St. Paul Camp Support with just some of the supplies they bring to the encampments. The group collects supplies at 2161 University Ave. W., on Wednesdays and Fridays, 3-7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. They always looking for clothing, camp stoves, towels or tents. (Photo by Jan Willms)

big problem, and within that problem we have another issue that is systemic in that we don't have enough shelter space for people to come indoors. COVID-19 has made that worse because social distancing is critical to the health and well-being of people staying in shelters, and shelters have needed to depopulate, a lot running at 50 percent capacity."

Otteson added that means that other housing, such as hotels, have to be used. "We

know it's dangerous to be outside in the weather, but we also know people experiencing homelessness and staying in shelters are targets of violence, and it's just not a safe space for anybody to be."

### 'People don't want to be in shelters'

"Many people don't want to be in shelters," said April, a front-line worker who volunteers with St. Paul Camp Support, a group that collects dona-

tions of supplies for individuals and families living in outdoor encampments. "It has not been a dignified place for them, and they don't feel respected at some of the shelters. One man told me he did not want to go to a shelter because to him it feels like a prison, and that is so valid."

Donovan said that the city has been actively engaged with Ramsey County in working to

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2021 rates will be less than 2018-2019 fees

## Trash fees increasing

By JANE MCCLURE

What St. Paul's residents pay for trash collection will increase in 2021. But the usually contentious issue of organized collection drew fewer than half a dozen public comments during a November public hearing before the St. Paul City Council. The rates were adopted Nov. 18.

St. Paul implemented an organized trash collection system two years ago. Some of the strongest support came out of Frogtown, where illegal dumping of trash in alleys has been a longstanding problem.

Properties with 1-4 dwelling units are required to have garbage collection. Property owners are responsible for payment. The system was hailed by those who saw it as reducing street and alley truck traffic, and deterring illegal trash dumping. Opponents said it would prevent neighbors sharing carts, take away the ability to choose one's trash hauler and increase cost for those who practice "zero waste."

TRASH FEES INCREASING >> 15

## Mapping Prejudice brings light to history's structural racism that impacts today's community



Denise Pike recalls a cross burning on the front lawn of her family's home in St. Louis Park when she was a girl. (Photo submitted)

## Looking back to move forward

By CHLOE PETERS

As a young child, Denise Pike experienced an attempted cross-burning on the front lawn of her family's home in St. Louis Park. Her own family was multi-racial, and they shared the duplex with a Black family. Since then, Pike has wondered about racial differences and what housing in particular has to do with inciting violence against people of color.

During her master's program for Heritage Studies and Public History at the Universi-

ty of Minnesota, Pike had the opportunity to be an intern for Mapping Prejudice.

Mapping Prejudice is a team of geographers, historians, digital humanists and community activists working with the University of Minnesota in order to expose structural racism. The data that they collect has brought thousands of racial covenants to light. These racial covenants were placed in order to prevent Black people from buying homes or property in Minnesota. On their

website, mappingprejudice.org, there is a map of the Twin Cities area where home owners can find out if their home has a covenant placed on it and then have the option to remove it.

"This data makes the extent of racial discrimination across the city of Minneapolis and the surrounding areas impossible to ignore or discount," Pike said.

In January 2020, the project extended into St. Paul and greater Ramsey County, Mapping Prejudice hosts online training

events for volunteers to help read deeds and contribute to the database that plots covenants.

### 'Owning Up' exhibit

Since becoming an intern for Mapping Prejudice, Pike also worked on a project of her own. Her portable exhibit, "Owning Up," explores the history of racial housing discrimination in Minneapolis through the stories of three Black families. Their experiences are displayed alongside the policy decisions and social practices that furthered the standard of racial segregation and continue to shape the city of Minneapolis.

MAPPING PREJUDICE >> 13



AGING WELL  
'All you need is  
a ball and a wall'

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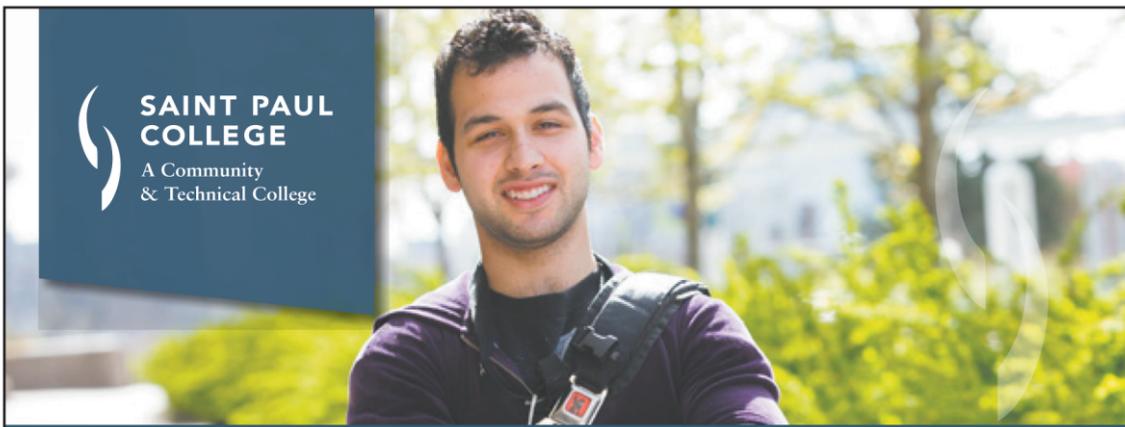
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'Mr Rondo's Spirit.'  
a story of a man  
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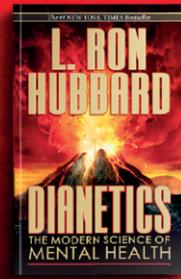


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Publication typically second Thursday. * Some exceptions	Deadlines typically last or first Monday.
Publication date	Deadline date
Jan. 14	Jan. 4
Feb. 11	Feb. 1
March 11	March 1
April 15	April 5
May 13	May 3
June 10	May 28 (Friday)
July 15	July 2 (Friday)
Aug. 12	Aug. 2
Sept. 16	Sept. 3 (Friday)
Oct. 14	Oct. 4
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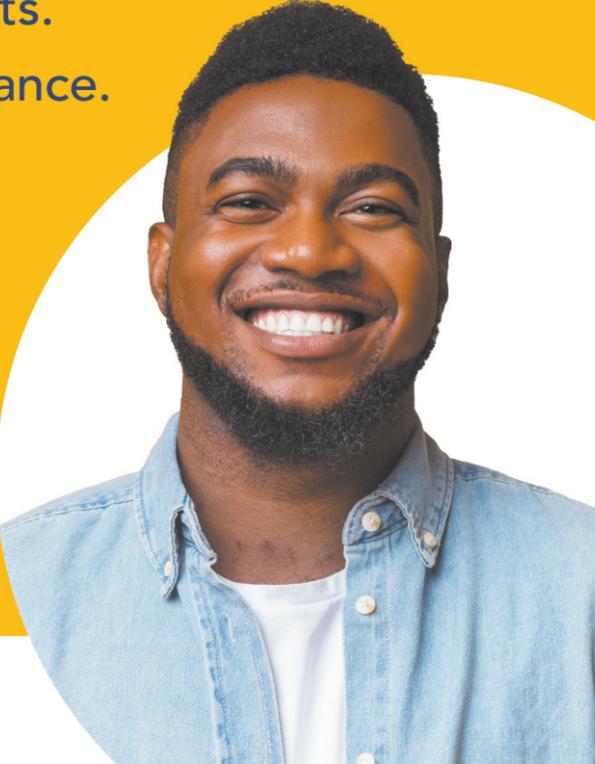
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# How will homeless weather winter?

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stand up low-barrier overnight shelters as well as day space.

"There are several options in locations throughout the city under discussion, which would add to and expand existing capacity. These should offer alternatives, some with greater flexibility than more traditional congregate living spaces."

Although the homeless encampments are mainly concentrated within the Metro, Otteson said homelessness is prevalent throughout the state. "I live in Willmar, and I know that it exists right here," she stated. "It might not be so apparent, and it might be more hidden, but homelessness exists across our state." She said that 80 out of 87 counties lack enough shelter beds.

## Who are the homeless?

"Many are working or they have a chronic disability," said Otteson. She added that half of the people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota are youth up to the age of 24.

"That really flips the switch for people when they think about who is homeless," Otteson said. "And the other piece of this is that we have systemic racism that comes out and is exhibited in the data on homelessness. People of color are 10 times more likely than their White counterparts to be homeless."

"American Indian and African American populations are at particularly high disproportionate rates of homelessness, and so that is something that we may continue to keep an eye on. We need culturally specific solutions created in communities to best serve people."

Otteson said that paying an unaffordable rent is the greatest factor to becoming homeless. "It creates this system of people being on the edge and being one car breakdown, one layoff, one sickness away from not being able to pay the rent. We have to do something about that."

Otteson knows of what she speaks, as she experienced homelessness when she was growing up. "My mom had to take her three kids and stay with an aunt in a one-bedroom apartment."

She said there is a lot of the same kind of doubling up happening today, but those informal arrangements are not preferred, particularly with the pandemic. "Just keeping that in mind, especially this time of year when



Tents are set up at various places in St. Paul, including by John Ireland Blvd. and Kellogg (above) and near a wooded park (at right). Homelessness is prevalent throughout the state. According to Minnesota Homeless Coalition (MHC) Executive Director Rhonda Otteson, 80 out of 87 counties lack enough shelter beds. Half of the people experiencing homelessness are youth up to age 24. People of Color are 10 times more likely than their White counterparts to be homeless. (Photos by Terry Faust)



it gets cold, people are making really hard choices about what they have to do to stay safe and stay well."

## Homes for All, coalitions

MCH, the organization Otteson leads, has its headquarters at 2233 University Ave. W. About 100 organizations across the state are members of MCH. "These organizations advance policy solutions on problems causing instability, and we really move the needle in creating homes in communities, the ultimate solution," said Otteson.

MCH plays a key leadership role and a founding role in Homes for All (HFA), which has been operating for about eight years, according to Otteson. HFA is a coalition of 280 endorsing organizations across Minnesota that advocates for the continuance of housing resources.

"We carry HFA's agenda on ours, submitting legislative items through that coalition because it is powerful and well known," Otteson said. She noted that after five special sessions, the legis-

lature finally passed a bonding bill. Otteson said the bonding investment of \$116 million is the largest passed in the history of the state to preserve and create homes across Minnesota.

"This was a big win, when we have so many challenges," Otteson said. She said the challenges are not only economical, but being an advocate during the current pandemic is difficult. "You can't just walk up to the Capitol anymore." She added that the new virtual environment and technology have created new space that MCH has embraced "because we have to."

"It's all about building that support for the (homelessness) issue, and with all the partners we come together as a community to advance these continued investments. We are going into one of the most challenging legislative sessions with our budget deficit not only in the current year, but in the next biennial. Advocates are preparing to have a strong presence and really engage

because those who are most at risk should not have to bear the greatest burden in balancing our state budget."

## Camp Support collects donations

"It just sucks," said April, the St. Paul Camp Support volunteer. "If there were enough housing so people could move on from shelters in a healthy time frame, it wouldn't be so bad. But some people have been waiting for housing for seven years."

St. Paul Camp Support collects donations at a building at 2161 University Ave. W., on Wednesdays and Fridays, 3-7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. "We are always looking for supplies, such as clothing, camp stoves, towels or tents."

"The camps are not good," she said, "but some have been through this before and know how to survive."

## St. Paul adds homeless shelters

Meanwhile, the city of Saint Paul continues to try and find solutions for the lack of both housing and shelters.

"The affordable housing goals of the Ford Site Public Realm Master Plan and Redevelopment Agreement have not changed," said Donovan. "Common Bond and Project for Pride in Living are partners with Ryan Companies in developing affordable and supportive housing on the site. The project is now called Highland Bridge Development."

Donovan said DSI has a site plan application in progress for Common Bond Communities at 830 Cretin Ave. for a 60-unit senior housing building that was conditionally approved in July. The site plan is on hold, pending financing.

She also noted that Ramsey County is reportedly looking at the property at former Boys Totem Town as a possible area to develop affordable housing along with other uses. "That option appears as though it would have a long road ahead," Donovan said.

St. Paul is leasing a West Seventh fire station as a homeless shelter for 18 months, and Ramsey County plans to open overnight shelter space in December at the vacant Bethesda Hospital site in Frogtown, as well as a vacant Luther Seminary dorm in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood.

"The challenges for the homeless are myriad and interconnected," Donovan stated. "A key one is scarcity of types of affordable housing in the region in all price ranges, as well as developable land in a built environment, such as St. Paul."

As to the city's challenges in its attempts to decrease homelessness, Donovan said St. Paul works with the county and outreach partners closely to address the lack of affordable housing and shelters. "Federal funds designated for homelessness flow largely through the counties, which are primarily responsible for the continuum of care," she explained. "Again, the challenges are complex and ultimately benefit from private and public sector partnerships. The economic impact of the pandemic, including the loss of employment opportunities, has contributed to and exacerbated existing challenges."

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, a Wilder study showed that nearly 20,000 Minnesotans are homeless on any given night.

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## 2020: The Year of the Pivot

2020 might become known as the year of the pivot. In the newspaper business, we've been zig-zagging for years now, since the Internet changed the business we knew. In some ways, that prepared us for 2020. I was just barely part of news media at its financial peak when there wasn't as much competition, so I don't expect ads to roll in easily. I expect to have to hustle to pay the bills. In some ways, it helps to have entered this business during the Internet age because I've always seen the benefits and challenges associated with it.

At TMC Publications, we were already a home-based business, which means we didn't have to worry about how to pay the rent when revenue slowed to a trickle in April. We've been using a secure cloud-based system for years for our files.

We had moved to a VOIP phone system with a built-in video conferencing in 2019, and it sure came in handy this year. When we were all staying home, it was nice to see faces via video for interviews and sales calls, and its use is picking back up as we head into the colder winter months.

From 2004 to 2019, more than a quarter of the nation's newspapers folded, leaving behind vast news deserts, according to research by the Husman School of Journalism

and Media at the University of North Carolina. Reporters and editors employed by newspapers dropped by about half, pointed out *Des Moines Register* Executive Editor Carol Hunter in a recent editorial. Locally, we saw *City Pages* abruptly close in October, and the *Southwest Journal* plans to discontinue publishing in December.

While newspapers are facing challenges in an evolving world, what hasn't changed is our need for them.

"Newspapers have long served as 'watchdogs' over government. The pandemic magnified the significance of this role because the virus closed most government offices, and meetings of school boards, city councils and county officials moved onto Zoom," pointed out Iowa Freedom of Information Council Executive Director Randy Evans, writing to support National Newspaper Week in October.

He added, "The most potent tool of newspapers continues to be the spotlight. They shine it on problems that need to be addressed and on solutions that ought to be considered. They shine it on stories that are heartwarming and uplifting. At other times, they shine it on topics that might raise the blood pressure of readers."

We've certainly got our share of blood-pressure-raising issues

Too much coffee

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN, Owner &amp; Editor

Tessa@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com



right here in the Twin Cities this year, and we're working to help you understand the varying perspectives around us with our coverage.

It's been a year of challenges.

In response to this, newspapers nationally have come together to support the Local Journalism Sustainability Act. Read more about it on page 5 in Dean Ridings' guest column, and then call your legislators to voice your support.

One of the hardest parts for me is hearing comments folks make disparaging the media, as though they've forgotten what a vital role we have in this great democratic experiment.

America needs journalists. We simply won't exist without them. I've always appreciated newspaper coverage of issues the most, as I think you avoid some of the echo chamber found on cable, television and social media.

Here at the *Midway Como Frogtown Monitor*, we recognize

that we need to pivot to keep up with the changes in our society, while also building upon what makes us strong.

In November, we launched a new, user-friendly website that we'd been working on for months. I'm pretty excited about it, and I hope you will be, too. We have more options for how we share the story with you, and it's easier from the back-end, which means we spend more time reporting than on tech issues.

We're also working on a great new Marketplace to showcase advertisers and connect local shoppers with local business, an important part of our mission. It fits in seamlessly with our What's Open page. If you have a business, I hope you'll take advantage of our free What's Open listings and let folks know as you pivot in response to the coronavirus pandemic. You can go in and make as many changes as you'd like, and there are ways to upgrade your listing at affordable rates.

We're adding paid obituaries to honor those we've lost. We're also adding paid announcements such as birthdays, weddings, engagements and births to celebrate what we have. This is the stuff of our lives, what connects our community, and so it belongs on both our online and print pages.

With your engagement as readers and advertisers, we can build our community and pivot together.

To the Editor

## Wrong decision on Line 3

Dear Editor:

Since the beginning of this year we have been fighting an ever-changing battle to protect our families, our neighbors and our communities at large. Our foe in this battle is a virus. A virus we knew little about, a virus that was hard to predict and it has proven to be a formidable opponent. Being a part of a struggle like this has been scary, it has created great suffering, yet at times it has brought us together as a people. On a local level, I must express pride that we have leaders such as Governor Walz who have helped us face this challenge. He has led us in facing this foe honestly, with clear eyes and with an underlying belief that our actions in this battle will be based on science and the common good. Simply put, we will make decisions based on scientific fact and on how we can use science to protect our neighbors, our families and those in our communities most at risk.

While I feel pride in Governor Walz's decision making in regard to COVID-19, I must admit I am feeling frustration and anger in regard to recent decisions Governor Walz and his administration have made in regard to Line 3. As a candidate and as governor, Governor Walz has talked about the need to act boldly on the climate crisis. He has also often talked about the need to respect, honor and protect our indigenous neighbors. In spite of this expressed commitment, just this week the Walz administration (along with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) granted Enbridge Inc. with their long sought after permits to begin construction on Line 3. This decision flies in the face of climate science and long-term health of our communities and planet. It also is another clear reminder that money talks and talks louder than the needs of the Indigenous communities that will be put at risk for the benefit of a corporation to make money on the sale of fossil fuels. In that regard, the long-standing tradition of broken promises to our Indigenous neighbors continues.

So what next? This reminds me that the world is gray and even those leaders we support make bad decisions. Unfortunately for us all Governor Walz made the wrong and likely devastating decision to allow Line 3 to move forward. It also reminds me that in this and all areas true change will come from the ground up. When our leaders fall short, when our leaders ignore science and the well-being of our fellow citizens WE must act. No doubt the actions of the Walz administration this week are a huge step back in the fight against Line 3. That said, the battle is not over. We all must rise, we all must push back. When we make our voices heard, when we follow the science to make decisions and when we put people first we will prevail. Hopefully then, our leaders like Governor Walz will come along with us..

Tom Lucy  
Como

## A socially distanced holiday season

We are now about nine months into the pandemic. Many have tried to maintain sanity by making jokes (today is the 265th day of March) as we all hear the same phrases used over and over ("in these unprecedented times" and "you're on mute" come to mind).

There was added excitement over the warmer months when we felt a sense of freedom as we could enjoy nice weather and many restrictions were eased. But as the year went on, we saw the likelihood of the pandemic's end coming before the end of 2020 look less and less likely as company work-from-home policies kept pushing out the return date.

The school year started with many students not in the classroom, but at home attempting to learn virtually. While students, teachers and parents all have said it has gone smoother than it did in the spring, the joy and social aspect are gone from in-person learning.

Now we are finding our-

selves in the midst of another time of the year we hoped we wouldn't experience socially distant from one another- the so-called "most wonderful time of the year." The annual gatherings with friends, family and colleagues at restaurants, offices and other public places are not happening, and holidays are advised to be spent only with immediate households. And the unfortunate numbers of new COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths are daily reminders of why we must continue to be careful.

So what can we do to bring light to this dark period? Plenty! Let's start with lights...

A favorite annual tradition for many is taking a tour of holiday lights. For some this is simply driving or walking around their neighborhood to see the biggest and brightest displays at nearby homes. For others, they may also seek out the homes that sync up their lights to a radio station. This year, there are also many professional displays including one at the State Fairgrounds. These events keep you

Building a stronger Midway

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

in the comfort and safety of your vehicle.

Even though shoppers are continually resorting to online shopping, many of us still prefer going in-person for our shopping - especially for gifts. Thankfully, health officials have found retail establishments are a low-risk place for spreading the virus due to shorter visits and a mask requirement. If you usually dread the idea of going to stores in December for fear of crowds, this year you should have an easier time finding a parking space and elbow room once inside. A comment I've seen online is now is the time to give back to those

small businesses in your community who have agreed so often to donate to an auction for your school, church and more.

While we cannot dine and drink inside our favorite restaurants and taprooms, we can still show them our support by ordering takeout. Gift cards also make excellent gifts, including for yourself. We all have our favorite places to dine; pick out your top few and show them your support this season.

Finally, while it isn't the same as being in person, you can still fire up the virtual meeting to connect with friends and family this year. This technology is a great way to stay connected and see people you might not normally see. Show your creativity by wearing a fun sweater, decorating Gingerbread houses and anything else you can think of that can be done virtually.

This holiday season will be one to remember. But it can also be one to remember for starting new traditions. Be safe, be creative and be thankful for what you have this year. May 2021 be a year that brings us a COVID vaccine and lessons learned from the challenges of 2020.

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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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# In a divided time, saving local journalism is a bipartisan cause

In a presidential election year and in the midst of the dual crises of the coronavirus pandemic and widespread economic misery, the divisions among Americans can seem to easily overwhelm the bonds that unite us.

That's why it's so heartening to see in recent weeks that Americans of all persuasions, and their political leaders on both sides of the aisle, are coalescing around a cause for a community pillar with a history of helping this nation navigate past buffeting winds of turmoil: Saving local journalism.

And make no mistake, local journalism – primarily the newspaper that brings news of its community from high school sports to mayoral campaigns – needs saving. Even before the pandemic lockdowns and before shuttering Main Street businesses sent advertising revenue off a cliff, local newspapers were operating on a financial knife edge. They are being whipsawed by Big Tech companies like Facebook and Google that suck up nearly all available ad dollars while paying no or minimal compensation for the local journalism content they display on platforms.

A joint survey of 20,000 Americans, which was conducted

by Gallup and the Knight Foundation just before the pandemic unleashed its wrath upon the nation, found Americans understand very well the consequences of civic life without robust local journalism.

The vast majority of Americans, more than eight in 10, say – in general – that the news media is “critical” or “very important” to democracy. More Americans report they are following local news closely. A follow-up question shows that these citizens are more likely to vote and to feel attached to their communities.

Most encouragingly, Americans still see the news media as part of the solution and not the problem: Nearly half, 49%, say the media could do “a great deal” to heal political divisions, while another 35% say journalism could contribute a “moderate amount” of healing.

Perhaps the best example of this growing recognition of the importance of local journalism – and the urgent need to support it in a time of its own crisis – is the bipartisan response to an important piece of legislation introduced this summer by U.S. Representatives Ann Kirkpatrick, a Democrat from Arizona, and Dan Newhouse, a Republican

**Guest columnist**



By **DEAN RIDINGS**  
CEO, America's Newspapers

from Washington state.

**The Local Journalism Sustainability Act has attracted 78 cosponsors.** These Congressional representatives range all over the supposedly immutable political divide – from liberal representatives, including Democrat Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C., to conservative Republican Vern Buchanan of Florida. In Minnesota, Betty McCollum (D-4), and Collin Peterson (D-7) are supporters.

There's a lot to like about the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, which will cost taxpayers nothing while helping the three stakeholders of trusted, fair and accurate journalism: People who subscribe to newspapers or other local media; businesses that advertise in local newspapers; and newspapers that staff their news-

rooms with journalists who cover the community.

The legislation provides a sun-setting five years of tax credits for subscriptions, advertising and newsroom payrolls.

Whether or not this legislation passes in this election-shortened Congressional session, it still stands as a way forward for bipartisan action on a crisis that affects not just newspapers, but all elements of a thriving community. That's why, if you don't see your Congressional representative in the list of cosponsors for H.R. 7640, please consider asking him or her to be part of the solution

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## Remember the Midway Stadium?

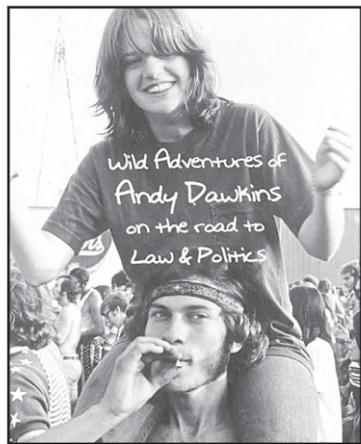
How many of you readers have a favorite Midway Stadium memory? Some of you, I'm sure, go all the way back to the old Midway Stadium built in 1956 on a gravel pit east of Snelling. Share your favorite memory with readers by emailing [news@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:news@MonitorSaintPaul.com).

How many of you readers have a favorite Midway Stadium memory? Some of you, I'm sure, go all the way back to the old Midway Stadium built in 1956 on a gravel pit east of Snelling. Share your favorite memory with readers by emailing [news@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:news@MonitorSaintPaul.com).

Maybe you saw a famous person there? Anybody in the stands the day that Gene Mauch, the Minneapolis Millers Manager, and later the Minnesota Twins, stormed into the stands and got into a fist fight with a fan? Is it possible someone out there even knows whom the fan was?! All I know is that he was a regular at Saints games, sat near the field, knew his baseball, and was good at getting the goat of opposing players.

I was there the day Eddie Feigner, the King and his Court, played a Twins team headed by Zoilo Versalles. Eddie Feigner (The King) threw a softball underhanded faster than any Major League pitchers of his day. He had just three teammates (The Court) behind him in the field; but I don't remember who won. Anybody remember who did, or the score?

There are great music events some of us might want to recount as well, but first I want to fit in one more baseball story – the day I met Hap Holmgren, the long-time Municipal Athletics Director who officed out of Midway Stadium. It was in 1979, on my first day back from law school out east. I needed a job while I studied for the bar exam, and thought umpiring could be kinda fun. It was 11 a.m. on a Friday, and first thing Hap said, was: “Can you do the



Andy Dawkins with Mary Jo Giblin, later editor of the *Biwabik Times*.

North St. Paul vs. Stillwater game at 1 o'clock this afternoon?” That sounded like the long and the short of the job interview, so of course I said yes, but I didn't have a car, didn't have a ball-strike indicator, didn't have time to go buy a blue umpires shirt. Instead just hopped the bus that took me out to North St. Paul on Highway 36.

Got there in time. I was supposed to be the base ump, but the home plate ump hadn't yet arrived by game time, so I called the opposing managers to the mound and said, “Without a chest protector I will call the game from behind the pitcher. Does anybody have an indicator? I haven't kept up with rule changes – just let me know if something comes up – but I do have excellent judgment. Batter up!”

It was the top of the first. A Stillwater better cracked a deep one to right. I thought it got over the fence and couldn't wait to show I knew the home run signal, circling my right arm in the air. But, unfortunately, the ball didn't clear the fence, and instead the North Saint Paul right-fielder picked it off the wall on one hop and twirled to make a great throw to second base. Meanwhile, the batter saw my signal and broke into his home

**Remembering the Midway**



By **ANDY DAWKINS**

run trot. Out at second base on a perfect throw, right? Wrong – ground rule double I ruled. Both managers strolled to the mound and I began hearing derisive remarks from the players and fans. “Thought you said you had great judgment. Son, there's always time to make the home run call. Next time make sure it's over the fence.” Fortunately the home plate ump showed-up just then, saving me from ongoing derisive remarks from the players and fans, and I was happy to be relegated to just doing the bases.

My favorite memory of a music event is the June 1971 Open Air Concert at the old stadium featuring Muddy Waters, John Sebastian, the Allman Brothers, and local musician Tony Glover. Maybe you were there too? And want to tell how much fun it was? Or maybe you saw The Replacements or Bob Dylan at the new (circa 1982 to 2015) stadium?

In 1971, I was 21 and about to start senior year at Hamline. My friends and I couldn't believe it! – a Woodstock happening just two blocks from Hamline! That's me in the photo from that day with Mary Joy Giblin on my shoulders, who later became the Editor of the *Biwabik Times*. Yeah, I was a total hippie that year.

Andy Dawkins has lived in the St. Paul Midway for the past 50 years. He is a retired attorney who served 15 years in the Minnesota State Legislature followed by four years working for the city of Saint Paul as its Director of Neighborhood Housing under Mayor Randy Kelly.

Share your favorite memory with readers by emailing [news@MonitorSaintPaul.com](mailto:news@MonitorSaintPaul.com).



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## AGING WELL

# 'All you need is a ball and a wall'

*Handball is a lifetime sport for local players*



Players stand in front of the wall at Clayland Park. (Photo submitted)

By CAROL MAHNKE

One wall handball wasn't designed for the pandemic. But it's a healthy solution to indoor courts for handball players.

"All you need is a ball and a wall," a player commented.

Without the other three walls, players are sometimes obliged to fetch the ball from the surrounding grass, but that's not considered a hardship.

At Clayland Park in St. Paul an unlikely combination of participants gather Thursday and Saturday afternoons to use their hands to bat the ball against a single wall erected in the middle of what might otherwise have been a tennis court.

The group includes doctors, lawyers and clergy as well as high school and college students and young men – some the children of immigrants to this country. There also are participants who

have served time in prison. And occasionally women play.

"It's a welcoming group," says Steven Tamminga of the Minnesota Handball Association. Anyone coming to the park will be welcomed to play the game.

YMCAs in the Twin Cities have limited play in handball/racquetball courts and some private gyms are open (depending on current COVID-19 restrictions). The Midway YMCA helped get young people started in handball and introduced them to the Clayland court, according to Mitchell Lallier of Kids on the Line/Minnesota Youth Handball.

Lallier's son, Joseph, whose mother is Peruvian, plays most Thursdays and Saturdays. He, Antonio Flores and Isaac Alberg play often. Joseph and Isaac have done well in national tournaments, but Antonio's family doesn't have the means to send



Handball brings together an unlikely combination of participants to use their hands to bat a ball against a wall. The group at Clayland Park includes doctors, lawyers and clergy, as well as high school and college students. (Photo submitted)

him to tournaments,

The two Lalliers, Mitchell and Joseph, teach handball at the Midway Y. They also teach children's swimming.

The wall went up about a year ago after a group of handball players raised the funds for

it and convinced the St. Paul Park Board it would be a good addition to the park.

"If you want to play handball this year," said player Rich Ryan, "this is your best option."

ALL YOU NEED >> 7

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"It's a welcoming group," said Steve Tamminga of the Minnesota Handball Association. Anyone is welcome to join the game at Clayland Park. (Photo submitted)

## ALL YOU NEED

>> from 6

Jack LaVeille is kind of a renaissance man. He has taught school, raised hogs, worked with nuclear energy – and now is a court mediator. He learned to play with his father some 50 years ago when he was 17.

LaVeille, Golden Valley, says handball is to racket ball as chess is to checkers. Handball is a refinement of the game, he believes.

Handball leaves out the racket; players hit the ball with their hands. Most play with a somewhat soft ball, but some play with a smaller, hard ball and it takes awhile to get hands calloused enough to play comfortably.

Neighborhood residents were at first puzzled and a little leery of the wall, but the players take care to leave room for neighbors to park around Clayland and they maintain good sportsmanship and relatively quiet play.

There have been other courts

"It's a lifetime sport."

~ Rich Ryan

at Phalen and in Richfield but they have deteriorated. The Clayland wall is poured concrete.

New York has many one-wall handball courts and there are courts at Iowa University in Ames as well as in Fargo, N.D., Springfield, Mo., Portland and Seattle.

"It's a lifetime sport," according to Ryan. Tournaments have age brackets ranging from under 15 to 80.

"It's a path to resilience," he added.

The game goes back to 17th century England when Oliver Cromwell served as Lord Protector, known for ethnic cleansing activities in Ireland. Cromwell's strict rule outlawed many sports so the Irish developed a quickly hidden and dispersed game called "alley cracker" in which a small ball was batted by hand against an outdoor wall, explains Rich Ryan.

The game's ideals focus on

Hand, Heart and Head because the skill involves all three, Ryan said.

The tournament held recently at Clayland Park, sponsored by the Hamline-Midway Handball Club, the Midway Men's Club and the Hamline-Midway Coalition brought some nationally-ranked players to the little park.

Dave Schiller, who learned to play in the Stillwater prison, organized the tournament. He was a finalist in the play, but was defeated by tournament champion Dave Velez of New York.

Sean Lenning of Seattle came to Clayland for the tournament. He has been playing for 19 years — since he was 16. He finds handball players to be "independent minded people," and he enjoys playing outdoors.

Lee Engele of St. Paul has earned national status. She says her sister, Anna, was a better player, earning world titles, before she retired. But Lee has many titles to her credit.

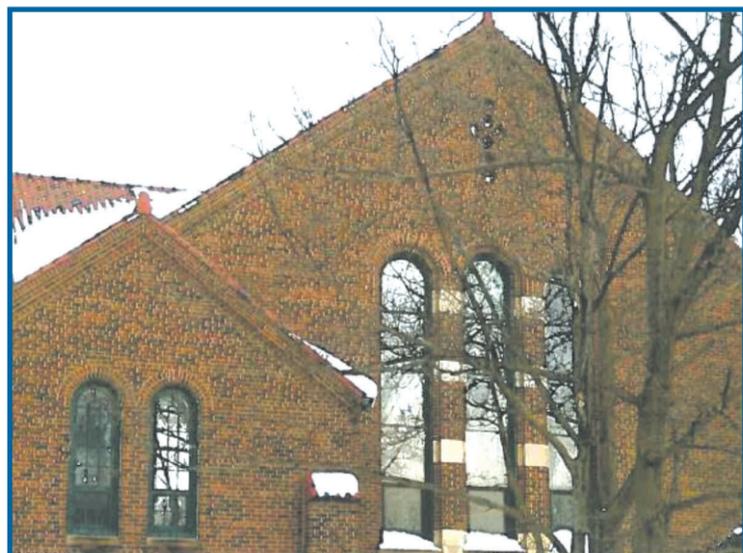
Several of the players said they learned to play from their fathers, and they have good memories of father-son times.

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# Creative Enterprise Zone hires new executive director

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Angela Casselton was recently named executive director of the Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ), a non-profit organization that attracts and supports creatives of all kinds to "make it here."

Where exactly is here? The CEZ sits squarely between the University of Minnesota and the Midway along University Ave. It's a district that fosters creativity and innovation, equity and environmental health. It has also been the fastest growing neighborhood in St. Paul for five years.

## Building on the past

Casselton is keenly aware of the economic challenge brought on by the pandemic, but remains hopeful as she starts her new job. She said, "I've been involved with this organization for years in different capacities. It's important to remember that the CEZ was born during a time of great disruption, when Green Line construction tore up the length of University Ave."

She continued, "We know that our neighborhood is resilient. Even so, there will be changes because of pandemic-related business closures. How it looks now may be different from how it will look next year."

Most people know the CEZ for their work with the Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival in 2019, for which they have earned their moniker, "the mural people." A dozen murals were commissioned by artists from the Twin Cities and beyond two summers ago.

Casselton worked with CEZ founder, Catherine Reid Day, to gather neighborhood sponsors



## THE ZONE

The Creative Enterprise Zone includes the area between:

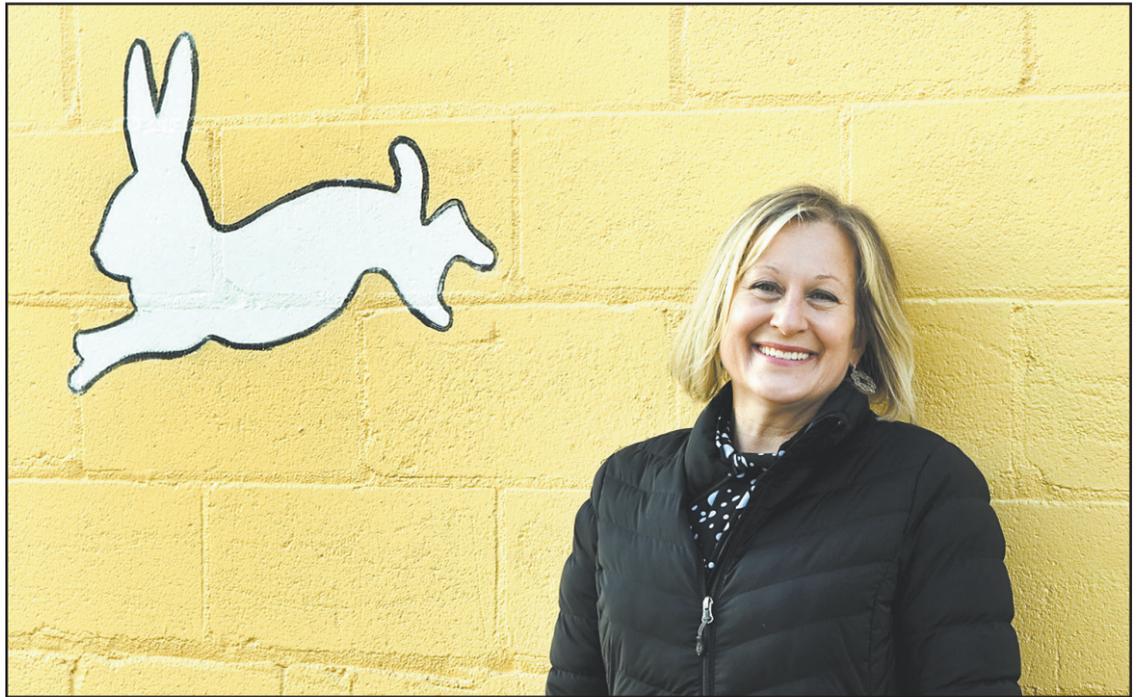
- Emerald Ave on the west
- Prior Ave on the east
- I-94 on the south and
- The railroad yards on the north

for that first-ever event in St. Paul. Casselton said, "I learned about so many businesses in the CEZ through those contacts, and was given an opportunity to help shape that first festival, too."

Her learned experience will be put to good use in 2021 when the festival returns. Due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, the 2020 Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival was cancelled and sponsors were released from their obligations. Nonetheless, with grant funding from the Knight Foundation and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, the CEZ was still able to oversee the creation of six new murals last year.

## Strengthening community connections

In addition to brightening the corridor with public art, CEZ staff and board members are working behind the scenes in other ways. Casselton said, "The



The Creative Enterprise Zone's new executive director Angela Casselton. The 18 murals that now grace the mostly industrial spaces of the CEZ are a great way to experience art, especially during the pandemic when museums are closed. View the map of where they are located on the CEZ website at [www.creativeenterprisezone.org](http://www.creativeenterprisezone.org). (Photos by Margie O'Loughlin)

key to the success of the CEZ as an organization has been, and will continue to be, collaboration."

An example is the US Bank that used to operate at the corner of Raymond and University avenues. The property has been purchased by developer Kraus-Anderson, and will be replaced with a multi-story housing project.

The Kraus-Anderson development team met with a task force that included CEZ staff several times while they were designing that project. Casselton said, "They made a point of bringing us to the table. This kind of collaboration results in a neighborhood that is more cohesive and better functioning."

With the recent installation of Renee Spillum as board president, the CEZ board is prepared to move forward into the world of real estate negotiations.

Spillum is a senior project manager for Seward Redesign, a community development corporation that promotes the health, vitality and self-determination of the Seward neighborhood in Minneapolis. She holds a masters of public policy with a concentration in housing and community development from the Humphrey Institute, and has lived in the Midway area for 15 years.

One of the ideas up for consideration is forming a Community Investment Cooperative, modeled on the one being explored by the Hamline Midway Coalition (with technical assistance provided by CEZ consultant Erin Heelan.) That would give corridor residents a chance to buy into building ownership, preserving space for creative studios and shops.

Casselton said, "The definition of 'creative' includes artists

of all kinds, manufacturers, entrepreneurs with a creative focus, architects, designers, writers, and artisans. Our vision is rooted in the belief that creative work is both necessary and deeply satisfying. A growing number of people make a living through their creative talents. The more vibrant the mix of people and ideas here, the more desirable the CEZ will be to live and work in."

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the staff and volunteers of CEZ continue with their core operations: a monthly newsletter, social media communications, community-driven real-estate work and more.

Questions about the CEZ can be directed to executive director Angela Casselton at [info@creativeenterprisezone.org](mailto:info@creativeenterprisezone.org). For newsletter sign-up, visit [www.creativeenterprisezone.org](http://www.creativeenterprisezone.org).

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# 'Mr. Rondo's Spirit: a story of a man and his community'

Author focuses on ordinary people doing extraordinary things who reached deep down and found courage

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

According to Rondo resident, educator, and artist Ericka Dennis, most children she meets don't know the real story of the historic Rondo neighborhood.

Dennis currently works as a Family Liaison at Barack Obama Elementary School in the Summit University neighborhood. Her job is to facilitate parent education and school programming, to connect families with resources, to mediate concerns, and to develop community connections.

She said, "While most of the students where I work, including Black children, could tell you there's a summer festival in the neighborhood called Rondo Days - they couldn't tell you what the celebration is about. They don't understand what was lost here back in the 1960s."

Old Rondo was once a thriving mix of African American churches, businesses, schools, and homes for more than 100 years. When construction of I-94 began in 1956, its path was drawn to cut right through the middle of the Rondo neighborhood, where approximately 90% of the St. Paul's Black population lived.

By the time the freeway opened in 1968, more than 600 family homes and businesses had been destroyed.

## A story to raise awareness

Dennis said, "When kids drive down I-94 between Rice St. and Lexington Ave., they need to understand that Rondo's business district was right here, underneath where the pavement is now. The freeway cut through Rondo's main street, forcing neighborhood stores to close.



Ericka Dennis (pictured left), author of "Mr. Rondo's Spirit," with her son Zaine Dennis at the Rondo Commemorative Plaza at 820 Concordia (Old Rondo) Ave. and Fisk St. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

These miles of roads, built for fast transportation, pushed Black residents into mass migration."

A couple of years ago, Dennis learned of a project to teach children the truth about Old Rondo.

The project was launched by a collective of three St. Paul organizations: the publishing house In Black Ink, Rondo Avenue Inc., and the Minnesota Humanities Commission. Their vision was to start gathering and publishing little known stories of Old Rondo. Writers and artists with direct connections to the Rondo community were sought out, and Ericka Dennis was one of them.

Dennis had grown up in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood, graduated from Central High School, and gone on to work as a professional theatre artist on many local stages as an actor, playwright, and director.

She has been a resident of Rondo since 1995, and has deep roots in the community.

When asked to submit a book proposal on a Rondo theme, she procrastinated because, she said, "Honestly, I just didn't have the time. It also seemed unlikely that I'd get picked, since I'd never written a children's book before."

Dennis laid the request for proposals letter on her desk, and almost didn't submit it. At the last minute she did and, to her surprise, her book proposal was chosen from a stack of others for publication. It was time to add "children's book author" to her already long list of professional accomplishments.

## Book character inspired by real lives

Dennis said, "I decided to make the central character a composite of many people's stories. I wanted the readers to feel something while they were learning. The destruction of Rondo is so personal, so much more than a telling of facts. Yes, there was a

lot of information to cover, but it had to be done in a way that was engaging. I chose a rhyme scheme for the story-telling voice, and aimed at fifth-sixth graders for my primary audience."

In "Mr. Rondo's Spirit: a story of a man and his community," the central character is Paul Rondo. He worked as a Pullman Porter for the railroad, and lived in the Rondo neighborhood before Interstate-94 was built. Mr. Rondo tells about his life in Rondo and how it changed over time. Through sheer will and faith, Mr. Rondo and his family found a way to keep the spirit and legacy of Old Rondo alive.

The book has been distributed widely through schools and the St. Paul Public Library by the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

## The Rondo Commemorative Plaza

Dennis is at work on a different story telling project these

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days. She explained, "The Rondo Commemorative Plaza is a public park at 820 Concordia (Old Rondo) Ave. and Fisk St. The exhibits there tell the history of the neighborhood, and were designed to rotate. I was commissioned to write a new panel called "Women in business in Rondo." I've finished with the writing, and the fabrication process has begun. Installation will be in 2021."

Interstate-94 is already more than 50 years old. Its construction took a mighty toll on Old Rondo, but at least the stories are getting told now. According to Dennis, "There is something of a Rondo Revival going on, and it is all about ordinary people doing extraordinary things."

'MR. RONDO'S >> 11

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## FROGTOWN

# Chestnut trees planted in Frogtown garden

*New hybrid brings hope against chestnut blight*

By RENNIE GAITHER

The legendary chestnut tree, once dominant in the ancient forests from Connecticut to eastern China and Japan, stands firmly among the pantheon of classic American trees. This forest giant, nicknamed the bread tree, was a wildlife staple and generous source of timber, food and income for Americans during the 18th and 19th centuries.

However, a devastating fungus introduced from imported Japanese chestnuts had other plans.

The American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), capable of growing to a height of 80 to 100 feet and a diameter of nearly 10 feet, has endured an epic bumpy ride over the last century. And the tree has now dropped new roots in Frogtown.

The chestnut blight, *Cryphonectria parasitica*, first noticed in 1904 at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, whipped across the east and central midwestern states. An estimated 4 billion trees perished in just 25 years.

Today, most generally consider the American chestnut tree virtually extinct in the wild, despite occasional sightings of “living dead” stumps. Present-day orchardists continue to grow American chestnut trees commercially through careful coppicing, or cutting the tree down to ground level, hoping for new shoots. Such commercial tree management can keep trees alive and growing for approximately 15 years before they succumb to blight.

Historically, the chestnut proved a bounteous stalwart. Consistent crops of wild American chestnuts once covered the forest floor of the Appalachian Mountains. Deer, raccoons, squirrels, opossums, skunks, chipmunks and other rodents foraged on this favored nut. There’s a long history of livestock grazing on the nut. Chestnut leaves and flowers sourced food and nectar for over 100 species



Frogtown Green volunteers planted the chestnut seedlings around the perimeter of Frogtown Green’s Our Village Community Garden at Pierce Butler and Milton avenues. (Photo submitted)

modification promises a path toward successful reintroduction of American chestnut trees with nearly 100% original genetic makeup.

This past October a donor gifted 14 chestnut tree seedlings to Frogtown Green, a 10-year-old, resident-led and volunteer-powered community organization.

The hybrid trees came from Badgersett Research Corporation in Canton, Minn. Badgersett describes them: “Our hybrids now contain American and Chinese species most frequently, with varying amounts of Japanese, European, and Seguin chestnut.”

Frogtown Green volunteers, along with the grounds crew at Terrybear, Inc., planted the seedlings around the perimeter of Frogtown Green’s Our Village Community Garden at Pierce Butler and Milton avenues. Volunteers subsequently enclosed the seedlings in 0.5-inch mesh hardware cloth for protection against rabbits and other mammals. Terrybear crew later added wood chips as a surface mulch.

It’s hoped that these chestnuts will add needed diversity to Frogtown’s tree canopy, along with a host of other benefits such as mitigation of climate change. If these trees are able to establish themselves and succeed through harsh Minnesota winters, they should bring some much-needed cheer in spring.

Discover more about Frogtown Green tree plantings: <https://tinyurl.com/y6s5ow2n>.

Learn about other Frogtown Green opportunities: [frogtown-green.com](http://frogtown-green.com).

**GREENER IN 2020**  
What Frogtown Green Did This Year

- We grew and gave away 73 fruit and shade trees to homeowners and renters.
- We maintained 6,000 feet of pollinator gardens at our neighborhood park.
- We kept 60 community garden beds open and growing food for families.

Want to know more?  
[frogtowngreen.com](http://frogtowngreen.com)  
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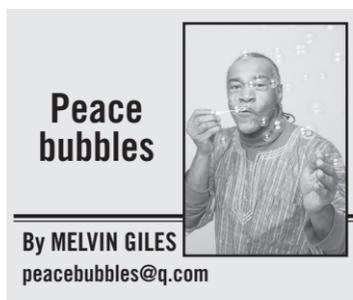
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## FROGTOWN

# I wish you hopeful, healing and prosperous shining 2021

*All shall be well,  
And all shall be well,  
And all manner of things  
shall be well.*

~ Dame Julian of Norwich



Season greetings, Monitor readers,

This has been the most strangest, weirdest, and craziest Leap Year I have experienced since 1984; instead of having national leadership in deep denial of HIV/AIDS, we currently have national leadership deep in non-accountability of COVID-19; instead of the Rainbow Coalition, we have Black Lives Matter; and instead of voting to keep the same status quo, this Leap Year we chose a different path forward and not voting to stay in denial or not being accountable to all people regardless of being blue, red, purple, or another color or culture.

Thank you to all first time voters and to our young and older courageous Social Justice Champions!

Today, I send us all a cheerful holiday message and good tidings of Hope, Wellness, Joy, Compassion, Abundance, Healing, and Gratefulness. I end this unbelievable year with Hope that All Will Be Well going into 2021. My hope is not pretending that everything thing is okay Behold Underlying Truth, believing that talking, working, playing, and dancing together (all colors and cultures) things and our way of being will be well. Yes, we still have months and months of challenging times

ahead; however, every day we are learning more and connecting dots. For instance, more and more people are calculating COVID-19 and the I Can't Breathe killing of George Floyd to understanding and acknowledging the link of climate change and Black Lives Matters to the negative historic impacts of remaining silent, following rules to receive benefits and privileges and allowing injustice to happen to First Nation, Black, Brown and Mixed People and to our environment.

Mother Earth and her children cannot breathe because of an outdated and out-of-control toxic system of man-isms and we are dying and have been senselessly dying for generations. Please, let us take some time during this season of light to breathe, ponder, and start/continue unpacking our outdated mental files and fear-based beliefs and act and behave as appreciative adult children to our green planet and all creatures, great and small.

We can start locally with supporting and standing with Red Lake and White Earth Nations'

common sense, rational, and wise demand to stop violating and destroying their and our nurturing sacred living space we call Earth/Minnesota! Pipeline workers can transition into clean and green Earth-workers. Let's learn the lessons of the past and stop breaking treaties and spreading diseases, in order to master the land and People of All Colors.

In short, in America/Minnesota when we start honoring, listening, and respecting indigenous wisdom and practices we will begin to eradicate man-made diseases and restore a healthiness that was before the arrival of the Mayflower.

Part of denial or keeping a dysfunctional status quo in place is saying "don't get political." This is not about politics; it's about living in a healthy, fair, and regenerative manner. We are the vaccination for COVID and we are the immunization for a better, just, healthy, and peaceful world. Our biggest challenge is ourselves.

I have hope that we can and will overcome our challenges and obstacles by working, struggling,

and celebrating together.

On behalf of all the great people and organizations I have the pleasure of daily struggling, working, playing, singing, dancing, and planning with, in particular, the Community Peace Builders (formerly the Peaceful Love Warriors), the Urban Farm & Garden Alliance (UFGA), Bethel University FSU Community Partnership, the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC), the UMN Place-Based Approach (PBA) Team, the Art of Food In Frogtown and Rondo, and my faith-based and community allies, I wish the *Monitor's* readership a blessed and compassionate ending of 2020 and a hopeful, healing, and prosperous shining 2021.

Be safe, be well, and be at peace. All is well and all shall be well.

*May Peace Prevail Be In Rondo, Frogtown, & Hamline/Midway Communities*

*May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities*

*May Peace Prevail On Earth (MPPOE)*

## 'Mr. Rondo's Spirit'

>> from 9

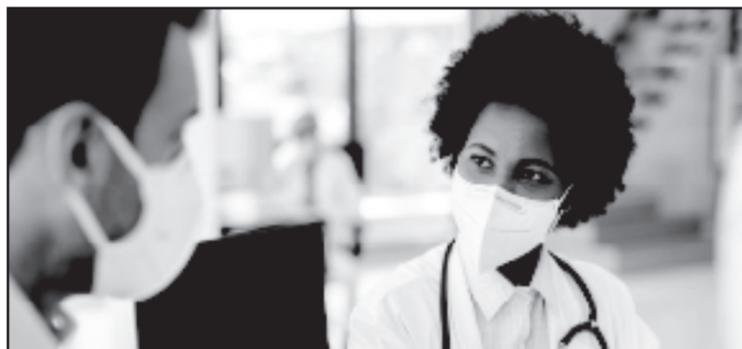
Dennis considers herself one of those ordinary people. She said, "I have had to struggle with self-doubt, like most people, but I do have something to say – something to share."

She concluded, "In these times especially, I want people to believe in themselves. Children think that when someone does something notable, that person is somehow different from them. But they're not; they've just reached deep down in themselves and found some courage."

Author, actor, educator, activist, and mother Ericka Dennis (left), with her son Zaine Dennis, has been a resident of Rondo since 1995, and has deep roots in the community. She is also working on a new panel at the commemorative plaza called "Women in business in Rondo." Dennis said, "We must dare to speak the truth to power in our homes, in our work spaces, in our communities, and in our world." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



## Frog Food by Z Akhmetova



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## HAMLINE MIDWAY / COMO

# We're making our list of best holiday decorations

The Como Community Council is looking for the best holiday decorations in the neighborhood. Here's how it works.

1. Now: Sign up your house or a neighbor's by filling out the form at [www.district10comopark.org/holidays.html](http://www.district10comopark.org/holidays.html). Get us the entry before 8 a.m. on Monday Dec. 14. (Entries must be within District 10 – which is the parts of Saint Paul from roughly Larpen-teur on the north, Dale on the east, Pierce Butler on the south, and Aldine on the west.)

2. Beginning Dec. 15: We'll turn residents loose to choose their favorites. Check the Como Community Council's website and Facebook pages to find a map of all the nominated houses! Take a stroll or ride, and enjoy our community's creativity.

3. Dec. 15-30: Vote for the Neighbor's Choice Award (we'll link to the ballot from our web page when all nominations are in).

4. Thursday Dec. 31: We'll announce the neighborhood's favorites – who get bragging rights, celebratory cookies, fame, and more.

## District 10 Como Community Council

By MICHAEL KUCHTA,  
Executive Director  
[district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org)



the Como Park area a better place to live, work or play? Nominate them for the District 10 Neighborhood Honor Roll. The Honor Roll pays tribute to everyday people who make a sustained and lasting impact in our neighborhood or the city.

Submit your nominations by email to: [district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org). Make sure we receive them no later than Thursday Jan. 14. Tell us who you are nominating and why. The Como Community Council board then selects three of your nominees at its January board meeting recognize for 2020.

### Make a meal out of this

The Como Community Council, in partnership with the Sanneh Foundation, is distribut-



Thanks to the astounding generosity of Como residents, 150 seniors in the neighborhood and 50 homeless youth at Booth Brown House received freshly made Thanksgiving meals. Como residents donated more than \$2,300 to make it happen, and nearly 50 volunteers delivered the meals in person. Here, Joan McKernan picks up meals to deliver from Molly Fitzel, executive director of the North End-South Como Block Nurse Program, who helped the Como Community Council coordinate the effort. (Photo submitted)

ing free meal boxes on selected Friday afternoons for Ramsey County residents dealing with financial hardships because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The boxes hold ingredients and recipe suggestions for

two meals (6 servings each). The boxes contain locally sourced food, including lean proteins, whole grains, fresh produce, spices, and pantry staples.

Distribution will be on Fridays Dec. 11 and 18, beginning

at 1:30 p.m. Distribution will be in the north parking lot of Niem Phat Buddhist Temple, at Como and Front. The site is served by the 3A and 65 buses.

Reservations are highly recommended: Sign up at [www.district10comopark.org/mealbox.html](http://www.district10comopark.org/mealbox.html). Walk-up distribution will be available while supplies last.

### Call or link into D10 meetings

Pandemic or not, renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to participate in District 10's board and committee meetings. You can join either by video conference or by phone.

To obtain links, phone numbers, or other access information, send a request by email to [district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org). Or, call 651-644-3889. Upcoming meetings:

- Board meeting: Tuesday Dec. 15.
- Neighborhood Relations: Tuesday Jan. 5
- Land Use: Wednesday Jan. 6
- Environment: Wednesday Jan. 12

All meetings begin at 7 p.m. Whenever possible, agendas and other relevant documents are posted in advance in the "Board News" section of District 10's website: [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org)

### Recognition where it's due

Know someone who makes

## Teens serve as election judges

During the intensity of the 2020 General Election, many Como students took it upon themselves to participate in our democracy. Very few high school students are eligible voters, the exception being a handful who turn 18 early in their senior year.

However, 10 current Como seniors became Ramsey County student election judges and served alongside veteran judges at precincts across St. Paul on Nov. 3. Online training programs prior to election day prepared the students for a 15-hour shift in which they helped carry out tasks needed to ensure fair and legitimate elections.

Senior Fiona Hatch, who worked at North Dale Rec Center, shared that the experience has been valuable in connecting her, and those like her, to the democratic process.

"I think that young people – especially those who have not yet had the chance to vote in an election – can really benefit (by serving as an election judge) be-

## Como Park Senior High School

By ERIC ERICKSON  
Social studies teacher



cause it makes politics and current events feel real," Hatch said.

"I found that while serving, I've been so much more invested in keeping up with our country's policies and affairs because of my time as an election judge".

Several Como alumni who were election judges in 2019's off-year elections and 2020's presidential primary also returned to duty at St. Paul precincts.

Two members from Como's class of 2020 continued internships with the St. Paul League of Women Voters (LWVSP) that



Como seniors Kalid Ali (left) and Nag Poe have taken an active role in promoting political participation as interns with the League of Women Voters. (Photos submitted by Eric Erickson)



they began as high school seniors. Emma Wolters, who now attends the University of Minnesota, and Lila Seeba, who now attends Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, created and implemented census outreach programs last summer.

This fall, they virtually col-

laborated on presentations, newsletters, and social media links to promote voter registration and turnout. In our digital and video conferencing world, their materials were shared from dorms, across town and across an ocean, to college campuses and communities in St. Paul.

Two seniors in Como's class of 2021 also began internships with the LWVSP doing census outreach last summer. Nag Poe and Kalid Ali produced materials in Karen and Oromo to distribute within their respective communities. In September, they made presentations about political participation to senior U.S. Government classes at Como via Google Meets.

"I want my community represented," Ali said. "Since I couldn't vote this year I felt like registering others to vote was another way I could participate in our democratic system."

### Conference title

The Cougars football team wrapped up the St. Paul City Conference Championship before all Minnesota State High School League activities were put on pause. Como finished 4-0 in the abbreviated season, making memories during the challenges of the pandemic which will last a lifetime. It was the first conference title for the football team since 2009.

## { Monitor in a Minute }

By JANE McCLURE

### Hamline Park playground funds

New playground equipment for Hamline Park is getting a boost in the form of a grant. On Nov. 18, 2020, the St. Paul City Council authorized the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept a grant of \$79,122.36 to reduce the cost of play equipment for the park at 1564 Lafond Ave.

The park was chosen for an update using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars, based on a ranking done regularly by parks staff. Staff look at issues including condition of current equipment and neighborhood need. The project went through the city's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget process.

Minnesota-Wisconsin Playground was recently selected by parks staff to provide the new playground equipment valued at \$237,933.64. The firm is a Minnesota company and an industry leader in supplying and installing new play equipment products and components that include best-selling play structures and components nationwide.

The project is getting help from the playground equipment company GameTime. GameTime has a grant program which will reduce the cost of the equipment. City Council action is required to accept the grant.

### Energy study on tap for Como

A geothermal feasibility study of the Como Zoo/Conservatory

Campus has obtained an \$8,114 from the city's Energy Conservation Loan Fund. The St. Paul City Council approved the allocation, which will cover the city's 25 percent share of the study costs.

The remaining costs of \$24,342 will be covered by Xcel Energy. A local company, Darcy Solutions, is also involved in the study.

The intent is to find a replacement for an old steam boiler system at the conservatory and zoo. The city is trying to reach a goal of carbon neutrality in municipal buildings during the next decade. Geothermal systems use groundwater to heat and cool buildings. They are preferred not just for long-term cost savings but also for reduction of carbon emissions.

The study is expected to be completed next year and should inform city leaders as to issues including which aquifer to use and

how a system would be set up. The city will then look for ways to pay for a new system.

The Energy Conservation Loan Fund was established by the mayor and City Council in the 2008 city budget as a means of financing energy projects that support sustainable economic, social and environmental development through the implementation of energy efficient and renewable energy measures.

### Business among honorees

A pandemic cannot keep St. Paul city leaders from honoring small businesses. The St. Paul City Council in November presented its annual St. Paul Business Awards.

Businesses are nominated by the public and chosen by a committee of past award winners. Businesses are typically honored in person, with awards and a reception,

but that couldn't happen this year. A video tribute was prepared for the businesses.

Council members said it's especially important to honor businesspeople during what has been a very challenging time.

Flannery Construction, which is located in Snelling-Hamline neighborhood at 1375 St. Anthony Ave., was given the Good Neighbor Award. This award is for business that has shown dedication to improving the community, and working with community partners. Flannery is a second-generation business, getting its start in 1980.

Other businesses honored are Candyland in downtown St. Paul, West End business Jandrich Floral and the East Side's Karibu Grocery & Deli. Businesses are honored as newcomers, longtime community establishments and in a people's choice award.

# Mapping Prejudice brings light to history's structural racism that impacts today's community

## BUILDING UPON OTHER WORK

Mapping Prejudice is based in the Borchert Map Library at the University of Minnesota. In 2016, the founding members of the project team joined forces to create the first-ever comprehensive visualization of racial covenants for an American city.

Mapping Prejudice was inspired by groundbreaking work in Seattle and Virginia that show how digital tools can illuminate structural racism and transform our understanding of the past.

Segregated Seattle was the brainchild of the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project at the University of Washington, which assembled a database of racial covenants that has become an important resource for historians, legal researchers and activists trying to understand how ideas about race shaped real estate law and housing policy.

Mapping Inequality was conceived by the University of Richmond's Digital Lab, which digitized New Deal redlining maps to illuminate how federal policy makers "used racial criteria to categorize lending and insurance risks." Historians have long understood the importance of redlining. Yet by using digital mapping software to organize, analyze and display historic data about this practice, this project retold the story in way that made it accessible for a popular audience.

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>> from 1

The exhibit aims to counter the idea of Minneapolis as a "model metropolis" so that as a city, it can begin to recognize its past. More about her exhibit can be found at [dpike.dash.umn.edu/owningup](http://dpike.dash.umn.edu/owningup).

"While we make no policy proposals, we hope that the exhibit encourages visitors to think critically about their neighborhoods and the future of the city of Minneapolis," Pike said.

She co-curated the exhibit along with Kacie Lucchini Butcher after their first year in the Heritage Studies and Public History Master's program at the University of Minnesota. They worked closely together with Mapping Prejudice. Their goal is to create a visible representation of the systematic racism that's happening.

According to Pike, Minnesota is ranked highest in racial disparities and residential segregation in a predominantly White area. She believes that these covenants aren't just things of the past, but that they impact the community today and will in the future, as well.

"It puts into perspective just how wide-spread and destructive racially-discriminatory policies were to communities of color. In

order to make reparations in the present day, we must fully understand the damages we are dealing with," Pike said.

### 'White public doesn't realize full extent of disparities'

Areas that had racial covenants placed on property are still some of the most predominately White areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The areas that people of color were allowed to live in are still areas with the highest population of color. Despite racial housing discrimination being illegal for over 50 years, there are still long lasting patterns of segregation. Notable is the gap in homeownership rates. While 78 percent of white families own homes in the Twin Cities, only 25 percent of African-American families have title to their dwelling.

"Minneapolis and the Twin Cities see themselves as very progressive places but, I think that a large portion of the White public don't realize the full extent of racial disparities here," Pike said.

She also believes that the segregation of housing, in part, has to do with the current Uprising. Mapping Prejudice is for the purpose of giving people a deeper understanding of how ingrained structural racism is in

Minneapolis. It is a tool to connect the dots between housing, policing, health and school disparities among others.

"I think the Uprising we are seeing locally is due in part to initiatives like Mapping Prejudice, which builds on the work of anti-racist activism." Pike said, "Communities of color have known and lived this history and have been fighting back against structural racism all along, I think where this data has had the most impact, is in White residents."

During her time with Mapping Prejudice, Pike said she has learned a lot. Through this, she has been able to have many conversations with community members. She and her co-curator met with educators, students, historians, politicians and real estate agents. They had personal discussions about how the exhibit and racial disparities in housing have impacted them. But, Pike thinks that more can be done. She hopes to encourage an ongoing conversation, like the ones she had around her exhibit, on local and present day structural racism.

"As a public historian I want to make those connections between past and present so that we can move forward towards a more equitable future," Pike said.

## What are covenants?

During the twentieth century, racially-restrictive deeds were a ubiquitous part of real estate transactions. Covenants were embedded in property deeds all over the country to keep people who were not White from buying or even occupying land. In Minneapolis, the first racially-restrictive deed appeared in 1910, when Henry and Leonora Scott sold a property on 35th Avenue South to Nels Anderson. Covenants remained commonplace in much of the nation until 1968, when the Fair Housing Act made them explicitly illegal.

## Why covenants matter

Covenants divided cities by race. These residential segregation patterns persist today. And this physical segregation undergirds contemporary racial disparities. Covenants did more than steer people to certain neighborhoods. They also determined who could buy property.

Today Minneapolis has the lowest African-American homeownership rate in the country. And since most families amass wealth through property ownership, this homeownership gap continues to feed the contemporary racial wealth gap. Wealth is built through generations, with one generation passing resources to another. Thanks in part to the racial biases that have been baked into the real estate market over the last century, the average White household in the United States has 10 times as much wealth as the average Black household.

The racial wealth gap makes it hard to erode residential segregation. And it contributes in every way to the racial disparities in education, health outcomes and employment facing our community today.

From [mappingprejudice.umn.edu](http://mappingprejudice.umn.edu)

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### Young people help at Midway YMCA tree lot

Again Gary Ales and the Friendship Club turn out to help the Midway YMCA Men's Club unload Christmas trees to help raise money for the Y programs. Over 50 people showed up the make hard work easy.

The 50 people came from seven high schools (Central, Humboldt, OWL, St. Paul Academy, Visitation, St. Thomas Academy, Eagan High School and four colleges (Concordia Women hockey team, St. Kate, St. Paul College, and Inver Hills Community college). Gary said that Nikki Schilling started coming out 15 years ago as a ninth grader at Humboldt High School and now she is a fifth grade supervisor at Bruce Vento School.

When Joseph Lallier (senior at Eagan High School) was asked why he had been doing this for the past four years, he said that beside being fun it was a way a young person could give back to his community. Dave Dominick, the director of the Midway YMCA, was so thankful to all the persons that turned out to help unload the Christmas trees this year.



"Leadership in our community comes by being servants to others. To finding a need and filling it, by taking your gifts and sharing them with others, taking what you have plenty of and giving to others. By being active in your community and demanding the best from everyone," observed Mitchell Lallier. "What a fun way to start the season by giving to others.

Someone brought bell necklaces and wrist bells to ring as they worked. A group broke out singing Jingle Bells and everyone joined in.

## In Brief

### Recycle broken holiday lights

Got any broken strings of lights this holiday season? Don't throw them away - recycle them! Saint Paul Public Library locations will be collecting holiday lights for recycling through Jan. 22, 2021. Look for the "Holiday Light Recycling" bin at your local library. Visit [stpaul.gov/recyclingholidaylights](http://stpaul.gov/recyclingholidaylights) to find a drop-off location.

Accepted items: Holiday lights, electric cords, telephone cords.

Prohibited items: Cord adaptors, battery packs, plastic rope lights, CFL lights.

### Rep. Rena Moran honored

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) presented St. Paul Rep. Rena Moran (District 65A) with a Legislator of the Year Award at its annual conference, held online on Nov. 14. The award recognizes a legislator who has been an outspoken advocate for children and adults with mental ill-

ness and their families.

NAMI's board president Carrie Borchard said, "Representative Moran has focused much of her energies on ensuring that children receive the support they need to succeed. This has led to her authoring bills to support trauma informed schools, changing child protection laws, promoting early and effective childcare, and funding culturally competent mental health care. She has also worked on police reform, and expunging eviction records so they don't become a permanent barrier to housing.

"NAMI greatly appreciates her advocacy on children's mental health and wellbeing and her work to make our mental health system more accessible and culturally competent," she said.



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## WHAT'S OPEN

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## Trash fees increasing

>> from 1

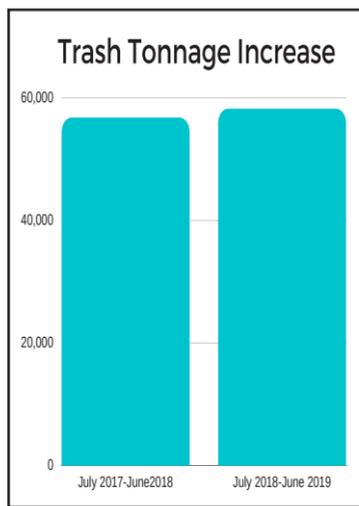
Summit Hill resident and landlord Alisa Lein expressed frustration that despite promises by the city council to improve the system, nothing has changed. "Our supposedly protected tenants are still forced to pay garbage overcharges mandated by the city's no-sharing and no opt-out policy," she said.

Lein is asking that more be done to let multi-unit building share fewer carts or have a dumpster. Buildings are required to have one cart per dwelling unit. She's also asking that multi-family buildings not have to pay the city charges and pay on their own.

"My family alone currently has 16 mandated trash carts collecting dust in basements. Sixteen carts ready to be used versus making more. We are not the only property owners storing, and paying for, unused carts."

Ward Seven Council Member Jane Prince agreed that the council needs to look at the issues raised by Lein and other multi-family property owners. But that will have to wait until the city and haulers' consortium can renegotiate the contract.

Others said any increase is too much or asked the city to do more to acknowledge those who work to live zero-waste lifestyles through recycling, composting and making purchases that generate less trash.



The trash charges have to be set by ordinance, using a formula that factors in fuel prices, the Consumer Price Index, taxes, tonnage collection history and the tipping fees at the Ramsey/Washington counties' facility in Newport. The tipping fee for 2021 will be \$84 per ton, up \$2 from the 2020 charge.

The tonnage increase is based on program history, from June 2018 to July 2019, during which 58,214.15 tons of trash were collected. That's an increase of 1,445.48 tons over the period July 2017 to June 2018. City staff expect the next reporting period to see a significant increase as more people have stayed home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

City staff worked with a consortium of trash haulers, using the formula, to set the fees. There is one less hauler in the group, as

the company Advanced Disposal was recently purchased by Waste Management.

Three sizes of carts and four collection options will still be available in 2021. Small carts, which are collected every other week or weekly, hold 35 gallons. Medium carts hold 64 gallons and large carts hold 96 gallons.

For a small cart collected every other week, the 2020 quarterly rate is \$57.60. The proposed 2021 quarterly rate is \$59.23, or a \$1.63 increase. The annual increase is \$6.51. There are 5,074 small carts collected every other week citywide.

For a small cart collected weekly, the 2020 quarterly rate is \$67.29. That increases to \$69.04 in 2021, for a quarterly increase of \$1.75. The annual increase is \$6.99. There are 17,584 small weekly carts collected citywide.

For a medium cart collected weekly the 2020 quarterly fee is \$93.09. That increases to \$94.87 in 2021, for a quarterly increase of \$1.78. The annual increase is \$7.11. There are 29,147 medium carts citywide.

For a large cart collected weekly the 2020 quarterly fee is \$99.45. That increases to \$101.23, for a quarterly increase of \$1.78. The annual increase is \$7.11.

All rates include state and county taxes, which don't show up on the bills but are paid separately.

The 2021 rates are still slightly lower than what was charged for 2018-2019.



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SPIRE Credit Union has received both the Adult and Youth Desjardins Awards, recognizing outstanding financial education efforts from the Minnesota Credit Union Network (MnCUN) and Credit Union National Association (CUNA). SPIRE's Building Financial Freedom program was developed in 2007, and since its inception has reached 13,600 adults and youth over 1,700 classroom hours. In 2019, 843 youth were educated over 35 events in the areas of fraud, auto buying, budgeting, housing options, credit management and more. (Photo submitted)

There is still free walk-up service for people who cannot move their carts to the alley or street curb. Service holds will continue to be offered for people who are gone for four or more weeks.

The organized collection program will also continue to offer collection of two to three bulky items as part of the property owner's base rate. Yard waste collection can be handled for an

extra charge of \$41.20 per season. That charge doesn't change from 2020.

Nor will additional service fees change from 2020 to 2021. These include charges for cart size changes, off-day service pickups, additional bulky items, yard waste bags without an annual yard waste subscription, and additional garbage bags placed outside of a cart.

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REBUILD REPAIR RECYCLE

# IN SEARCH OF DARK SKIES

*Photographer Mike Shaw on exhibit at the Bell Museum soon*



Astrophotographer Mike Shaw uses a sturdy tripod for his night photography, and a wide-angle lens to capture the full dome of sky overhead. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)



"Comets are amazing night sky objects to observe. They are relatively rare, and absolutely striking. Comet Neowise, pictured here, was the brightest comet seen from Earth in the last 20 years." At right, photo of Aurora Borealis. (Photos submitted by Mike Shaw)



By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Between the months of March-September on a clear, moonless night, it's easy to find astrophotographer Mike Shaw. He will be in his car heading north.

In August 2019, he was doing just that. Pulling in to the last parking lot on the Gunflint Trail near midnight, he was disappointed to see what appeared to be wisps of fog in the sky over Gull Lake. Shaw set up his tripod and camera anyhow – and his disappointment turned to joy.

Through the camera, the grey wisps weren't fog after all but bright green, shimmering shafts of light. The Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, had come earlier than predicted. It was, Shaw remembered, "a phenomenal night."

Shaw is one of four artists-in-residence currently working with the Bell Museum of Natural History. During his residency, he spent 50 nights under the stars all across Minnesota. The photographer, author, and workshop leader captured night sky images in locations both iconic and unknown.

His photo exhibit of Minnesota's treasured night skies was scheduled to open Nov. 25, 2020 at the Bell Museum, but has been postponed until further notice. Museums across the state are closed until at least Dec. 18, in an attempt to quell the spread of COVID-19.

Formerly a Ph.D. research scientist and a tenured college professor, Shaw combines a deep understanding of science with his

passion for astrophotography. The images he made for the Bell Museum exhibit will help viewers experience Minnesota's night skies at varying levels of darkness: comparing the effects of light pollution in different parts of the state and its effects on being able to view the Milky Way.

### Bad news, good news

According to Shaw, "Minnesota has some of the darkest night skies on the planet but even here, it can be hard to find a naturally dark night sky. Light pollution is the term used to describe the spread of scattered light from streetlights, buildings, and vehicles – and it's spreading globally at a rate of about 2% per year. The night sky is a valuable natural resource that is under threat from light pollution."

The International Dark Sky Association works to protect the night sky for present and future generations. Shaw is a Delegate to their organization, and supports their recommendations for reducing light pollution.

He said, "Protecting the

dark night sky begins at home. We need to turn lights off when they're not in use, and remember to light only what's needed. Outdoor lights, especially, should point down, not up."

"Ironically, the proliferation of LED light bulbs that started a decade ago has been problematic. It's important to know which LED light bulbs to buy. Those that emit light in the blue spectrum really mess with the perception of living organisms to distinguish between night and day. Choose LED light bulbs that have warm orange tones, similar to the quality of the incandescent bulbs we used to buy."

Shaw added, "It's important to note that, unlike other kinds of pollution, light pollution is 100% reversible. How can we fix it? On both a large and small scale, we can turn off our lights!"

### Intro to star gazing

The brighter night skies in the Twin Cities are actually a benefit to star gazers just starting out. Shaw said, "Any place in town is suitable for observing

the night sky. I could make out planets, stars, constellations, and the moon in all its phases from places as brightly lit as the stairs of the State Capitol. Light pollution blots out the dimmer stars, so only the more prominent sky objects are visible."

For starters," he suggested, "see if you can find the Big Dipper, which is part of the constellation Ursa Major (the Big Bear). From the Big Dipper, with a little help from the internet, you should be able to find the North Star. The stars of Ursa Major (and many others) are called circumpolar stars, because they never rise or set below the horizon in Minnesota. That means you can find them all year long."

### We care for what we see

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Northern Minnesota was recently designated a Dark Sky Sanctuary by the International Dark Sky Association. At just over one million acres, the federal wilderness area is the largest Dark Sky Sanctuary to date: it is the first in Minneso-

ta and only the 13th internationally to receive this designation.

Shaw said, "This recognition of the quality of darkness that we have in Minnesota is very significant. If you can't see night sky objects, it's hard to care about them. As time is progressing, more and more people are becoming aware of the importance of preserving dark skies."

Doing his part to build that awareness, Shaw is offering a series of virtual workshops with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and the Minnesota Astronomy Society this winter. Once COVID-19 is under control, he will resume offering field workshops in search of dark skies around the world through his business [www.mikeshawphotography.com](http://www.mikeshawphotography.com).

In addition, Shaw has authored two books: "Creative Nightscapes and Time-Lapses," and "The Complete Guide to Landscape Astrophotography."

When asked about his favorite dark sky experience of all time, Shaw said, "If you're in a very dark, safe place, try this. Lay flat on your back, and look up overhead. Your peripheral vision won't take in the horizon line. See if you can find the central band of the Milky Way, the part that looks like a light-colored belt."

"Within the central band, there are dark areas. These are dust clouds. With time, your eyes will adjust to the darkness and you'll be able to see the dust cloud areas. There are stars in front of them that are also visible. Suddenly the Milky Way isn't flat anymore. It's like being in a rocket ship or floating in space, and having a three-dimensional viewing experience. There's nothing better."

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