



HM LIBRARY TO BE DEMOLISHED

City to renovate Hayden Heights and Riverview

By JANE McCLURE

The Hamline Midway Library will be demolished and replaced with a new structure for \$5.8 million.

St. Paul Public Library administration announced the decision May 26, 2022. Social media exploded with debate after the announcement. Preservationists, including the Renovate 1558 group, criticized the decision and what they saw as a lack of public input. Others wanted to revisit the earlier decision to not build a new library and new Hancock Recreation Center elsewhere. Supporters hailed a new building, saying it will be more user friendly.

The June 1 St. Paul Library Board meeting added fuel to the fire as city council members debated the decision and whether or not there was enough public input and engagement.

Board chair Jane Prince was especially critical of library director Catherine Penkert's claims of a community-drive process, saying, "We were misled." She read a statement into the record. Penkert was in tears at one point.

Prince criticized what she saw as hand-picked, controlled outreach process to reach library administration's predetermined decision to demolish the longtime library and build something in its place. While saying the library board will make sure the administrative decisions will go forward, she repeatedly expressed unhappiness with the process and what she saw as disregard for community input.

Council member Mitra Jalail vehemently objected, telling Prince her statement was not fair or professional, and defending the decision for a new building. She called the new design beautiful. Council member Chris Tolbert also objected. While he has praised the current library in the past, he also agrees with the decision to replace it.

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The city plans to demolish the historic Hamline Midway Library and build a new one, as shown by this rendering.

Como residents perform alongside professional dancers in Ballet Co.Laboratory shows



Como resident Charlotte Tracy (above) is a part of the city's only professional ballet company and school, the Ballet Co.Laboratory, as are her sisters, Isabelle and Hazel. (Photo by Alexis Lund)

SISTERS WHO DANCE

As the school year draws to a close, most high school students are focused on final exams, proms, and preparations for graduation. Como resident Charlotte Tracy, a trainee dancer with Ballet Co.Laboratory, had a different milestone to celebrate prior to donning a cap and gown – her final performance with the professional Company of Ballet Co.Laboratory.

From May 20-22, 2022, Charlotte danced alongside professional dancers on the E.M. Pearson stage at Concordia University for "Firebird," with about 90

other students from The School of Ballet Co.Laboratory. Together they told the reimagined story of a magical bird who embraces her unique power to bring protection, beauty, and love to the earth.

Ballet Co.Laboratory, the city's only professional ballet company and school, gives dancers in their pre-professional program the opportunity to perform in two large-scale productions per season – the organization's annual holiday production and another reimagined story ballet in the spring.

SISTERS >> 16

Give your opinion

Weigh in on city's CIB projects

By JANE McCLURE

Anyone seeking a project for their community doesn't have a lot of time to weigh in on St. Paul's 2023 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) candidates. A public hearing on projects is 3:30 p.m. Monday, June 20 at city hall, giving advocates one more chance to seek share of a \$1 million pot.

That amount means it's likely that fewer than a dozen of the 43 projects in the finals will be funded. Those are from a list of almost 90 submissions. An online project poll closed June 3. Read about projects at <https://engagestpaul.org/14520/widgets/43754/documents/>

Public comments will be evaluated along with district council rankings and initial project scores from the CIB Committee. A first committee pass at project rankings is expected June 13.

Testimony at the June 20 hearing can make a difference, said Noel Nix, director of community engagement for Mayor Melvin Carter. "The committee can adjust the rankings after the public hearing."

The committee meets June 27 to finalize its recommendations, and send those to the mayor and city council. The mayor can accept the recommendations as is, or make further changes before presenting the capital budget as part of the 2023 city budget in August.

Project requests were asked to focus on public safety, with many focused on traffic and lighting improvements. One interesting aspect of St. Paul's capital spending process is that anyone can submit an idea.

Hamline-Midway projects in the chase include Horton Park Plaza, at \$310,552. Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) proposes a park entry plaza in Horton Park where Hamline Avenue meets Minnehaha Avenue, and replacement of light fixtures along the west side of Hamline between Englewood and Minnehaha avenues. Signage, landscaping, trash and recycling containers, a bike repair station and bike racks could draw more people to the park and increase eyes on the park area.

A second HMC request is for \$215,000 to design and install traffic calming measures at the intersection of Thomas Avenue and Griggs Street, with concrete curb extensions and medians. Temporary bollards would be used to show the concept.

Thomas is a focus for area resident Barrett Steenrod, who seeks traffic calming measures in the form of curb extensions, pedestrian islands, and four-way crosswalks for Thomas's intersections with Avon Street and Victoria Street. No cost estimate was given.

Lighting needs are in two area projects. Frogtown Park Stewards are seeking \$154,526 for full replacement of existing largely non-functioning lighting within Frogtown Farm and Park with solar powered lights or other lighting. Copper wire

GIVE YOUR OPINION >> 6



AGING WELL
Building power through All
Elders United for Justice

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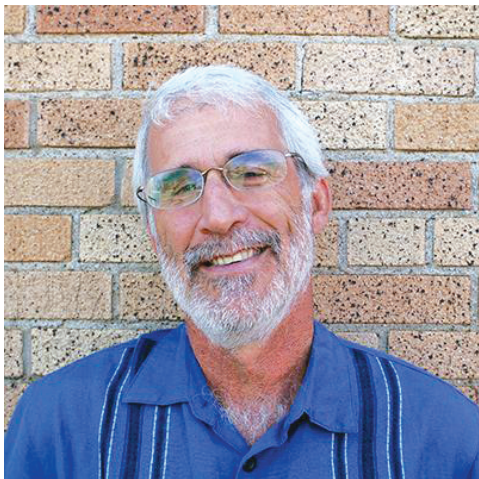
A voice for justice:
George Floyd's aunt
releases memoir

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The Twin Cities
art legacy

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"When elders come together and build power, they can put pressure on decision-makers in the state to improve the lives of elders and their families," said Vic Rosenthal. (Photo submitted)

By CHLOE PETER

"Elders from diverse backgrounds are becoming more aware of the importance of working together to build power," said St. Paul resident Vic Rosenthal. "For many elders, because of race or lack of resources, there are significant inequities and that everyone must work together to change the status quo."

He is the facilitator of a new group, All Elders United for Justice (AEUJ). It is an organization that is working toward bringing elders education and discussing changes they can make with their vote. It also provides information on finances, housing, and opportunities for elders while focusing on bringing diverse voices in to play a role in decisions. They focus on bringing power to the elderly by voting, bringing up issues to politicians, and starting conversations.

BUILDING POWER THROUGH UNITY

All Elders United for Justice aims to bring power to elders through relationships and discussion

According to Minnesota Compass, an organization that aims to provide free and reliable data about the state of Minnesota, adults aged 65 and older make up 15 percent of the population. In fact, most Minnesota counties outside of the metro area have a higher population of older residents. In the near future, it is predicted that elderly Minnesotans will outnumber people ages five through 17. They also are the most likely out of any age group to vote.

Planning for All Elders started in 2018 when Rosenthal discussed the role of older people in Minnesota. While still in its formative stages and figuring out their mission, AEUJ aims to help elders of Minnesota to have a greater voice when it comes to issues such as affordable housing, transportation, and prescription drugs. They aim to bring in elders from rural, immigrant, and different cultural backgrounds in order to reflect as many people as possible.

"When elders come together and build power, they can put pressure on decision-makers in the state and demand changes to improve the lives of elders and their families," Rosenthal said.

All Elders aspires to create a community that relies on all different kinds of people to come together for justice in Minnesota. Communities of color, including American Indian, Asian, Black, and Latinx, make up just two percent of the elder community in Minnesota. Longfellow resident Don Hammen, a member of AEUJ, mentioned that telling one's stories breaks down barriers that have been created by society in terms of age, race, and

cultural differences. While being an elder may not have the same meaning for each of these differences, it can bring relationships closer together, including from different generations.

"What I've learned from the 'elder world' is that none of us are experts and we're all going to have to find a way to learn from each other," Hammen said.

Uptown resident Leif Grina, leader of the Minneapolis Regional Retirees Council and member of AEUJ, mentioned that the council has had difficulties not including voices from people of color, but wants to heavily pursue that with All Elders. He also mentioned thinking about how elders are represented in our culture and in media and wanting to move forward with, what he feels to be, a more realistic approach.

"I remember looking at a magazine from a senior organization about some movie star that was now elderly and the 'joys of aging', and it just struck me: that's not what elders look like," Grina said. "I think what's exciting about All Elders is that other communities are being brought in."

A study done by the University of Southern California revealed that due to the climate crisis, fear of economic collapse, and wealth inequalities, younger generations tend to stereotype and have negative feelings toward older generations. However, AEUJ longs to mend some of that gap as well by breaking down these stereotypes and building relationships with younger people, as well. Rosenthal mentioned that the climate crisis is something that they have addressed



"I think what's exciting about All Elders United for Justice is that other communities are being brought in," said Leif Grina. (Photo submitted)



"What I've learned from the 'elder world' is that none of us are experts and we're all going to have to find a way to learn from each other," said Donald Hammen. (Photo submitted)

potentially result in a world of All Elders United for Justice," Hammen said. "And when that happens, we all benefit. We all do better when we all do better."

in discussion, and elders do care about making change for the planet that their children and children's children will be living on.

While there isn't a physical place to meet as of yet, elders interested in AEUJ may contact Rosenthal at vic.rosenthal@gmail.com.

"Building relationships by telling our stories and using the truth contained in those stories for the purpose of building power and using that power to shape public policy whenever and however possible will

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George Floyd's aunt releases memoir

By JILL BOOGREN

Becoming an activist in a worldwide movement for racial justice was beyond anything Angela Harrelson would have imagined for her life. But the murder of her nephew, George Perry Floyd, Jr. – or Perry, as his family knew him – by Minneapolis police officers, changed her in profound ways.

In her memoir, "Lift Your Voice: How My Nephew George Floyd's Murder Changed the World," Harrelson shares her reaction to Perry's death and the conviction of Derek Chauvin. She exposes the racism she experienced as a child in the south and as an adult in the Midwest. She challenges White Americans to look closely at their own perceptions and beliefs. And she shares how her nephew's death pushed her to use her voice against injustice.

Before she had time to truly grieve for Perry, Harrelson was launched into the spotlight – as a public spokesperson, a representative of the family, a speaker at events, co-chair of the George Floyd Global Memorial – all brand new roles for her, each in contrast to her upbringing.

"I grew up in a raggedy old shack in Goldsboro, N.C.," writes Harrelson. Her family was poor, sometimes on the receiving end of racial slurs and discrimination. Her mother, born in 1925, gave birth to 14 kids and had a lot to navigate.

"My mother raised us to be very submissive to White people," said Harrelson in an interview at the memorial. "Even though she would tell us behind closed doors, 'You know you can do this... but at the same time, don't question them.' She did that out of protection. Because she grew up in an era where you didn't question White people."



Angela Harrelson calls the shift that has taken place since the death of her nephew, George 'Perry' Floyd, "the Great Awakening." (Photo by Jill Boogren)

Harrelson learned to pursue her dreams anyway, but to keep a low profile; speaking up against racism was not an option.

FINDING STRENGTH

As she dealt with a wide range of emotions following Perry's death, Harrelson turned to something familiar, writing, which became very therapeutic for her. She had always journaled – she even used to write family newsletters – and found that the process allowed her to reflect on everything she was feeling: Angry. Mad. Frustrated. Guilt. Her anxiety level was up.

"I was in a dark place," she recalled. "But then... there was love. I felt love. And kindness. That was coming out of me, too. And that's where I needed to be."

The writing process took her back to her childhood, retriggering numerous instances of racism she had endured: Being forced to stand on the school bus, a target of bullying by White students, prohibi-

ted by a teacher from using her own first name in class. As an adult, when Harrelson expressed interest in becoming an attorney, an instructor at Kirkwood Community College in Iowa told her straight up, "I'm a racist, and I don't teach Black people."

For Harrelson, the murder of her nephew showed that though there have been changes over time, there were hidden inequalities, injustices within the system; things never really changed.

"Perry's death made me see that very clearly," she said.

Enduring poverty and being raised in a family culture that gave her faith, Harrelson found strength she didn't know she had – including in the determination and willpower passed along by her ancestors, especially her great-grandparents who were born to slavery.

"They passed along that strength through their hands, their blood, sweat and tears, and their faith, all of that was

passed along to survive," she said. "Because they had to."

COMING TO TERMS

Though Harrelson wanted to see the site where Perry was actually killed, it was too overwhelming at first to go to 38th and Chicago.

"It was difficult because everything happened so fast. One minute Perry was here, and all of a sudden he wasn't here. And it's dealing with the reality that he really is gone," she said. "I knew that he'd been killed... But then, he was everywhere. I walk out and he's on somebody's wall. Somebody's wearing him on a t-shirt. And it played with my mind, my emotions. It was just so sad."

She stayed hidden for a while, but when she came out, the community "wrapped their arms around me, and I knew I was gonna be okay." Harrelson and her family leaned on each other plenty. But being the relative who lived closest to Perry, with the rest of her family in North Carolina and Texas, the community at George Floyd Square became like family to her. Having people nearby to call on when she needed something and neighborhood kids calling her "Auntie" filled a void in her life.

She also saw how they were taking care of the memorial, delicately, meticulously, making sure the offerings were in the right place, one small piece at a time.

"They take care of this memorial as though [Perry] was their brother or sister, and I see them doing that for my family," said Harrelson. "They didn't know him. But they had the commonality of the pain."

On Oct. 14, 2020, Perry's birthday, Harrelson, with Perry's cousin Paris Stevens and now-executive director Jeanelle Austin, launched the nonprofit George Floyd Global Memorial to preserve the offerings and ensure the stories in the movement for justice are carried to future generations.

A VOICE FOR JUSTICE >> 12

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Midway's industrial sector still one of hottest spots in Twin Cities

BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

BY CHAD KULAS,
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Throughout the history of the Midway neighborhood, manufacturing has held a very important place. As technology and products have changed, so, too, has the evolution of the buildings and the companies within.

While the Midway can still boast a significant number of manufacturing/industrial jobs, many of the older buildings have been renovated to other uses. Some, such as the Fisher Nut Building and the former American Can location, have converted to mixed use with both office space and manufacturing and changed names to the Wycliff and Priorworks, respectively. Other locations now have housing, whether with a converted old building or a new build.

What's the future of the industrial sector in the Midway? We asked this question to a panel of experts at our recent Economic Development meeting, held at the newly expanded Minnetronix Medical. Moderated by John Young, Forte Real Estate Partners, the panel included: Tonya Bauer, Saint Paul Port Authority; Peter Mork, Capital Partners; Joe Schultz, Forte



Minnetronix Medical has been located along Energy Park Drive for many years, but was faced with a decision: stay and expand, or leave? After careful consideration, they chose to stay and grow from 120,000 to 160,000 square feet. Part of their rationale is knowing that their 400 employees are spread out and the site is centrally located. This is one of the most referred to benefits of the Midway neighborhood.

Real Estate Partners; and Steve Wellington, Wellington Management.

As we go further into this K-shaped recovery, where many businesses and industries are hurting while others are thriving, there is no doubt industrial/manufacturing companies are doing well. The last two years exacerbated the already rising trend of online shopping, and as such the

importance of warehouse space. With the supply chain problems, many parts and products have been harder to get and having an easy access to what you need is a serious benefit.

Costs of industrial space has risen dramatically, both locally and nationwide. This, combined with the unpredictable costs of supplies (examples being lumber,

various metals, glass) can make projects difficult to budget. Brokers are also working with many clients two years before they need to find new space.

Industrial space can be difficult to find for several reasons. In addition to the limited number of buildings zoned for industrial, each potential tenant has their own list of needs: ceiling height, garage door, loading dock, floor plan and more. This is part of the reason many are cautious to convert industrial buildings to other uses. Once its gone, its hard to get back or replace in another parcel.

Minnetronix Medical has been located along Energy Park Drive for many years, but was faced with a decision: stay and expand, or leave? After careful consideration, they chose to stay and grow from 120,000 to 160,000 square feet. Part of their rationale is knowing that their 400 employees are spread out and the site is centrally located. This is one of the most referred to benefits of the Midway neighborhood.

The final question of the day was simply, "The future of the Midway: optimistic or pessimistic?" All panelists agreed they're optimistic. With the central location and numerous buildings created for industrial uses, it was no surprise. The Midway continues to be one of the hottest spots in the Twin Cities for industrial businesses. History has shown it always has and while the products may change, our neighborhood has always been a place for good paying jobs in a diverse group of manufacturers.

New Juneteenth book explores history, culture, and community-building

PLANTING SEEDS

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



Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute is proud to announce that James Johnson is the winner of our Writing for Social Change Competition. His children's book, "Ol' Jim Crow's Jubilee Day Caper," will be released on Juneteenth 2022 and he will be honored at our annual PPGJLI's Community Celebration.

Mr. Johnson is a south Minneapolis native and the education director of Evolve Family Services. Written for children and adults alike, the book is inspiring and educational. It provides a detailed history of Juneteenth and ignites hope for the future. The author dedicated the book to "all the young social justice superheroes who find their superpowers through reading."

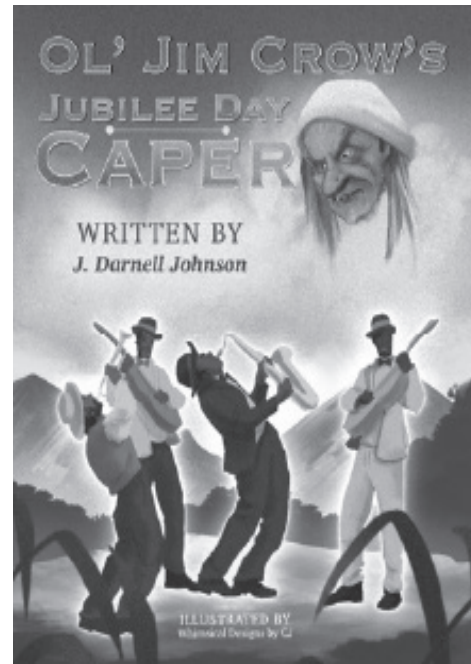
The theme of the writing competition focused on arts-based community development. Mr. Johnson handled the topic beautifully in an age-appropriate manner as only a true storyteller can. His origi-



South Minneapolis resident James Johnson is the winner of the Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute Writing for Social Change Competition. His children's book, "Ol' Jim Crow's Jubilee Day Caper," will be released on Juneteenth 2022.

nal manuscript features African Americans celebrating the end of slavery and how Juneteenth came to be.

In "Ol' Jim Crow's Jubilee Day Caper," the author captures the spirit of Juneteenth, while the villain, Jim Crow, looks down from a cloud. He is still trying to disrupt festivities and spread anti-Black



racism after more than 100 years. No matter what he does, Crow cannot crush the celebrants' spirit.

Jubilee Day is now known as Juneteenth and marks the day on June 19, 1865, when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to ensure that more than 250,000 enslaved African American peo-

ple were freed and to enforce the edict. The action came two and half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which declared the ending of slavery on Jan. 1, 1863. In 1890, Juneteenth was celebrated as Jubilee Day by African Americans throughout Texas.

Juneteenth is a combination of the words June and nineteenth – Juneteenth. It has been referred to as "America's second Independence Day." It has been known by many names over the years, including Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Black Independence Day, and Jubilee Day. African Americans celebrate on June 19 of each year with feasts of red food and drink in remembrance of their ties to West African traditions and the bloodshed by their enslaved ancestors. Now a federal holiday, all Americans are reminded of the history of racial terrorism while yet challenged today to make justice and freedom a lived reality for all.

* This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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

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Story ideas always welcome.

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LIBRARY TO BE DEMOLISHED >> from 1

On May 14, several dozen area residents gathered to speak about their desire to preserve the building, and to give it a symbolic hug, with a larger group out front. The Hamline Midway Coalition had requested that the decision process be delayed.

The decision to demolish the existing library building was announced on May 26 by St. Paul Public Library Director Catherine Penkert, along with Keon Blasingame of LSE Architects and Russ Stark, chief resilience officer for Mayor Melvin Carter. Renovation plans for the Hayden Heights and Riverview libraries were also announced, as part of the Transforming Libraries initiative. Proponents for renovating the existing building have expressed frustration that the final decision about the building is in the hands of library administration, not the public or the city council.

Hamline Midway has had almost 1,000 people weigh in this year during discussions of the library's future, said Penkert. That's the most input among the three neighborhood branch libraries.

"Renovate 1558 is heartbroken by the decision by St. Paul Public Library (SPPL) to tear down the historic Hamline Midway Library, a choice that needlessly divides our neighborhood by demolishing a city-owned building in good condition," said Jonathan Oppenheimer.

"Never once in this process did SPPL leadership ask whether the community favored renovation and expansion of the library or demolition and rebuild. This year, there have been only two events regarding the future of the library and a survey. Not enough time to truly engage the community," pointed out Bonnie Youngquist.

When the city undertook the Transforming Libraries initiative for Hamline Midway, Hayden Heights and Riverview, staff and consultants talked to library users about what they want and need in library facilities, said Penkert. For all three libraries, having safe and inviting spaces, accessibility and spaces for a wide variety of uses emerged as priorities.

Penkert described all three libraries as "well loved, well used and well worn." The library had not seen significant improvements in many years. Transforming the libraries means reimagining their spaces for today's and future users.

Part of the vision that emerged for the three branch libraries is to see them as neighborhood resilience centers, places with many uses and resources for their neighborhood. Penkert cited the program libraries host with partner agencies and groups as part of that vision.

For Hamline Midway, four options were presented earlier this year. Those were narrowed to two, one for building renovation and expansion and the other for a new building on the current site at 1558 Minnehaha Ave. The options are within an \$8.1 million budget.

The option of a new building was chosen over expanding and renovating the current structure. A new structure would have more space, with flexibility in uses. The new library would have 9,400 square feet, which is 5,200 square feet more than the existing building. The renovation option would have meant a facility of 6,200 square feet, or 2,000 square feet more than the current building.

Construction could start as soon as spring 2023.

Two strong themes heard at Hamline Midway were those of access and equity, Penkert said. That will mean moving most library functions to one level and having the main entrance be fully accessible. She called accessibility "absolutely critical" when looking at building design, saying neighborhood residents who use wheelchairs or have mobility issues have been unable to use the library.

Safety and security are other considerations driving the decision to build a new library.

Yet library administration wants to honor the current building's history and

role in the neighborhood, by preserving architectural elements of the existing library in the structure. She described the proposed new library as "a bridge between old and new."

There will also be opportunities to have community members involved in further library planning, speaking out about building details, including interior and exterior finishes, public art and furnishings.

Penkert called a new library the "best option" in terms of how the building would function and how it would have a minimal carbon impact. She and Blasingame spoke of the long-term goal to dramatically reduce energy usage and possibly provide renewable energy options on-site.

One problem cited with the existing library is its aging infrastructure. One issue with the current Hamline Midway Branch Library is aging HVAC systems. The library closed for more than year during the COVID-19 pandemic due to air circulation issues.

Stark also noted that the current library building lacks insulation in its exterior walls. Another issue with an older building like Hamline Midway is embodied carbon in its foundation.

Sustainability will be a key feature of a new library, Blasingame said. That ties into St. Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan, which the city council approved in 2019. Building a new library, with sustainability and energy-efficiency measures, helps the city toward its goal of being carbon neutral by 2050, and reducing emissions. That's part of a strategy to eliminate the city's contributions to global climate change.

ONLINE MEETINGS

When asked if anything could have been done differently during the Hamline Midway Branch Library planning process, Penkert cited the pandemic as a challenge to seeking continued neighborhood input. Library administration presented plans for Transforming Libraries to city council members in early March 2020, just before everything shut down. Ways to engage community members had to change.

"There was no roadmap," Penkert said. She gives credit to library staff and community members for participating in a lot of engagement events.

The challenges in gathering input had to be weighed against the need to make library improvements, and meet timing of the city's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process itself. Had the libraries' request been delayed, that would have meant a wait of at least two more years.

"We didn't want to miss an opportunity to make a big investment in our libraries," Penkert said.

Renovate 1558 has highlighted several issues with the community engagement. "The neighborhood has been gaslit into believing that this has been a fair, thorough, and transparent process, yet by every measure it has not been: SPPL made an initial CIB decision after one online meeting; then did no outreach for 11 months; made a final decision three months into a 7-month engagement process in 2022, after just two in-person meetings that did not allow for debate and discussion in front of community members; all while sending out a single highly-biased public survey that did not allow respondents to note a preference for preservation, and refusing to release the 200+ comments from that survey," said Jonathan Oppenheimer. "Along the way, SPPL convened a hand-picked group of Project Ambassadors, refused to make their meetings public, and rejected multiple calls to seat a member on the committee who supported preservation. And nearly every one of SPPL's public statements in the past three months refused to acknowledge the huge support for preservation – as if we didn't exist."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DONE OVER 2 MONTHS, FEB. 8-APRIL 26, 2022

1 - Virtual open house on Feb. 24, 2022

1 - In-person open house on April 22, 2022

1 - In-person listening session at library on March 22; survey version 1 had 68 responses, survey version 2 had 66 responses

1 - Online survey, 1000 responses of which 763 about Hamline Midway project; question was whether folks wanted to renovate library or demolish and rebuild

4 - Virtual Project Ambassador meetings on Feb. 8, March 8, March 30, April 26, 2022



(Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

to unstable soils.

Hamline has also had foundation problems. More than \$400,000 has been spent over the past 4.5 years to try to fix water infiltration problems. The foundation would need to be fully excavated for work if the building were to be saved, according to library staff.

The other two libraries will be renovated. Hayden Heights, which opened in 1979, will benefit from interior and exterior renovations that including adding large windows on its White Bear Avenue side. It also will gain outdoor green space, off of its children's area.

Riverview, a Carnegie Library built in 1916, will have an addition built on its west end. The building will have exterior and interior renovations, with main uses on one floor. Its front steps will be turned into a reading plaza where people can read or use their devices to work and study. Outdoor programming space will also be enhanced. Penkert noted that one lesson of the pandemic is the need for outdoor learning and activity spaces at libraries.

Penkert and Blasingame said that none of the designs should be considered final. There will opportunities for community members to weigh on design refinements.

TWO LIBRARIES TO BE RENOVATED

What began as the Hamline Library opened in October 1930 after years of neighborhood activism to get it built. The lots it was built on were purchased thanks to neighborhood donations in 1922. But delays on the city's part and litigation involving the Hale estate took time.

Hamline was one of the city's two Henry Hale Memorial Branch libraries. The other, in Merriam Park, was built in 1930 and replaced in the early 1990s due

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By PENNY FULLER

What thoughts or images come to mind when you hear "freshwater"? Do you see a sparkling lake, hear water lapping against the shoreline, feel it tickling your toes? Is it a gurgling creek winding through woods and meadows to an unseen destination?

The darker picture: Freshwater faces continual threat.

One huge threat comes from storm-water run-off. Salt laden roads and walkways increase the salinity of water more each year. Per the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: "Chloride from de-icing salt and water softener salt gets into lakes, streams and groundwater that supplies drinking water. One teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of water. Fifty lakes and streams have chloride levels too high to meet the standards designed to protect fish and other aquatic life; 75 more are nearing that level."

So, is there a bright side?

What thoughts or images emerge when you hear the term Minnesota Water Stewards? Oft an unseen force, they are growing network of neighbors in the community. But who are they and what do they do?

In 2013 Freshwater, a non-profit organization dedicated to protection, conservation and restoration of all freshwater, created a program called Minnesota Water Stewards (formerly Master Water Stewards) in partnership with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) to train citizen volunteers to be leaders in their community. The goal: protecting freshwater. Water Stewards act as leaders, educating on ways to prevent water pollution and showing community members ways to conserve and protect waterways. Freshwater Society Education and Program Coordinator Alex Van Loh reported they are 470 strong, and growing.

As part of her daily work with landscape clients, Standish resident Roxanne Stuhr said she is painfully aware of how natural resources, particularly water, are routinely compromised by human activities. Keen to make a difference in her com-

GUARDIANS of our FRESHWATER

Minnesota Water Stewards connect over clean water



South Minneapolis resident Roxanne Stuhr said, "One of my biggest rewards comes from guiding people through the process of creating their own individual take on an effective system and seeing them be proud and excited of their contribution." (Photo by Penny Fuller)

munity, she considered the Water Steward program as an opportunity. Stuhr was among the first group certified by the program. Stuhr said, "One of my biggest rewards comes from guiding people through the process of creating their own individual take on an effective system and seeing them be proud and excited of their contribution."

Former Freshwater Director of Programs, Peggy Knappb, explained the underlying program concept. "It starts with an assumption that everyone cares about clean water. Everything at every moment of every day depends on it, but most people don't know how to act on that idea. We wanted to teach people behaviors, actions they could apply individually. People are more apt to trust information from someone they know, like a neighbor, rather than

an expert who's a stranger. So, the idea was to educate a core group who would teach their neighbor. And then it spreads neighbor to neighbor, building relationships into a locally-based leadership."

Sue Nissen, of Edina, recounted growing up in the midwest with fond memories of summers spent at the lake. "The water is both energizing and calming," she said. "It's just part of me, and we are all made of water." Nissen became a Minnesota Water Steward. "The training itself was really great," she said, "not just knowledge, but the forming of relationships with others...many permanent friendships."

Nissen completed a collaborative capstone project at Union Congregational Church in St Louis Park in 2015. "It was really a great experience and a wonderful

success," she said. "It's funny," she added, "as a water steward I thought I'd just be digging holes, working on little projects, but it's become about educating and reaching out to others to help them understand how vital clean water is and how ridiculous it is to contaminate our fresh water." Nissen is also a founding member of StopOverSalting (SOS) in Minnesota, working to support legislation aimed at reducing oversalting practices within the private sector.

A Minnesota Water Steward's work is ongoing. They commit minimally 25 hours annually of outreach and educating their community about clean water practices. A steward represents just the tip of an iceberg, each connecting to many people in their own community, with effects far reaching. Knappb summarized: "From one small change you create over what you can control (like keeping storm water on your property) you see yourself differently, as a person who does things to protect water, and you feel inspired to take more steps...to want to share and it grows from there."

Van Loh described the program's ongoing focus: empowerment and engagement of the community to address local water pollution and increase public awareness, education and action on water quality issues. He explained that the program is evolving including a new branch called Water Conservation Advisor (WCA). And there is Art for Water, another way to reach the community. Following coursework completion, a public art installation furthers outreach and inspires yet more individuals to care for Minnesota's water.

You don't have to be certified as a water steward to make a difference. There are many ways that you can choose to be the difference, from simple to complex. Examples: keeping yard and pet waste off the street and out of storm drains, directing gutters to the yard instead of the street or adding a rain garden. Also, reduction or elimination of fertilizer and pesticides and switching from lead to non-toxic tackle. Their website provides a starting point to learning and considering your options. <https://minnesotawaterstewards.org>

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Give your opinion >> from 1

thieves have repeatedly hit the park. Since 2018, 10 of 13 lights at the Frogtown Park and Farm have been unlit.

Another lighting request is from St. Anthony Park Community Council (SAPCC), which seeks \$30,000 to add lighting on Raymond between University and Wabash avenues, especially on the street's west side. A third request in that area, also from SAPCC, is for \$150,000 to remove the railroad lines and repave Wabash Avenue between Cromwell and Raymond avenues.

The South St Anthony Park Whole Community Block Clubs St. Anthony Park seeks \$315,000 for improvements at the Cromwell-Robbins-Manvel intersection, with improved lighting and traffic calming.

Another West Midway area project is proposed by Macalester-Groveland resident Joel Clemmer to add sidewalks on the south side of Charles Avenue between Hampden and Vandalia avenues, for \$60,000.

Two proposals from Como Community Council center on Como Park needs. One is for \$104,715 to install security cameras at four locations along the Como Lake path, improve lighting at four locations, and potentially remove underbrush and overgrown vegetation at multiple locations. Changes would improve sustainability and accessibility of places along the path.

A second request is for \$857,535 for wayfinding improvements at Como Park, including information kiosks and trail repairs.

The advocacy group Sustain St. Paul seeks more than \$1.6 million for several pedestrian safety improvements near schools, libraries and recreation centers

citywide. That includes Crossroads Montessori, with a \$320,000 request for bumpouts at the Front-Kent and Front-Mackubin corners.

Another area site is Jackson Elementary, which closes at the end of this school year. Bumpouts are sought on Thomas Avenue at Western Avenue and Arundel Street, for \$320,000.

Reconfiguring the Selby Avenue-Saratoga Street intersection was proposed by Union Park District Council (UPDC) member Scott Berger. The project, which could cost up to \$1.075 million, could include design elements such as roundabout or a "protected intersection." A protected intersection has more separation between bicyclist, pedestrians and motor vehicles, often with small islands at intersections.

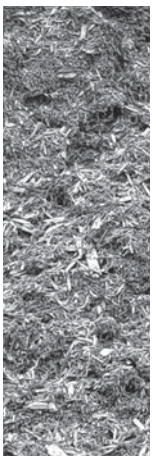
Three proposals submitted by UPDC Transportation Committee member Lisa Nelson are still in the running, for \$65,000 to place a flashing beacon light on Griggs Street between Skyline Tower and Midway Peace Park, and \$75,000 for a beacon where Selby and the Ayd Mill Road trail intersect.

A request for \$65,675 was made by Nelson to add bike racks at several city parks and playgrounds that lack them. Among the 13 parks eyed are Shadow Falls, Iris Park, Dickerman Park, College Park, Horton Park, Ryan Park and Marydale Park.

Marydale Park is in two other requests. North End Neighborhood Organization seeks \$148,120 to upgrade lighting, benches and picnic tables. Another need is to repair the fishing dock.

Sepak Takraw of USA seeks \$129,605 for light fixtures and wind shields at parks including Marydale. The improvements are for two parks that have courts for the games of tui lub and sepak takraw or kato.

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ST. PAUL RESIDENTS NAMED BUSH FELLOWS

Abdiaziz Ibrahim and Dr. Artika Tyner are among 24 extraordinary leaders who have been named the 2022 Bush Fellows for Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography.

The Bush Fellowship provides Fellows with up to \$100,000 over 12 to 24 months to pursue education and learning experiences that help them develop the skills and relationships to foster large-scale change in their communities and region. The fellowship is distinctive in



Abdiaziz Ibrahim



Dr. Artika Tyner

its flexibility, allowing Fellows to define what they need to become more effective and equitable leaders. Fellows can use the funding to pursue such things as education, leadership training, networking and mentorship.

This year, 468 people applied for the Bush Fellowship.

Abdiaziz Ibrahim is passionate about connecting immigrant families and families of color to resources that build economic mobility, especially safe, decent and affordable housing. As founder of Immigrant Housing Solutions, and with deep experience with property management and federal rental subsidy, he is in a unique leadership position to help families access affordable housing in Minnesota. He sees a significant need for property management companies that are owned and operated by people from his community. He knows how difficult it can be for families to find decent housing and to understand their rights as tenants. He wants to expand affordable housing through outreach to landlords and property managers and by providing a holistic combination of tenant education and financial

literacy training. To lead this significant change, he will pursue a master's degree in business administration, obtain certificates in community building and leadership development, and work with a coach to build stamina and well-being.

Artika Tyner is an accomplished educator, civil rights attorney, law professor and award-winning children's book author who beat the odds as a child growing up surrounded by incarcerated family members. She immersed herself in books from an early age and became a first-generation college student. Now, she seeks to share the gift of reading with children of color who are growing up in conditions

similar to those she experienced. She sees that Minnesota's educational system continues to experience some of the most significant racial disparities in the U.S. and that those disparities show up in the people she serves in the criminal justice system. She wants to employ a cross-sector, intergenerational approach to address the literacy crisis at a statewide level. To lead this change, she will take time to strengthen her leadership and communication skills and build a professional network in the education community. She also will gain organizing skills to raise awareness and mobilize others who share her passion for racial equity.



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ART-A-WHIRL AND THE CREATIVE CLASS: *The Twin Cities arts and culture legacy*

UNDER THE HOOD

BY SUSAN SCHAEFER

Something under the hood is not immediately apparent or obvious. This column will uncover stories that span the neighborhoods covered by TMC Publications.



ART-A-WHIRL SPANS NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISCIPLINES

Whatever corner of the Twin Cities you live in, chances are you or someone close to you has participated as an artist or a guest in what Anna Becker, executive director of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) calls our "rite of spring" – Art-A-Whirl.

The three-day happening has been heralded as the biggest open studio tour in the United States with tens of thousands of visitors attending past events.

Shuttered for the past two years due to the pandemic, this year's event took place on May 20-22, 2022, and the artists were primed and ready to throw out the welcome mats. Even with COVID-19 variations continuing to mutate and spike, many of NEMAA's more than 1,000 members, housed in over 60 locations in a defined geographic area, were cautiously op-



Former NEMAA president, Carmen Gutierrez-Bolger, readies her Casket Art studio for Art-A-Whirl 2022. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

timistic about this year's turn out.

Past NEMAA president, Carmen Gutierrez-Bolger, who shares her studio in the Casket Arts Building with two fellow artists, said the artists she spoke to were enthusiastic about returning to an in-person event. "To be honest," she stated, "almost everyone has had COVID. This year many are cautious about not serving food, but many, including my studio, are not masking."



Susan Schaefer's *Engineered to a Higher Standard* collage.

marketing, Art-A-Whirl, now marking its 27th year, grew in popularity, becoming a nationally recognized art phenomenon.

By 2002, under the leadership of then-president Gutierrez-Bolger, members of NEMAA joined together with the city of Minneapolis, the McKnight Foundation, and local businesses to establish the formal geographical area now known as the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District. In fact, those efforts have been a model for many other Twin Cities' neighborhood branding efforts, including those served by our community papers. Colorful flags on light posts now demarcate many communities.

ASTONISHING ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ARTS

In the early 1990s, even before

ART-A-WHIRL >> 9



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ART-A-WHIRL >> 8

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ART-A-WHIRL >> from 8

NEMAA formed, as chair of the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce's respected Leadership Minneapolis Program™, I established the creative class sub-committee of the chamber's public affairs group. We invited author Richard Florida as a guest speaker to discuss his groundbreaking book, "The Rise of the Creative Class." Along with colleagues from the newly dubbed creative industries including architecture, public relations, advertising, design and landscaping, our sub-committee hosted guest speakers and special events, providing new perspectives and data about how significantly creativity impacted local economy. We understood how important it was to engage business leaders around the arts.

Our efforts can be linked to the adoption almost two dozen years later by the city of Minneapolis of the Creative Vitality Index (CVI), an economic measure developed by a Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), used to weigh in on the ever-increasing contribution of arts and culture to our population.

Minneapolis even developed a sort of "Culture Czar," Gülgün Kayim, who is Director of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, and whose small but mighty staff helps to develop arts and culture policy, and to research the economics of the creative sector.

Pre-pandemic, the economic impact of the creative arts in Minneapolis astonished. The 2018 CVI estimated that the arts contributed \$5 billion in sales, or 9.2 times that of Minneapolis' sports sector, earning our region a lofty place as a national creative mecca. Post-pandemic, the news is grim. Statistics from the Minneapolis Creates website state: "A 2020 study by Americans for the Arts showed that 62% of artists and creative workers were fully unemployed, while 95% reported income losses. Also in 2020, the Minne-



Crowds flock the two-story Grain Belt Warehouse during Art-A-Whirl 2016. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

sota Council for Nonprofits projected that up to 60% of the state's nonprofits, many of them arts and cultural organizations, would close by the end of the year."

Thankfully, culture, art and artists are resilient, and Art-A-Whirl bravely reopening its doors this year serves as a notable link to our region's robust art and culture legacy.

THE LEGACY AMENDMENT: GUARANTEEING 10,000 LAKES AND STUDIOS

What are the other factors for Minnesota and the metro area's rarified arts and culture environment? Meet the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, aka the Legacy Amendment, passed in 2008 by Minnesota voters and enshrined in the Minnesota Constitution.

The full amendment concerns overall quality of life in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, protecting drinking water sources, wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat, lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater, supporting parks and trails, and preserving arts and cultural heritage. Yes, there was quite a lobby in place to get that included in the long list of natural habitat initiatives.

One leader of this arts lobby is Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, a super smart 901 (C) (4) umbrella lobbying organization that represents with verve, vim and

vigor the highest interests of: 695 performing arts, 262 multipurpose arts, 232 history and historical preservation, 156 visual arts and architecture, 49 media and communications, 30 literary, 10 humanities, and 167 miscellaneous arts organizations that represent Minnesota's 1601 recognized creative entities! They continue the good fight to ensure arts and culture has a "lifebuoy" amidst all that water.

The Legacy Amendment increased the state sales tax by 3/8 of 1% beginning July 1, 2009, continuing until 2034. The additional revenue is distributed into four funds: 33% to the clean water fund; 33% to the outdoor heritage fund; 19.75% to the arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25% to the parks and trails fund.

Based on current sales tax revenue, this means Minnesotans will invest more than \$1.2 billion in arts and cultural heritage fund projects and programs over the 25-year life of the tax with a portion made available through grant programs.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

As a practicing artist, I have participated in diverse aspects of Minnesota's arts and culture largesse. For example, in 2016, as a NEMAA member, I hosted a highly successful Art-A-Whirl photography exhibit in the Grain Belt Brewery Annex, interacting with hundreds of visitors over

the three days of the event.

That year I was also accepted into the prestigious St. Catherine University Women's Art Institute (WAI) Summer Studio Intensive. Like many arts programs, the WAI benefits from Minnesota's support of the arts. Happily, my 10-panel collage, "Recollection: My Lost Yiddish Civilization," incorporating archival family documents and photographs, ink drawings on fine art paper, and newsprint earned a nice spot on a wall in the University of Minnesota's Regis Center for Art's Quarter Gallery where our group show was held. UMN also benefits from the state's arts funding.

More recently, working from a light-filled studio in the Thorpe Building, I produced my collage titled, "Engineered to a Higher Standard," in response to the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Each of these activities has a lifeline directly connected to Minnesota's commitment to the arts.

But I am more than a practicing visual artist. I am also a journalist dedicated to shining a light on how creativity contributes to human wellbeing.

It is worthwhile to remember that behind Minnesota's economic arts' statistics toil humans whose creativity and innovation fuel this so-called creative class. Frequently laboring for the sheer love of their craft, many visual and performing artists, directors, inventors and innovators produce from an inner creative core more likely fueled by passion than personal gain. These makers are marked by an almost holy drive to create – and when their artistry and intent collide, it often yields something extraordinary in its wake.

Susan Schaefer is a widely published independent journalist, creative writer, and poet. Her articles appear in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, PBS' online magazine, Next Avenue, Next Tribe, and beyond. She was columnist and features writer for Minneapolis' Southwest Journal and Minnesota Good Age magazine.



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LET'S GET CRAZY (AGAIN)

By PATRICIA OHMANS

On a hot evening in July 2008, some Frogtown residents came up with a crazy idea. Thirteen acres of beautiful land stood empty on the west end of the neighborhood. What if those 13 acres could become a new park? Four of us – including yours truly – drew up a plan on the back of an envelope. Then we got to work.

At first, it seemed our idea was doomed to failure. We were ordinary Frogtown residents; none of us were government poohbahs or philanthropic moneybags. Nobody in power seemed interested; the city parks department shrugged; the foundation that owned the 13 acres wanted to sell it for millions of dollars. They made that clear to those of us who asked.

In desperation, we called a public meeting. We didn't expect much. But when 150 Frogtowners and friends assembled at Rondo Library on a freezing January night to hear our plans, we began to believe that with enough hard work, our "crazy idea" might actually prevail. And prevail it did, with the help of the generous donations, state and city funding, and a roster of organizational partners. Today, those 13 acres of greenspace are Frogtown Park & Farm – a St Paul city park that we all own – thanks to the many people who worked to make it so.

That's the point of this story: neighborhood improvements don't usually happen without a ton of hard work on the part of ordinary residents. We're often unpaid, usually unfamiliar with the government processes and jargon, and definitely

lacking the money needed to make our ideas a reality. The campaign for Frogtown Park & Farm was the result of careful strategy, endless meetings, and constant advocacy. We had heart, we persisted, and most importantly, we had the support of hundreds of citizens just like us. The result: a new park and a greener neighborhood.

Now, the work continues. There are myriad ways that we ordinary citizens can step up to protect and improve Frogtown's green spaces. Here are just a few of the many ways that Frogtowners – and friends – can get involved and build something green and beautiful, right in our own neighborhoods.

1. TURN THE LIGHTS BACK ON:

Ten out of 13 light fixtures at Frogtown Park & Farm are broken, wires stripped out of their bases. Neighbors are working to win funds from the city budget to turn those lights back on. Solar powered lights offer an innovative, energy-saving solution to this safety problem. If you agree, you can help by ranking the project as a top priority, on a city-run poll. Go to engagestpaul.org/cib2022, scroll down to "Rate the Projects" and give "Lights On: Solar-Powered Lighting in Frogtown Park & Farm" a number one rating.

2. BUILD A BEE LINE:

Hamline-Midway and Frogtown residents are teaming up to plant a pathway for pollinators along Pierce Butler Route, stretching from Snelling Avenue all the way to the intersection of Pierce Butler



Susane Moua was among the 100+ neighborhood advocates who gathered to support Frogtown Park & Farm in 2009. (Photo courtesy of Frogtown Green)

and Minnehaha. The endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee has been spotted a couple of times in gardens along the way. Volunteers plant and weed in the gardens every Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m. Join us at 9, in the parking lot at the corner of Grotto and Minnehaha.

3. PLANT A GRAVEL BED:

No, a gravel bed is not a place for pea gravel to multiply – it's an ingenious way to cultivate small, bare root trees over a summer, in a nursery bed filled with gravel. Once they've leafed out and developed a nice mass of roots, formerly puny fruit and shade trees are ready for free delivery to residents in Frogtown, Hamline-Midway, Summit-University and Payne-Phalen. Volunteers have already planted over 600 trees

this way! To learn more about Frogtown Green's gravel bed model, check our website, frogtowngreen.com. There's a downloadable Tree Planting Guide for Urban Neighborhoods right on the home page.

4. RUN AWAY TO THE (CLIMATE) CIRCUS:

Climate change will hit residents of Frogtown harder than those who live in wealthier, greener neighborhoods. Frogtown Green is planning a one-day "Climate Circus," to demonstrate affordable, household-scale adaptations to the heat, storms and drastic weather coming our way. We need creative people: artists, performers, teachers and environmental advocates, to help plan this festive event this August. Contact Patricia at Frogtown Green (info@frogtowngreen.com, 651-757-5970) if this interests you.

5. SAVE THE TREES:

Citizen advocacy for greenspace isn't just needed in Frogtown. Our neighbors to the north, in St. Anthony Park, are working hard to prevent county road workers from cutting down over 150 mature oaks, evergreens and other trees along Cleveland Avenue. Protests are being organized. If you're an urban tree advocate, contact Ramsey County Manager Ryan O'Connor, 651-266-8000, and tell him to save the Cleveland Avenue trees. Check the neighborhood's listserve (SAPark@groups.io) for other ways to help out.

So, there you have it; five ways to work with friends and neighbors for a greener urban environment. And that's just a starter list. But maybe you have your own crazy idea? If so, I'd love to read it! Email me at info@frogtowngreen.com.

Patricia Ohmans founded Frogtown Green, a volunteer-powered initiative to build green beauty in the Frogtown neighborhood. We plant trees, cultivate gardens and work toward a healthier environment. If you'd like to know more, our website is frogtowngreen.com or you can contact us directly at 651-757-5970.

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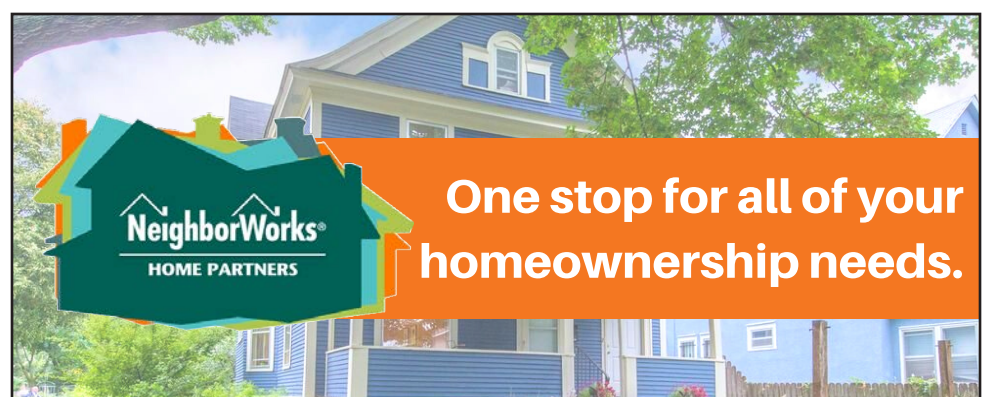
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WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RISE

We've got to decide if it's going to be this generation or never.

– Daisy Bates

Hello Monitor readers,

Happy June and great summer times to look forward to enjoying! Unfortunately, the month of May was a painful and traumatic month that will have lasting ripple effects. Hopefully the ripple lessons that come from this month will empower us to pause and take stock in our tendencies to prioritize profits over people. May we truly begin to learn to prioritize people over profits.

This month I didn't have writers' block. Instead I had sadness, madness, frustration, and helpless feeling blocks in preparing to write/share for this issue. I contemplated not writing/sharing anything other than an "Hello" with a blank space. I was looking forward to writing and highlighting Father's Day, Juneteenth Celebrations, GLBTQ Pride, Dairy, and Black Lives Matters Month or about D-Day-WW11, Adopt-a-Cat Month, Flag Day, Smile Day, Swim-a-Lap Day, and/or about Forgiveness Day. However, a feeling of depression and craziness began to surround me, which left me simply numb in the midst of too many tasks to accomplish. My normal self-care therapy, my Course-In-Miracles practice, and even intentionally blowing peace bubbles were not working for me as the days of May brought on bad news, work deadlines, the awesome tragedy in Buffalo, N.Y. (which brought up memories of the unthinkable tragedy in Buffalo, Minn.), and the absolutely senseless mass shooting in Texas. And then....

I attended a smaller George Floyd Vigil Memorial that included acknowledgements for other recent and past victims slain unjustly by bad rotten cops and/or by bad rotten desperate community individuals. The event was hosted by the Victoria Theater Art Center (VTAC), and facilitated by their gifted community coordinator, Sydney L. It was a very healing experience that was encircled by cleansing spring rain sprinkles, and the fresh mourning of young elementary kids and two of their educators and the thoughts and prayers sent to the grieving parents, siblings, grandparents, and their loved ones. The memorial ceremony event ended with heartfelt songs and a poem ("The Dream Keeper") by Langston Hughes, offered and read by Sharon C.:

*Bring me all of your dreams,
You dreamers,
Bring me all of your
Heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.*

Being present with others and listening and taking in this poem lit a spark within me that said: indeed, it is always darkest before dawn!

Yes, I started feeling that this poem alone could fill my blank column space as it was filling and renewing my numbed and disempowered space within me. Yet, I still didn't feel recharged to share any type of message of "hope," of "yes we can," of "this will pass," and we will rise together.

Of course, I did have good moments of thinking about the great inter-generational folks that I work with in urban and rural gardening/farming, the June 17 Community Peace Celebration, and of the acceptance and variety of the upcoming Juneteenth holiday Celebrations. However, super inflation is crippling gardeners and farmers and family households; the Peace Celebration volunteer planners have other work priorities and can't even find a time to meet and plan; and that the Juneteenth Holiday is really just acknowledgement without creative reparations and equitable justice. And then....

I was contacted by a partnering-ally team within the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) who offered to share words of encouragement, on how to talk to our children about these tragedies instead of leaving them in fear and ignorance, as is the tradition of Puritan, fearful, and supremacy toxic-thinking and acting. I believe the SPPS Early Learning Coalition team's message is for communicating with our young-ones and for our older-ones, particularly for our older-ones who want to ban books, restrict conversations about race and cultures, reduce voting rights, fire teachers who answers when a student asks questions that are shamed at home, or who want to jail doctors for honoring a women's decision about her health and body. Thank you, SPPS Partnerships Office of Early Learning for sharing and educating us and for doing your job!

Since the insurrectionist attack on the Capitol on January 2021, the Frogtown-Summit-University Early Learning Coalition has had monthly conversations on how to talk with children about difficult topics, from the murder of George Floyd to homelessness to domestic violence. Often, we have invited guests from local organizations – such as the Ain Dah Yung Center or Women's Advocates – to help guide those conversations. Together, we have generated valuable insights from our experiences talking with and supporting children, whether our own or those whom we encounter in our professional work.

Regardless of the topic, several ideas recur in our conversations on how to talk with children. Here are some of them:

1. Parents and caregivers should take care of themselves and name their own emotions in response to a tragedy or other difficult topic. And, they should not be afraid of children seeing their emotional responses because that can lead to a conversation about how it's okay to have big feelings when something makes you feel sad, angry, or scared.

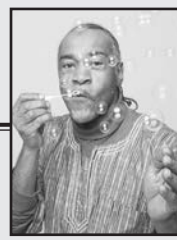
2. Respond to children's questions or observations directly and simply, in concrete language that they will understand, depending on their age. Ask them what they know already and what led them to wonder about it. If you don't have an answer to their question, be comfortable simply saying that you don't know, but follow up by suggesting that you and the child, together, can try to find some answers.

3. Assure them that you and the many other caring adults in their life will do whatever they can to keep them safe, but also teach them simple things that they can do on their own to keep themselves safe, such as memorizing your phone number and address, or

PEACE BUBBLES

BY MELVIN GILES

peacebubbles@q.com



naming some other people in their community to whom they can go for help.

4. *Help children refocus their attention from the sadness, anger, or fear they feel in response to an event toward the positive ways that people come together as a community to help each other heal and create solutions to problems. Participate with children in simple actions that help them to understand that they can change the world – such activities don't have to be directly related to the event and could be something as simple as making a card or gift for one of their friends.*

These are just a few ideas that we hope might be useful to families and adults who work with children, especially in light of the recent tragedies in Buffalo, Uvalde, and too many other places to name. We also welcome any residents and community partners to join our gatherings and to share your own ideas and resources. If you would like to learn more about our Early Learning Coalition and what we're planning for the summer, please visit our website (<https://www.spps.org/frogtown-elc>) or send an email message (zachary.pierson@spps.org). Thank you.

Now, as far as doing your job, I never thought I would ever see such a blatant disregard and dishonor of a civic oath to uphold the law and a responsible and accountable lawmaker. Yes, we always have a few rotten apples and greedy cracked-egg lawmakers. However, we are currently witnessing and hearing lawmakers and judges destroying the dreams and hopes for the intended American way of life. And, yes,

I think that is the root of my depressed feelings. That even in the aftermath of the George Floyd murder and other similar George Floyd like-victims, COVID's lesson of institutional (not personal or bias) racism being a confirmed health factor, the Jan. 6 treasonous assault on our national capitol, the multiple Asian hate attacks and killings, the Buffalo neighborhood grocery store brutal massacre, and the unbelievable and random craze mass-gun deaths, that we still haven't found the will to call on our Better Angels for intervention, prevention, and pro-active changes.

Thankfully, we have Maya Angelou's inspired words to remind us that "Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise, I rise, I rise." In 2022, it is self-evident that all of us (child or elder, low or upper income, female or male, BIPOC or not, lawmaker or voter, urban, rural or somewhere in-between, conservative or semi conservative, walker, runner, cyclist, roller, &/or whatever), we are all slaves to our taught-fears, prideful-ignorance, human-guilt, and systematic-traumas.

Yet we have the potential and can choose to rise. I can rise, you can rise, and we can rise together!

Keep the positive vibrations flowing, stay optimistic; and, keep doing Good things, keep walking in Faith, keep having Patience and tapping-into the Healing Power of Empathy, and keep Hope Alive!

May Peace Be In the Rondo, Frogtown, Hamline/Midway, Como, and Surrounding Communities...

May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities...

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A VOICE FOR JUSTICE

>> from 3

THE GREAT AWAKENING

Harrelson calls the shift that has taken place since Perry's death "the Great Awakening."

"It was a validation of this ugliness that was being hidden for so many years, playing with people's minds, because to White America... they could not see that," she said. "When Perry died, it gave validation. It gave meaning. It gave support. That what we were saying was true."

As these hidden layers were exposed, she felt Black people didn't have to defend themselves as much, and White people became more open to hearing the message – that fundamentally, according to Harrelson, "we need to treat people like human beings." When Perry was pleading for his life, speaking out of desperation, she reasoned, he was appealing to Chauvin as a human being. But Chauvin and the other officers failed to see Perry as one.

With this exposure has come some forward progress, Harrelson believes. Since her nephew's murder, some cases have been reopened, and six police officers in Minnesota have been convicted for extreme violence against Black people (Chauvin, J. Kueng, Thomas Lane, Tou Thao, for George Floyd's murder; Kim Potter of Brooklyn Center in the death of Daunte Wright, and Brett Palkowitsch of St. Paul for using excessive force involving a police dog during an arrest of a person mistaken for a robbery suspect).

"Those may be small victories to others, but those are battles we have won towards the war... So yes, the movement is going forward, and it makes me feel good to see these things happening, because I know that it validates to me that my nephew's death was not in vain," said Harrelson. "Everything takes time. You're not gonna win all the battles. But it doesn't stop us,



I Ling Thompson from Colorado, Diane Regas from California, Angela Harrelson and Susan Schmidt from the Twin Cities talk at the George Floyd Memorial. Harrelson often greets visitors to the Square and has met people from all over the world. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

'cause when we go five steps backwards, we gonna go 10 forward. And the bottom line is, we're not taking it anymore."

NEGOTIATING FOR EQUALITY

Harrelson talks about Black Americans having to be in constant negotiations – whether or not to take a drink at a water fountain or ride the bus or be educated – for equality. For her, the Black Lives Matter movement exposes White people to this reality.

"What to them is a privilege, to us is a negotiation. It's a business deal," said Harrelson. "I want one day to not have to say Black Lives Matter. I want one day to not use the words White privilege... I just wanna be able to come out and know that I'm a human being. And I don't have to watch what I say, or when I'm driving I gotta slow down – not because I should by law, but I should because my color's Black, and I don't want my skin weaponized. 'Cause I wanna see another day."

Nowadays Harrelson goes to the Square as often as she can, greeting visitors as she sees them. On the day of this interview, she spoke with people from California, Colorado and St. Paul. A Sudanese gentleman from Australia who attends Harvard University. A Minneapolis educator on strike. Rochester, Minn. Detroit, Mich. They are simple exchanges that uplift Harrelson and leave a lasting impression on those she's touched.

"You see something in the news, you're able to meet Angela, with all she's experienced, [and see her] show up with so much love. It's powerful," said I Ling Thompson, who was visiting from Grand Junction, Colo.

Often, White people ask Harrelson, "What can we do?" She talks about the importance of having these conversations, something that just didn't happen before. On this particular day, she encouraged a White woman to go into a Black hair salon, another to a Black church. To be okay with feeling awkward, but to recognize that it's only because it's different. To recognize that many Black people have been moving in White spaces for much of their lives.

Harrelson's warmth and generosity of spirit is felt throughout the pages of "Lift Your Voice." So is her determination. She's blunt about the impacts of systemic racism, in her own life and as played out on the world stage in George Floyd's murder. As she explains in the book, it's not enough to care about racism, you have to act. "The main thing is to speak up when you see injustice."

"Lift Your Voice" is a story of finding strength, holding onto hope and tapping into our collective humanity.

More on the George Floyd Global Memorial can be found at georgefloydglobalmemorial.org.

FILMNORTH® MARKS 35TH ANNIVERSARY WITH MOVE TO PERMANENT HOME

FilmNorth® will move from its current leased space to a new home in an historic building designed by renowned architect Clarence Johnston at 2441 University Ave. FilmNorth will purchase and co-own with D/O Architects.

The move will allow FilmNorth to serve a larger community of burgeoning filmmakers in a space that is 30% larger than its current facility. The project's innovative capital campaign, capturing unique tax credits along with partnering with D/O Architects, made the move fiscally feasible.

"This will be a state-of-the-art education and laboratory space for media artists that will be a model for the nation," said FilmNorth Executive Director Andrew Peterson. "As we mark this extraordinary organization's 35th anniversary, this move creates a dynamic permanent home for FilmNorth that looks to the future, greatly expanding our community-based film programs and increasing our engagement with artists in the North." Included in the expansion will be more classroom space, editing suites, and a unique and beautiful state-of-the-art screening room with DCP projection.

"This move is a win on many levels," said Bianca Rhodes, FilmNorth Board of Directors President. "Not only will tax credits make our move financially viable, our location along the Metro Green Line is a win for our education programs, especially for young people. We will be close and accessible to students coming from high schools and universities in both east and west metro areas."

FilmNorth, formerly known as Independent Film Project, was founded in 1987.



Andrew Peterson



Bianca Rhodes

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Como junior Alex Le is training in the U.S. Naval Summer Flight Academy at Delaware State University.

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**COMO PARK
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

BY ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher



On June 10, 2022, Alex Le will complete his junior year at Como with the No. 1 academic ranking in his class. Two days later, Le began training at the U.S. Naval Summer Flight Academy.

Le earned a full-ride \$25,000 scholarship to the challenging program held at Delaware State University. Beyond the classroom, his academy training will include over 15 hours of solo flights. When Le starts his senior year at Como, he will already have a private pilot's license from the Federal Aviation Administration.

WCCO-TV News recently did a feature story on Le and his extraordinary accomplishments. Le shared that he's excited for the opportunity, but also a little nervous about solo flights.

He's been studying flight manuals and mentally preparing for the adventure. It's a unique chance to propel his career path before even taking on his senior

year of coursework at Como.

Le says that he'll be applying to the Air Force Academy and has dreams of being an aerospace engineer for NASA or Boeing.

CONCERT SEASON

The Como choirs performed an outdoor concert at the Como Lake Pavilion on Tuesday, May 24. Choir director Siri Keller wanted the spring concert to embrace spring in the neighborhood. Beyond families and friends, the free concert attracted a wider audience from the community.

Members of the Como Band, under the direction of Dr. Philip Fried, presented a concert in the school auditorium on Thursday, May 26. Attendees were treated to popular music that included selection from musicals such as Les Misérables and films including Star Wars.

ST. PAUL BADMINTON STARS SHINE

St. Paul girls' badminton teams traditionally dominate the rest of the state's competition and this year was no exception with Johnson, Washington and Highland all reaching the state tournament's final four.

Como's team has reached that stage

several times over the years. While that didn't happen this season, the Cougars' No. 1 singles player and senior captain Pa Nra Lee earned the third place medal in the individual tournament.

RETIRING TEACHERS

Abdomohammed Karimi began teaching science and math to Como students in the fall of 1985. In total, he spent 39 years teaching in St. Paul Public Schools.

Karimi was an instructor of AP physics for most of his career at Como and was known for his enthusiastic greetings and welcoming classroom environment.

"My years of teaching have been filled with utter enjoyment as many familial relationships were formed," Karimi said.

Suzanne Susens started her career at Como in the fall of 1994 as a French language teacher. With dual licensure as an instructor of English Learners (EL) she began teaching EL classes in addition to French, and switched to teach EL full-time in 2012.

"Como has been a family for me," Susens said.

"The students and my colleagues have shaped the person I have become. They've made me wiser, kinder and more empathetic – in short, a better citizen of the world."

D10 thanks lake clean-up and blood drive volunteers

DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY SHEVEK MCKEE
Executive director
district10@
district10comopark.org



Thanks so much to everyone who showed up to make our May 21 Como Lake Clean-Up event a success! We had 32 community members help collect 50 pounds of trash from the lakeshore.

We also had our third Como Community Blood Drive on May 26 at Como Zoo where the Red Cross collected 60 units of blood from nearly 60 donors. Special thanks to our sign-in table volunteers Jessica, Kelly, Betsy, and Judie. The next blood drive will be on Aug. 2.

COMO NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY PROJECT

The D10 Neighborhood Relations Committee in happy to introduce the Como Neighborhood History Project. We're partnering with St. Kate's University to explore the history of our Como neighborhoods.

We'll be collecting stories from our neighbors that have lived here for most of their lives. We are more than the State Fair and Como Park! We are a neighborhood of shops, institutions and families. Let's

collect those stories together!

How you can get involved:

- Dig through your old photos! Share pictures of our neighborhood from the past. We are especially looking for old pictures of businesses, street scenes, homes, or schools that used to be here and are now gone like Sugar Dave's Drive-Inn at Como and Snelling.

- Help us find neighbors to interview. Suggest a family member, friend, or neighbor that has lived in the D10 community for most of their lives. Help us interview them or we can help with the interview to get their memories saved.

- Design a walking tour. Keep us healthy and fit while we are walking past interesting houses, pieces of art or cool institutions.

- Research and write a story. Help us research the many buildings, institutions, and past events that have shaped our community. Do you have old documents about the history of Como Elementary or Tilden School? Have a story about the old corner store or garden nursery business in your neighborhood, know a house that had interesting or famous folks living there, share them with us!

Reach out to history@district10comopark.org if you'd like to contribute or get involved. Watch for updates at district10comopark.org/history

COMO TREE TREK - JUNE 25 - OR SELF-GUIDED ANYTIME

The D10 Environment Committee hosts Tree Treks where community members can learn how to identify and appreciate the multitude of different tree species living in Como Park. Volunteer tree expert Stephanie Mirocha is our fabulous second-generation Tree Trek guide.

In addition to the planned events each year, the Tree Trek program has also created and installed Tree Tags on numerous trees around Como Park for self-guided tree treks. Find out more at district10comopark.org/tree-trek.

COMO LAKE CLEAN-UP - JUNE 28

D10 Como Park is planning our next Como Lake Clean-Up for Thursday, June 28, 6-9 p.m. These events, in partnership with the Capitol Region Watershed District, focus on the shoreline and lake itself.

District 10 provides trash-grabbers, rakes, buckets, nets, trash bags, and nitrile gloves for those who need them. Or, feel free to provide your own gear. Registration (before June 27) is not required, but it helps us plan and communicate if changes come up. Register and find out more at District10ComoPark.org/Como-Clean-Up

ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL - JULY 8

Every year, the D10 Neighborhood Relations Committee plans our Ice Cream

Social, typically featuring free ice cream, live music, meet-and-greets with neighborhood organizations, and activities for children and families.

The event is at the Historic Streetcar Station in Como Park, 1224 Lexington Pkwy. N. from 5-8 p.m. Because parking is limited, we encourage community members to walk, bike, roll, car-pool, or take public transportation. Bring your neighbors.

This event is still being planned. If you're interested in helping plan or volunteering at this event you can fill out our volunteer interest form, come to our Neighborhood Relations Committee meetings (1st Tuesdays), or reach out to organizer@district10comopark.org.

Find out more at district10comopark.org/IceCreamSocial.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to participate in District 10's board and committee meetings. You can find meeting details on our website at District10ComoPark.org.

- June 7, 7 p.m. - Neighborhood Relations Committee
- June 14, 7 p.m. - Environment Committee
- June 21, 7 p.m. - D10 Board Meeting
- July 5, 7 p.m. - Neighborhood Relations Committee
- July 6, 7 p.m. - Land Use Committee
- More upcoming events at district10comopark.org/Events

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HISTORIC CHURCH RECOGNIZED

Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill, 105 University Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55103 is listed in the National Register of Historical Places. The application had been submitted in August of 2019 to the National Park Service and the plaque has been installed. Shown above, left to right: Reverend Dr. Joy L. McDonald Colvet, congregation president Laura Delventhal, and David Krahn, member of the Property Team. Christ Lutheran on Capitol Hill is significant under the National Register Criterion for its architecture as a distinctive example of the Beaux Arts style within the context of Protestant churches. The congregation chose the aesthetic of the new edifice, constructed in 1915, to be in harmony with the newly completed Minnesota State Capitol, located diagonally across the street. The Beaux Arts style ran counter to both the stylistic trends and the theological prescriptions of Lutheran churches especially, and Protestant churches generally. Often Protestant churches were more inspired by the Gothic and Romanesque style.

Christ Lutheran has been an active, vital congregation for over 150 years. "We have added on to our building to accommodate our congregation's ministry and to also provide space for agencies and organizations that serve the needs of our community and our state," say church representatives. "Examples include the use of our new commercial kitchen by Shobi's Table, which is a food truck ministry; Good Acre, which connects communities and people through good food; and West Indies Food Truck, which focuses on healthy living for people of color. Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota; Daily Work, which works with job seekers as they seek employment; and the Saint Paul Area Synod of the ELCA have offices within the facility. In addition to the home congregation, worship space is provided for Rock of Ages Baptist congregation.

"We are humbled by this important recognition. Being on the National Register of Historic Places reminds us of the confidence and expectations by people outside the church relative to the importance of our ministry. We are most thankful to our foremothers and forefathers who labored in abiding faith to care for this building and who carried out God's ministry with our community and to the wider world. We feel a deep obligation to continue to maintain and preserve this building for God's mission, both for today and for our future."

PLAN IT

ECO FAIR COMING AUG. 13

The Eco Fair will be a free community event. Organizers of the Eco Fair & 5k have put out a call for exhibitors to participate in the event to be held Saturday, Aug. 13 in Como Park. It will be hosted by Donate Good Stuff in partnership with District 10 Como & District 12 St. Anthony Park Community Councils, Zero Waste St. Paul, and ReUse Minnesota Nonprofits and community organizations that focus on sustainability, the environment, reuse, etc can find out more and register at <https://www.donategoodstuff.org/eco-fair-5k-2022---support-the-event.html>

NORTHERN SPARK ART FESTIVAL JUNE 11

The annual free Northern Spark festival will bring wonder and exploration to the Rondo, Frogtown, and Little Mekong neighborhoods of St. Paul, as well as downtown St. Paul and Raspberry Island on Saturday, June 11, from 9 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 12. Learn more

about how to experience the art, how to get around, a map, and updates at northenspark.org.

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION JUNE 18

YWCA St. Paul will celebrate Juneteenth, the commemoration of the end to slavery in the United States, on Saturday, June 18, 2022, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Boyd Park. This year's celebration promises to be fun for the whole family. Hosted by Jearlyn Steele, the event will offer music entertainment by Thomasina Petrus, Johnnie Brown, and Sound Effects, storyteller and spoken word artists Beverly Cottman, and Brittany Delaney, along with kids' activities, vendors, food, and more.

TERRA NOSTRA ART EXHIBIT

"Terra Nostra, Our Earth" will be on display May 21 through July 3, 2022 at the Basilica of St. Mary. It will feature art from five artists, including Midway resident Mary Gallagher, with varied connections and responses to environmental justice, art and Catholicism, collectively known as Catholic Artists for Environmental Justice.

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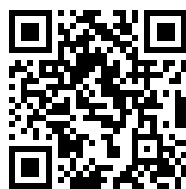
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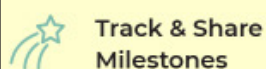
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SISTERS WHO DANCE

>> from 1

Ballet Co.Laboratory Artistic Director Zoé Henrot feels strongly about the benefits of students working with professional artists and notes: "It's not only the students' performance and education experience that is enriched by this model. Our professional dancers are equally as inspired by the opportunity to share the stage with the next generation of the art form. Together they encourage one another and realize that no matter how many years they have been dancing, the learning and growing never stops."

For senior Charlotte Tracy, dancing alongside professional dancers has manifested as improvement in her dancing. In *Firebird*, Charlotte danced in the corps de ballet, a key skill for dancers to master that involves dancing in unison as a group. "When I was younger and would only perform in a recital or *Nutcracker*, every show felt like a big deal, but also a lot of pressure. Since I have been dancing in multiple professional shows a year, my dancing has improved drastically. Every time I perform, I feel less stage fright and a little more prepared for the stage than last time," Charlotte reflected.

Now Charlotte's two younger sisters, Isabelle and Hazel, are following in her footsteps by taking classes at The School of Ballet Co.Laboratory. When upper-level students of the school had the opportunity to work directly with *Firebird* choreographer Flavia Garcia to learn the steps for their roles, Isabelle Tracy, age 14, was thrilled. "It was fun to get to learn from a guest choreographer because usually, we work with people we already take class from. This experience has helped me adapt to different teaching styles," she said.

The lower-level students of The



School of Ballet Co.Laboratory performed roles in *Firebird*'s prologue. Choreographed by artistic director Zoé Henrot, the prologue gave the audience more context about the realm in which the *Firebird*'s story takes place, and how the *Fire-*

bird's character has been shaped by her life experiences. During the choreographic process with Henrot, dancers in Beginning Ballet through Level 3 were given opportunities to infuse the choreography with their own ideas about their characters.



Charlotte and Isabelle Tracy perform in *Lullaby*. They both attend and perform with Ballet Co.Laboratory. (Photo by Rachel Koep)

AT LEFT

The three Tracy sisters: Isabelle, Charlotte and Hazel. "Most kids my age have a lot more free time, but I wouldn't exchange being a trainee for anything," said Charlotte. (Photo by Rachel Koep)

Henrot said, "It is important to me that the dancers feel they have ownership over the steps they are dancing. Traditionally students do not engage in this part of the creative process but are expected to at a professional level. I want to ensure they are prepared for this in the future."

Hazel Tracy, age 6, is the youngest dancer in the Tracy family. Currently in beginning ballet, she was thrilled to perform in *Firebird*, especially since she got to share the spotlight with her big sisters. All three siblings agree that getting to watch the professionals in rehearsals and up close on stage is inspiring.

Charlotte Tracy considers her front-row seat to the inner workings of a professional ballet company a distinct privilege. "Most kids my age have a lot more free time, but I wouldn't exchange being a trainee for anything. I feel incredibly prepared going into a college dance program next year because of what I've learned at Ballet Co.Laboratory." Tracy will begin her first year at the University of Missouri – Kansas City's dance program this fall.



New Summer Hours Begins June 14

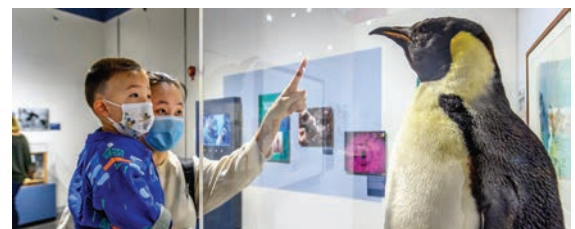
Plan your visit to the Bell Museum this summer with our new hours Tuesday–Friday from 10am–4pm and Saturday–Sunday from 10am–4pm! Tickets for general admission and planetarium shows are available online or over the phone. Call 612-626-9660 from 10 am–3 pm, Wednesday–Sunday. Members and visitors with free or discounted passes, or complimentary admissions, please call to reserve your tickets or simply reserve them at the museum.



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