



Tips for those  
looking for  
staff >> 11

## LAND OF 10,000 OUTDOOR HOBBIES



**W**inters can be frigid in Minnesota, but Karl Erickson, the woodworking program manager at Elpis Enterprises (2161 University Ave.) can find ways to make the cold weather both fun and a learning experience. The Elpis ice fishing program is open to youth from fourth grade and up at area schools. They learn how to identify species, as well as fishing regulations and cold weather conditions. "They are taught heater safety, hook safety and hole safety," Erickson said. Sixth-graders from Sejong Academy experienced ice fishing on Lake Como on Feb.13, 2023. Vanessa Jesci caught one of the larger fish (above). Police cadets from the St. Paul Police Activities League assisted students at Como Lake. >> More online at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com). (Photo by Terry Faust)

## GARBAGE CHANGES MAY BE COMING

Public Works passes along  
some citizen recommendations

By JANE McCLURE

St. Paul's contract for organized garbage collection, serving 1-4 unit dwellings, expires Oct. 1. That may be months away. But in the scheme of city process, it is coming up fast.

The St. Paul City Council in February accepted a report from Public Works staff that included some but not all recommendations from a citizens advisory task force.

A request for proposal for a new service provider is being prepared, said Susan Young, manager of resident and employee services.

Not everyone agrees with what Public Works has brought forward, especially as it affects multi-family buildings. A growing number of small landlords want the same rights that single-family homeowners could have under a changed contract. Ideas up for debate include the extent of opt-outs, and allowing multi-family properties to have fewer trash carts or even small dumpsters.

The changes eyed include having the city itself take on a small amount of garbage and recycling collection. A district council consortium and later the nonprofit Eureka Recycling have handled residential recycling. Years ago, Hamline-Midway

GARBAGE CHANGES >> 10

## ST. PAUL ASKS FOR NEW SALES TAX

Tax would be used for street  
and park projects

By JANE McCLURE

St. Paul's proposed sales tax could be directed to several West Midway streets that are in need of repair. But the tax, which is pending action from the 2023 Minnesota Legislature, has a long road ahead.

The sales tax would be used for city Public Works and Parks and Recreation projects.

Getting legislative approval for a tax is one step. State lawmakers are eying a record number of city and county local option sale tax asks, including St. Paul's request for a one percent sales tax increase. The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) has indicated that 38 requests were made

prior to the Jan. 31 deadline.

Why so many requests? Some are holdovers from the 2022 session, when no local option sales taxes were passed.

If the tax gets the go-ahead from legislators, it then would go to St. Paul voters in November.

The proposed sales tax has definite pros and cons. If approved, it is expected to generate an estimated \$984 million in revenue over 20 years. That's a lot of money for infrastructure. But it would also put St. Paul's sale tax among the highest in Minnesota.

It would give St. Paul two unique sales taxes. The first was adopted by state lawmakers in 1993.

The Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) program began in 1994. It continues to provide funding for the RiverCentre and neighborhood and cultural projects, and

SALES TAX >> 10

## TMC PUBLICATIONS GARNERS 20 AWARDS AT MNA



Left to right: Eric Erickson, Tesha M. Christensen, and Terry Faust celebrate and hold up a selection of the nine first place award plaques the newspapers earned spanning its photographs, articles, and advertisements. >> More on page 3 and online.

TMC Publications' three newspapers earned a total of 20 awards at this year's Better Newspaper Contest through the Minnesota Newspaper Association. They were presented on Jan. 26, 2023. In its 49th year, the Monitor was recognized with two first-place awards and one second-place.



AGING WELL  
10 guidelines for a strong,  
long and happy life

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And the annual Midway  
Area Chamber of  
Commerce awards go to...

PAGE 7



Como Park swimmers  
return to state  
competition

PAGE 7

# 10 GUIDELINES FOR A STRONG, LONG AND HAPPY LIFE


*Most resolutions made in good conscience are broken in good time. These 10 guidelines are ageless and timeless.*

Some time ago, after suffering the shocking and unexpected loss of my still young husband, Martijn, while we were living in Europe, I experienced what is called traumatic grief. In addition to a year of intense grief counseling, I also trained and earned my certification in Presence-Based Coaching. During this period, I developed 10 simple coaching guidelines that contribute to well-being. These apply to people of all ages, but are especially useful to help us as we age, designed to keep us thriving rather than simply surviving.

## 1 CREATE QUIET TIME EACH DAY

The Information Age and modern life have shaken us from the natural rhythms that promote balance. It takes an intentional effort to break from the in-

**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.*

tensity. Creating a place and or space to reduce the literal and emotional noise is one essential step. Simplicity is key. While adopting meditation, yoga, Qigong or other practices brings an elevated sense of peace, so too can merely breaking away from the technological onslaught by doing something quiet and or manual. Like reading a book. Having a conversation. Playing a board game with family or friends. Walking in nature. Playing or listening to music. Whatever activity or down time gives a true break from contemporary clamor will contribute to a greater sense of well-being.



Original collage by Susan Schaefer

## 2 EAT WHOLE FOOD AND DRINK LOTS OF WATER

The pace and "conveniences" of modernity seem to have highjacked common sense. Many of us have fallen prey unhealthy food and beverage choices. We short-circuit our health and healthcare systems by so doing. Breaking the habit of reaching for highly processed foods, including sugary drinks, can be done in increments. Replacing one sugary or salty snack with a piece of fruit or veggies is one way to start. Not buying sodas or sweetened fruit drinks in the first place helps, as does keeping fresh, filtered or bottled water within easy reach. Research proves that fast foods are actually engineered to be addictive – as dangerous as smoking cigarettes or abusing alcohol! It is not easy to end addiction but doing so can prevent the onset of diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure that lead to stroke, heart disease, dementia and an overall poor quality of life. Incremental change yields big results.

## 3 TO SLEEP, PERHAPS TO DREAM

Everyone has a different sleep requirement and the older we get the more likely we are beset by disruptions. Getting ample sleep is critical to good health. Sleep disorders such as in-

somnia, restless leg syndrome, narcolepsy, and sleep apnea can cause a cascade of other health issues. However, we can control many of the impediments to getting a good night's sleep – starting with making sleep spaces quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature. Next, remove electronic devices such as televisions, computers, and smart phones from the bedroom, and end screen time well before bedtime. Avoiding large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bed helps, as does using herb teas that promote good sleep. Of course, maintaining regular sleep and waking times is highly beneficial, as is getting regular daily exercise. The key is knowing what we can change and that we can change.

## 4 REGULAR BODY MOVEMENT

There is much hype about what is the best and how to get adequate exercise. A rule of thumb that most medical experts agree with is that we should maintain some practice of regularly moving our bodies. However, we do not need extreme physical activity, which actually can contribute to problems as our bodies age and change. Medical research has shown that simply walking each day for as little as 30 minutes promotes good health. All we need is a steady and regular practice that suits our temperament and abilities. Walking helps maintain healthy weight, prevents or manages conditions like heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, improves cardio fitness, strengthens bones and muscles, improves muscle endurance, and increases overall energy levels. For those of us in the cold climate, mall and museum walking brings it inside. Oh yes, and it helps us to get a good night's sleep! Talk about a virtuous circle!

## 5 UNCLUTTER

As night follows day, as we age we tend to collect stuff. Sometimes a lot of it. Excessive hoarding is a genuine psychological problem. The need to accumulate can be related to painful feelings and difficult experiences and extreme hoarders benefit with counseling. Yet simply living a long life means we tend to collect more. Many of us have authentic attachments to certain objects, like photos, a parent's ring

10 GUIDELINES >> 3

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## 20 AWARDS >> from 1

### NEWS

1) First Place, Sports Story - Eric Erickson, "Unforgettable dream come true," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, October 2021. Judge's comment: Great use of photographs put this entry in first place. Great writing and what a day for those athletes! It is like we were there!

2) First Place, Investigative Journalism - Jill Boogren, "Did city mislead, downplay public input on 38th and Chicago survey?" Southwest Connector, Dec. 2, 2021 (also ran in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger). Judge's comment: The information from the survey was very enlightening on this issue. Comments from the postcards didn't match public officials' comments. Information was displayed attractively which helped with understanding the content.

3) First Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "A new Dale Street bridge," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, September 2021

4) Second Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "It's Cheatham Avenue now," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

5) Third Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "Should 3rd Precinct stay in Longfellow?" Longfellow Nokomis Messenger



Jill Boogren won first place for Investigative Journalism.

### PHOTOS

6) First Place, Photography Portrait and Personality - Terry Faust, "Affordable housing architect," Southwest Connector, March 3, 2022. Judge's comment: Good composition, fill flash, and posing of the subject,

each of which is a skill of its own.

7) First Place, Photography News Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Art on the Edge," Southwest Connector, Aug. 4, 2022.

8) Third Place, Photography Feature Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Blindfolded clay throw down," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, September 2022. Judge's comment: Liked the composition of the photo and the story line. Good composition with great lines of focus down the potters' line.

### INFOGRAPHIC

9) Second Place, Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations - Tesha

M. Christensen, "Lake Street 2 years later," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, July 2022. Judge's comment: Nice pictures

### DESIGN

10) Third Place, Typography and Design - Andoni Aldasoro and Tesha M. Christensen, Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Good design. A great entry in a crowded field.

### ADS

11) First Place, Advertising Campaign - Tesha M. Christensen, "Henry W. Anderson Mortuary," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

12) First Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Roadrunner Records," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: I like the orange for an ad for a record company. It harkens back to a time when harvest golds and earthy shades were all the rage but the shade you choose doesn't scream 70s.

13) First Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Village Shores," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Winner has the best balance, use of white space, accurate photo (doesn't look like stock image, even if it is) and large text to grab the eye.

14) Second Place, Institutional Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Chris-

tensen, "Yinghua Academy," Southwest Connector.

15) Second Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "United Noodles," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger. Judge's comment: You did a good job pulling the red and green from the photo into the words - it ties it together.

16) Second Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "ReUse Center," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

17) Second Place, Institutional Advertisement - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Elmhurst Cemetery," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor.

18) Third Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Fun City Dogs," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: There was just the right amount of different colors to tie everything together and draw the eye, without overdoing it.

19) Third Place, Best Advertisement - Tesha M. Christensen, "Longfellow Business Association," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

20) Third Place, Self-promotion or House Ad - Tesha M. Christensen, "Looking for carriers," Southwest Connector.

**\* READ AWARD-WINNING ITEMS @ MonitorSaintPaul.com**

## LIBRARY EARNS NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATION

By JANE McCLURE

The Hamline Midway Library's newly won spot on the National Register of Historic Places doesn't guarantee its future. The building could still be demolished. But the decision, announced at the end of January, was celebrated by those who have sought to save the 92-year-old structure.

"After a year-long effort, months of research, various appeals, and the dogged persistence against numerous city-created obstacles, Renovate 1558 is proud to announce that the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch, has been successfully listed on the National Register of Historic Places!" they announced in an e-newsletter.

The group thanked architectural historian Barbara Bezat, citing her "experi-

ence, tireless research, and determination in shepherding this nomination through the city, state, and federal review process." That work was called "invaluable."

The group also praised the professionalism of Joy Beasley, associate director, cultural resources, partnerships, and science, keeper of the National Register, in properly recognizing the actions of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on Aug. 1, and directing that the nomination be considered by the State Historic Preservation Board.

The HPC made no recommendation on the library, which city leaders interpreted as a reason to reject the quest for historic designation. That was successfully challenged, sending action to the state board. The state board last year unanimously supported designation.

Renovate 1558 members hope that city officials will reconsider a library renovation option put forward by LSE Architects, or relocate the library to a new building and repurpose the building at 1558 Minnehaha. The city took similar action several years ago when it built the combined library-recreation center for the Arlington Hills neighborhood and sold the longtime Arlington Hills Library. It is now the East Side Freedom Library.

Renovate 1558 noted that achieving historic designation for a property against the wish of the listed owner is a "rare occurrence." State and possibly a federal review would be needed for any actions to alter or destroy a National Register property.

Mayor Melvin Carter's administration is determined to demolish the library and have a new structure built at its current site, despite deeply divided community sentiment.

"Our Hamline-Midway neighbors have clearly expressed their desire for a brand new, state of the art public library," said Carter in a statement. "We remain resolved to deliver on that promise."

A new library is estimated to cost \$8.1 million. It could still go forward but with more steps before the current library could come down.

It isn't easy to take away designation or to demolish a designated structure. In the most recent controversial case in St. Paul, Carter signed off on demolition of the historic Justus Ramsey House, saying it was unsafe. The property owner wanted the house off of his restaurant patio. Preservationists went to court to block demolition and instead worked with the city to reach a compromise. The small stone house has been disassembled and is in storage until it can be moved to a new site.

## 10 GUIDELINES >> From 2

or a child's first drawing. However, there's truth in the old adage that less is more.

Clutter causes chaos and can actually be dangerous by causing fire hazards or blocking exits. Too many objects in one place can also add to mental confusion. I have written numerous articles about the art of curating as a way to ease through the pain of parting with objects - pairing down to treasured items to showcase. An article in "Psychology Today" cites scientific documentation about how living in clutter creates or contributes to low subjective well-being, unhealthy eating, poorer mental health, less efficient visual processing, and less efficient thinking. The advantages of streamlining outweigh simple housekeeping by elevating happiness while also benefiting physical health and cognitive abilities. Plus, your children will thank you.

### 6 CREATE AND SERVE COMMUNITY

In his landmark book, "Bowling Alone in America," author Rob-

ert D. Putnam bemoaned the shrinking tendencies of American volunteerism and civic duty, pointing out this behavior increasingly disconnects us from family, friends, neighbors, and social structures, while lessening our social capital, which depletes both individual and community well-being. Fortunately, Minnesotans' inherent activism puts us in a different category, but we cannot take for serving our communities for granted. The truth is, that by serving community we also serve ourselves.

### 7 PLACE YOUR FRIENDS, LIKE YOUR ART, IN THE BEST LIGHT

Friendships represent a deep form of social capital. Unlike family relationships, which are a given, friendships must be forged and tended. Lifelong friendships so nourish our souls that the late author, John O'Donohue, titled an entire book, "Anam Cara," a Celtic term for soul friendships, the essence of true friendship. Making and keeping lifelong friendships by investing time and energy is strong medicine.

### 8 BE A BEGINNER, LEARN NEW THINGS, OPEN NEW DOORS

Older people are notorious for getting "stuck in their ways." But a positive aspect of modernity is that there are so many options to keep current and to keep learning. From national programs like the celebrated Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), to countless offerings from other, innumerable organizations. Many neighborhood schools, community colleges or centers, religious organizations, even food coops offer seminars and workshops. And, thanks to the internet, choices are countless. I keep this poem framed above my desk: "If the Angel deigns to come, it will be because you have convinced her, not by your tears, but by your humble resolve to be always beginning: to be a beginner." - Rainer Maria Rilke

### 9 RESPECT THE PAST, LIVE THE PRESENT, ENVISION THE FUTURE

The 1960's Hippie rallying cry, "Be Here Now," often has been misinterpreted. It is the balance of past, present

and future that helps us thrive. As Winston Churchill is credited with saying: "Those of us who forget the past are doomed to repeat it." The popular trope of "being present" misses the mark. As it is for learning proper grammar, we need to practice all of our tenses in order to succeed.

### 10 ACCEPTANCE, COURAGE AND WISDOM

Can we truly shape our perspectives and make positive changes? I think so. Like all good things, it takes time and practice. But many wisdom traditions have variations of the legendary serenity prayer: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." It all begins within.

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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## PPGJLI LAUNCHES 100 BLACK AUTHORS CAMPAIGN

### PLANTING SEEDS

BY DR. ARTIKA TYNER,  
[dr.artikatyner@gmail.com](mailto:dr.artikatyner@gmail.com)



Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute (PPGJLI) is launching the 100 Black Authors campaign. The campaign will promote cultural preservation through the arts and humanities and build an ecosystem for new literary artists. We are planting seeds of social change by training, equipping, and motivating the next generation of Black authors. The goal is to publish 100 Black authors over the next 10 years, and make the City of Saint Paul an arts and cultural hub.

#### DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Our nonprofit organization seeks to promote literacy and diversity in books. Youth are more likely to read stories in

which they see themselves or their culture represented. We have instituted numerous programs focused on increasing child literacy rates. Our award-winning program, Leaders are Readers, brings diverse authors into local schools and provides an enriching learning experience.

A child's ability to read affects their success throughout life. Youth that cannot read by fourth grade are more likely to drop out of school, be incarcerated, and live in poverty. PPGJLI is dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline and creating new pipelines to success. PPGJLI focuses on promoting literacy by increasing access to diverse books in order to help Black children discover the joy in reading.

#### PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN BOOKS

Diversity in books has long been a talking point in the publishing industry. It may seem that there are more children's books with African American characters. It is a false perception born of increased awareness of the deficit rather than actual numbers.

According to Word Rated, the num-



ber of Black authors and Black characters in children's books is declining – again. In 2020, the number of Black characters in children's bestsellers decreased by 23 percent. There was a 31 percent decrease in children's bestsellers written by Black authors. A mere 12.12 percent of children's books feature characters that are Black or African.

Youth are more likely to see a book with a black bear or black dog on the cover than a Black girl or Black boy.

A 2018 study conducted by the Co-operative Children's Book Center of Education (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, showed that children's books in 2018 had a main character that was an animal rather than an Asian, Black, Latinx or Native American child. Only 10 percent of books had characters that were African or African American; 7 percent were Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific; 5 percent were Latinx; and 2 percent were Native American/First Nation.

PPGJLI is making a commitment to change those statistics with its new initiative. The nonprofit organization is leading the way to increased literacy and cultural identity among children in the BIPOC community, while providing opportunities and a voice for new Black writers.

Learn more PPGJLI 100 Black Authors Campaign and current writing competitions: [www.ppgjli.org](http://www.ppgjli.org)

Host a book drive to support the Leaders are Readers program: <https://www.ppgjli.org/host-a-book-drive>

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.

By TONY SCHMITZ AND PATRICIA OHMANS

At the age of 94, Tony's grandmother Annie had lived a full, rich life. She had worked as a cook, raised two boys, kept poultry in her garage, and presided over a sprawling garden. A self-sufficient widow, she lived alone in a tiny house on a small-town Main Street. The steeple of the Catholic church that she attended every day was almost close enough to cast a shadow onto her porch.

Things started to fall apart when Annie tumbled down her steep steps. A broken hip landed her in the hospital, and then a crowded nursing home. A leg infection from diabetes complications led to an amputation. Annie was miserable and in physical agony. She believed she would never return to a meaningful life, and her doctors agreed that she did not have long to live. Her most fervent wish – expressed repeatedly every time we visited her – was that she could die with her family around her. Instead, she died alone and in pain, in the middle of the night.

#### WHERE A PEACEFUL DEATH IS A CRIME

In 10 states, the peaceful death Annie

## It's time to legalize medical aid in dying

wished for is legal. In Minnesota, it is a crime. It's high time for Minnesota to catch up to New Mexico and eight other states – plus the District of Columbia – where medical aid in dying is legal.

Don't just take our word for it! Two-thirds of our fellow Minnesotans feel the same way. Fully 66 percent of 5,000 Minnesotans surveyed by the Minnesota Senate's research staff in 2016 agreed with this statement: "When a mentally adult is dying from a terminal illness, they should be able to receive a prescription for life-ending medication that they self-administer."

#### END OF LIFE OPTIONS ACT

A bill introduced in the Minnesota legislature last month decriminalizes medical aid in dying, in exactly this way. The bill is modeled after Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, which has been in practice for 25 years without a single instance of abuse or coercion. This bill needs to be heard, and it needs to pass. If you agree, contact your state senator and representative and

tell them you support the Minnesota End of Life Options Act (SF 1813/HF 1930).

#### FACTS ABOUT END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS

To counter misinformation about medical aid in dying, here are some more facts you need to know.

As with the Oregon law, to be eligible, a person must be an adult (18 or older); terminally ill with a prognosis of six months or less to live; and capable of making an informed decision. The dying person must swallow the medication (ruling out the possibility of third-party injections) and must be informed about other end-of-life care options, including hospice and pain control. A person's choice for medical aid can be withdrawn at any point, and providers can opt out. No one is forced to participate.

#### BI-PARTISAN, STATEWIDE SUPPORT

Minnesota's elected officials should be supporting this sensible, popular, vetted initiative. Their constituents do! A survey of Minnesota voters conducted by the

national research firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner concluded, "There is bi-partisan support for this legislation and support across generations, geography and religious faiths."

Politicians do not lose votes by supporting medical aid in dying. In fact, the survey found that 61 percent of voters would be more likely to support a candidate who supports legislation legalizing medical aid in dying.

So, why hasn't this sensible law, which prioritizes freedom of choice in medical decision-making passed? Maybe we're just scared. Death is something no one wants to think about, but all of us will experience, some of us in the deep throes of pain. Let's ensure that when terminal suffering becomes unbearable – as it did for Annie and as it has for so many others – there can be a peaceful, legal, dignified way to end it.

Patricia Ohmans is a public health professional and a member of *Compassion and Choices*, an organization dedicated to improving care, expanding options and empowering everyone to chart their end-of-life journey. Tony Schmitz is a retired journalist, a novelist, and a boat-builder. Patricia and Tony live in Frogtown.

## Letter

#### LET'S EXPAND ACCESS TO BIOMARKER TESTS

Facing a cancer diagnosis is terrifying. When I was diagnosed with my first melanoma in 2015, I was halfway through grad school and working for my dream organization. I was terrified that my future was being taken away from me so early. Fortunately, scientific advances have made mel-

anoma much more treatable, especially when caught early like mine was.

However, health insurance hasn't kept up with the innovation of medical care. I'm a four-time melanoma survivor and thankful to have been diagnosed at stage 1b or earlier each time. At some point, if I develop a later stage melanoma, biomarker testing will likely be used to determine which immunotherapy would be most effective in treating me. Melanoma can become deadly in as little as six weeks

so removing the barriers to biomarker testing are crucial. Three of my four diagnoses occurred during the pandemic when there were already a lot of delays in health care. Insurance barriers to treatment should never be one of them.

For too many people in our state, their insurance won't cover the biomarker testing they need to determine the best treatment for their diagnosis. Thankfully, the Minnesota Legislature is considering bills SF1948 and HF 1978 that will ex-

pand access to biomarker testing. I'm urging my lawmakers, Senator Erin Murphy and Representative Kaohly Vang Her to support this legislation and help ensure Minnesotans have the opportunity to get the right treatment at the right time. For me and so many others, it could be life-saving.

Jennifer Schultz

Volunteer with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), St. Paul

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

#### Story ideas always welcome.

Keep in touch with the *Monitor*. Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail to [tesha@monitorsaintpaul.com](mailto:tesha@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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Members of Minnesota Newspaper Association, Midway Chamber Area of Commerce, and Midwest Free Community Papers. Sister publications: *Longfellow Nokomis Messenger* and *Southwest Connector*.



# They won 2023 virtual ice castle contest

On Jan. 29, 2023, 14 Minecraft players descended upon the Victoria Theater Arts Center for their Ice Palace Building Competition, as part of the St. Paul Winter Carnival, and two winners emerged victorious. "Our congratulations to the winners, our thanks to all of our builders, and we hope that next year's competition is just as fierce!" said Sara Smith.



In the individual category, Frosty12814 won for their build, King Shiver's Castle. It was selected by judges for its creative use of the environment and show of remarkable technical skill.



In the team category, The Beast, made up of tallonisc00l2323 and oShibedo, won with a cozy build that showcased the public nature of ice palaces while showing off their creativity, originality, and skill in construction.

### Landmark Center Spring Events



**Ballet Tuesdays**, March 14 & April 11, 12-1pm **FREE**

**St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration**, March 17, 10am-5pm **\$7-\$9**

**SUNDAYS AT LANDMARK: An Irish Day of Dance**, March 19, 11am-5pm **\$7-\$9**

**Urban Expeditions: Nigeria & Scotland**, March 12 & April 16, 1-3pm **FREE**

**SUNDAYS AT LANDMARK: Tea at the Castle**, April 30, 1-4pm **\$5 Reservations Required**

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# AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

## BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

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



On Feb. 25, 2023, the Midway Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Celebration. The event is always a fun night and this year's theme, "Music & The Midway," meant it would definitely be festive. For extra fun, there was a banner meant to look like the iconic black First Ave. wall with stars which listed our biggest supporters of the night as well as album covers and vinyl "record" coasters at the tables.

Part of the fun every year is when we announce recipients of our Leadership Awards. They are always exemplary of what makes the Midway special, and we love highlighting them along with the other finalists. Without further adieu, here are this year's award finalists and recipients...

### ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Little Free Library has been well-

known for years as the little boxes all over town where people can donate a book or grab one. Did you know they have 150,000 locations and are on all seven continents? Yes, even Antarctica! You can see a photo of that one, as well as many other Little Free Libraries, at their new headquarters in the Wycliff Building. Other finalists: The Arc Minnesota, Minnetronix

### NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR: DRESS FOR SUCCESS

After losing their location to a fire in the Ashton Building, Dress for Success Twin Cities moved to a mobile confidence center (The Success Express) which has changing rooms and has helped eliminate transportation barriers. A national brand, locally they serve more than 3,000 women and promote local companies like Lip Esteem. Other finalists: St. Paul City School, Springboard for the Arts

### LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: FLANNERY CONSTRUCTION

Not only is Flannery Construction a business located in the Midway, they are also doing several projects in the neighborhood. Currently, there are three Flannery projects along University Avenue with many past Midway projects including the current Peking Garden/Hmong Amer-



Tetra Constantino of Elsa's House of Sleep (left) and Christine Noonan (right) of the State Fair congratulate Kara Sime of Your HR Navigator. >> More photos online at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com).

ican Partnership building, Model Cities, Springboard, Saint Paul Police's Western District, American National Bank, Element Gym, and the Flannery Construction headquarters. Other finalists: Ideal Printers, Suntide Commercial Realty

### SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: YOUR HR NAVIGATOR

With over 20 years' experience in helping companies with human resources, Your HR Navigator founder Kara Sime has worked with a variety of industries, from Fortune 500 companies to solo operators. Your HR Navigator has been very generous in lending expertise to the Chamber

this year through programming, membership recruiting, and the contributions of its owner Kara Sime to the Board of Directors. Other Finalists: JB Vang, TST Creative Catering

### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: TONYA BAUER, ST. PAUL PORT AUTHORITY

For many years Tonya has been a valuable Board, Executive Committee, and Economic Development Committee member. She regularly contributes value through her knowledge, experience, and wisdom, but also through the engagement of her employer the Port Authority.

Tonya brings her connections and knowledge from her many other community activities to the Midway Chamber. She always has creative ideas for programming and insight and wisdom she brings to the Board. She asks tough questions.

The Chamber would not be the same without Tonya! She's fun - she contributes substance and does it with a smile and good humor. Other Finalists: Terri Banaszewski, Sunrise Banks; Sara Betru, Jennings Community School

We were excited to announce this year's recipients and recognize them for their great work in our community and helping build a stronger Midway. Think about others you know who help make our neighborhood better and brighten their day by telling them thanks for their contributions.

# Como swimmers return to state meet

## COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY ERIC ERICKSON  
Social studies teacher



### HISTORY DAY WINNERS

11th grade students at Como completed and presented their History Day Research Projects at the end of the first semester. Four projects were chosen for the St. Paul Regional Competition to be held on March 18 at Johnson High School.

In the exhibit category, Melanie Flores was selected for her work on soccer legend Pele. In the virtual exhibit category, Destiny Streeter was chosen for her research on Pablo Escobar.

In the website category, Como qualifiers include Paw Gay Say and Zariya Gemeda for Anne Frank, and Luke Glad and Zak Ahmed Nur for Augustus Caesar.

### SPRING MUSICAL

Como Park's Theatre Department will present three performances of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling B-E-E Musical Show" from March 17-18. Friday night's show will be at 7:00 p.m. Saturday will include a 2:00 matinee and a 7:00 performance.

The cast and crew have been working hard under the direction of Siri Keller and Suzanne Myhre. Senior Emerson Spencer said, "it's an entertaining show and the characters are pretty funny." The community is invited and encouraged to

### SWIMMERS RETURN TO STATE MEET

The success and depth of the Cougar boys' swim team was evident in the pool and on the podium at the Section 4A Meet held on Feb. 24. Beyond the individual events, there are three relay races in high school swimming and Como qualified for state in all three of them.

Representatives of Como at the state meet included seniors Gabe Napierala, Sig Isaacson and Charlie Power-Theisen, and juniors Kai Sackreiter, Kyle Kosiak and Oskar Helgen.

### NORDIC SKIER IN STATE MEET

Talented Como freshman Henry Simmons had an outstanding Nordic Ski season that concluded at the Minnesota State Meet at Giants Ridge in Biwabik on Feb. 16. Simmons also earned all-conference in the Twin Cities Nordic Conference.



Como swimmers celebrate a great night at the Section 4A Meet where six Cougars qualified for the state meet. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

attend. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$7 for adults.

### JROTC BUSY AS EVER

Fifty-two Marine Corps JROTC cadets participated in a winter retreat focused on accountability, leadership, courage and teamwork. During three cold February days, in-town adventures included winter camping at Fort Snelling State Park, discussions with the Department of Natural Resources staff, and a visit to the State Capitol before heading north to Camp Shamaineau in Motley, Minn. Activities on the shores of Lake Shamaineau involved a low ropes obstacle course, ice wall climbing, zip lining, winter skills

training, tent construction, leather designing skills, bonfires and more. Sgt. Major James Kirkland said, "throughout the numerous hours of training, morale was high at all times!"

JROTC Drill teams have also been participating in competitions. An Upper Midwest Meet was held at Cretin-Derham Hall with 11 other JROTC programs from Minnesota and surrounding states. Cadet Chi Say led her team to a first-place finish. Como's "Close Order Drilling" team traveled to Indiana for another Regional Meet for the first time in program history, where they placed in four out of the eight events.

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BY MELVIN GILES  
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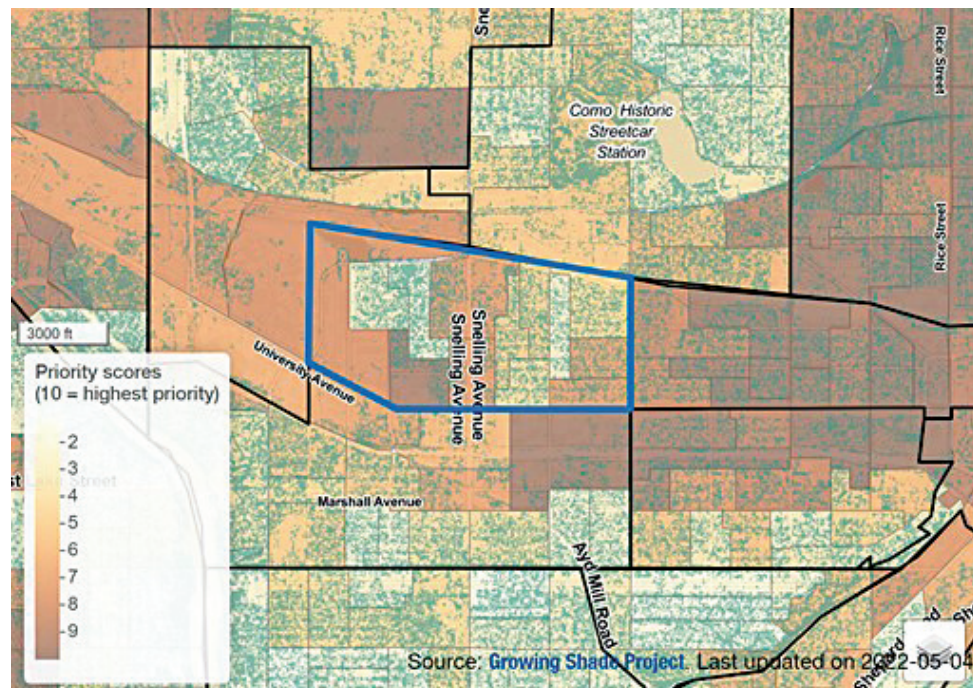
"We all have angels guiding us... They look after us. They heal us, touch us, comfort us with invisible warm hands... What will bring their help? Asking. Giving thanks." ~ Sophy Burnham

Hello Monitor readers,

January and February were very tough months of natural and human acts of physical, mental, and emotional harm and tragedy that continues to challenge our values, beliefs, and worldviews. It feels too draining and emotionally charged even to list the record numbers of senseless and cruel single and mass killings, the unbelievable tens of thousands of earthquake victims, and of the ongoing death tally of the year-long Ukraine and Russian war along with all the other non-stop wars and battles globally. Not to mention, our unresolved border (north and south) crossings challenges, polarizing politics (politics before country lawmakers), and everyday people feeling abundantly scared and fearful of each other and of those who are to serve us – it is making the start of 2023 a year not for the faint of heart.

A Children's Garden educator at the Peace Sanctuary Garden sent an email message to the garden's planners and helpers expressing "In the midst of hardship, there is hope." At the time I didn't take her message in; however, after receiving and hearing news of St. Paul's deadly last weekend in February, I was grateful for her message. I'm still holding on to her message because no matter what my eyes see, I still know that good men and women are still serving us. We often call them First Responders. I still know that good young women and men and kids are loving human beings, and I really know that we do have good lawmakers who honor country over political competition and outdated toxic racist and sexist thinking. And, I really, really know that good folks way outnumber the not good

**TREES CAN HELP POOR AIR QUALITY**



The Midway neighborhood, highlighted in blue, scores high in priority for advancing environmental justice through tree planting and canopy preservation compared to other neighborhoods in St. Paul, points out local environmentalist Molly Coddling.

stinkers and bad human apples!

Yet, I am aware that humans need a sense of immediate safety, or at the least, answers that lead to safety of their worldviews. I asked two of my White allies to speak to a comment that was made to the Monitor via email and comments that I also have been receiving from my White friends regarding the heartbreaking and fatal weekend tragedies. I informed my allies that I was still reflecting and grieving and trying to understand it myself. I also shared that I thought it would be more appropriate for a White person to reply to another White person's suggested inquiry – if poverty or hopelessness was at the core or root of the shootings. I am sharing one response this month and the other next month. I also want to invite readers of all colors (Black, Brown, White) to feel comfortable sending an answer or comment to the editor.

From Terry Burke: As a White woman, I'd like to see us stop incarcerating Blacks at a rate five times higher than whites. (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/13/politics/black-latinx-incarcerated-more/index.htm>) How can Black youth have hope for

the future when they know how our country imprisons Black men at such a high rate? Major white collar crime rarely results in prison while nonviolent crimes by Blacks can result in long prison sentences. We need to be involved. Learn about the Twin Cities Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee and how they are working to transform the prison system in Minnesota.

Thank you, Terry!

**COMMUNITY FORESTS IN MIDWAY NEIGHBORHOODS CONTRIBUTE TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

By Molly Coddling:

Our urban trees provide many community benefits. Economically, trees improve property values, lower energy costs, and provide growing career opportunities. A host of public and private tree care industry organizations afford technically proficient, competitive employment opportunities with good wages and pathways to entrepreneurship. Environmentally, tree roots intercept stormwater runoff and improve the quality of water entering our lakes and rivers. The impact of trees on our watersheds is even more important in



**BELOVED COMMUNITY AWARD**

Melvin Giles received the Beloved Community Award from Hamline University on Jan. 24, 2023. Through the award, Hamline seeks to recognize a student, staff, faculty and community member whose demonstrated leadership, service, and commitment epitomizes the work that must be done by all to enjoy meaningful lives, relationships and participation in The Beloved Community. This year's program focused on "Re-visiting the Forgotten and Overlooked Passages: A Prelude to Dr. King's 'I Have a Dream Speech.'"

urban neighborhoods with more impervious surfaces like roads and parking lots. Trees also remove air pollution and improve air quality. Urban canopy provides communities with practical strategies for climate resilience. Trees sequester carbon and will help to buffer some of the worst impacts of climate change for Minnesotans, reducing environmental threats to the health of urban communities now and in the future.

Urban forests also improve our physical, mental, and emotional well-being by lowering stress, facilitating nature connections for residents of all ages, and providing neighbors with opportunities to be more socially connected outside. Tree canopy delivers relief from urban heat island effects via its vibrant shade, which can cool air temperatures up to 15 degrees Fahrenheit and reduces the risk of heat-related illness for vulnerable community members. Neighborhoods with higher canopy coverage have better air quality and are associated with lower rates of asthma and asthma-related hospitalizations.

Unfortunately, not all canopies are dis-

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**More!**

Volunteer this summer with the Bee Line's Seedling Corps, to help grow the Bee Line gardens.

**Info**



Scan the QR code for all the details!

The Bee Line is a 2.5 mile stretch of pollinator-friendly, native gardens from Snelling to Dale, along Pierce Butler Route. A project of Frogtown Green and Hamline Midway Coalition. [www.hamlinemidway.org/beeline](http://www.hamlinemidway.org/beeline)



**TREES CAN HELP** >> from 8

tributed evenly. Inequities in forest distribution leave urban neighborhoods like Midway with less trees (26% canopy coverage) than the St. Paul average (34.5%), and much less than Metropolitan Council goals of 45% coverage to deliver all these tree benefits to community members (Met Council, 2022). A new regional data tool, Growing Shade, helps communities across the Twin Cities metro prioritize areas for canopy projects that center the environmental justice (see image on page 8).

Environmental justice areas of concern are often associated with increased proportions of populations of Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color and with

decreased average median household income. This pattern is present in the Twin Cities metro, in other communities in Minnesota, and in cities across the United States. Why is this? Racially discriminatory practices like redlining, disproportionate public disinvestment in infrastructure (including trees and parks), as well as land-use decisions and processes which disenfranchise residents mean that less environmental benefits are afforded to Communities of Color and communities with lower socioeconomic status.

This is where tree huggers, community lovers, and social justice advocates unite! Environmental injustices like inequitable canopy cover are a systemic problem which require environmentalists, community organizers, non-profit organizations,

academic institutions, and multiple levels of government to contribute to its solutions. Fighting for environmental justice requires old silos to be torn down and new collaborations which serve common aims to be fostered. Urban canopy equity work must center the priorities, values, and needs of communities most impacted by injustice. Through fundamental principles of mutuality, reconciliation, and relationship-building, we can ensure that urban forests in Midway and across St. Paul deliver environmentally just benefits for future generations.

**SPRING IS BLOOMING**

Staying optimistic is hard and challenging, and it takes much faith and working and struggling together. Every day I'm

reminded by an anonymous writer that "Hope is not pretending that troubles don't exist... It is the trust that they will not last forever, that hurts will be healed, and difficulties overcome... It is the faith that a Source of strength and renewal lies within to lead us through the dark to the sunshine..."

It's okay to feel our sorrow, our pain, our fears, and our frustrations and we can still keep hope, optimism, joy, and love alive within us. Spring is blooming!

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

*May Peace Be In Our Homes & Communities...*

*May Peace Prevail On Earth (MPPOE)!*

**PLAN IT**

**HONG AMERICAN PLAY OPENS MARCH 31**

Local Hmong American playwright and theater artist Katie Ka Vang returns to Theater Mu for the world premiere of her and Melissa Li's musical, "Again." Weaving together unlikely friendships, complex family dynamics, and original songs, Again runs March 31-April 16 at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis. The story begins when cancer survivor Mai See, a successful memoirist who can't seem to get her life together, meets Quest, an aspiring filmmaker who is battling chronic cancer herself. Inspired by Mai See's work, Quest asks her to star in her documentary. Although Mai See reluctantly agrees, they're both thrown for a loop when Mai See discovers she has relapsed.

THEATER MU (pronounced MOO) is the largest Asian American theater company in the Midwest. Pay as you are pricing. More at theatermu.org.

**CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT STATE FAIR**



After more than 50 years with the Minnesota State Fair and 27 as CEO, Como resident Jerry Hammer will retire this spring. Stepping in as CEO will be Renee Alexander. Alexander has more than 20 years of experience with the Great Minnesota Get-Together, including 13 years as deputy general manager, playing a key role on the State Fair's senior management team. (Photo submitted)



**Hmong center 30 years old**

The Hmong Cultural Center celebrated its 30th anniversary in December at its new storefront museum (375 University Avenue West). The center has recently hired two new tour guides, Pa Kou Vang and Pa Soua Vae. Located just four blocks from the Minnesota State Capitol, the Hmong Cultural Center storefront museum is the first stand-alone Hmong museum in Minnesota. Visitors learn substantively about Hmong culture, history, contributions to Minnesota and Hmong folk art traditions through cultural objects, artworks, display panels and interactive video exhibits. One-hour field trips to the museum may be scheduled for a \$100 fee. The walk-in self-guided visitor admission fee is \$7. More information about the Hmong Cultural Center Museum is available at [www.hmonghistorycenter.org/](http://www.hmonghistorycenter.org/). Call 651-917-9937 or email [markpfeifer@hmongcc.org](mailto:markpfeifer@hmongcc.org) to schedule a museum tour. Hours are Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., or by appointment.

**Food drive for Keystone as need increases locally**

March is Minnesota FoodShare Month. Area food shelves are struggling to keep up with growing demand.

Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave., is hosting a food drive for Keystone Community Services, 1-4 p.m. Sunday, March 19 in the church parking lot. The most needed items at Keystone are rice, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned meat, pasta, cooking oil, sugar, flour, soy sauce, fish sauce, laundry detergent, toilet paper and dish soap.

The food shelf always welcomes paper, plastic and reusable shopping bags.

Food insecurity and hunger are growing problems. The total number of visits to Keystone's food shelves increased by 80% from December 2021 to December 2022. In December 2022, 10,626 people received food support from Keystone's food shelf program. The number of new participants nearly tripled in 2022 compared to 2021 (4,972 new in 2021 vs 13,441 in 2022).

In a typical day, Keystone supports 200 families a day at its two sites and a food mobile distribution. The week of Jan. 9, Keystone supported 140 households



Keystone President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mary McKeowen will retire on June 2, 2023.

in one day at one site. Emergency SNAP benefits will go away in March and many families could lose \$100 in extra SNAP support.

Keystone is feeling the impact of inflation, too. The social services provider spent 30% more than budgeted in 2022 on food alone to support the increase in participation and increased operational costs like

gas, insurance and supplies which are also increased due to inflation.

Ramsey County recently completed a food assessment of the needs of Ramsey County residents and found that food insecurity rates across the county have the highest concentrations in the University Avenue, Midway, Frogtown and Capitol Heights areas of Saint Paul. Keystone's basic need programs supports neighbors in all of those neighborhoods.

**Let Light Shine Through celebrates Hamline Methodist**

Let the Light Shine Through is a celebration and rededication of Hamline Church United Methodist's sanctuary windows. The windows, which were central to the church's successful National register of Historic Places nomination, will be celebrated at a service at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 30 at the church at 1514 Englewood Ave. The public is invited to attend. One highlight is to hear from Al Palmer of Palmer Gaytee Glass. Palmer Gaytee worked on window restoration. Gaytee Glass crafted several of the church windows years ago.

The church dates from 1928.

The church's leaders, its Ministry of Memory Committee and committee working on the April 30 event are looking for people whose family members have church windows dedicated to them. Families may have left the church and community. The committee would still like to hear from them and invite them to the

event.

Every window in the church not only depicts a Biblical story, there are also stories about the people and groups to whom windows are dedicated. The last eight of the 10 upper level (clerestory) windows were installed in the years between 1954-1960. Six of the small lower level windows were also installed in the post World War II era from 1948-1953.

Hamline Church would like to reconnect with the families whose members were honored with windows. Ministry of Memory Committee members are available after church on Sundays to answer questions and give church tours every Sunday. If anyone knows of such individuals honored with a window, please contact Mary Bakeman ([marybakeman@msn.com](mailto:marybakeman@msn.com)) or Roger Greiling ([rogergreiling@yahoo.com](mailto:rogergreiling@yahoo.com)).

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## THEY MADE THE COMO PARK HONOR ROLL

### DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY SHEVEK MCKEE  
Executive director  
district10@  
district10comopark.org



In December and January, we accepted nominations for the 2022 Como Neighborhood Honor Roll, our board members voted to select honorees among the nominations, and the winners were honored at a recent board meeting.

Congratulations to 2022 Honorees Carol and Jim Kmiecik, Molly O'Rourke and Judy Johnson of the Midway Parkway Garden Club, and Reene Jacobsen and

Sandy Simpson, garden stewards of the Midway/Arona garden.

The Honor Roll is an annual tribute that recognizes everyday residents and organizations who make a sustained and lasting impact in their neighborhood. The city has paused it's official support of the honor roll program, but it's important that we continue to celebrate our outstanding community members, whose names will be added to the permanent plaque in the D10 office. You can see more about the 2022 Honorees, as well as our record of past honorees, here: [District10ComoPark.org/HonorRoll](http://District10ComoPark.org/HonorRoll)

### D10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Residents of District 10 who are at least 16 years old, representatives from businesses, non-profits, or other organiza-

tions with a physical presence in District 10 are eligible to vote in our April elections.

- Online ballots must be requested by Monday, April 17 at 8 a.m.

- If you need a paper ballot mailed to you, we need your request by Sunday, April 2.

- We will send out ballots beginning Monday, April 10.

- We must receive your completed ballot at the District 10 office no later than 5 p.m. Monday April 17.

The election is April 19. Find out more information here: [District10ComoPark.org/Elections/](http://District10ComoPark.org/Elections/) That's where you can also learn more about the roles and opportunities of board members. The filing deadline to be included on the ballot as a candidate is Sunday, April 2. If you have any questions or would like to know more about being a board member you can reach out to [district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org). All of our board and committee

meetings are open to the public and agendas are posted in advance on the website and in the weekly newsletter. We encourage you to come to our meetings and see how you like being part of our work and get to know us!

### 'PICK UP & PARTY' EVENT MAY 13

Our members have been working hard on our 2023 events calendar. We're planning to again have a community event in each of Como's four sub-districts in 2022. On May 12, we're planning a Spring event at Orchard Rec Center.

We're also planning our annual Ice Cream Social at the Como Streetcar Station in July, and a Harvest Festival in the Tilden Park area in October. Get involved in planning the event in your sub-district, or any of the sub-districts, at our Neighborhood Relations Committee meetings. Find the latest info at [District10ComoPark.org/Events/](http://District10ComoPark.org/Events/)

## GARBAGE CHANGES >> from 1

was one of the first neighborhoods to have curbside residential recycling, with residents issued yellow, blue and white bins for paper, cans and glass.

Trash for decades was handled by haulers hired by property owners, with the St. Paul Haulers LLC group taking over under a city contract in 2018. That consortium has asked if it can renegotiate the current contract.

The hauler consortium was launched when the city had 15 haulers providing residential trash service, as a means of protecting market share for smaller companies. Now there are five, with Waste Management having more than 50 percent of the residential accounts. The others are Republic, Aspen, Gene's and Highland Sanitation.

The hauler consortium could submit a bid, as can other haulers or hauler groups, said Young. One issue the city must consider is how much capacity bidders have and if they can successfully do the work.

Young cited the tight timeline to get a new contract and request for proposals ready, and the need to rectify past problems.

Customer service is a huge issue. Young noted that in some cases, people have waited on the phone for hours to get a response from a hauler. It's recommended that both garbage and recycling customer service get more city oversight.

It's also recommended that the city take over cart management for trash and recycling, and that the city handle trash billing. Public Works is recommending that adjacent property owners or residents in multi-unit buildings be allowed to share carts (which

isn't currently allowed), with conditions tied to the amount of waste generated.

Single-family dwellings may be allowed to opt out of garbage service, if the residents could demonstrate that they are generating little to no waste. That was requested by several Midway residents, under the original contract.

Another change is organics pickup. Ramsey County is developing a program to encourage residents to put food scraps in compostible bags and put bags in their trash. The organics bags would be pulled out of the waste stream at the Ramsey-Washington trash facility in Newport. The current compost drop-off program with neighborhood and yard waste sites would continue.

Yard waste pickup would remain an optional service for residents under a new

contract.

What may generate debate is how bulky items are handled. Currently each household can dispose of two to three bulky items per year without an extra charge. That was seen as a way to reduce illegal dumping of items. But illegal dumping has increased, not decreased. For years residents would sometimes save bigger items or quantities (such as construction waste) for neighborhood cleanups. In the past every district council held at least one cleanup event a year. That was changed over time and now there are just two drop off days a year. The effectiveness of that has been questioned.

The recommendation is for bulky items to be included in the base rate for trash collection and to allow up to six items per year.

## SALES TAX >> from 1

city budget needs.

But city leaders face many differences between 1992 and 2023. The 1993 effort passed despite a split city council. The 2023 proposal has clear majority support.

The 1993 tax didn't have to go before the voters. A petition drive to put the measure on the ballot fell short. The 2023 proposal requires a referendum.

And while the 1993 tax has funded a diverse group of projects, sales tax request that go to the capitol today must have specific projects attached.

Business groups haven't come out with strong positions for or against the tax. Midway Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Chad Kulas said that group will hear from Public Works Director Sean Kershaw this month.

Midway has been in an educational mode, with participation in a survey led by the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and other groups.

Department directors Kershaw and Andy Rodriguez of Parks and Recreation

have been reviewing the proposal with two city commissions, Transportation and Parks and Recreation.

"The mayor decided that this year was the year we needed to try again" for the tax, said Kershaw, factoring in DFL control of the House and Senate and a DFL governor.

The needs cannot be placed on Local Government Aid or on property taxpayers, the department heads said. They note that parks and public works facilities here have regional significance so that should be spread out regionally.

Submitting a local sales tax request means having a detailed list of potential projects under state procedure changes adopted in 2019, Kershaw and Rodriguez said. Not surprisingly, city officials have heard questions about why other requests weren't included.

For Public Works, street projects were chosen with several criteria in mind. Streets with current or proposed regional transitways, safety issues, major regional freight corridors, and bike facilities are among the streets eyed. "We could have picked any arterial or collector street because almost all of them need work," said Kershaw.

The estimate of needs for Public Works alone is at \$750 million in today's dollars. "Arterial streets right now are on a 124-year replacement cycle," said Kershaw. Residential streets have a 289-year replacement cycle. The industry standard is a 60-year maximum design life.

"And we're going to see the worst pothole season we've ever seen," Kershaw added.

Two dozen street projects are outlined in the Public Works proposal, including the controversial reconstruction of Summit Avenue between Mississippi River Boulevard to Kellogg Boulevard. Several projects are in the West Midway area, where streets regularly take a beating from heavy truck traffic. Area projects include Hamline Avenue from Pierce Butler Route to Randolph Avenue; Cretin Avenue from Interstate 94 to Ford Parkway; Pelham Boulevard from Franklin Avenue to Mississippi River Boulevard; Vandalia Street from Interstate 94 to Capp Road; Territorial Road from Vandalia to Cromwell Avenue; Transfer Road from Prior Avenue to Ellis Avenue and Ellis and Vandalia; and Marshall Avenue between Lexington Parkway and Western Avenue.

For Parks and Recreation "our biggest need is capital maintenance," said Rodriguez. His department has 39 community recreation center buildings, with an average building age of more than 40 years.

The city only has \$2.5 million in capital maintenance dollars each year through the Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget process. The department has a backlog of about \$40 million in parks and recreation maintenance needs, Rodriguez said. As buildings continue to age, the costs rise.

Parks and Recreation fields more than 3,800 maintenance service request each year. Only about 75 percent of those are completed. The parks and recreation system receives an estimated 15 million visitors per year, with community center accounting for almost three million visits alone.

Several facilities are cited in the request, including downtown parks, and the Mississippi River Learning Center and National Park Service headquarters at Crosby Farm Regional Park/Watergate Marina. Another idea on the list is a multi-sport/multi-use regional athletic center. The latter facility doesn't have a designated site, said Rodriguez.

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**m** DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# HELP WANTED TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP AND MAINTAIN STAFF

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

It's been called the Great Resignation, the Big Quit and the Great Reshuffle. Resignation rates across the United States have remained high since COVID-19 hit in the spring of 2020.

Businesses are struggling to find people to fill positions at all levels and departments with qualified staff who will be reliable and show up.

"If you are an employer struggling to find workers, ask yourself what you could be doing different," advised Midway Area Chamber of Commerce and south Minneapolis resident Chad Kulas. "Can you look at other job boards? Ask different people if they know anyone? Have you considered hiring people with disabilities? What incentives can you offer that will last? Culture has become a very important priority to attract and maintain employees. What are you doing to make sure you have a great culture?"

"Employees want flexibility, good pay and benefits," pointed out Kara Sime of Your HR Navigator. "In addition, I see employees ask about and expect a positive work environment, more than in the past."

Current job openings are offering more incentives and many are focusing on flexibility, Kulas pointed out. "The ability to work remotely is now very common and seen by many as a requisite for applying. I've also seen unlimited PTO, though I've also heard employees who have it oftentimes take less days off."

He added, "Flexibility is the biggest thing – and actually was even before the pandemic. For over 10 years I've heard em-

ployers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance. Employees



Employees want flexibility, good pay, and benefits."

Kara Sime



"While this trend has been going on for years, the pandemic certainly made it bigger. Now if your kid is sick or you or a family member was COVID-exposed, employers need to understand you may need to alter your schedule on the fly."

While more employees want to be remote or have more work flexibility to be remote more often, more employers are pulling people back into the office, observed Sime. "So, there is going to be a disconnect here at some point. And, in my opinion from 25 plus years of professional experience, I think our pendulum had to swing way over to remote work because of COVID-19, but it swung so far to one side it has to swing back to a middle ground where some live and in-person work is needed. It is true that there just are some things that need to be done in-person or are more effective live where non-verbals can be seen and accounted for in the conversation."

"In addition, as human beings, we have a physical need to be with and interact with other humans, so I can see that employers who stay with remote workers are going to have to get very creative with the

structure and plan new interactions and ways of connecting with the other humans in the workplace."

To draw people in, some businesses are offering incentives for those who are there in person.

"They might offer free food and drink, or games like ping pong, pool, darts. These ideas were all popularized by tech firms in Silicon Valley years ago," remarked Kulas. "I'm also seeing more opportunities for team bonding; this is becoming more important when some employees never or rarely see their co-workers. I've witnessed many times two people meeting for the first time even though they work for the same company and have for months or even years. With employees more scattered and working at home, finding ways to bond the team are more important."



For over 10 years I've heard employers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance."

Chad Kulas



### TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

"For employers, find the right balance of getting the bottom line you want and maintaining happy employees,"

recommended Kulas. "With a tight job market, employees and job seekers have the upper hand in negotiation, so make sure you're treating your employees the way they want to be treated. If you can create a great work culture, you have a leg up on others. Also, don't be afraid to change what you're doing and find uncommon solutions. The world changes and you need to adapt."

"I wish there was a silver bullet or a top three list of things to do, but there isn't," said Sime. "Main tips, however, are to actually live and create a healthy workplace for people. Treat your employees as you want your children to be treated when they venture out into the work world. We spend one-third of our life at work, so employers should focus on employee well-being overall – helping employees to be successful people in the world will pay dividends at work with productivity, loyalty, happiness and engagement. This benefits the company, the employee and the community at large. While creating this intentional and healthy culture takes time and effort, this attracts and retains people better than any hiring bonus."

### TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

"For employees, the past few years have made many people rethink the type of job they want," remarked Kulas. "While this means you should also be thinking of the type of work you want to do, job loyalty means more than ever. You will be appreciated if you stay at your current job, and the grass isn't always greener elsewhere. While you should look for better fits, don't just leave because you think you can find a slightly better spot."

"Think about the future of that particular job. What does it look like in 10 years? Twenty? Can you do it for the rest of your working life? Will a machine replace it?"

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