



Foster the
family

>> 7

Russel Balenger replaces Dai Thao as Ward 1 City Council Member

By JAN WILLMS

Long-time community worker Russel Balenger has been named to replace City Council Member Dai Thao, who left Saint Paul in August to serve as director of a faith-based social justice organization in Sarasota, Fla.



Russel Balenger

Balenger will represent Ward 1, an area that has been called the “heart of Saint Paul” in terms of both geography and composition. He will serve as council member of the most racially and economically diverse ward in the city until the end of 2023.

“I saw Dao Thai was resigning and moving to Florida, and there were some things I had talked about with him previously,” Balenger said. “I really wanted to get some work done, so I decided to put my hat in the ring.”

Balenger, who co-founded the Circle of Peace Movement (TCOPM) with his wife, Sarah, over 12 years ago, said his family had suggested he might start slowing down. “I didn’t feel like slowing down, so I just decided to give it a go and here I am.”

TCOPM was organized as a community response to increasing violence. The Balengers gathered affected families to sit, share a meal and talk with one another. The effort has continued to grow over

RUSSEL BALENGER >> 8

NEW CAREER PATHWAYS CENTER



Volunteers from 3M help ready the new Career Pathway Center on the Saint Paul College campus on Aug. 31, 2022. The new Saint Paul Public Schools learning space features classrooms, state-of-the-art technology and equipment, collaboration areas and an outdoor courtyard where students from numerous post-secondary institutions can pursue college courses, industry, trade, advanced manufacturing, Vo Tech certifications and internships. The transformation was led by national education nonprofit Heart of America. (Photo submitted) >> More on page 10.

What will happen with rent control?

Resident at Dominion-owned Legends says rent hike will leave her in streets

By JANE McCLURE

Changes to St. Paul’s sweeping rent control regulations could be adopted by the St. Paul City Council in mid-September. But with so many amendments and a looming legal challenge, it’s difficult to say what rent control will eventually look like.

A vote could occur as early as Sept. 14. The council continued a hearing and vote on amendments Sept. 7, following a three-hour hearing Aug. 24.

Fifty-three percent of St. Paul voters in 2021 approved one of the most restrictive rent control measures in the United States. Rent control took effect May 1, with measures put into place for tenant and landlords including processes for increases above the mandated 3 percent cap and for appeals.

The council is now considering further amendments, with some providing additional protections for tenants and others providing incentives for developers, who have slowed new housing production in the wake of rent control.

Ward 4 Council Member Mitra Jalali said she is already hearing of violations of rent control, and dealing with tenants who fear displacement. Jalali wants additional protections for tenants and opposes amendments brought in by Ward 3 Council Member Chris Tolbert.

The biggest flash points are two exemptions brought in by Tolbert – one for affordable housing and one for new construction. The new construction exemption

RENT CONTROL >> 16

One year in, Hamline Midway Coalition Executive Director Sarah O’Brien shares what she appreciates about her work



Sarah O’Brien just ended her first year as Hamline Midway Coalition Executive Director. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

District 11: a place where your voice matters

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

What does a district council in St. Paul do? The answer is as varied as the people who live in district, Como resident Sarah O’Brien has discovered in the last year since she was hired to replace outgoing Hamline Midway Coalition Executive Director Kate Mudge.

O’Brien has always worked in non-profits. She appreciates the mission-driven work she’s doing at HMC.

“I love that everyone is working for that mission,” remarked O’Brien.

Learn more about her work.

DEFINE WHAT HMC IS FOR SOMEONE WHO DOESN’T KNOW

O’Brien: I tend to start out with a bad

joke about how I will need a white board, some maps and charts, and about 45 minutes of the person’s time to properly explain the intricate work of the Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) and the district council system in general. Yet that bad joke captures something important, and kind of wonderful, about how energizing and interesting I find the work.

The Hamline Midway Coalition is truly the hands and feet, and sometimes the voice, of our neighborhood – serving our neighbors and working together to solve all sorts of problems, create opportunities, and improve where we live, work, and play. However, it’s a lot of hands, and a lot of activity, for lots of different efforts.

Our mission covers a lot of ground: “Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) is an

action-oriented, neighborhood-based organization that develops and supports resident-led initiatives in community building, transportation, economic development, and neighborhood improvement.” It’s hard, when asked, not to just start listing (and mapping on those whiteboards) all the ways we empower and connect neighbors and initiatives.

Without any whiteboards, and more succinctly, I would like someone who doesn’t know anything about the Hamline Midway Coalition to know that their voice truly matters and is heard, and we (HMC) are a great starting point to get local issues solved, and opportunities and ideas launched.

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AGING WELL
From the ‘Hood
to the woods

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Life is a climate carnival:
8 steps to reducing your
household climate impact

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George Floyd Square:
Sowing seeds of
solidarity

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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.

BEACH TO BEECH

When I arrived in Minnesota as an east coast transplant in the late 1980s, my summer visions were of expanses of New Jersey beaches rather than expansive views of blue beeches, the understory tree of northern pine forests. Finding summer pleasure in a tiny lakeshore cabin nestled in any forest was an entirely alien concept.

East coast childhood summers had been two-month long versions of the Minnesota State Fair wrapped in a sea breeze. There were bustling boardwalks, vast horizons of deep blue wave-tossed waters, and fine sand strands as far as the eye could see, dotted with colorful beach chairs and umbrellas. Summer sounds were chants of, "Getchur ice-cold fudgy wudgy ice cream," belted out by a phalanx of dudes dressed in white, heavy mini freezers strapped to their shoulders, not the haunting call of a lone loon. Coppertone, hot dogs and pizza were my summer scents, not the clean prick of pungent pine.

But that has changed.

After 34 summers far removed from the throngs of vacationers packing the boardwalks and beaches, I've come to savor the tranquility of the north woods.

FROM THE 'HOOD TO THE WOODS

It's a privilege to be able to access the wilderness. Unlike the seashores in easy reach for most east coast urbanites, finding a way to the immense nature of north-

From the 'HOOD to the WOODS



There are easy woodland walks that don't require heavy hiking. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

ern Minnesota and Wisconsin requires ample resources. Generational ownership of private cabins is typical, severely limiting access. And while resorts and small inns dot the northern landscapes, many are inaccessible for numerous metro residents.

This year in late July, our little group of four women hailing from all corners of the metro area, planned a mid-week stay in a private cabin on Lake Nancy, a pristine northern location belonging to a dear, longtime friend.

Key to any cabin trip is good preparation, so ahead of our adventure we met on a sunny café patio for the requisite kick-off strategic meeting. With no supermarkets or restaurants near our destination, we planned our communal meals. All groceries would be hauled in from our respective

urban grocery stores. Joint activities, games and puzzles were also coordinated. All aspects of our stay easily came together.

Of course, a trip up north also requires having reliable transportation, which was not a problem for four solidly middle-class women. In fact, we took two cars – the right choice given the hilarious amount of cargo we schlepped. Our mini-SUVs seemed packed for a two-month rather than mid-week stay. Laden with our urban amenities, we headed out at the appointed time.

GPS WON'T GET YOU TO THE DOOR

Unlike some of the longer "Up North" trips, Lake Nancy is a comfortable two-and-a-half-hour commute from the metro. Turning off I35 at the landmark "caloric" café known as Tobies, my com-



View from the dock provides the tranquility of the water, sky and trees and a lone loon in the distance seeking her feathered family. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

panion, Kathy, and I munched donuts and cinnamon buns as we continued along a two-laned local highway. It wasn't long until we left the paved main road onto its graveled country cousin, driving into the deep, silent woods, simultaneously exchanging delighted glances and exhaling an identical sigh as our city concerns melted away under the green canopy. Our pleasure on entering untouched nature soared like the first eagles we soon spotted above.

LITTLE CABIN IN THE WOODS

Although I had been a regular Lake Nancy guest frequently in the early 1990s, the nearly 20 years since my last visit erased any directional memory. Fortunately, our host had provided a detailed, hand-drawn map for the last part of our journey. Well off the beaten path where our GPS failed us, our only wayfinding devices were the map and modest country-style address placards. After a few wrong turns, we found the golden knotty pine cabin with its signature red garage and reassuring "Lake Nancy Rd" sign.

Like many an original hunting or fishing shack, the cabin has been adorably renovated, featuring a well-stocked kitchen with the necessary appliances. Although the sole bathroom is small (and the shower smaller), everything is updated and practical. The living room with its

TO THE WOODS >> 3



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Quietly reading on a deck under whispering pines is a quintessential lake tradition. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

TO THE WOODS >> from 2

woodburning stove, two tiny bedrooms and small porch, harkens back to the cabin's 1800s provenance. There is something primal and satisfying about being in such a space.

We enjoyed our meals and each other's company primarily in the cabin's centerpiece, a modern, vaulted-ceiling great room, surrounded by picture windows that bring the pine forest indoors. This room opens onto a large deck with views of the lake, festooned with bird feeders that host a constant show of pileated woodpeckers, ruby-throated hummingbirds, black-capped chickadees, northern cardinals, red-winged blackbirds, blue jays and more. Gathering here was the heart of our stay, filled with the sounds of book pages turning and the welcome conversation of wise women.

THE BENEFITS OF NATURE

Whether taking little hikes around the area, lounging in the great room or on the spacious pontoon or deck, or splashing in the lake, the absolute break from city sounds and distractions is healing balm for body, soul and mind. It is a privilege and a pleasure.

Regardless of age or culture, all hu-



Simple pleasures of a homecooked meal and camaraderie contribute to the sense of north woods well-being. (Photo by Susan Schaefer)

mans find nature pleasing. Being in, or even viewing scenes of nature, is proven to reduce anger, fear, and stress – feelings that can elevate blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension and suppress our immune systems. Research from the Earl E. Bakken Center Spirituality & Healing, a part of the University of Minnesota, offers evidence about how our environments increase or reduce stress.

We are genetically programmed to find trees, plants, water, and other nature elements engrossing, increasing our pleasurable feelings. When we are absorbed by nature scenes, we become distracted from our pain and discomfort. Because humans find nature inherently interesting, time in nature also increases our ability to pay attention, providing a respite for our overactive minds, refreshing us for new tasks.

It is a scientific fact that being in na-

ture contributes to a virtuous cycle of healing and restoration.

WHAT ABOUT ACCESS?

Sadly, research also confirms that underserved and communities of color are far less likely to engage in nature-based outdoor recreation activities, with historic discrimination being a large underlying factor.

Our local Twin Cities PBS station (TPT) in conjunction with parent company, PBS, has responded to this situation by launching a six-part primetime series, "America Outdoors With Baratunde Thurston," an outdoor enthusiast and New York Times bestselling author of "How to Be Black."

Thurston is the real deal – witty, authentic and charming. His personality is

infectious. The series follows him on adventure-filled journeys exploring a diverse array of natural regions across the U.S. It focuses on how those landscapes shape the way Americans work, play and interact with the outdoors. The segment on Minnesota's north woods will resonate with local audiences.

The show is for everyone, but there's little doubt that PBS and TPT are wisely responding to the problem of access to natural settings for certain populations. This inaccessibility is as much a central theme of the series as is the twinned message for intensified environmental stewardship.

In a similar vein, at the beginning of August the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* featured Laura Yuen's illuminating article about the 100-year history of Black families getting away to a certain Minnesota lake. Yuen's article reinforces the necessity for nature retreats for everyone. Black families, she writes, "went to the lake to get away from the city, find solace in nature, hear the call of the loon, sip cocktails and play cards, teach their kids how to anchor the boat, pick wild berries, walk the woods under the stars, and tell stories about the colossal fish they almost caught."

My friends and I could do these things without any roadblocks. Shouldn't everyone be able to access our wild and wonderful nature?

It is in our best interest as a society to do a better job providing equal access to our northern woods and lakes. A website called Wilderness Inquiry features several options: https://www.wildernessinquiry.org/about-wilderness-inquiry_old/partner-organizations/

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

Suicide rates too high; we should learn warning signs

By SUE ABDERHOLDEN

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Suicide rates in Minnesota declined slightly in 2020, but it's important to remember there were a record number of suicides in 2019, and this is the sixth year in a row where more than 700 Minnesotans have died by suicide. There are far too many deaths, and many families are devastated by these deaths.

Just as many people know first aid, people need to know the warning signs of suicide and what to do. Some of the warning signs include:

- Previous suicide attempts
- Statements revealing a desire to die
- Expressions of hopelessness or having no reason to live
- Prolonged depression, being very sad
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Unexplained anger, aggression, or irritability
- Withdrawing from friends and family, giving away prized possessions
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Using drugs or alcohol more often

If you are worried about yourself, a family member, or a friend, know that caring help is available. There is hope. People can now call or text 988 to be connected to a trained counselor. All Minnesota counties have a mobile mental health crisis team that can help in a crisis. And in Minnesota, 911 operators are supposed to link people to the mobile crisis team if

Suicide, overdose, and ACEs are **URGENT, RELATED, and PREVENTABLE** public health challenges per the CDC.

6 IN 10



adults reported experiencing at least one type of ACE, and approximately 16% of adults reported experiencing four or more types of ACEs.

70,000+

individuals died from an overdose in 2019.

47,000+

individuals died by suicide in 2019.

CALL 988

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health, suicide or substance use crisis or emotional distress, reach out 24/7 to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) by dialing or texting 988 or using chat services at suicidepreventionlifeline.org to connect to a trained crisis counselor. You can also get crisis text support via the Crisis Text Line by texting NAMI to 741741.

appropriate.

NAMI Minnesota offers several suicide prevention classes during September, including QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), which teaches the three steps anyone can take to help prevent suicide.

Suicide is a public health issue and

1 IN 4 STUDENTS REPORT AT LEAST 1 ACE

Approximately 37% of all students in the Minnesota Student Survey reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience.

The number of ACEs a child has experienced is strongly correlated with the likelihood of suicidal ideation and attempts. Of all ACEs, sexual abuse has the highest correlation to suicidal ideation and attempts.

is preventable. Please join in the efforts to save lives. Learn more about the steps you can take and the resources in your community by visiting NAMI Minnesota's website at www.namimn.org

Sue Abderholden is the executive director of NAMI Minnesota.

ACES LINKED TO SUICIDE

Adults who had experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more likely to have attempted suicide in their lifetime than those who had not experienced ACEs. Researchers used data from the 2012 to 2013 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC) to match people who had attempted suicide with those who had not, based on the presence or absence of nine mental and substance use disorders that are associated with suicide risk. This allowed the researchers to estimate the role that ACEs played in the risk of suicide attempts independent of mental and substance use disorders.

The ACEs included in the study were (1) psychological abuse; (2) physical abuse; (3) sexual abuse; (4) emotional neglect; (5) physical neglect; (6) witnessing violence against a mother or other adult female; (7) substance misuse by a parent or other household member; (8) mental illness, suicide attempt, or suicide death of a parent or other household member; (9) incarceration of a parent or other household member; and (10) parents' separation or divorce.

9TH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN U.S.

From 1999-2018, suicide rates rose 35 percent and declined in 2019-2020. Suicide was the 9th leading cause of death in the United States in 2020.

Local book celebrates voices of Black women

PLANTING SEEDS

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



Stories center the cultural experiences of diverse authors. While, writers shape the course of history by reimagining the present and constructing a new future filled with infinite possibilities. This process of creating art for social change is key to building a more just and inclusive society. It is illuminated in the new Aya Collective's anthology, "Let the Black Women Say Ase." The book is published by a local Black woman-owned press in Saint Paul, Minn., Aya Media Publishing (<https://ayamediapublishingllc.com/>). This organization was founded by the pioneering educator and author, Ebony Johanna Adedayo.

As editor of the anthology, Adedayo focused on creating space for the voices of Black women primarily from Minnesota, Ohio, and Illinois. These writers range in age from their 20s to 60s, and encompass all walks of life.

The writers in the anthology fully embrace the diversity of their life and spirituality. Readers will find stories of courage



Ebony Johanna Adedayo owns Aya Media Publishing, which just released "Let the Black Woman Say Ase."

and thankfulness when life is good and stories demonstrating the bravery of Black women to lean in and carry on – even when life is immensely painful. There are stories of strength that transcend individual experiences and are shared by Black

people across the African Diaspora.

The writers cover subjects encompassing loss, liberation, and their ancestors. The anthology's stories are helping to craft a new narrative for Black women by defining who they are, their beauty and spir-



ituality, and who they are as people.

Each page of this anthology explores the power of hope fueled with purpose. This is an invitation to Afro-futurism where writers reshape the course of history. The writers

share their vision for a future where Black women can be free from the social norms of biases, stereotypes, and prejudice. It is a world where they can stand tall in their heritage and take pride in their Blackness.

Reading "Let the Black Women Say Ase" is the perfect way to celebrate National Literacy Month. You can gather a group to read the book and learn more about the rich cultural experiences of Black women. Also, you can check out a copy of the book at your local library since it is Library Card Sign Up month.

September is National Literacy Month and Library Card Sign Up Month. In addition, Sept. 8 is International Literacy Day.

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.

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

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

responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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THE (COFFEE) BREWING DISTRICT OF SAINT PAUL

BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

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



As the weather cools down, not much sounds better than a warm cup of coffee on a patio. And lately, there's been a lot more options in and around the Midway. Here are some new (and old) places to check out.

Abogados Café has received a lot of

media attention after its recent opening. The coffee shop bills itself as the only lawyer-themed coffee shop in America and is located in the same building as the law firm, Ceiba Forte. The two are related, as the husband-wife team of Inti Martinez-Aleman and Ofelia Ponce own and operate both the law firm and coffee shop. "Abogados" means "lawyer" in Spanish and the decorations are Latino in culture, a nod to not only the coffee served but also the heritage of the owners. Location: 1052 Dale Street. Order: Fearless Lawtite (cayenne and cinnamon)

Traveling farther down Dale to University you'll find Flava Café. Operating in the new NDC building, Shaunie Grigsby is

the owner of Frogtown's first Black-owned coffee shop. A general benefit corporation, Flava is a "social enterprise community café invested in offering quality coffee, food, service and programming that eliminates disparities for young women of color and gender expansive youth one latte at a time." Location: 623 University Ave. Order: Nina Simone – espresso, dark chocolate, whipped cream, chocolate sauce.

Heading to a meeting recently at Vandalia Tower, I stopped at the coffee shop located on the first floor, SK Coffee. Voted Minnesota's Best Coffee House in 2021 in a Star Tribune readers poll, the coffee is brewed right at Vandalia Tower, but has

a much larger reach as it can be found at Kowalski's and co-ops, and is a rotating roaster in other parts of the country including at shops in Chicago and Park City, Utah. SK Coffee opened in April 2021 by owner Sam Kjellberg. Location: 550 Vandalia Ave. Order: Spicy Latte

While new coffee shops have opened, I don't want to forget about our old favorites. I'm thankful they survived the pandemic and customers can once again dine in. Dogwood Coffee, Gingko, Groundswell, Workhorse, and Golden Thymes are all going strong and have been important members of our community for years.

With its many taprooms, the Midway can be called the brewery district of Saint Paul; with our number of wonderful and unique locally owned coffee shops, it is also emerging as the coffee brewing district.

Letters

WHAT ABOUT POLLUTION FROM IDLING CARS?

The article regarding what happens when you remove I-94 seems to be based on fiction. The pictures show I-94 in definitely a non-rush hour period with even fewer cars in the new reimagined eight-lane road plus a bus route in the center. A better picture would be to show the roads at rush hour.

The pollution from cars idling at the stops lights will be way worse than the pollution from the freeway, since the average speeds will be lower. This new road is still a "wasteland" of cars, because it has to carry 160,000 cars a day or the cars have to go to other neighborhoods polluting them. These cars are going to go somewhere, because the infrastructure for public transportation is sorely lacking. What we have (e.g., the Green Line) is abused (e.g., smoking, trash, disruptive behavior) by some of the riders making riding public transit a chore rather than a pleasure, like it is in Europe.

A much better and more practical option would be to cover sections of the freeway, as suggested for the Rondo neighborhood and promote better, safer and cleaner transit to get people out of their cars.

The article against replacing the Hamline Midway library called the process deceitful. Based on my reading of the article, the author simply doesn't want to believe that old buildings have serious and expensive repair needs. A new library that is state-of-the-art and accessible to all should be embraced by the community.

Regards,
Chuck Bye
Como

UNACCEPTABLE TO IGNORE COMMUNITY INPUT ON LIBRARY DECISION

Concerning the future of the Hamline Midway Library, I do not understand the purpose of surveys and public engagement if SPPL director Catherine Penkert can simply ignore the results.

In March of 2021, as part of the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process, 318 people completed a survey indicating their preference for CIB funding. Of those who responded, 69% ranked "Renovation of the Hamline Midway Library" as their "high and very high" priority. More importantly, survey respondents overwhelmingly ranked the "Rebuild" option as "very low and low" priority among the choices for CIB funding.

But SPPL director Catherine Penkert who repeatedly spoke of community engagement and transparency, in the end, chose her own personal preference for the future of the library building over community preference. That is unacceptable.

Jeffrey Thole
Como

MEAN TO SKIM BUT READ WHOLE PAPER

Regardless of if the Ren Fest ticket opportunity still exists, I wanted to pass along some thanks. Many thanks for all your work to get local stories and events out to our communities! I moved to the Como neighborhood in 2021 as a new homeowner during the pandemic, and I've felt so much more connected by having this awesome resource.

I always start reading with the intent to skim, but end up making it through the entire paper each time! The stories of connection and joy, coverage of Como HS, latest update on the historic library debate, and Mr. Giles' column always leaves me feeling hopeful. As a public health worker during this time, it gives me relief to see the ads for vaccination, fact-based information about COVID-19, and the highlights of cultural wellness initiatives.

Thank you for all that you do!
Warmly,
Emily Regan
Como

Editor's note: Thanks, Emily! We hope you enjoy the four-pack of tickets to the Ren Fest.

Got input on the paper or story ideas? Email tesha@monitorsaintpaul.com and you might win tickets to the Ren Fest!

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A PRIEST NAMED DAN

By JAN WILLMS

It is an exciting moment when a writer's first novel is published. But when that first novel is also turned into a movie, the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction can be intense.

Dan Hornsby has achieved that goal with his book, "Via Negativa," published in 2020 and in the process of going into film production.

The book has a simple premise. A priest named Dan sets off on a road trip and picks up a coyote that has been hit by a truck to make the journey with him. Dan has been dismissed from his conservative diocese, and he plans to make a slow and contemplative road trip, heading to see old friends and hoping to find some answers.

Naming his main character after himself was kind of a joke, Hornsby said. "He really doesn't say his name for quite some time," Hornsby noted. "I think it's natural if you're alone, you don't say your name. There is this genre of auto-fiction, where people kind of explain their characters. He is 70, and I was 29 when I began writing the novel. The name just kind of stuck,

and there are a lot of priests of Irish or Italian extraction who are named Dan. So it kind of works out."

Hornsby said there were a lot of ideas that are part of theology that he wanted to explore, so the character of the priest was a way for him to think about the mystery and conflict that comes with spirituality.

Writers are often advised to write about what they know, and Hornsby has done that. Originally from Indiana, he holds an MFA in fiction from the University of Michigan and a master of theological studies from Harvard Divinity School. He is currently a visiting professor teaching creative writing at Macalester in Saint Paul.

"Via Negativa" is defined as a way of describing something by saying what it is not...it refers to the stream of Christian theology which emphasizes the unknowability of God and the inability of positive theological attributes to define God.

"I know a Latin title is not the catchiest thing in the world," said Hornsby, "but I'm putting out a narrative that the priest is very much in denial. That's kind of what his life has been like. One nice thing about having a narrator who is not exactly my age, he has more of a life lived



Dan Hornsby does much of his writing at Milkweed coffee shop on East Lake Street near where he lives. He is a visiting professor teaching creative writing at Macalester College. (Photo by Terry Faust)

Writing professor's first book, 'Via Negativa,' is heading for the big screen



Dan Hornsby published his first book, "Via Negativa," in 2020. (Photo by Terry Faust)

than I have."

When taking a trip by yourself, it is only natural to start thinking about your past life and reflect on it, according to Hornsby.

"We think about the mystery of our

lives and try to figure things out, and that doesn't ever stop. Whether you are middle-aged or older, it doesn't stop. You die, and you are still trying to figure it out," Hornsby said. He said there are moments of insight in Dan's life.

TO THE WOODS >> 7



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FOSTER THE FAMILY

Support group helps foster parents and adoptive families navigate through grey areas

By JAN WILLMS

What do you do when a foster child you have raised for several years is suddenly going home to her birth parents?

How do you react the first time the school principal calls you in to discuss a behavior problem with your foster child?

Visits are being arranged with your foster child's birth mother. How does this make you feel?

The chances are, if you belong to a Foster the Family group, another foster parent may be going through these same challenges or already has and can offer some advice.

The important thing is, you can share the struggles, the challenges and the triumphs of being a foster parent with someone who knows exactly what you are going through. That is the primary goal of Foster the Family.

The nation-wide program that offers support to foster families and adoptive mothers was founded in New Jersey by Alan and Jamie Finn. Foster mom Jessica Willman found out about it through Instagram.

"I saw this post about this woman who had fostered a child in her home for three years who was now going to be reunited with her biological family. I was so impressed how Jamie went through that and how we can encourage the birth families," Willman said. She started following Jamie's posts on Instagram.

"To see her being so uplifting, even as she grieved the loss of the child was so inspirational," Willman said. Through Foster the Family, Willman was also gaining and sharing information about trauma, birth families, and regulations.

Admitting that she is not a support-group type of person, Willman said she found Foster the Family to be so encouraging and professing such a can-do attitude that when last September the organization was looking at starting support groups across the country, she thought it would be cool to start one in the Twin Cities. Willman said over 200 applied and at the end of the year, 10 were selected to be Foster Family support groups. "The Twin Cities was one of them, so we started in December 2021," she said.

"We meet in person at the Knox International Center in the Hamline Mid-



Jessica and Steven Willman, with (left to right) Adon, Sophie, Jack and Ollie. Two children were adopted after being fostered. (Photos submitted)

who are going through the same things you are, or have gone through them. A lot of it is how we can share our calm and our peace with the kids in our home. We can center ourselves to better care for the kids in our home."

Willman has two biological children and has adopted two children that she fostered. She said when her family first started doing foster care, almost all of the answers to questions were "it depends." She said in the current Foster the Family group, about half of the attendees don't have a placement at the moment. "A quarter of them are waiting for their first placement," she said. Willman explained that placements can be long or short-term; a mixture of fostering to adoption and emergency care.

CHALLENGE OF SAYING GOODBYE

One of the toughest things about being a foster parent is having to let a child go, according to Willman. She said it is so difficult loving a child, knowing the child won't be with you forever. "It becomes easier, but I don't know anyone who could keep their distance. You're going to love that child not any different than any other kid in your life."

"One of the things we hear most often is about navigating the system and the lack of control," Willman said. "No situation is the same, every kid is different, and we never know how long things will take."

Willman said another big challenge is the relationship between the foster parents and the birth family. "I am licensed through Ramsey County, but I was not

trained on how to interact with the birth family. You have a relationship, but you don't."

She said her adopted children are half siblings, with the same mom. "We will have that person in our lives, even if there are no visits. We build relationships that are good for our kids. Our group talks a lot about birth families; it is never really clear how much control to give them."

Willman explained that situations can be hard. "You know the kid, and you know the situation," she said. "We want to see families re-united, and we look at how we can support them." She said the foster parent can sometimes help babysit to provide the birth mom a break and to help her succeed. "Ultimately, we have very little control over what happens," she said.

COVID-19 DISRUPTED EVERYTHING

When COVID-19 happened, it hit both biological and foster families hard. "Everything was disrupted," Willman said. "We did not know how to do visits, and we were just lost. You have these babies, and you can't put them on Zoom. It's not the same as the birth mother being able to hold her child for a couple of hours. But we figured it out."

COVID-19 upended everything. Social workers could not make home visits. Training was postponed. A lot of mandated reporters could not meet with kids, and their teachers were not seeing them every day.

"I feel like our social workers are still scrambling to catch up," Willman said. "And a lot of families are getting caught up on everything."

HELPING EACH OTHER

Willman said there is a waiting list of foster families for children under age two, but it is difficult to find placements for children with high needs, siblings or older youth. "Unless there is a shared trauma that separates them, we try to keep sibling groups together in foster care," Willman said. "Taking a sibling group is a big commitment."

Willman re-emphasized that the Foster the Parent group is to provide support for foster and adoptive families, whether it's providing a meal when needed or encouragement.

"We find the tools to change what we can while we navigate this tricky world and help each other," Willman said.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Foster the Family can email fosterthefamilytwincities@gmail.com.

A PRIEST NAMED DAN

>> from 6

Hornsby said people tend to think of older individuals as not having new interests, but that is not correct. He said he liked the idea of having an older narrator.

"I started this book in a couple of different forms," Hornsby stated. "Maybe the real draft of it started in 2016, and the book came out in 2020. I was working the first draft for about a year. I kept polishing that and bringing it to friends to have them read it."

Hornsby said he spent two years of really hard writing, then spent time copy-editing and getting ready for publication. He got an agent.

He said that publishing a first novel is like a journey, discovering and figuring out what you need. "For example, if you

go for a hike and pack just a Snickers bar, you can go really fast for a while, run up a mountain and then you die. But if you carry a fridge on your back, it's way too heavy. You have to figure out how much stuff to take out. When you make the trip, there are some kind of immediate physical things to solve, like the title. I needed a couple of working parts, and then it moved ahead."

Hornsby also hired a film agent and shopped the book around. Hannah Peterson is scheduled to adapt and direct "Via Negativa" for the big screen. Hornsby said Peterson is a protégé of Chloe Zhao, the Oscar-winning director of "Nomadland." The production company for the film is Complementary Colors. "The producers really got the book," Hornsby said.

He said they are now just waiting for the next step in production. Peterson took the book and adapted it. "I gave some

help, nothing too much. I am a producer on the project, but I am not directing it. I respect these people who know what they are doing."

He observed, "I think I wanted to present the character as looking at more marginal forms of spirituality, more marginal expression, especially in the kind of Catholic tradition and the kind of Catholic guilt."

"I wanted to get inside those ideas and show what it is like to embody that." He said he wanted to show what it is like for somebody who came up in the Catholic tradition, who either doubles down and becomes more conservative or authoritarian or isolates and tries to be good. He noted that with this book, he wants to make the Catholic tradition more accessible to those who did not grow up in it.

Hornsby said he does much of his writing at Milkweed Café, a coffee shop in

his neighborhood. "I come over and write a couple hours in the morning, then go teach, and sometimes come back later and write some more," he said.

His second book, "Sucker," is set for a February publication. It is the story of the son of a millionaire who has to find employment, and gets involved with a start-up tech firm that may have ties to the mob. The book is a satire of Silicon Valley and the 1 percent.

Regarding his writing, Hornsby said he first likes thinking of an idea, seeing if it has legs, and doing some research to see if it will hold water. "You see it's working, and it's fun figuring out what you are doing," he said. "First you require a bigger burst of energy, then you get down and try to make it pop. There's something underneath what you think you are doing that has to be brought out."

In unusual move, historic preservation committee didn't support library nomination

Hamline Midway Library

By JANE McCLURE

Planning for a new Hamline Midway Branch Library continues, with a decision in August to not consider National Register of Historic Places designation for the 92-year-old structure.

The State Historic Preservation Review Board opted Aug. 16 to not consider a historic designation for the building at 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. Earlier in August the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) didn't take a position on a register nomination, after the commission split on motions for or against designation.

The nomination was written by Barbara Bezat, a historian who served on the HPC for several years. She made several arguments that the library building is worthy of preservation and met National Register criteria.

One argument is that the library is locally significant in the areas of social history and education given the strength of community involvement in its construction and the way in which the building served the community as a library and center for neighborhood activities. Many community groups worked together to get the library built.

Bezat wrote, "Community input played a large part in persuading the St.

Paul Public Library system to construct a building in the area. Storekeepers had, by 1908, volunteered to set aside space in their retail locations for book 'lending stations' ... The significance of the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch building in the Social History/Education context is (also) evident in the participation of the residents and businesses in the area for their continued efforts to persuade the library system that their neighborhood strongly desired a nearby, permanent library facility. It is also important to note that the Hale Memorial Library is one of the first two branch libraries built after the construction of the three Carnegie Libraries in St. Paul, the Riverview, Arlington Heights, and St. Anthony Park, all completed in 1917."

It's unusual for the HPC to not forward a National Register nomination. It's also unusual (if not unheard of) for a nomination to be stopped by objections of the type the library faced. The state board received letters from St. Paul's historic preservation supervisor, George Gause, and Mayor Melvin Carter recommending against the nomination. Library staff also indicated that had the national register nomination been approved, it could have created uncertainty for the \$8.1 million new library project.

Gause's letter stated that the HPC was allowed to erroneously vote on several motions. What should have counted was an initial 5-4 vote to not support the

LIBRARY DIRECTOR RESIGNS

Saint Paul Library Director Catherine Penkert has resigned. "I will be stepping away from my role as director to make room for another leader of a library system that holds such a special place in our community. It has truly been the honor of a lifetime to serve you in leading libraries, particularly during the historic time of a global pandemic and racial reckoning," she said via an online announcement on Sept. 6. She has been with the library system since 2018.

Beginning Sept. 17, Barb Sporlein, deputy director, will serve as interim director.

"While I will be leaving this role, I'm still a proud Saint Paul resident and library user.



Catherine Penkert

I'm deeply grateful for our Saint Paul community. It has been an honor to serve you," said Penkert.

"I am proud of the vision we have built together and of our accomplishments as a team. You, our library users, are at the center of building a library system that welcomes all people to connect,

learn, discover, and grow. We have done that by eliminating late fines to ensure libraries are accessible to everyone in our community. Innovative programs like Drag Story Hour and Read Brave allow everyone to see themselves in libraries and push us to have crucial conversations as a city. In partnerships, we opened Career Labs to support job seekers and offered TechPaks to connect people to broadband when our lives went digital during 2020."

nomination. But that claim is disputed by members of library preservation group Renovate 1558 and others wanting to see the Hamline Midway Library preserved. They continue to argue that the library should be saved and renovated, and not torn down, and continue to accuse library administration of misleading the public.

Meanwhile the process of planning for a new Hamline Midway and renovated

Riverview and Hayden Heights libraries has continued. The latest design survey closed Sept. 6, with the public weighing in one continuing design work for all three locations.

The full pre-design reports from LSE Architects for Hamline Midway, Hayden Heights, and Riverview are posted online at <https://sppl.org/transforming-libraries/>

Russel Balenger >> from 1

the years, drawing in participants nationally and internationally to talk with one another about resolving issues, big and small.

"Every person is given an opportunity to be heard, and every participant has an equal voice in decision making," said Balenger.

He said he "absolutely" will also continue with TCOPM. "It's a rare opportunity to hear what folks are caring about, what's worrying them, what's frightening them, and what's making them feel good."

As a council member, Balenger sees TCOPM as having an ear to the ground to hear what's going on. "I have a lot of young people in the group now, and they let me know what is going on and how they are being treated," Balenger explained. He said he recently attended a meeting at Wilder that a lot of young people put together to discuss their concerns about going back to school, their treatment by teachers and how they felt about education.

Balenger said TCOPM also has a men-

toring program working with youth and their families who are negatively impacted by the criminal justice system. "I feel strongly that we need jobs for these youth and their families. I know people say there are jobs everywhere you look, but people need access to good education, employment and recreation," Balenger stated.

He cited some of the changes he would like to see occur. "We have a swimming pool on Lexington that is too expensive for them to swim in," he noted. "Minnesota is number one in disproportionate minority contact with our criminal justice system, and has been for the last 20 years I have been paying attention. Even though Black boys are three percent of the population, juvenile detention centers are full of them." Balenger said it speaks to a greater problem, and lots of kids think being in trouble is part of growing up. "It's not," he stated.

Balenger said the situation has been like that as long as he has had his eye on it. "There has not been improvement or changes; it has gotten even worse." He said he rarely sees a White youth in juvenile detention.

Besides working with youth, Balenger said there is a lot he would like to focus

on while he is on the council, a position that will last until the end of 2023. "I am very concerned about crime and justice and what is happening with our water and air," he noted. "I am concerned about climate and I am learning a lot about rent control and housing creation. I want to make sure everybody is able to afford a place to live."

Balenger emphasized that he has a lot to learn, but he said there are great people on the council that have been so helpful, gracious and welcoming. "I think we're going to be a great team," he said.

His past connections with the community include being vice president of Amicus, a Minnesota non-profit organization with over 43 years of experience in building positive and constructive relationships between offenders, volunteers, and the community. He also worked with Urban League, an organization that advocates for equity, justice and power for African descendants.

"I've had a lot of experience with the community," Balenger said.

Seeing recreation centers remain open for longer hours and not closing a couple hours after school ends is a goal for Balenger. "We need to take kids off the

streets and keep them further away from negative influences that drive them to negative behavior. What I see on the news is so negative when it comes to non-White kids," he said. "It's important that we have more success stories being told."

Balenger spent his first years in the Rondo community in a 16-room house built on two lots. "It was a middle-class neighborhood," he said. But like about 900 other Black areas in the 1950s and 1960s, the houses were torn down to make way for a freeway. Balenger's family left their house, having to split up until they found other housing, which was difficult. "Neighborhoods wouldn't sell to Black families," Balenger said. His family ended up moving four blocks away to a White community. "It was quite a change," he noted.

He said he has made it a practice in his life to look at every knock as a boost.

Balenger has spent much of his time advocating for change and support for his neighborhood. As a council member, he will be able to do that for many of his city's neighborhoods. "It's quite an opportunity," he said.

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SPPS students show gains in all subjects on MCA test

2022 results still lag behind pre-pandemic levels

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has released districtwide results for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) for the 2021-22 school year.

After two years of disrupted learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) students showed gains across all subjects for nearly every race/ethnic and student group on the MCA compared to 2021. One group, American Indian students, saw declines in science. By comparison, Minnesota overall experienced a slight increase in math and declines in reading and science for all students.

Overall, these results lag behind 2019

achievement levels and are not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. While the data is moving in a positive direction, it should be interpreted with caution due to the pandemic and challenges of returning to in-person learning after an extended period of distance learning.

"I am cautiously optimistic about these results and the gains our students made in the 2021-22 school year," said Superintendent Joe Gothard. "Funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) has allowed us to better support student achievement, particularly for those groups that were most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Coupled with our SPPS Achieves strategic plan, I believe we will continue to see increased achievement in the coming years."

The MCA is a standardized test taken each spring by students across the state in

grades 3-8 and 11 (for math); grades 3-8 and 10 (for reading); and grades 5, 8 and high school (for science). ACCESS is a standardized test taken each winter by students in grades K-12 who are learning English as a second language.

The results show increases in math, reading and science:

- 35% of students were proficient in reading, up 2 percentage points from 33% in 2020-21 but down from 2018-19 (40%)
- 25% of students were proficient in math, up 4 percentage points from 21% in 2020-21 but down from 2018-19 (32%)
- 25% were proficient in science, up 1 percentage point from 24% in 2020-21 but down from 2018-19 (29%)

The number of students who took the MCAs increased compared to 2021, with 88% of students testing in reading, 85% of students testing in math and 84% of stu-

dents testing in science. Of the students who took the ACCESS for ELLs in 2022, 8% were proficient in English, up 1 percentage point compared to 2021 and a 2 percentage point decrease from 2019.

A complete summary of SPPS MCA trends is available online at <https://www.spps.org/Page/31385>.

ACCOUNTABILITY (NORTH STAR) REPORT

North Star, Minnesota's school accountability system, includes indicators for determining student academic progress and achievement. In addition to analyzing MCA test score data, the system compares a student's academic achievement year over year and considers attendance. It also measures progress toward English language proficiency and evaluates each high school's graduation rates. The total number of SPPS schools identified decreased from 29 schools in 2018 to 20 schools in 2022. A full summary is available from the Minnesota Department of Education.

'MORE NORMAL YEAR' COMING?

COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher



After hosting summer school classes for students from across the St. Paul Public School district, Como Park High School welcomed new and returning Cougars into the building at the start of September.

Como staff members kicked off the 2022-23 academic year on Aug. 29 with a week of workshops and seminars to prepare for what they anticipate will be an even "more normal" year than 2021-2022, while also implementing new initiatives.

NEW SCHEDULE

St. Paul Public Schools are utilizing a block schedule of classes at every high school this year. Students will have four classes a day that meet for 80 minutes each. Then students will have four different classes the next day for 80 minutes each.

Collectively, students attend eight classes over two days, so it's called an "8 over 2" schedule and will be organized by "A" days and "B" days. Como students

will also have a grade-level academic seminar that meets every day for 35 minutes.

School leaders are confident that students and staff will adapt and quickly find comfort within the new system. Many teachers are looking forward to longer chunks of time together.

"I think it will benefit our students, create more engagement, encourage deeper discussion, and stimulate more critical thinking," said social studies teacher Justin Mann.

NEW BLEACHERS

Athletic director Koua Yang successfully secured a second set of bleachers for Como's turf field. Rising nine rows and stretching along 20 yards of the field, the additional seating will allow visiting fans to have their own section while Cougar fans can congregate together in the original set of bleachers.

The Como turf is scheduled to host 20 varsity games for soccer and football this fall, plus over a dozen junior varsity and lower level games. Physical education classes frequently use the space during the day, and many community groups and partners take out permits to utilize the space as well.

HOMECOMING ON OCT. 1

Spirit Week at Como is set for the last week of September, culminating with a Cougar homecoming tripleheader on



A second set of bleachers have been constructed at Como Park High School's turf field. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

Saturday, Oct. 1.

The Como girls' soccer team will host St. Croix Prep at 10 a.m. The football team will face Highland Park at 1 p.m. followed by the boys' soccer team versus Minneapolis Edison at 4 p.m.

JROTC BUSY AS EVER

Committed cadets in the Marine Corps JROTC program had an active summer. In late June, they embarked on a four-day (3,300 mile) road trip for their annual Leadership Orientation Camp.

Twenty-nine students had a whirlwind adventure that included Chicago and the Museum of Science and Industry, Gettysburg National Park, Constitution Hall in Philadelphia, Tun Tavern (the birthplace of the Marines) and New York City sites such as the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the 9/11 Museum, Central Park and more.

Back home, cadets volunteered at several events, and spent many days working at the State Fair in order to raise funds for the upcoming school year.

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CAREER PATHWAYS CENTER >> from 1

Over the next five years, 3M has committed \$1.375 million to support this program. It will give students from all SPPS high schools equitable access to college courses offered by faculty from numerous post-secondary institutions including: Bethel University, Century College, Dakota County Technical College, Minneapolis Community & Technical College, Minnesota State University - Mankato, Online College in the High Schools, Saint Catherine's University and Saint Paul College.

Career Pathways are part of the SPPS Strategic Plan led by Superintendent Dr. Joe Gothard and the visionary work of the late Darren Ginther, SPPS Director of the Office of College and Career Readiness. SPPS extends their gratitude for the long-term commitment of anchor partners 3M, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Right Track Center for Youth Employment and now, Heart of America, for believing in our students.

Superintendent Gothard remarked, "This districtwide program is the next phase of the college and career readiness work that is part of our SPPS Achieves strategic plan. With pathways in science and medical, business and communications, human services, and innovative and emerging technologies, high school students can graduate already having gained real-world experience, industry certifications, college credit and internships in the field of their choice."

"I am so proud of this work, and so excited about the future for this first cohort of students, and the many to come after them. Students, you have made an excellent decision enrolling in this program, and we can't wait to see what you accomplish."

It cost \$500,000 for the space, renovations and programming/staffing costs. "The fair market value of the cost of the project is typically 1.5 to 2.25 more than the actual funding received due to our abil-



(Photos submitted)

ity to work with our product and service vendors to procure free and/or deeply discounted prices," observed Tim Tormoen of Heart of America Foundation. HOA provides high-quality resources and transforms spaces in under-resourced schools, helping to close the gap in education spending by creating modern learning environments that are essential for children to reach their potential in a rapidly changing world. Heart of America has served more than two million students in need by distributing more than 4.3 million books, investing \$7.5 million in technology, and transforming over 800 community spaces, including public libraries, athletic facilities, technology labs, workforce development centers and schools in historically under-invested communities across North America and Puerto Rico.

New program at Hamline aims to help working paraprofessionals earn their teaching licenses

Hamline University's innovative Para Pathway program, which launched this fall, aims to support paraprofessionals across the state in earning bachelor's degrees and teaching licenses in order to address the growing teacher shortage.

"The purpose of this program is to remove barriers for folks who we know are going to be successful teachers based on their skills and established work in the classroom," said Dr. Joe Lewis, associate professor of education and chair of Hamline's education department. "They're highly likely to be committed to staying in the profession, which is another advantage of this program."

According to the 2021 Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report, nearly a third of new teachers leave their profession within their first five years. Hamline's program targets paraprofessionals to help build a more stable workforce because they've already developed skills and experience in the classroom and have demonstrated a commitment to working with students.

The Para Pathway program also helps address another staffing concern: fostering greater diversity in the workforce. The 2021

Teacher Report also states that "Minnesota continues to lag significantly in the ability to hire and retain racially and ethnically diverse teachers even close to the proportion of students of color and indigenous students in the state."

Statewide, the 38% proportion of students of color (339,669 students) is met by only a 7.28% proportion of teachers of color (5,497 teachers), according to data included in the 2021 report. Regionally, the greatest disparities are in the seven-county Twin Cities metro and the Headwaters economic development region in northwestern Minnesota.

"Paraprofessionals not only have skills needed to work with students, but they more often have a racial and cultural connection to students in school," Lewis said. "We're interested in recruiting people of color and Indigenous people into the profession because Minnesota is especially underrepresented in that area. We see this program as a way to address both of those concerns."

The program is designed for working adults, with courses available in the evenings and online.

Deidra Peaslee of Saint Paul College Selected for Aspen Institute's New Presidents Fellowship

Deidra "Dee Dee" Peaslee, EdD, president at Saint Paul College, is one of 26 leaders selected for the 2022-23 class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship. This program supports community college presidents in the early years of their tenure as they work to achieve higher and more equitable levels of student success.

This class of fellows represents the diversity of the nation's community colleges, collectively serving over 250,000 students at colleges across the nation, in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The incoming class of New Presidents Fellows is 46 percent female and 65 percent are people of color. Located in 19 states, their institutions too are diverse, from a tribal college with fewer than 300 students to an urban college that educates more than 35,000 each year.

"I am excited to collaborate with the Aspen Institute and community college leaders from across the country in identifying and implementing strategies to create and sustain learning environments that support all students in succeeding," said Peaslee. "This work is critical to Saint Paul



Deidra Peaslee

College as we launch a new strategic plan informed by our new mission statement, "Grounded in equity and inclusion, Saint Paul College educates and empowers students to lead purposeful lives and discover rewarding careers."

Peaslee is a collaborative, inclusive leader with a 30-year career of empowering students and inspiring educators. She has been the president of Saint Paul College since July 2019, and is the first woman president in the College's 112-year history.

Under her leadership, Saint Paul College was fully reaccredited by the Higher Learning Commission; has committed to becoming an anti-racist and trauma-informed; and has redeveloped its mission, vision, and values to reflect its student-ready-campus culture and foundation in social justice.

Prior to Saint Paul College, Peaslee served at Anoka-Ramsey Community College for 17 years. In addition to her experience in the Minnesota state system, she was the assistant dean for the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business at DePaul University; a career planning specialist for ACT, Inc. and the interim placement director for South Dakota State University. Peaslee and her husband, Rich, have two daughters, Emerson (21) and Paige (18).

U of St. Thomas professor earns Phi Alpha Delta's prestigious award for diversity and equity work

Dr. Artika Tyner has been chosen as the recipient of one of Phi Alpha Delta's (P.A.D.) most prestigious awards, the John J. McAulay Legal Educator Award (#padcon2022). Phi Alpha Delta is the world's preeminent law fraternity, with a legacy that began on Nov. 8, 1902 to support the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion under the law.

The award is presented from time to time to a P.A.D. member for their contribution to legal education based upon a lifetime of dedication to the principles and core values of compassion, courage, diversity, innovation, integrity, professionalism, and service. McAulay was a professor of law at Loyola University School of Law in New Orleans, Louisiana for more than 40 years and the District XVI Justice from 1974 to 1979.

"For the past 16 years, I have educated and inspired my students as they build new inroads to justice and freedom," said Tyner. "My students and mentees are planting seeds of social change. I am blessed that we are on this leadership journey together."

Tyner is passionate about the law, an advocate for justice, and law professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. She's the founder of the non-profit organization Planting People Growing Justice™ Leadership Institute (PGJLI). Tyner has been recognized for her efforts in multiple fields that includes the Anthem Award, Bush Foundation Fellowship, Loft/McKnight Writing Fellowship, and Social Justice Leader Award.

HAMLIN HEADLINES

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Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY PATRICIA OHMANS
FrogTown Green

First the bad news: FrogTown, Saint Paul's most diverse and vibrant neighborhood, will be hard hit by the coming climate crisis. Residents of our low-income neighborhood are already suffering from the increased heat of summer, elevated air pollution levels, and flooding from severe rainstorms.

And now the good news: more than 200 FrogTowners and friends gathered on Aug. 20 to learn ways to cope with and combat the impacts of climate change – in a lively, fun-filled event called the Climate Carnival, sponsored by FrogTown Green.

The carnival took place in a series of festive tents on the Lily Pad, a community gathering space on Dale Street. Each tent focused on a different aspect of sustainability, with hands-on games, make-and-take opportunities, and exhibits.

Kids at the carnival inaugurated a rain garden by catapulting (toy) frogs into a water-filled pool; sorted through microscopic seeds to save them for future pollinator plantings; and learned about alternative energy sources by pedaling a bike to make spin art masterpieces. Game prizes included free treats from La Cucharada, the new ice cream shop on Dale Street, as well as take-home art kits donated by the Bell Museum.

Climate change is a global problem of course, and there is only so much that each of us, as individuals, can do to change the massive political and economic forces that are driving it. But taken together, even the smallest steps can get us a long way toward a goal of more sustainable homes, communities, and even cities.

Patricia Ohmans founded FrogTown

LIFE IS A (CLIMATE) CARNIVAL



Young climate carnival-goers "voted" for their favorite step toward sustainability. (Photo courtesy of FrogTown Green)

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.

8 SIMPLE STEPS

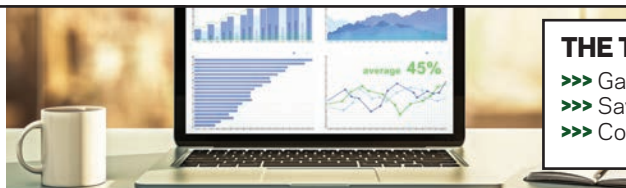
The Climate Carnival presented eight simple steps to take, to reduce your household's contributions to the greenhouse gases that are causing our atmosphere to change so quickly. How many of these steps have you taken in your home?

- 1 Steward water by reducing pollution in storm water.
- 2 Build soil by making compost out of food waste.
- 3 Eat local by growing food in backyard and community gardens.
- 4 Grow shade by planting trees.
- 5 Feed pollinators by harvesting seeds to plant habitat for insects and birds.
- 6 Capture energy by using LED bulbs and signing up for energy audits.
- 7 Recycle stuff by donating to thrift stores, or passing along useable goods.
- 8 Make your voice heard by voting for climate friendly candidates.

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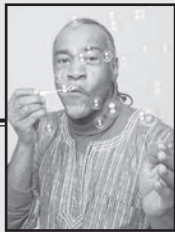


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PEACE BUBBLES

BY MELVIN GILES
peacebubbles@q.com



The greatest battle in life is the struggle within you. ~ Nathaniel (Nick) Abdul Kalik

September Full Moon 2022: Pisces Moon calls on you to speak your dreams into reality. ~ Maria Sofia Mamanides

Tell the truth and shame the devil. ~ An African American proverb

Hello Monitor readers,

August was a beautiful and refreshing month. It also seemed like a blur or flurry of activities and wonderful outdoor events, like the Great MN Gathering at the State Fair. My highlight of the 2022 fair was the launching of the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBR). The COBR vision is a state where all Minnesota children and families are inspired to engage with the natural world in ways that support physical activity, mental well-being, creativity, and appreciation for nature. Please take time this month to learn more about the COBR and how you can actively pledge to support the principles of the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, <https://mn.gov/children-outdoors/>.

The MN Renaissance Festival is celebrating its 51st season. This traditional family-friendly festival is another great way to enjoy the outdoors with wonderful people. I am also looking forward to this year's special Selby Ave, Jazz Festival! This is a favorite family festival of the Rondo Community hosted by Golden Thyme Coffee Café. This is a don't miss event! For more information, <http://selbyavejazzfest.com/>. Many other summer and fall events are occurring this month, particularly outdoors events and fun adventures. Please let me know if would like to assist with harvesting rural or urban farms and/or community gardens. Many hands make light the work!

WE LIVE IN PERILOUS TIMES ~ PART 2

And now, part two of my brother's small meditation on our current state of affairs. I felt that his thoughtful reflections needed to be shared and discussed with a greater number of open-minded people.

White Supremacy is a key factor that holds everything together. As the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond describes, "Racism was done." It was an intentional strategy to divide and subdue natural allies against wealthy landowners and became institutionalized throughout the USA. As I am looking at it, in addition to skewing institutional be-

WE LIVE IN PERILOUS TIMES

havior to favor White people, the system is based on very strict and powerful methods of constraining the behavior of Black people and communities of color. These methods are violent and militaristic. The police and national guard come to mind. Police, to me, are state sponsored terrorists. Since the founding of this country, citizens have lived under a system of constraints (called civil and criminal law) that have worked well enough for White people. Today, people of color are challenging these and rising up to protect and assert their humanity and to challenge this authority. At the same time, (as Ms. Walter describes in "They are preparing for war": An expert on civil wars discusses where political extremists are taking this country - interview with Barbara F. Walter - <https://wapo.st/3bWV2Tc>) a big chunk of White people are feeling disconnected from the social, political, economic etc. systems (these are disintegrating) and their "freedoms" and privilege are disintegrating too. White Supremacy is not working for them as well as they expect it should. The reaction of many of these is to double down on White Supremacy and bring back ORDER. As White Supremacy is challenged and deteriorates, Mr. Brooks describes the messages they receive from the world around them. This attacks their identity and they want to strike out, back and "make America great again".

"The stressors build up: bad at school, bad at work, humiliating encounters with others. It feels shameful to be so unworthy of human attention. We see ourselves as others see us, and when no one sees us, our sense of self disintegrates. They are ill-equipped to deal with their pain. And here's where victimhood turns into villainy. The ones who become mass shooters decide they are Superman, and it is the world that is full of ants. They decide to kill themselves in a way that will selfishly give them what they crave most: to be known, to be recognized, to be famous. They craft a narrative in which they are the hero. The world is evil, and they will stand up to the world. Or, the world is in catastrophic danger. The Blacks/Jews/women are destroying us, and they will strike back. These internet-fueled narratives have an arousing power. They make them feel righteous, strong and significant. People whose lives are dissolving into chaos will grasp any black-and-white story that provides order and purpose." (Why mass shooters do the evil they do by David Brooks - <https://www.tribune.com/why-mass-shooters-do-the-evil-they-do/600189003/>).

I believe that the above is an accurate description of the dynamic that is occurring with the Trump/Republican authoritarians. It is more general than the factors that coalesce into mass shooters.

The great disruptor has been a worldwide pandemic. This changed everything. How we work. How we socially interact. How products of our economy were distributed. How families connected. What we did for entertainment, leisure or diversion. Even, what we thought was true. Nothing has been the same since.

Before the pandemic a new force for our common humanity was building power. The Movement for Black Lives articulated a vision of humanity counter to White Supremacy. The uprisings around George Floyd's murder unleashed much energy asserting humanity of Black people and communities of color. In some quarters, conversations and policies happened that furthered recognition of peoples' humanity.

So, where will we go from here?

Ms. Walter describes one scenario as insurgency. "Here it's called leaderless resistance. And that method of how to defeat a powerful government like the United States is outlined in what people are calling the Bible of the far right, 'The Turner Diaries,' which is this fictitious account of a civil war against the U.S. government. It lays out how you do this." According to the CIA manual for insurgency, we are in the second of three stages. "That's when these groups begin to build a military arm. Usually a militia." The signs are here: "They use unconventional tactics. They target infrastructure. They target civilians. They use domestic terror and guerrilla warfare. Hit-and-run raids and bombs." To me the mass shootings fit into the disintegration and are acts of domestic terror and guerrilla warfare as described by Ms. Walter. They have recruited veterans who fought in the wars we have perpetrated over the past 30 years. They have recruited members of law enforcement and are sending members into the military to get trained. Remember Charlotte, Jan. 6?

As I see it, this is the default. It is the direction in which this country is lurching forward. The supporters of Trump and the Republican party want their White Supremacy back. They are ready to sacrifice what little democracy we had to enforcing ORDER. Looking at the laws passed in many states, the Republican controlled senate at the country and state levels, we are clearly moving toward authoritarianism. If the owners of capital have anything to say, this would transform to fascism easily. These people are organized, trained and moving their agenda now.

The only counter I see is The Movement for Black Lives and other pro-human movements in communities of color. Right now, I do not see unity nor do I see actual visions of a humane society and humane governance. I strongly believe that leadership needs to come from communities of color. We've had some uprisings, demonstrations and protests. I do not see a movement and these countervailing forces therefore are feeble.

It ain't pretty. In the words of Dr. King, "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

Art Serotoff is a community activist who lives in south central Minneapolis. Currently his focus is on the Bryant and Central neighborhoods, and he co-leads a group of White residents who want to deepen their understanding of White supremacy and develop into anti-racist allies in the neighborhood. Art was programs director for Sabathani Community Center for 16 years and funds distribution director for the Minneapolis United Way for 14 years. He learned about his place as a White man in U.S. society from the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. This was a life changing moment 33 years ago. Since then, Art has been working to undermine systemic racism in whatever manner he could. Art is married to Sandra Richardson, and has two children who are in their 30s. He grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. and came to Minnesota 45 years ago.

A FULL MOON THIS MONTH

I end on a light and hopeful note: Happy Harvest Full Moon Month! "The stars have aligned with the September Full Moon 2022, bringing us a lovely lunation in the dreamy, creative, and spiritual sign of Pisces... this Full Moon is offering all of us the opportunity for emotional release, especially around areas where we've felt pressure to perform or meet overly perfectionist standards", wrote Maria Sofia Marmanides of womenandhome.com. And, if you need a little inspiration to let go and release unwanted energy, Dr. Valentine from Hamline-U offers this garden song/video link, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BP-qh4cIrlc>.

Keep the good thoughts and stay optimistic. Things are getting better in an updated and equity/fair manner, which is different from the bias manifest destiny of White privilege at any cost including lying to be right and letting corporations be in control of everyday people, like us, the Monitor's neighbors and readers! Thank you.

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

May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities...

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HMC: a place where your voice matters

>> from 1

Together we can shape the wants and needs of our neighborhood, and HMC is a vital conduit between the city of Saint Paul and the neighborhood.

WHAT DREW YOU TO HMC?

O'Brien: Nestled in the Hamline Midway neighborhood are some of my favorite people, my favorite restaurants, my favorite parks, and my favorite hobbies.

I enjoy the eclectic makeup of this pocket of Saint Paul and the great neighborhood pride of its residents. At the time I applied for the executive director position I worked as development and communications director for The Open Door, a hunger relief organization located in Eagan, serving all of Dakota County. I have an incredible passion for hunger relief initiatives and could have done that work forever. However, visiting and/or driving through the Hamline Midway neighborhood multiple times a day (to and from work, eating, visiting, working out, etc.) my heart was being pulled back to this great neighborhood, this great city. I live in Saint Paul, play in Saint Paul, I wanted to work in Saint Paul and be part of sustaining a great community.

I have been dedicated to the nonprofit sector for just about 20 years and much of that work has been striving to ensure a better community for all. I was eager for the opportunity to work for an organization committed to the same.

WHAT GOALS DID YOU SET FOR YOUR FIRST YEAR AND HOW DID THAT GUIDE YOUR TIME?

O'Brien: To learn from the folks that make up this great neighborhood, plan together our desires, and initiate these ideas.

It was and continues to be important to me to listen to the wants and needs of our community so that I am truly representing our community. I am thankful for the people who have taken the time to meet with me over coffee, a walk, a conversation in the park, to teach me about this great neighborhood. Our committees (environment, development, transportation) and the volunteer leaders on each of these committees have been a great support to our work – I encourage everyone to connect with these committees and to attend the monthly meetings.

This is where ideas turn into action.

WHAT WERE YOU EXCITED TO WORK ON DURING YOUR FIRST YEAR WITH HMC?

O'Brien: Where are my whiteboards? There are so many exciting initiatives, projects, and programs taking place at the Hamline Midway Coalition in partnership with so many great organizations, people, businesses, and the city of Saint Paul. It would be hard to list them all in a newspaper due to word limitations but some that come to mind are: the Midway Investment Cooperative, the Gravel Tree Bed to provide free trees to neighbors, The Bee Line, the Neighborhood Plan, Renter Engagement, the Midway Project, the first annual Ice Cream Social, the neighborhood garage sale, Annual Meeting and Winter Solstice Events.

One example of the complex, detailed and intricate nature of this work took



Steph Hankerson (left) and Sarah O'Brien hold a blanket flower while working at Pierce Butler Meadow. (Photo submitted)

place the first week on the job. I was invited to Pierce Butler Meadow to celebrate the hard work and dedication of numerous volunteers who have worked countless hours over multiple years to restore the area to native prairie. Upon arrival I learned, and witnessed, that it had been mowed.

I was then asked what I was going to do about it.

Working with community members, the Capitol Region Watershed District, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the city of Saint Paul, we ensured that "no mow" signs were placed. Community members such as Steph Hankerson, Steve Mittrione, Paul Nelson, and countless others, and partners worked hard over the four seasons to restore plantings, and shortly, an informational sign will be on display so passersby can learn more about the prairie and its importance in protecting, managing, and improving local water resources within the neighborhood.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN OVER THE LAST YEAR?

O'Brien: I have enjoyed my time drinking from the firehose over the past year. I have learned that numerous people commit countless hours of their personal time to ensure that the Hamline Midway neighborhood continues to be a great place to live, work and play. I have learned about the importance of a tree canopy in the city, what a parklet is, what happens when Pierce Butler Meadow gets mowed, what it takes to ensure a traffic light is

installed at a busy intersection, the dos and don'ts to running a hybrid meeting, gathering community input to inform a 10-year neighborhood plan, the blood, sweat and tears as well as passion and commitment that go into being a small business owner, how to listen and ensure that residents are heard – I will be a lifelong learner on this one.

WHAT'S AHEAD?

O'Brien: So many great things! I am excited to share with you about the newly launched Midway Investment Cooperative – a group of neighbors who banded together to form a Real Estate Investment Cooperative to pool resources in order to collectively buy, rehab, and manage commercial and residential properties.

HMC is also working to form a Renter Advisory Forum to connect renters to one another and provide a chance to advance their voice on issues being faced.

Please also keep an eye out for our draft Neighborhood Plan – it will need your input! The Neighborhood Plan is our community's vision for what Hamline Midway is – and will be – in the future. Once it is completed, it is incorporated into the city of St. Paul's 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

I really want to invite the Hamline Midway residents to continue leaning into the work of their district council. What you think about your neighborhood and what you want to see change or improve or remain the same is something that I

GET TO KNOW HMC DISTRICT 11

Hamline Midway Coalition is one of 17 district councils in Saint Paul. HMC's primary service area is the Hamline Midway neighborhood – bounded by University Avenue (south), the BSNF rail line (north), Lexington Avenue (east), and Transfer Road (west).

BOARD MEMBERS:

President Thom Foss (subdistrict A), vice president Jennifer Hadley (subdistrict A), co-secretary Sarah Wolbert (at-large), co-secretary Ilya Garelik (subdistrict C), David Albornoz (subdistrict A), Karen McCauley (subdistrict A), Nneka Constantino (subdistrict B), Steve Samuelson (subdistrict B), Michael Strasburg (at-large), Gary Lasowski (at-large) and Daniel Mohlenhoff Baggett (subdistrict B).

- The board meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, 6:15 p.m.
- HMC Transportation Committee meetings held the second Monday, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom
- Early Learning Coalition, third Wednesday, 2:30 p.m.
- HMC Development Committee, second Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m., via Zoom
- Environment Committee, fourth Monday, 7 p.m. via Zoom

COMMUNITY PROJECT COORDINATOR:

Alec Armon was born and raised in Rochester, and graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 2018, where he studied political science and Latin American studies with a focus on public policy and economic justice. As an undergraduate, he co-founded a student organization that redistributed excess dining hall food to community organizations addressing food insecurity. He gained experience in economic development working for an entrepreneurship nonprofit in Mexico City following graduation and most recently learned more about local government in his hometown through an internship with the city of Rochester. Alec believes in the power of participatory democracy to foster inclusive community development and is looking forward to working alongside the Hamline-Midway community on neighborhood initiatives that ensure all residents are represented.

should be hearing about. I encourage you to attend the Hamline Midway Coalition Annual Meeting the evening of Thursday, Nov. 17. It is an opportunity to reconnect with neighbors, local businesses, and community organizations, to ask questions, to hear about the great things happening in your neighborhood, and to eat free food.

If you can't wait until November, attend a committee meeting, or stop by my office to say hello. I am in the basement of the Hamline Midway Library (1558 W. Minnehaha Ave.).

Email director@hamlinemidway.org or call 651-494-7682.

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Rent control >> from 1

would be for up to 20 years, with a look back of 20 more years. Several speakers at the hearing said Tolbert's new construction exemption flies in the face of what voters and the mayor's task force wanted.

Others said exempting affordable housing from rent control would hurt the people who need protection the most. Margaret Kaplan of the Housing Justice Center said that such an exemption would adversely impact more than 6,000 homes. The new construction exemption as pro-

posed by Tolbert would affect another 20,000, she said.

But developers said rent control has all but brought new housing construction to a halt, and said the current regulations are too stringent. Some called for a full repeal of the measure.

Many tenants who have spoken in support of rent control and tighter regulations are from the West Midway and South St. Anthony Park areas. Some are from buildings owned by Plymouth-based developer Dominion, which has redeveloped liquor warehouses on University Avenue and constructed new housing in the area.

Dominion and tenants at two of its buildings have been in an appeal process over rent increases of almost 8 percent. Dominion leaders contend a higher increase is needed to cover costs. Tenants say the increases are excessive and are forcing them to move.

At a news conference prior to the Aug. 24 hearing and at the hearing itself, residents of Dominion's Legends at Berry and other buildings said they are hard-pressed to pay such increases. Legends tenant Stephanie Ericsson-Hinton said the rent hike means that 75 percent of her Social Security income will go toward housing. She has no other income or savings, is

skipping medical appointments, and had to visit a food shelf for the very first time.

"It is my right to have stable housing," she said. "But I cannot afford to live here, and I cannot afford to move."

Other tenants described working multiple jobs, donating plasma and making other sacrifices just to pay rent.

Eilene Naudain, another resident of Legends at Berry apartments, described moving to Minnesota to help an ill family member. She said her former home in Harlem offered more rent stability than Minnesota. With a high rent increase, "I'll be in the street," she said.

Is inclusionary zoning a good solution?

New committee will consider how to address residential and business displacement

By JANE McCLURE

When people lose their homes or storefronts to involuntary displacement, what can be done?

The St. Paul Planning Commission Aug. 19 voted to set up a community advisory committee to study and make recommendations for the creation of anti-displacement and community wealth-building policies. The committee's work will inform ongoing work to study and possibly implement inclusionary zoning or other measures, something the commission has discussed for years.

Residential and business displacement is a longtime concern for St. Paul

city leaders, but it is also an issue that can be challenging to address. Many community groups have spoken out for years against what they see as a threat of gentrification and displacement, with concerns raised during Green Line light rail planning and construction over a decade ago.

Planning director Luis Pereira and city planner Tony Johnson presented the advisory committee recommendation. The advisory committee process will include in-person and virtual open houses, pop-up sessions, targeted outreach and other ways to gather input. The 10 to 15-member committee itself, which will be set up by city staff and a consultant, will include a range of people from developers to equity-based groups.

The committee work will take place over one and a half years, and will lead to further studies and policy recommendations.

One longer-term look will look at inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning is

also known as inclusionary housing. It is tied to regulations requiring that a share of new construction be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes.

The need for inclusionary zoning in St. Paul was raised during protracted debate over developer Alatus' \$70 million Lexington Station mixed-used development near the southwest corner of Lexington Parkway and University Avenue. Alatus recently closed on its site, and will start the development soon. Community groups called for more affordable housing as part of the development during the debate over Lexington Station.

But the city has few tools to require that developers build housing that is affordable to people with very low incomes. The planning commission resolution creating the advisory committee states that the commission finds that publicly available resources are not likely to be sufficient to address funding and production gaps for housing based upon projections. The city must also do more to create housing supply.

Planning commission chair Luis Rangel Morales said inclusionary zoning may or may not be the tool the city eventually uses to create more affordable housing, and that a range of options could come forward. "The answer we've been getting is that inclusionary zoning is one possible solution but may not be the most feasible," said Rangel Morales.

Cities can mandate or provide financial or density bonus incentives to implement inclusionary zoning, Johnson said.

A key impetus for the advisory committee's work is that study is that the housing supply in the Twin Cities metropolitan area has been below housing demand for several years and that additional pressure will be placed on the current under supply.

In St. Paul, an additional 7,000 new households are anticipated by 2030, promoting a need for at least 1,973 affordable housing units. The city also estimates an unmet gap of nearly 11,000 units in Saint Paul needed just for existing households at 30 percent of area median income.

2022 ENGAGEMENT PLAN: IT IS A WRAP

DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY SHEVEK MCKEE
Executive director
district10@
district10comopark.org



The Sept. 10 District 10 Como Community Council Harvest Festival event at Tilden Park concludes D10's ambitious 2022 community engagement plan. While we still have several tried and true community opportunities to come in the rest of 2022 (Lake Como Cleanup), holiday decoration contests, Thanksgiving drive), these new events were spread out in the neighborhood across our long-established four sub-districts to reach more community members who haven't been engaged in our work before. We had our share of last-minute scrambles and teachable moments, but we also connected with a new community members and created (and strengthened) partnerships with other organizations and businesses. These events literally would not have happened without the astounding work of our community organizer, Jessica Willman, who somehow accomplishes more in 10 hours a week than many do in 40, and the vol-

unteer leadership of our Neighborhood Relations committee: Sarah Reuter, Morgan Weinert, Lizzy Cantley, and Abby Gold. Many others in the community and D10 board have contributed in invaluable ways. We're already looking ahead to 2023, where new events become second annual traditions, and we hope to add additional depth as well as even more fun and games!

CITYWIDE DROPOFF AT FAIRGROUNDS

The city partners with local district councils to organize annual citywide drop-off events for residents to properly dispose of large refuse items and recyclable materials not collected via the residential recycling program. D10 Como Park helps coordinate the event held annually at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. This year's even will be Sept. 17, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. View the accepted items list, rates, and more at District10ComoPark.org/CitywideDropoff

LAKE COMO CLEANUP - OCT. 8

D10 Como Park is planning our next Lake Como Cleanup for Saturday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m.-noon. These events, in partnership with the Capitol Region Watershed District, focus on the shoreline and lake itself. Our July 26 cleanup event drew 21 people who helped clean over 50 pounds of trash

from the lakeshore!

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 Oct. 7) is not required, but it helps us plan and communicate if changes come up.

COMO GOLF LOT CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULED

The north and south Como Pavilion parking lots both received major upgrades earlier this summer. A canoe/kayak launch will be finished near the south lot later this year. Now it's the Como Golf Course lot's turn, construction began the week of Sept. 12. The golf lot will be closed for approximately 5 weeks. No, golfers, fair-style lawn parking is not allowed during the construction.

UPCOMING APPLICATIONS/RENEWALS

Speedway (950 Lexington): Gas Station and Malt Off-Sale Licenses are up for renewal Dec. 1. Anyone with input should email the Como Community Council or contact the office of Ward 5 Council Member Amy Brendmoen: ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Vistabule Teardrop has submitted an application for a motor vehicle dealer - new vehicle license for 1455 Energy Park Dr. Anyone with input can email the Como Community Council or contact the office of Council Member Mitra Jalali: ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us. Representatives

from Vistabule are planning to attend the Sept. 20 D10 Land Use committee meeting to introduce themselves and answer questions.

Duke's Car & Towing (977 Front): Auto repair garage license is up for renewal Oct. 19. Anyone with input should email the Como Community Council or contact the office of Ward 5 Council Member Brendmoen.

*While license renewal dates serve as community reminders, feedback on a business license can be submitted at any time

D10 COMMUNITY MEETINGS SCHEDULE

- Land Use Committee - Tuesday, Sept. 20, 6 p.m.
- D10 Board - Tuesday, Sept. 20, 7:15 p.m.
- Environment Committee - Wednesday, Oct. 5, 6 p.m.
- Neighborhood Relations Committee - Wednesday, Oct. 5, 7:15 p.m.
- Land Use Committee - Tuesday, Oct. 18, 6 p.m.
- D10 Board - Tuesday, Oct. 18, 7:15 p.m.

As always, you can find meeting details on our website: District10ComoPark.org. All D10 board and committee meetings are open to the public and have space for community members to bring topics for discussion.

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*Source: Pew Research Center, March 2021 survey

Relevance Project



A few thousand White citizens tried to drive the Arthur and Edith Lee family from their home for a week. This photo was featured in the October 1931 edition of "The Crisis" magazine.



Jay the Gardener (left) and Carla Jo "CJ" Bielawski embrace as he holds a box of Black-eyed Susan seeds that have been passed along from the original garden tended by the Lees.

By JILL BOOGREN

The little white house at 4600 Columbus Ave. S. is a typical south Minneapolis home. It has a garden out back and another out front, where every year in mid-July the Black-eyed Susans bloom. Its simple serenity belies its roots in Minneapolis history, though, as indicated by a limestone pedestal on the front lawn bearing a plaque that describes how it earned a spot on the National Register of Historic Places.

Formerly the Arthur and Edith Lee house, it is the site of a 1931 race "row," as termed by the then *Tribune* - a White mob numbering in the thousands had gathered out front to coerce the Lees to leave. They first tried paying them but ultimately resorted to hurling bottles, black paint and racial epithets at the home.

The Lees were Black.

And though Arthur Lee was a war veteran and U.S. postal worker, that wasn't enough to break the racial covenant that denied home ownership to people of his color.

In a 1931 edition of *The Crisis*, "A Roman Holiday in Minneapolis," Chatwood Hall wrote, "Mr. Lee's first serious hint of trouble was a large sign placed on

GFS: SOWING SEEDS OF SOLIDARITY



On July 11, Brass Solidarity plays a few tunes in front of the Arthur and Edith Lee house at 4600 Columbus where an angry mob gathered in 1931 to force the family out. (Photos by Jill Boogren)

his front porch, bearing this inscription 'No N-s [racial slur is spelled out] Allowed in this Neighborhood. This Means You.'"

"Please, never forget that it wasn't just the south that dealt in the Jim Crow behavior," said high school teacher and GFS resident Marcia Howard to community members who gathered in front of the home on July 11, 2022.

A steel sculpture that stands with the plaque, created by Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center (3749 Chicago Ave.) with Obsidian Arts, has a portrait with this quote from Arthur Lee from July 16, 1931: "Nobody asked me to move out when I was in France fighting in mud and water for this country. I came out here to make this house my home. I have a right to establish a home."

Carla Jo "CJ" Bielawski, whose parents Carl A. and Pearl Lindstrom moved into the home in 1957, is the current resident and caretaker of the property. She keeps the Lee's contribution to the house alive by tending to the Black-eyed Susans that are planted throughout the property.

"Those are the same babies of the ones Edith Lee planted in 1931," said Howard. "And for that reason, the idea of commemorating what happened here and bringing it to the Square, where we have had an occupation that is markedly different than what happened here" - this drew cheers from the two dozen people there - "because we are there for equality. We are here for liberation. We're here for dismantling systems of racial redlining, profiling, inequity that happened here."

People tucked cut flowers behind their ears and, to the music of Brass Solidarity,

marched in procession to 38th and Chicago. There they were met by CJ who had already presented seeds to Jay the Gardener to plant throughout the Square.

"Today was the day 91 years ago that [the Lees] were told, 'Go. We'll give you money if you go,'" said CJ. "That man was American. Whatever his color is my color, we're all the same color underneath. We all bleed red. So let no more blood be shed."

The Lees moved within three years, and the neighborhood didn't have another African American resident for 30 years.

Jay held up a box of "thousands" of Black-eyed Susan seeds and embraced CJ.

"If you see Black-eyed Susans sprouting up from every hem and hamlet and corner of this Square, it's because Edith and Arthur Lee's legacy continues," said Howard.

See the University of Minnesota's Mapping Prejudice project and view the TPT documentary "Jim Crow of the North" to learn more about discriminatory housing practices in Minneapolis. See JustDeeds.org to see if your home has a racial covenant on it.

BUILDING POWER

Under The Peoples' Way that same evening, in another quiet act of solidarity, artist Jordan Powell Karis was constructing the components of a new wooden fist, like those that mark each of the four entrances to the Square. Once ready he hand delivered it to its destination - Akron, Ohio, where on June 27, 2022, Jayland Walker was killed by police in a hail of bullets shot as he was fleeing on foot. The med-

ical examiner's autopsy determined that Walker had 46 gunshot wounds; 26 bullets were recovered from his body.

Asked what moved him to build another fist, Powell Karis said, "I live in mostly White spaces. And in these White spaces everything is back to normal. And it's intolerable. It's truly intolerable to see White spaces continue on while people are doing work and the work's not done yet. And it makes it harder for us to do the work when that continuation is happening unconsciously."

Five days prior, Powell Karis had no plans to do this. Something called him. He reached out to a reverend there, and it just clicked.

"The people there, they need the support. They need to know that they're being cared for by the rest of the communities out here," he said. "We gotta keep showing up for one another. We all just gotta keep showing up."

BLESSINGS

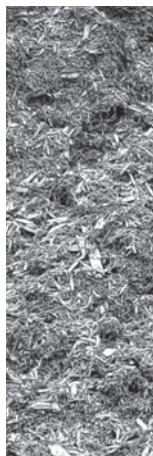
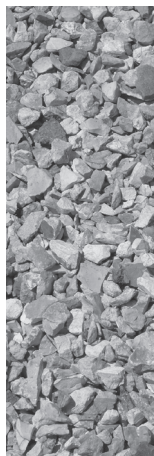
On the evening of July 14, to show solidarity with Jayland Walker's loved ones, activists gathered at the Square to bless the fist, which was now assembled and painted, for its journey eastward. Civil Rights Activist Rosemary Nevils offered the first blessing, pouring water for each name called of a person whose life was taken at the hands of police. But there was one more name to say today, once more from closer to home: Tekle Sundberg. (Articles at www.LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com).

The impact was felt throughout the Square. GFS community member C Chase had spent the night watching livestreams and trying to get information from residents.

"I had to tell people today that I can only stay a little while because I've got two vigils to attend tonight. We've gotta bless this fist to go to Akron for Jayland Walker, who was absolutely massacred. And in the early hours of the morning, overnight, we have someone presumably in what seemed to be a mental health crisis shot for it while his parents were outside," she said. A vigil was being held for Sundberg after the one at GFS. "And I'm in coordinator mode. I show up to this space that holds the grief and resistance to this very atrocity, and I show up to make sure we have water, to make sure people are seated, to make sure it's accessible for those who need it. And this is not who I wanna be in this space or in any moment. I don't wanna be facilitating other people's grief."

After community members spoke, everyone present was invited to sign the fist, which Powell Karis delivered the following day. One expression, written on its base, reads: "Love to Akron. Peace, Power & Love from GFS. Minneapolis."

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NIGERIAN OFFICIALS WORK WITH BOOKS FOR AFRICA

His Royal Majesty Richard Oghenevwoaga Ebelle (JP), Okorefe I, Ovie (King) of Agbarha-Otor Kingdom (Urhoboland, Delta State, Nigeria), met with Books For Africa staff on Sept. 2, 2022 at the Books for Africa Warehouse (717 Prior Avenue N.). He was accompanied by 20-30 Nigerian-Americans and officials from Nigeria who were in Bloomington for a national conference. The group is working with Books For Africa to send up to 30,000 books to the students of Nigeria. His Royal Majesty Richard Oghenevwoaga Ebelle (JP), Okorefe I, who ascended to his father's throne in 2012, has said he deeply appreciates the mission and contribution of Books For Africa over the years. He has authorized the book drive to benefit the schools and libraries in his kingdom. The Progress Union, made up of Nigerians living in the United States, works on behalf of the Urhobo people in Nigeria. The Ovie or King has undergraduate and graduate degrees and a keen interest in education. Modern Nigerian monarchs, such as HRM Okorefe I of Agbarha-Otor Kingdom, are revered custodians of ancient cultures and traditions of their people. While they do not exercise direct political powers, they wield vast influence in their domains. Agbarha-Otor Kingdom is in Ughelli North Local Government Area (LGA), an area of more than 1.3 million people in Delta State, Nigeria.

Books For Africa remains the largest shipper of donated text and library books to the African continent, shipping over 55 million books to all 55 countries on the African continent since 1988. Last year alone, Books For Africa shipped 3.2 million books, valued at over \$26.7 million, and 355 computers and e-readers containing over 1,065,000 digital books, to 27 African countries. More than \$2.3 million was raised last year to ship these books to the students of Africa.

PLAN IT

LIVE PAINTING EXPERIENCE

Minneapolis artist seangarrison's show "The Darkness In My Skin: A Live Painting Experience" runs through Friday, Sept. 17, 2022, at the Historic Mounds Theatre, St. Paul. seangarrison will use hanging bodies as his canvas to connect the lynching era in American history to its manifestations as seen today, in particular George Floyd. This 1.5-hour show, the score produced by Julian Montgomery, is what he calls "technicolor root digging." Each show will be followed by a collective conversation where the audience will be asked why they were "brave enough to heal" by going on this journey. They will be challenged to come up with answers, spoken from emotions the show has placed them in. seangarrison calls the emotion of pain, the most "beautiful known to humans" because he feels it's the most authentic emotion to speak from.

ART EXHIBIT BY ANN SISEL

Mid-century modern furniture and decor retailer MidModMen+friends (2401 University Ave. W.), a long-standing presence in St. Paul, is reviving its recurring showcase of local and regional creative talent. "Future Heirlooms: From Funky Flowers to Futuristic Homes," presents original acrylic paintings and watercolors by Ann Sisel and will be showing throughout the fall season. All works in the showcase are available for purchase. The St. Paul-based artist says she came late to her artistic pursuits, but has since exhibited and sold her award-winning works widely. Her subjects range from nature and architecture to pure abstraction, and her techniques can include credit card scraping, vvcollage and palette knife.

FALL HARVEST MARKET SEPT. 24

The Hamline Church Women host a Fall Harvest Market 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 24 at the church at 1514 Englewood Ave. The event is free and all are welcome. Come and purchase your favorite craft, food and vendor items, and bid on silent auction items to help equip the church kitchen. The popular used book sale is also offered. One new market feature is an EcoFair, sponsored by the church Earthkeepers. Energy costs are rising. How can you reduce your energy use

and save money on utility and transportation expenses? Visit the EcoFair on Energy Use for information and tips on becoming more energy efficient. Sign up for a personal review of your utility bill and find out how you can reduce your energy use and save money at the CUB Utility Bill Clinic. Learn how planning now to invest in new technologies can reduce and green your energy use. Questions on the ecofair may be directed to HamlineEarthkeepers@gmail.com.

Market vendors of all types are still needed, and space is available inside and outside. Contact hamlinewomen@gmail.com for details.

MARYDALE FESTIVAL SEPT. 24

Enjoy an afternoon of art, music, food, and fun for both kids and grown ups in the North End of Saint Paul on Sept. 24, 12-5 p.m. The event is located in Marydale Park (542 Maryland Ave. W.).

TREE TREK OCT. 1

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 1, 10am-Noon, for the D.10 Environment Committee's 2022 Fall Tree Trek. This walking tour will again be led by Minnesota Master Naturalist Stephanie Mi-rocha. She will provide fascinating facts, uses, and histories of many of the diverse tree species in the park. The event is free, but please register in advance. Attendance will be limited to 20 participants. Dress for walking and the weather and meet between the Butterfly Parking Lot and the Labyrinth (adjacent to the restored Lily Pond - just across the pedestrian bridge on the west side of Lexington Parkway). Of course, you can use the Tree Trek Tree Tags to go on a self-guided Tree Trek anytime! Find a map of the marked trees on the District 10 website, district10comopark.org.

CHROMA ZONE ART FEST

The closing weekend of the 2022 Chroma Zone Mural & Art Festival is Sept. 30-Oct. 1. There will be pop-up art stops in the Raymond-University area on Friday, Sept. 30 from 5-8 p.m. Take a bus or bike mural tour from the Prior Works Building (755 Prior Ave. N.) from the north lot on Saturday, Oct. 1 from 3-6 p.m. Listen to the art talk at Can Can Wonderland from 6-9 p.m. on Oct. 1. More at chromazone.net.

Common carp muddy the water at Como Lake

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is scheduled deployed four large box nets on Aug. 10 to catch and remove common carp over a period of 4-5 weeks in Como Lake. Common carp are an invasive fish that contribute to poor water quality by stirring up the bottom of the lake while searching for food. During feeding, they uproot plants, muddy the waters for native fish, and allow excess nutrients stored in the lake bottom to be released and later consumed by algae. Common carp are one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species due to their wide distribution and severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands.

Common carp are native to Europe and Asia. They were stocked as a game fish across the Midwest in the 1880s, and have since become overabundant in many waters. Today, common carp are an invasive species regulated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, which means releasing them into the wild is not allowed. Fish caught while angling may be returned to the same water body.

In 2021, CRWD conducted a survey of the number of common carp in Como Lake and estimated their population to be above the critical threshold for water

quality. Carp caught during the survey, and throughout the spring and summer of 2022 were tagged for tracking and later removal. While removal is needed, the carp population in Como Lake will be further limited by poor spawning habitat and abundant bluegills that feed on carp eggs. Additionally, new carp can't migrate into Como Lake since it has no inlets from other water bodies.

In August and September 2022, nets will be set around the lake and baited with corn, a food attractive to carp but not of interest to other fish in Como Lake. The tagged carp will allow CRWD staff to track when they are gathering in the nets. CRWD will use this information to pull in the nets at the best time to catch as many carp as possible. By reducing carp populations in Como Lake, CRWD is working to ensure that water quality improvements continue.

This project builds upon decades of work to achieve cleaner and clearer waters in Como Lake and is a critical next step towards protecting it for generations to come, said Bob Fossum, CRWD Monitoring and Research Division Manager.

Learn more at capitolregionwd.org/carp-removal

New park opens at Highland Bridge development

On Aug. 9, 2022, the City of Saint Paul celebrated the opening of Uncí Makhá Park (2230 Montreal Ave.), a brand-new 6.4 acre park at the Highland Bridge development. The new park features an off-leash dog park, nature-based playground, two beach volleyball courts, fitness lot, hammock grove, two picnic shelters, and a newly restored section of Hidden Falls Creek.

Uncí Makhá (pronounced Oon-CHEE ma-KAH) translates to "Grandmother Earth" in Dakota. The name was recommended by Dakota community members and represents the significance of the water within Uncí Makhá Park flowing through the creek into nearby Bdote, a sacred site central to the Dakota creation story.

Prior to its restoration, the creek leading to Hidden Falls had been routed underground through a storm sewer in prepa-

ration for construction of the Twin Cities Assembly Plant around a century ago. The newly daylighted creek now flows through a bedrock ravine that serves as a unique place to explore during drier periods and is designed to flood with stormwater during rain events.

The creek flows along a pedestrian path that travels under Mississippi River Boulevard and leads to a plaza above Hidden Falls. The path to the plaza, known as Mississippi River Boulevard Crossing, will open in September. A second phase of the Mississippi River Boulevard Crossing project will eventually connect the network of trails within Highland Bridge to Mississippi River Boulevard Regional Trail and Hidden Falls Regional Park.

This is the second of four new City of Saint Paul parks to be constructed at the Highland Bridge development.

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**Star Party:
James Webb Space Telescope****You're Invited!**

Join us at the Bell Museum on September 9, 7:45–10pm for our next in-person Star Party! Observe the Moon and our favorite deep space objects (weather permitting) on our roof deck. Then head inside to explore hands-on activities, and our expert astronomy team will guide you through the night sky and highlight cosmic sights in our planetarium.

**Spotlight Science: Back to Birds!****September 17, 10am–2pm**

Back to school time means Back to Birds! Flock to the Bell Museum to meet and greet ambassador birds from the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, engage in hands-on activities to learn how birds adapt to their environment, and more!

bell museum
bellmuseum.umn.edu