



B LINE: 'LIVING-YOUR-LIFE-IN-THE-CITY LINE'



Politicians from Minneapolis and St. Paul throw shovels full of dirt as they celebrate the ground-breaking of a new Bus Rapid Transit Line that will connect the two cities. The B Line is expected to be operational in 2024. Work will primarily be done east of Hiawatha Ave. this year, and to the west next year. View photo gallery at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Ground breaks for Bus Rapid Transit B Line along Marshall/Selby avenues, connecting Union Depot to Bde Maka Ska

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Marshall/Selby/Lake St. will be torn up over the next two summers to create the new 12.6-mile Bus Rapid Transit B Line.

The majority of construction along this line will be done east of Hiawatha this year, and west of Hiawatha next year. The line will open in 2024.

"Riders deserve fast and reliable service, and that is exactly what we are bringing to the B Line corridor through this significant investment," said Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle. A ground-breaking for the new line was held at E. Lake and 27th on Monday, May 8, 2023.

The B Line will run every 10 minutes, seven days a week during the day and most of the evening, and will mostly re-

place Route 21. It aims to make travel time 20% faster along the route.

"It is one of many bus rapid transit lines that we are building throughout the community," said Zelle. "This is not a commuter line. This is a living-your-life-in-the-city line."

Southwest Minneapolis resident, Senator Tina Smith, stated, "This project is about connecting people to their lives. ... This community is so worthy of this investment."

"The B Line's construction is an im-

Tameka Jones launches storefront for Lip Esteem in Rondo, where she grew up

She's changing the landscape of beauty

By AAMIRA REDD

Amidst the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uprising following George Floyd's murder, Tameka Jones, a proud Rondo native and passionate makeup artist, emerged with a strong desire to restore beauty and uplift her community. In 2020, she seized an opportunity to make a positive impact by creating a plant-based, gluten-free lipstick line.



Tameka Jones of Lip Esteem aims to help people of all skin tones feel beautiful with the plant-based, gluten free lipstick she sells. (Photo by Aamira Redd)

REALIZING HER PASSION FOR MAKEUP

Jones, 47, owner of makeup company Lip Esteem, has always had a passion for makeup. As a young child during her visits to California, Jones cherished the memories of playing with her grandmother's makeup and the loving encouragement she received.

"It was like a safe and fun place for me, and so ever since I just started doing makeup, even if I was doing it wrong, I was still practicing. So, my love of make-

LIP ESTEEM >> 6

CAUGHT BETWEEN

Over 11 years in, their family court case is still spread between two states and getting worse. Now she's been ordered to pay fines or go to jail because her daughter won't go to dad's house.

She lived in Minnesota for only five months and her daughter was born in Iowa, but Dani* has been dragged into family court in Minnesota nearly every one of the past 11 years by her ex-boyfriend.

She's been trying to figure out what happened and why things have gotten worse instead of better.

She did what everyone tells women to do when they're being abused. She left.

She fled back home to Iowa when she was six weeks pregnant, determined to raise her baby in a violence-and-alcohol-free environment with the help of her family.

And then, before her daughter had even been born, Dani found herself in



By Tesha M. Christensen

family court. Her ex-boyfriend had filed for custody of their unborn child two months before her due date.

She filed herself in Iowa then, but Sherburne County Judge Mary Yunker, the same one who presided over the controversial Autumn Hallow case, ruled that the case be in Minnesota instead of Iowa. (Autumn Hallow was murdered by her father and step-mother despite repeated abuse reports and attempts by her mother

in Yunker's courtroom to protect her.)

Today, neither party resides in Sherburne County, Judge Yunker retired in November 2022, and Dani has asked repeatedly to have the case moved to the state where her daughter has lived her entire life. But it remains in Minnesota.

Dani finds herself stuck between two states. Iowa begins investigations, but is then told by Minnesota that it will follow through on them. Instead, the issues dealt with in Minnesota are in regards to the latest motions filed by her ex-boyfriend Bryan.

"The nightmare doesn't exist until you're in it," said Dani. "And then no one wants to talk about it."

CAUGHT BETWEEN >> 2

Hamline Midway Coalition welcomes new staff, moves into Knox building

Meet Jenne Nelson

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Hamline Midway Coalition has a new office and a new executive director.

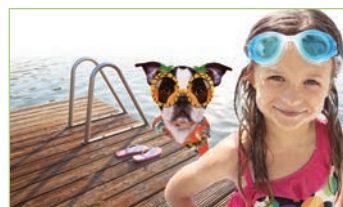
In February, the neighborhood group moved next door from the Hamline Midway Library into the Knox International Building.

Jenne Nelson joined the staff as executive director when Sarah O'Brien left.

WHAT ARE YOUR CONNECTIONS TO THE AREA?

I live in the Como Park neighborhood, and have for the last 13 years. I love Saint Paul. My two young kids go to a SPPS school, our neighbors have become friends whom we treasure, and my husband and I plan to live in this city for a very long time.

MEET JENNE NELSON >> 13



SUMMER IN THE CITY
Looking for something fun to do?

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AGING WELL
Columnist Susan Schafer bids a fond farewell

PAGES 8-9



Head over to Frogtown Farm and call chimney swifts to tower

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CAUGHT BETWEEN >> From 1

FROM A DREAM TO A NIGHTMARE

Only 23 when she met Bryan*, Dani thought she had fallen into a love story. He was charming, it moved fast, and within a few months of meeting him in Des Moines, Iowa, she had agreed to move to Elk River, Minn. "I thought he was the answer to my prayers when I met him. And then I thought there was something wrong with me," she said.

"After I moved, his personality changed really quickly from a nice man to my worst nightmare." He drank excessively, she recalled, and on more than one occasion she called her mom while she was hiding from him in a bathroom. Her mom recalls hearing him swear and yell at Dani while pounding on the closed door. She told her mom, "I'm afraid he's going to hurt me." When her mom visited, she saw how much alcohol he drank. "He had the potential for violence," Cindy* recalled. "I saw the amount he consumed." He coerced Dani into doing things she didn't want to do in the bedroom. He destroyed things her biological dad left after he died. He changed her phone password. She had to dash out of the way one day when he directed his vehicle at her in the yard. He threatened the life of her dog.

But she never called the police. Not even when he somehow sold her car without her signature. It left her even more isolated, far from home and her family. But he didn't ever punch her. Instead, he broke the things around her, throwing bottles at the door when he raged at her. When she threatened to call the police, he said he'd have them lock her up. When she said she was going to leave, he retorted that he'd report the car she was in as stolen. He wanted her tested for Borderline Personality Disorder and told her she was crazy.

Later, others gave her the words to describe the experience. Abusive. Coercive. Controlling. Gaslighting. Manipulative. Narcissistic. Friends began to suspect that he might have a personality disorder.

"I feel so bad for that version of me," Dani said. "I know I tried to stand up to him, but I never stood a chance. He had the money. He had everything. He knew that by moving me to Minnesota, he was moving me from my support system and anyone who would help me. And then he'd call me the crazy one."

Then she discovered she was pregnant. She opted not to get the abortion he suggested, and when he said they were through, she got him to put in writing that she could drive the car that was in his name and she headed back to Iowa.

She didn't know what was in front of her. "He uses the court system to terrorize me," said Dani. "I've never had a break."

"It's a form of control," pointed out her mother.

Cindy added, "He's a master gaslighter. You don't even know how to defend it. He'll put anything in an affidavit."

"His biggest go-to is, 'Dani are you of sound mind? Do you need to speak to a professional?'"

IN COURT BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN

Bryan kept calling her when he was drunk, yelling and screaming at her every day over the phone line. It took her awhile, she said, but she finally blocked his calls. Later, he used that to show she was refusing to co-parent.

On March 14, 2012, Bryan filed a pre-birth petition in Minnesota seeking to establish paternity, custody, and parenting time for the unborn child. Dani counter-filed in Iowa, but citing provisions of Iowa's version of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA), the case was placed in Minnesota. Dani's appeal was heard in Minnesota and they affirmed keeping the case in Minnesota. Despite mother and child living in another state, the Minnesota court said it would not be an "inconvenient

► "Research and submissions received demonstrate that perpetrators of domestic violence can also misuse family law proceedings to continue to perpetrate violence against their victims, resulting in secondary traumatization. In this context, parental alienation may be employed as a useful tactic."

UNITED NATIONS IDS LINK BETWEEN ABUSERS AND PARENTAL ALIENATION ACCUSATIONS



► "States ensure that the views of the child are sufficiently and independently represented in family law procedures."

► "States ensure mandatory training of the judiciary and other justice system professionals on gender bias, the dynamics of domestic abuse, and the relationship between allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts."

► The report urges family court professionals: "In the context of domestic violence, there is a duty to listen and respond to children's accounts of violence, with a view to validating these experiences, ensuring that decisions are better informed and that the child's safety and welfare are promoted."

► The UN Special Rapporteur recommends that states legislate to prohibit the use of parental alienation or related pseudo-concepts in family law cases, the use of so-called experts in parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts, and the use of reunification camps.

2023 Custody, Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children, report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, Its Causes and Consequences by Reen Alsalem

forum." The ruling didn't address how the poor, young woman would find representation in another state, afford to take off work to drive five hours one way to attend hearings, or find lodging in another state. Nor did it lay out how Twin Cities-based court professionals would manage working on a case where almost all the people they needed to talk to and visit were in another state.

Bryan didn't meet his daughter, Faith*, until she was eight months old, although he was notified right away of her birth. He had given up a child for adoption 1.5 years earlier. "I begged him to come meet his daughter whom he was in court fighting for," said Dani.

"We all tried to be very supportive of Faith's relationship with her dad," said Cindy. The early visits happened at their home, where Dani lived for a few years, and were at a hotel when they included Bryan's parents.

On Dec. 11, 2014, the Minnesota court granted the parties joint legal custody, with sole physical care to Dani subject to parenting time for Bryan following a custody evaluation by Minneapolis psychologist Susan Phipps-Yonas. She recommended that Dani have sole physical custody to maintain continuity for two-year-old Faith, whose life was in Iowa, and that the parents share legal custody.

Bryan has some relatives in Iowa, and exercised parenting time there when Faith was young, although he was often hours late. He's never attended a doctors appointment, school conference, school play, recital or other event. However, his brother and his father have. "I think that's really telling," said Cindy.

A second custody evaluation was done after Bryan again filed for sole custody in 2020 when Faith was eight. Again, the custody evaluator, this time Kareem S. Braxton of Minneapolis, affirmed that the parents share joint legal custody and that Dani have sole physical custody.

FIRST CHILD ABUSE CASE AGAINST DAD

Things changed quickly after they acted on that report through mediation in the fall of October 2021.

After she visited her dad, his wife, and two younger step-siblings for Christmas in

2021, Faith began saying she didn't want to go back to her dad's house in Minnesota. She was supposed to visit one weekend a month, and her dad was court-ordered to plan those visits ahead of time by the first of each month. He had done so in November and December 2021, but then canceled last minute before exercising his holiday time.

In January 2022, there was a bad snowstorm that prevented the visit. In February, Faith was vomiting and Dani asked that the visit be rescheduled to avoid putting a vomiting child in the car for a five-hour drive. In March, Bryan's weekend overlapped with spring break, which was Dani's holiday and took precedence. They had been using a family text message thread that included Dani's parents and Bryan's parents to keep conversations civil, but after Bryan engaged in abusive language directed separately at Dani, her step-dad and her mom, Dani stated that she would be using the court-ordered Our Family Wizard app for all future correspondence. Bryan did not check his messages there.

"The messages that have come through to Dani are generally negative, accusatory and not demonstrative of mutual respect for Dani as the other parent. [Bryan] has expressed frequent concern about Dani's ability or fitness to parent, and there has not been evidence that Dani is not a fit parent," wrote Dani's therapist Marcy Schrum in an August 2022 report.

Meanwhile, Faith had begun having night terrors.

Dani was stymied in her attempt to get Faith therapeutic treatment. Bryan spoke to his daughter's therapist via telephone, and stated that he wanted her to record all conversations with his daughter and send them to him, which the therapist was not comfortable doing and did not believe was appropriate. Per court testimony, he also told the therapist that he did not agree to let his daughter be in treatment.

In April 2022, the Iowa Department of Human Services got involved and concluded that dad caused a denial of critical care for his daughter. A Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) case was opened. Bryan was placed on the Central Abuse Registry. Faith resumed therapy.

"Faith was very good at articulating

what was bothering her, but she got to the point where she would start crying and shut down, and she would not disclose anything further. I do believe she has more to say, but she was unable to disclose at that point," wrote DHS investigator Jean Entz in her report. Entz made it clear that Faith did not want to see her dad and that Dani struggled with being in the position of following the court order or trying to figure out how to force Faith into the car to see him.

Bryan did not request parenting time for May, June, July, or August 2022.

Faith's school counselor reported to a child protection worker that Faith had talked about concerns at her dad's house and did not want to visit him there. There have been concerns about how Bryan has interacted with school staff, and now only administrators will speak to him.

Faith's therapist noted that Bryan had called her an excessive amount of times, and described Bryan as "aggressive and rude."

However, his interactions with his child's school, therapist and maternal grandparents has not been factored into the case by the various professionals making recommendations on custody and parenting time. The fact that Bryan makes adults uncomfortable has not been considered relevant to how he treats his daughter. This is despite specific language in court orders (commonly known as Appendix A in Minnesota divorce decrees) that neither parent disparage the other.

When interviewed by a child protection worker, Bryan blamed Dani for problems with his daughter, and denied that he had done anything inappropriate, according to the written report issued by DHS. Notably, he did not express concern about his daughter's mental or physical health. Meanwhile, Dani, who grew up with divorced parents, affirmed the position she has taken throughout Faith's life – that a relationship with her father is important. She also asked about resources available to help the family.

SECOND ABUSE INVESTIGATION

In June, Faith's therapist, Kim Montgomery, noted that she was showing signs of a child who had been sexually abused. She had told multiple people after the Christmas visit that her dad locked her in her room and body-shamed her.

As the days got closer to when she was court-ordered to see her dad in September, Faith began disclosing more information about her past experiences with her dad to those around her whom she has established relationships with. Her mom. Her maternal grandmother. Her school counselor. Her therapist (until treatment was stopped by Minneapolis-based parenting consultant Susan Lach following a conversation she had only with Bryan).

According to court documents, Faith told her grandmother Cindy that her dad had threatened to kill her mom and her if she told anyone what her dad had been doing to her. Once he stomped his foot on an ant, grinding his foot into it, to demonstrate what he would do to her if she told the secret.

Another child protection assessment began. Bryan declined to participate in any CPS interviews, although his Minnesota attorney, Katie Jendro, called to talk about dad seeking sole custody of Faith and requesting that the court approve him moving Faith to Minnesota. Dani cooperated fully with all CPS requests.

The child protection investigation in Iowa was halted because Faith broke down and could not give any more details to the STAR Center investigator. The CPS report states that because the child is not seeing dad, they did not feel like there needed to be a second STAR interview. However, they also wrote that it was imperative that ongoing discovery work be done. Despite that statement and a high risk assessment rating, the same CPS report made a finding that the sexual abuse could not be confirmed and closed the case.

CAUGHT BETWEEN >> From 2

"Am I to understand you sat in a room with Faith and she told you her father touched her private parts and you are going to do nothing about this?" Dani asked a CPS worker.

Since some incidents happened in Minnesota, Iowa CPS said they could not address them.

Minnesota stated that it would not look into the Iowa incidents. St. Anthony Village Police Department wouldn't proceed because there was an open family court case, a detail they learned when Bryan's attorney called them.

The Iowa court declined to bring back in the guardian ad litem who had worked previously with Faith.

An Iowa judge approved an order for protection that Dani made on behalf of Faith on Sept. 23, 2022. However, after Judge Yunker contacted him and insisted that he had no jurisdiction, Judge Paul Scott set it to expire in December. He observed that Dani could seek another one in Minnesota.

To do so required Dani to go through the entire process a second time, forcing her to find and hire a new Minnesota-based attorney and try to negotiate CPS workers across state lines.

A PC BROUGHT IN

A parenting consultant, known as a PC, was appointed in Minnesota last summer, but the case has not gotten clearer with her involvement.

Susan Lach of Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell in Maplewood has not ever met Faith. Nor has she journeyed to Iowa to meet those involved in Faith's daily life. Lach testified that she has not spoken to the child protection workers in Iowa, nor staff at the center where she was evaluated for sexual abuse.

A lawyer, Lach is neither a licensed therapist nor social worker, but her authority on the case is vast and equal to a judge. Whatever decisions she makes are considered orders and must be followed. In Minnesota, PCs are not required to have training on domestic violence, victim and perpetrator behaviors, long and short-term impacts of domestic violence and child abuse on children, child sexual abuse, child abuse, coercive control, implicit and explicit bias, or trauma. There is little oversight. (See sidebar)

Lach required \$2,000 up front, and charged \$500 an hour. Within a few months, she had charged the family \$4,700. Currently, she says Dani owes her about \$7,500.

Lach ordered that Faith discontinue work with her therapist and instead begin seeing a therapist in Minnesota. She also recommended a custody flip – moving Faith from Iowa where she has lived her entire life to Minnesota, changing her school, taking her away from the family and friends she has had her entire life, and switching all her medical providers. She

testified: "I don't think Faith cares where she lives. I mean, what does where she's lived her entire life have to do with where she gets therapy?"

Lach has opined that Faith was "coached" by her mother to make allegations against her dad – despite never having talked to Faith herself. Hearings have focused on Dani's credibility versus the facts of the case and Faith's safety. Lach did not respond to a list of questions about her work as a PC.

ISSUES WITH PC

Lach accused Faith's therapist of picking sides and said she could not be impartial in her treatment. Statements made to the court by Montgomery, however, focus on listening to the child, and helping her work through things.

Lach's testimony includes the following statement in reference to Montgomery, who is a school-based therapist with a master's degree in social work: "It doesn't look like she has any qualifications to be doing this at all."

Cindy said she was alarmed when she testified in Yunker's courtroom by the behavior of the people working there. "In my 23 years of working in a courtroom, I have never seen a judge behave this way," stated Cindy. "She was so unprofessional. She'd look down at me and make a face and roll her eyes. She said, 'That wasn't the question. Do you need it repeated for you?' It really affected my testimony." Plus, "she would make the objection and prompt Bryan's attorney, 'Do you want to object?'" She said Yunker interrupted people.

"It's like you're embarrassed to be part of that community," said Cindy. "I have never seen anything like it."

Dani's mother and stepfather have worked in the court system their entire lives. Neither understands what is happening in their daughter's case. They're losing sleep. Their health has been affected.

"It's surreal," said Cindy. "It's like you can't believe this is happening."

Her own professional work involved writing the court transcripts for many DHS cases of abuse. "This is the most alarming case I have ever seen. I can't believe they can look at themselves and say this child doesn't deserve to be helped," said Cindy.

"You don't just up and move a 10-year-old child," said Dani. "Why would you be willing to roll the dice that big? It's unbelievable to me."

AN ORDER FOR PROTECTION

One judge approved the order for protection (OFP). Another required that she drop it.

An OFP was granted in Iowa on Sept. 23, 2022.

Every year, U.S. child protective services referrals involve 7.2 million children.

91% of perpetrators are parents.

77% of child deaths involve at least one parent.

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

Judge Yunker, who is facing a lawsuit for her role in the Autumn Hallow case, retired on Nov. 15, 2022 – but not before issuing a scathing order with hefty purge conditions for Dani. Among them? An order to pay \$160,000 in fines and drop the OFP.

Additional sanctions aimed to financially target this single mom who is on government health care, per Yunker's court order, include the issuance of a \$100,000 bond. Dani was ordered to pay Bryan's attorney's fees and a fine of \$200 for every day Faith did not visit her dad since Oct. 29, 2022. The order concludes: Dani "is expressly warned future willful failure to comply with the orders of this court may result in incarceration."

Judge Yunker's order did not address the pages of abusive messages that Bryan had sent Dani and her parents.

PREDICTABLE ARC

Those with the National Safe Parents Organization say cases like Dani's follow a predictable arc, one that is backed by research.

When an abuse is brought up in family court, 73 percent of moms lose custody if they've been labeled an "alienator" – even when the courts believe that the father has abused the mother and/or child. If that abuse is sexual abuse, then a mom loses custody 97 percent of the time if a dad counters that the mom is alienating him from his child. This research was done by the Joan Meiers team out of Georgetown University, and was funded by a \$500,000 grant from the National Institute of Justice.

Domestic abuse advocates are increasingly talking about how abusers successfully use DARVO in the family court system. DARVO – which stands for deny, attack, reverse victim and offender – is a reaction perpetrators of wrong may display when being held accountable for their behavior, and has been studied by Dr. Jennifer Freyd of the University of Oregon. In assuming the role of victim, the perpetrator attacks the accuser's credibility. In family court, this is often done by accusing the protective parent of being an "alienator" and accusing them of "crazy" behavior.

"While gaslighting in the context of an abusive relationship is destabilizing and painful, nothing can prepare a survivor for the gaslighting that takes place in family court," observed national advocate Tina Swithin of One Mom's Battle, who is a member of the National Safe Parents Organization. "Worse, the court professionals often want survivors to gaslight their children by forcing them to encourage and

facilitate a relationship with a parent, who may be very unhealthy or abusive. We are teaching our children to override their instincts and truth because we are in a court system that believes relationships with both parents trumps everything else."

The United Nations has recently released a report on the link of parental alienation and domestic violence. "Research and submissions received demonstrate that perpetrators of domestic violence can also misuse family law proceedings to continue to perpetrate violence against their victims, resulting in secondary traumatization," reads the report. "In this context, parental alienation may be employed as a useful tactic."

The report urges family court professionals: "In the context of domestic violence, there is a duty to listen and respond to children's accounts of violence, with a view to validating these experiences, ensuring that decisions are better informed and that the child's safety and welfare are promoted."

The UN Special Rapporteur recommends that states legislate to prohibit the use of parental alienation or related pseudo-concepts in family law cases, the use of so-called experts in parental alienation and related pseudo-concepts, and the use of reunification camps. Colorado is the first to do this with the passage of a new law in May. The UN also urges states to mandate training on gender bias, dynamics of domestic abuse, and the relationship between allegations of domestic abuse and parental alienation.

'SHE JUST WANTS TO BE HEARD'

In late May 2023, Dani was ordered by her 10th Judicial Court Judge Kristi Stanislawski to pay the entire PC bill and related bond fees of \$7,500 within three days or go to jail. She has also been ordered to appear in Minnesota in person for court one time a month.

An child protection case remains open in Iowa. Faith is not currently seeing a therapist because the PC has stated she needs to be the one to pick one out.

Dani points to a notebook on her desk. "This whole notebook is filled with numbers of people I've tried to call for help. No one will listen. No one will help," she said.

"I don't trust the system anymore. I don't know why everyone wouldn't err on the side of caution. When children are involved, safety should be your first priority. I guess I'm really confused."

"You can't look at that little girl and not know that she's telling the truth. She's so scared. She just wants to be heard."

**Editor's note: In writing this story, I reviewed dozens of court documents, and reports by professionals. In recognition of the sensitive nature of this article, we have opted to refer to people by their first names or aliases. We have named the professionals working on this case as their work affects other families.*

✱ READ MORE STORIES in this series at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A PC?

Parenting Consulting is an alternative dispute resolution process authorized by MN Statute Rule 114.02 (a) (10). A Parenting Consultant (PC) is an individual agreed upon by the parties and court ordered to work with divorcing parents. The process includes attempts to facilitate agreement, coaching and deciding. PC decisions are binding.

Often, PCs are attorneys but some are licensed therapists. Prior to Jan. 1, 2023, PCs were not required have training to be a parenting consultant other than to be a qualified neutral. They were not required to have training in child sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, coercive control, implicit and explicit bias, trauma, long and short-term impacts of domestic violence and child abuse on children, or victim and perpetrator behaviors. Since the change to Rules 114 and 310.03, PCs are now required to have at least 18 hours of training in developmental needs of children, addressing domestic abuse in the PC process, and emotional and psychological dynamics of separation and divorce. Existing PCs are not required to adhere to the new training requirements.

The contracts with PCs require families to share their medical records. It is not a confidential process and is not protected under Rule

114. PCs are not mandated reporters of child maltreatment. A parent who disagrees with a PC decision may bring a motion to family court to contest it, and then must pay another bill for the PC to participate in the court hearings (along with attorney fees).

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY OF A PC

A parenting consultant can:

- Authorize trading time when parents do not agree
- Award compensatory parenting time to one parent
- Interpret unclear provisions in the decree
- Decide parenting issues and alterations in the parenting time schedule, including transportation
- Decide holiday and vacation schedule
- Decide school and day care absences, activities, vacation, holiday and summer camp issues, including dates and times
- Decide appropriate school and child care placement
- Consult with outside sources, including teachers, therapists, physicians, attorneys, family members, etc., and review relevant records
- Require independent evaluations and psychological testing, as well as substance use assessment, testing, monitoring and treatment
- Require therapy, anger management services, and/or parenting classes, and select the provider
- Communicate with, obtain information from, or provide information to any person without securing a ROI authorization from the parents

- Require a Safe Harbor agreement and then not share information with the parent/s. The PC may merely state, "I have considered input from a child's therapist."
- Decide issues with input from only one parent
- Make recommendations and decisions

Their rulings overrule existing court documents, including agreements parents previously made with each other.

Families using a PC are often paying fees for attorneys, individual therapists, and family therapists in addition to the PC bill. A PC's hourly fees are about that of an attorney, and range from \$250 to \$500 an hour. They typically require a retainer not to fall below \$2,000. Families can pay a PC \$5,000 or more a month. One parent can rack up the bills by asking a PC to rule on a multitude of issues even if the other parent has not agreed to pay for work on those issues. Most PC bills are split 50/50 by the parents, without factoring in who asked the PC to get involved on a specific issue. If one parent does not or can't pay for the PC, the PC can ask a judge to order payment.

Complaints about a PC may be sent to the ADR Ethics Board, 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55155-1500. Complaints and sanctions may or may not be public.

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 tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com.

6 KEY FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT JUNETEENTH

PLANTING SEEDS

BY DR. ARTIKA TYNER,
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Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom. This momentous occasion is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and grow, while renewing our commitment to the pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

FACT #1: WHEN AND WHERE WAS JUNETEENTH FIRST CELEBRATED?

Juneteenth is a combination of the words "June" and "nineteenth." On June 19, 1865, Federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to share with enslaved African Americans that they were free from the bondage of slavery. The Emancipation Proclamation granted them this freedom in 1863. U.S. General Gordon Granger announced, "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free." The dream of freedom was finally realized for 250,000 enslaved people. They began to rejoice, and this was the beginning of a celebration that we now call: Juneteenth.

Juneteenth is also a time to reflect on the past and learn lessons on how to build a brighter future. According to historian and author, Ngeri Azuawah: "Juneteenth is widely celebrated because it's a symbol of freedom and Black joy. It's an opportunity to reflect on the trials and tribulations of powerful people who persevered through the unthinkable. Today, we honor the hope and dreams of those who could only imagine days of freedom, free from unspeakable acts of violence, free from having their dreams deferred, and free from

having their humanity feel unrecognized by a country that they gave their all to."

FACT #2: WHO IS KNOWN AS THE GRANDMOTHER OF JUNETEENTH?

Opal Lee is known as the grandmother of Juneteenth. At the age of 89 years old, she launched Opal's Walk 2 DC. Her goal was to walk from Fort Worth, Texas to Washington, D.C. in order to raise national awareness about making Juneteenth a national holiday. She initially set forth to garner the support of 100,000 petitioners to achieve this goal. Over 1.5 million people joined with Ms. Lee and signed the petition.

Ms. Lee believes Juneteenth can unite others and inspire change. "I am hoping that Juneteenth will not just be about festivals, but it will be about uplifting each other," Lee said.

FACT #3: WHEN DID JUNETEENTH BECOME A NATIONAL HOLIDAY?

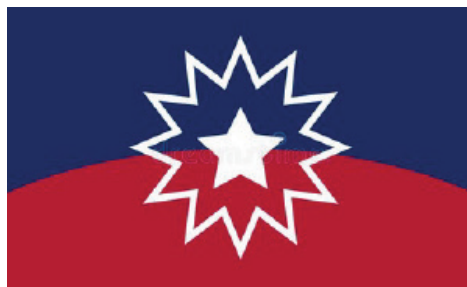
Juneteenth was first recognized as a state holiday in Texas in 1980. Juneteenth was declared a national holiday in 2021. The legislation was passed by Congress on June 16, 2021, and signed into law by U.S. President Joe Biden. In President Biden's 2022 Juneteenth address, he stated: "Juneteenth marks both the long, hard night of slavery and subjugation and a promise of a brighter morning to come."

FACT #4: WHAT IS THE JUNETEENTH FLAG?

The original Juneteenth flag was created in 1997 by Ben Haith, the founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF).

- The Arc: This marks the beginning of a new chapter in history for the Black community.

- The Star: The white star in the middle represents Texas, the Lone Star state,



where Juneteenth was founded. It also celebrates the freedom of African Americans across the United States.

- The Burst: This burst outlines the star. It serves as a reminder of a new beginning and a promise of freedom for generations to come.

FACT #5: WHY IS JUNETEENTH ASSOCIATED WITH THE COLOR RED?

The color red honors the countless lives lost due to racial terrorism during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Civil War, Jim Crow era, and still yet today. Juneteenth menus include red desserts like watermelon and red velvet cake. Red drinks made of hibiscus (or bissap) are also a favorite beverage. This drink has a connection to the African American community's Western African roots.

FACT #6: WHAT ARE WAYS TO CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH?

Start by learning more about Black History. You can begin by learning more about Black History Month. This short trivia can be used to begin the learning journey:

1) Who founded Black History Month?

During each of my Black History Month school visits, I start with this question. I have yet to hear a correct answer from students, parents, or teachers. I received a range of answers from Rev.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Rosa Parks. One student even shouted: St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter. It is wonderful to see these remarkable heroes and sheroes highlighted. However, it demonstrates the need to learn about the origins of Black History Month and its significance. It was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson with the launch of Negro History Week in 1926. His goal was to celebrate and honor Black achievements and build a legacy of change.

2) Why is Black History Month celebrated in February?

Dr. Woodson selected the month of February since it is the birth month of two individuals whom he deeply admired. They were President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass who both played a role in abolishing slavery. Historically, celebrations were held on their birthdays which are the 12th (Lincoln) and 14th (Douglass). Woodson wanted to create a bridge between this tradition and establish a practice of honoring the past contributions of the Black community.

Next, support local Black-owned businesses. Do you need new books for your summer reading list? Stop by Strive Bookstore and Babycake's Book Stack. Would you like a sweet treat? Visit Lutunji's Palate and enjoy her peach cobbler. Would you prefer a donut instead? Try The Donut Trap. With each purchase, you are helping to rebuild and bolster the Black ecosystem. This is vitally important when Black-owned businesses are under-resourced due to a lack of access to capital and funding. According to Pew Research, "Just 3% of U.S. businesses were identified as Black or African American-owned as of 2020. That's despite 12.4% of the overall population being Black adults."

Host a community barbecue and serve a red drink and red dessert. This is

6 KEY FACTS >> 5

Tips on attracting new workers

BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

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



One of the biggest challenges facing employers over the past few years has been finding employees. This has been true for employers of all sizes and in most industries. The Midway, a community with a longtime industrial history, a booming nonprofit sector, and a major retail corridor, is no exception. While the pandemic didn't help this situation, demographers have predicted a staffing shortage since the 1990s as many baby boomers retire.

What can be done? To be successful

in attracting and retaining employees, an organization must be forward-thinking and open-minded. And this goes for both attracting and retaining workers.

Ramsey County is fortunate to be the most diverse county in Minnesota. As all communities become more diverse, having a plan in place to become an inclusive employer will help create a culture to attract more job candidates and can give that employer a leg up on the competition.

One helpful resource is the Ramsey County Inclusive Workplaces Cohort that is sponsored by the Workforce Innovation Board. This is an annual group of small to mid-sized employers engaging in extended executive coaching. Employers participate in a peer learning community with the goal of advancing equity and inclusion in their organizations. In partnership with the Center for Economic Inclusion, the cohort experience creates a learning environment which fosters discussion and sharing

of ideas, while encouraging accountability through safe and brave spaces for confidentiality.

When an employer tells me they are struggling to find job applicants, I ask them how they are promoting their job openings. Often times they tell me they are looking the same places they always do. This makes sense in that it's what they know and has possibly always worked for them. But if they are struggling to find new applicants, it is important to think of new ways to look.

One way can be a job fair. You are coming directly to where there are job seekers, and you have an opportunity to talk with them prior to the interview process. A job seeker going to a job fair is also showing initiative by taking the time to go to the fair. Ramsey County is hosting a job fair in the parking lot at Allianz Field on June 29. This is the third year they have held a job fair at that site and the first year (2021) there were over 300 people in attendance with around 30 employers.

Once an employee is hired, it is also important to create a culture they want to

stay in. With a tough job market and a low unemployment rate, we see many employers lose their workers to another place in their same industry who can offer a slightly better package. That better package used to mostly mean better pay, but more and more is now also referring to the other benefits such as flexibility. Does the job offer a hybrid work model? What about the time off policy?

For employers wondering how to create culture in a workplace, the Midway Chamber's annual Leadership Summit is June 21 and features Rosie Ward, co-founder, Salveo Partners, LLC. Rosie's speech is titled "Become an Irresistible Employer by Rehumanizing Your Workplace." Anyone interesting in attending can contact me at chad@midwaychamber.com.

Running a business or nonprofit has always had its set of challenges; today, the workforce shortage is one of the biggest. Thankfully there are ways employers can gain insight and become a more attractive workplace.

Monitor

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News for you!

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. Unsigned letters will not run.

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Doge Pizza can't do overnight deliveries

By JANE McCLURE

Doge Pizza will not be able to stay open overnight, the St. Paul Planning Commission decided May 26. The commission on an 8-4 vote rejected Doge's request to change its nonconforming use for 629 Aldine St.

The vote is final unless there is an appeal to the St. Paul Planning Commission. The commission's Zoning Committee recommended denial May 18 on a 4-1 vote.

Commissioners said they are sympathetic to the business owners' request to stay open later and accommodate a growing demand for overnight carryout and delivery food. But a majority said that the restaurant's site in the middle of a residential area of Hamline-Midway makes overnight hours disruptive.

Doge Pizza would like to be open overnight, until 4 or 6 a.m. It currently must close at midnight.

The commission's Zoning Committee has considered the issue twice, voting for denial after asking that Hamline Midway

Coalition review the matter again. The district council initially supported the request and then pulled back its support.

The restaurant is a legal nonconforming use, with a longtime permit. Cities grant nonconforming use status or permits for land uses that don't legally "fit in" with a surrounding neighborhood. In many cases with a longtime property use that predates the modern zoning code, that use can stay with a permit and conditions. Or property owners can make the case to neighbors that a use should be re-established or should continue.

Doge's building is a former corner store, built in 1915. The city granted a nonconforming use permit for the property to allow a pizza restaurant in 1992, with the condition it close at midnight and stay closed until 8 a.m. For many years it was Cheney's Pizza.

Several different restaurants have operated in the storefront since 1992. Doge moved in in 2021.

Several complaints have been filed with the city about noise generated by the

building's hood/vent system since August 2021. Neighbors have also complained about trash and what a city staff report describes as "potential prohibited commercial sales activity." A big complaint is about delivery drivers who leave vehicles running, park on the wrong side of street and generate noise.

The overnight pizza sales started earlier this year. Overnight hours could make or break a struggling small business, said Doge owners Ahmed and Said Abdi. They are working other jobs and are trying to keep the business afloat.

Ahmed Abdi told the zoning committee that the business is not profitable. The extended hours were tried without the restaurant owners being aware of the restrictions tied to the nonconforming use permit. The extended hours have boosted business and meet requests of neighbors wanting an overnight food option.

The busiest time for business is 1-2 a.m. Some planning commission members asked if that extension could be offered instead. That would require a new application.

Senior city planner Josh Williams admitted that the request could be con-

sidered in a variety of ways. He recommended denial of the request to expand hours, citing the potential for additional commercial traffic in a residential area and detriment to the character of a largely residential neighborhood.

The issue has generated strong community support and opposition, with dozens of people weighing in on both sides. Doge waged a Facebook campaign seeking support.

Commissioner Mauricio Ochoa spoke in support of granting the request, saying he lives in the neighborhood. Hamline Midway has other sources of overnight noise, he noted.

But Commissioner Kristine Grill spoke for denial, saying the area is "truly residential." While people have cited the Snelling Taco Bell as being open overnight, it is on a commercial street.

Commissioner Jake Reilly said that while there are other nonconforming uses in residential neighborhoods, there don't appear to be anything on the order of an overnight restaurant. Reilly said the planning commission must look at the legal foundation of nonconforming uses when making its decision.

St. Paul approves raised, separated bike trail on Summit Avenue

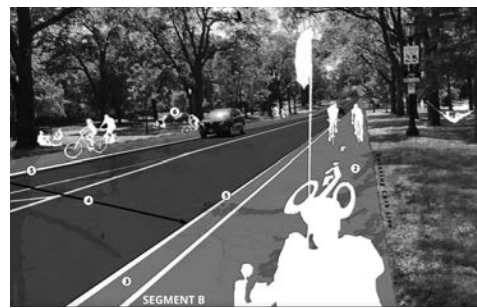
By JANE McCLURE

Plans for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail won a 6-1 vote from the St. Paul City Council on May 24, 2023, after more than four hours of testimony. The plans now go to the Metropolitan Council to meet a June 30 deadline.

Members of the Summit Avenue group Save Our Street, historic preservationists and some cyclists said the plan is flawed and should be discarded. They raised issues including loss of trees and impacts on the street's historic districts. Some brought up reports from project engineering consultant Bolton and Menk, which raised several technical questions about the project itself.

Others asked for a delayed vote, questioning why a decision came immediately after public testimony.

But many bicycling advocates from across the Twin Cities hailed the vote as a big win. Not only is a raised, separated bike trail promoted as safer and providing the chance for more to enjoy the street, a new trail on Summit is seen as advocates as a key tie into the greater regional bike faci-



ties network.

A long-range plan calls for the Ayd Mill Road and the Mississippi River Boulevard trails in St. Paul to tie into Minneapolis' Midtown Greenway via land along area railroads and the railroad High Bridge over the Mississippi River. Mississippi River Boulevard and Summit are regional trails, and receive regional as well as city funds for upkeep and improvements. A decision on whether Midtown Greenway should become a regional trail has been pushed to June.

The vote on May 24 isn't expected to end many months of debate. The vote came the same day that Ramsey County District

Court Judge Patrick Diamond denied a temporary restraining order sought by the advocacy group Save Our Streets, Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association (SARPA) and attorney Robert Cattanaach to put a hold on the project. The lawsuit was focused on city delays in meeting data access requests focused on the trail. Cattanaach said his group will be evaluating its options. He maintains the city hasn't followed proper procedures with the project.

The separated raised trail would run the length of Summit. Design would vary by street segment. Much controversy centers on Summit east of Lexington Parkway where about 50 percent of on-street parking would be removed. That brought up concerns of reception halls, places of worship, sober houses and residents losing parking. Several women said they already don't feel safe walking at night, and would have to walk longer distances when the trail goes in.

More than 200 people filled the council chambers, with more than 90 signing up to speak. City officials have received thousands of comments for and against the project.

6 KEY FACTS >> 4

an opportunity to bring family and friends together to celebrate freedom's journey by learning about Juneteenth. Explore the question: "Why is Juneteenth known as the United States' second Independence Day?"

Inspire your co-workers, friends, and family to work toward racial justice. This is

a daily commitment to realize the dreams of enslaved African Americans. They had an unwavering hope for the future that the next generations would be able to not only survive but thrive. How can you promote better educational outcomes for all children? How can you ensure pay equity and equal access to opportunities in your workplace? With a projected Racial Wealth Gap that will take over two centuries to

bridge, how can you help to advance economic justice in the Black community?

My daily affirmation is I am the dream of my ancestors. I embody these words by writing for justice. I have written thirty-five books that focus on Black history and showcase the leadership profiles of Black heroes and sheroes. I am excited to announce the release of my latest books in the Black Achievements series that focus

on Black leaders in STEM, activism, and politics (Lerner Publishing). You can find these books and my Juneteenth reading list at: <https://bookshop.org/lists/juneteenth-365>

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

Letters

SADDENED BY DECISION TO DESTROY HISTORIC HAMLINE LIBRARY BUILDING

I am deeply saddened that our mayor and city council are planning to demolish this beautiful building. So many elected officials have blinders on and cannot see future use of these historic buildings. These buildings were constructed far better than the new buildings and have such great architectural features that are not in today's designs.

Remember how beautiful the old St. Andrews Church was? The Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis let the German immersion school have the building if they promised to use it. The use was short-lived and it was demolished and a more modern structure was built in its place. It looks very out of place in the neighborhood.

In Europe, old buildings dating as far back as the 14th and 15th century still exist. The Europeans are very proud of

their old granaries, windmills, water towers, barns, blacksmiths, chapels, etc. These buildings have been well maintained, repurposed, and redesigned with modern conveniences inside. Many of them are featured in a program, "Escape to the Country," on 4.3 DABL channel on TV. Here, our elected officials, rich business executives, etc., cannot wait to rid our cities and countrysides of the old structures. The Midway Bank at Snelling and University was torn down to make room for parking at the oversized outdoor toilet known as Allianz Stadium. What happened to all the marble that was in the old Midway Bank, and what will happen to all the materials used to build the old Hamline Midway Library? Will it go to a landfill? Why are we recycling our plastic bottles and containers? Seems we are a very wasteful country from our elected officials on down.

Another thought: why would anyone travel to St. Paul and Minneapolis to see a modern structure similar to those in Dallas, Los Angeles, or any other big cities? I prefer to forgo those places and see beau-

tiful buildings like the Hamline Midway Library.

Audrey Clasemann
Como Park

WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT NEW LIBRARY

My family and I are among the many neighbors who are excited for the reconstruction of the Hamline Midway library. The countless hours that my kids and I have enjoyed in its beautiful old building have also made us intimately familiar with its limitations – the tiny downstairs hallway making bathrooms inaccessible, the limited spaces for meetings and events, and the isolation of many spaces from staff supervision.

I've been very frustrated to watch the disingenuous campaign by a small group of self-appointed "defenders" of the library, claiming that SPPL could make the building accessible, adaptable, and efficient if only it cared to. The public engagement process, which my family and I have provided input to at every opportunity, included consideration of several options for

complete or partial preservation of the old building, but the expenses and constraints involved in those scenarios were no secret. It's hard to imagine that anyone who has spent significant time in the building would be surprised to learn that it could not easily be expanded, retrofitted or moved. A complete reconstruction offers the opportunity for the new building to be designed for all the kinds of gathering, work, pleasure, and services that we come to our neighborhood library for, which are much broader than what the current building was designed for a century ago.

I will be sad to see a beloved old building go down, and I wish that there had been a practical way to adapt it to new needs, but I appreciate the thoughtful engagement that SPPL has gone through in the development of the new design, and I am excited to have a library that has been custom built for the needs of our community.

Adria Fernandez
St. Paul



SUMMER FUN GUIDE

Hello, Summer!

By JANE ST. ANTHONY

Summer is upon us. Delight in the chance to leave home without mittens. Most of the activities listed below are free.

ST. PAUL PRIDE FESTIVAL

The new St. Paul Pride Festival in Rice Park celebrates more than a day of merry-making on Sunday, June 10, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. It celebrates the bright future of St. Paul. With comedian/host Ashli Henderson on board, as well as a food court and stage time, the festival plans to uplift the diversity of St. Paul. "We'll be producing and organizing this event for the next 100 years!" quipped Kyle Ruck, lead organizer and producer of St. Paul Pride. "We're happy to have a free and open event that features local businesses like Gambit Brewing, which has created a beer in Pride's honor."

LITTLE AFRICA FESTIVAL AND PARADE

You are cordially invited to the African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS) 9th Little Africa Festival and Parade scheduled to take place on Sunday, Aug. 6, from 12-9 p.m. at Hamline Park, located at 1564 Lafond Ave.

This 9th Little Africa Festival and Parade is a family-friendly, one-day free event that showcases the rich, diverse, and beautiful cultures of different African countries, through trade/business, fashion, art, food, dance, music, poetry, crafts and more. For more information, visit www.littleafrica.fest.com or www.aeds-mn.org or call 651-646-9411.

GROOVIN IN THE GARDEN AT COMO PARK

Pack a picnic and dancing shoes,

spread out a blanket and attend free outdoor concerts and activities in front of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory Wednesdays in June and July from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hot dogs, ice cream treats, beer and wine will be available to purchase. If rain interferes, the concert moves inside the Visitor Center Porch.

DOCK & PADDLE AT LAKE COMO

Daddy Squeeze and Elizabeth groove on accordion and percussion (American and European Folk) 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 29 at the Dock & Paddle at Como Lake Pavilion Legacy, a four-piece group, offers an engaging selection of traditional and contemporary Irish vocal music and instrumental tunes on Monday, July 4, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

VICTORIA THEATER ARTS CENTER (VTAC)

The annual Frogtown Art Festival "celebrates the amazing talent and culture of our neighborhood," said Tyler Olson-Highness, VTAC Executive Director. "Featuring two stages, an arts market, workshops and food trucks, this outdoor gathering draws hundreds of folks each year." Mark your calendar: Saturday, Aug. 19, from 2 to 9 p.m. at 833 University Ave.

Third Thursday Block Parties: The 90s-themed community events provide food, creative activities and opportunities for neighbors to connect at Model Cities' Pocket Park, 833 University Ave. Dates: June 15, July 20 and Aug. 2 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

"It's a big summer for VTAC with our building renovation finally beginning May 22," said Olson-Highness. "All our summer programming will happen out in the community out in the community and online."

Minecraft Rollercoaster Contest: Contestants will have three hours to create the most wild and creative roller coaster VTAC's in Minecraft Server and a chance to win free tickets to Mall of America's Nickelodeon Universe! Sunday, June 11, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Hope News: Kids 6-16 learn to work and play collaboratively as they create original content, interview community leaders and highlight their own voices. Mondays, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at West Minnehaha Rec Center. Register at Saint Paul Parks and Recreation.

Digital Arts: VTAC's Minecraft Server is open every week for young builders of all skill levels to participate. Participants

SAFE SUMMER NIGHTS

Join your police officers and neighbors for a family-friendly event. There will be free food, bike giveaways, first responder vehicles, various police specialty units, and community partners.

JULY 13: MLK Rec Center and Hallie Q. Brown, 270 N. Kent St.

AUG. 10: North Dale Rec Center, 1414 N. St. Albans St.

learn to work and play collaboratively with guidance from Minecraft artist leaders. Sundays, 2-5 p.m. online at VTAC's Minecraft Server; Mondays 4-5:30 p.m. at West Minnehaha Rec Center.

More at www.victoriatheater.org.

'RED SPEEDO' AT HAMLINE POOL

Walking Shadow stages Lucas Hnath's "Red Speedo" June 10 to July 1 at an actual swimming pool. Red Speedo is a sharp and stylish play about swimming, survival of the fittest, and the American dream of a level playing field – or of leveling the field yourself. Red Speedo is a site-specific production at Hamline University's six-lane competition pool (1537 Hewitt Ave.). Audiences can expect an intimate experience against this epic backdrop (with surprisingly good acoustics)! To be clear: actors may get wet, but audiences are safe. It is written by Lucas Hnath and directed by Natalie Novacek. Tickets available at www.walkingshadow.org.

LIP ESTEEM >>1

up came from seeing how beautiful my grandma would look when she would walk out the house, and how beautiful my mom would look," Jones recalled.

A JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY

After sending her daughter to college in 2014, Jones embarked on a journey to pursue makeup artistry in California.

"I packed my car and I drove to California because I knew I was going to be a makeup artist to the stars, and my pastor said, 'You think you're going to make over stars, but you're really going to make over hearts,'" said Jones.

While spending time in both California and Atlanta, she gained a sense of freedom and self-discovery. It was during this time that Jones came up with the logo for Lip Esteem, which is a Black woman with natural hair blowing a kiss at a butterfly. For Jones, the logo represented something much more significant than what meets the eye; it represented her hopes and dreams.

Jones's experiences in these cities not only helped her find her purpose, but also laid the foundation for her transition into the lipstick business. Driven to make her mark in the beauty industry, she ventured into cosmetics with Lip Esteem.

The name of Jones's brand, "Esteem," holds a deeply personal significance. It represents embracing and feeling good about one's lips, regardless of their size or appearance.

"I had a lot of insecurities about my lips and so I would try to come up with ways that I thought would make them look smaller, like putting black lip line around and that looked crazy!" Jones recalled. "Eventually I was around 19 years old and someone complimented my lips, which was something I've always felt insecure about. So I went in the mirror and I looked at my lips and I had a cute gloss on and I was like... there's nothing wrong with my lips."

PRIORITIZING INCLUSIVITY

In 2020, in the midst of the pandemic and civil unrest, Jones felt called to take her destiny into her own hands and start her business. With the help of being featured on a television series, "Small Busi-

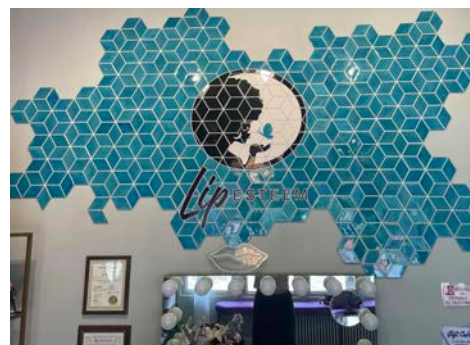


Kijana Jones works with her mother, Tameka Jones, (not shown) to help find the perfect shade of lipstick for clients at the Midway Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon on May 17 at Carondelet Center. At the storefront at 876 Selby Ave., they host make-up tutorials and group gatherings. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

ness Revolution," and participating in entrepreneurial cohorts, she achieved her dreams.

Starting out at the Midtown Farmers Market in Minneapolis, Jones established her business from modest beginnings and garnered significant support from the local community.

The encouragement and validation she received played a crucial role in shaping her entrepreneurial journey. However, despite residing in South St. Paul, Jones felt a profound need to reconnect with her roots by opening Lip Esteem in the Rondo neighborhood, which is located right on Selby and Victoria. For Jones, it's a tan-



The name, Lip Esteem, holds a deeply personal significance to founder Tameka Jones. It represents embracing and feeling good about one's lips, regardless of their size or appearance. (Photo by Aamira Redd)

gible connection to the community that holds an immense impact on her life.

Initially, she attempted to create the lipsticks herself, but encountered difficulties. Realizing the importance of a personal connection to her brand, she decided to pivot and seek out a manufacturer who could bring her vision to life. For Jones, the quality and ingredients that went into making her products was key, as she wanted to be inclusive as possible.

Driven by a genuine commitment to cater to individuals of diverse skin tones, Jones embarked on a transformative journey to establish a brand that not only embraces but celebrates the beauty of every individual.

"I make sure that everyone is represented all ages and races," said Jones. "The whole vision and mission of my business is to bring people of all nationalities and

colors together."

Jones not only strives to incorporate diversity into the brand but also works to be inclusive towards individuals with different health and lifestyle needs.

"When the thought occurred about having a business, I wanted to make sure that I had the best of the best and so, being plant-based and gluten free was very important," said Jones. "I have friends that have Celiac disease and so they were always talking about how they couldn't use certain lipsticks. So, when I thought gluten free, I was like, oh, this is perfect!"

INSPIRING OTHERS TO FOLLOW THEIR DREAMS

Through her story, Jones encourages others to follow their dreams relentlessly. She emphasizes the importance of forward momentum, leaving the past behind, and trusting in timing and purpose.

"I would encourage people to follow their dreams. If you're not in a place where you want to be, don't worry. Keep moving forward. Don't look too much behind you because you left for a reason," Jones said.

With her own experiences as a testament, she dismisses societal pressures and shows that age or circumstances should never hinder one's pursuit of passion and success.

"A lot of people in their 30s are like, 'oh, my God, my life is over! I'm not where I should be.' And that is foolishness. It's about timing. It's about purpose and plan, and so you can't get caught up on your failures. All you can do, is do the best with where you are, because everything will end up falling in place. I know it because I've experienced it," said Jones.

876 Selby Ave
St. Paul, MN 55104
LipEsteem.com
 Instagram @Lip_Esteem
OPEN DURING ROAD CONSTRUCTION

gluten free • plant-based • cruelty free
 black, women owned • made in USA

15%

off \$30

purchase

Use coupon code
ESTEEM15

FREE ECO FAIR JUNE 19

A Free Eco Fair powered by Donate Good Stuff will be on Saturday, June 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Como Park. There will be fun activities and learning for all ages.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Classical Actors Ensemble will be back in the parks for a 9th year this summer with "Much Ado About Nothing." Over five weeks the free tour will perform in 14 outdoor locations across the Twin Cities, as well as a visit to Franconia Sculpture Park near Taylor's Falls. See the production Friday, July 7, 7 p.m. at Como Park Lake-side Pavilion.

7 of 10 people who get the Monitor at their front doors read it.

PSST... WE'RE STILL DELIVERING TO THE FRONT DOORS OF EVERY HOUSE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

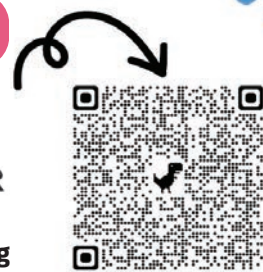


Volunteer with ESLC this summer

East Side Learning Center and CreateMPLS are partnering to host fun and learning at Liberty Plaza. Volunteer as a one-on-one literacy mentor or support students as they learn storytelling through coding!



651-758-0660 | admin@eslcmn.org



THE 27TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY PEACE CELEBRATION

June 16, 2pm - 6pm
WESTERN SCULPTURE PARK
387 Marion St, St Paul, MN 55103

Featuring Live Performances by Rondo All-Stars | Tearra Oso | Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli | Irreducible Grace El Panasueco | Brandon Lee | Ma'Jay | and more...
Special Guest Speaker: Jim Embry

Hosted by Will Flowers, as emcee extraordinaire!

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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.

Thirty-five years ago, at Thanksgiving, I moved to Minnesota from my Philadelphia home. I relocated back to my hometown in time for Passover and Easter. In November 1988, the Twin Cities were cold and snow-covered. During my big move home, in March 2023, the Twin Cities were cold and snow-covered, making fall and spring hard to distinguish.

YOUTHFUL OPTIMISM GIVES WAY TO THE WISDOM OF AGE

On the other hand, making such monumental life transitions in the springtime and autumn of my own life provides a contrast that is easy to distinguish.

I arrived in Minnesota in the optimism of my golden youth and have departed in the wisdom of my silver age.

In 1988, as a 38-year-old, my career and my vigor were in full bloom. The economy was thriving, and I had accepted a position as senior vice president of public affairs in a Minneapolis-based public relations firm. I was an active member in the national and regional activities of my professional association, the Public Relations Society of America, that provided me meaningful ways to fully integrate into Twin Cities civic and social life. Making workplace friends in one's 30s was easy. And my romantic partner from the area provided built-in family connections.

I look back at that move now with the insight gained by more than three decades of experience.

'MINNESOTA NICE' BUT OFTEN NOT INVITING

Even with all of the social and professional advantages of youth, Minnesota's culture was alien. My east coast friendliness and frankness were not readily appreciated. I found it all but impossible to translate my work friends into real ones.

There is a kernel of truth to the sense of exceptionalism that Garrison Keeler baked into Prairie Home Companion's famous tagline. While it's not entirely fair to generalize, Minnesota natives are a very insular group – whether it's due to the Scandinavian cultural influence or flat-out wariness of anyone who chooses to settle in the land of 10,000 lakes, mosquitoes and endless winters, one saying is relevant: "Minnesotans will gladly give you directions everywhere except to their home."

As an extrovert, who also happens to be an only child, I seek friendship and family everywhere I go. Sad to say, for the most part, my inner circle of friends in Minnesota are largely transplants them-

FOND FAREWELL

selves. And believe me, we talked a lot amongst ourselves about "Minnesota Nice" being a misnomer. Nice is as in polite, but not welcoming.

Native Minnesotan crime novelist, Catherine Dang, writes of the "dark underbelly of all those polite, respectful interactions" saying, "Minnesotans might be labeled as shy for their reserved behavior, but that distance serves a purpose. Social circles are tight in Minnesota, and outsiders are excluded. People have already established their friends and family, so strangers at best are viewed with indifference. At worst, they're viewed with caution. It's why people new to the state will complain about the lack of meaningful friendships that they make here."

BUT YOU SEEMED SO HAPPY HERE

And, for the most part, I was. As a minor public figure due to my many roles which include being a columnist here with TMC Publications CO., or before that my years as a columnist for the beloved Southwest Journal and Minnesota Good Age, or as past president of the Minnesota Public Relations Society, founder and chair of the Creative Class committee for the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, Executive Board member of the Seward Neighborhood, volunteer for our regional ACLU, and more – overwhelmingly it has been my "transplant" friends who have embraced me as part of their social circle. It will surprise many of my acquaintances to learn how much not ever really belonging hurt. My close friends know this about me.

COVID-19 WAS A DECIDING FACTOR

Certainly, the factor of "aging" combined with the forced isolation of COVID-19 quarantine exaggerated my feeling of not belonging. During those years of pandemic loneliness and uncertainty, I grew



increasingly drawn to my roots.

I formed a weekly zoom group populated with friends from childhood and my teenage years. All were and I experienced that sense of familiarity and belonging that had escaped me during my long tenure as a Twin Citian.

Even pre-Covid, I made an annual pilgrimage around the time of my April birthday to experience Philadelphia's glorious spring. Each time I made this trip, I grew more aware of how much I missed the historic brick and cobbled streets and the overwhelming greenery of the city.

Climate change certainly has reduced the weather rewards of any geographic location to a gamble, but the season of my birth, spring, still holds court in Philly. There are the astounding cherry blossoms and foliage lining our French-inspired Benjamin Franklin Parkway – the grand boulevard that defines our Center City. Philadelphia's diagonal Benjamin Franklin Parkway stretches one mile from just

beyond City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art at the edge of Fairmount Park, acting as the home of museums, cultural institutions and other attractions. And surrounding the art museum, gracefully situated above the falls of the Schuylkill River and the historic Water Works, is the famous Azalea Garden.

Created in 1952, this thematic garden located between the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Boathouse Row was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to honor its 125th anniversary. It was donated afterward to the Fairmount Park Commission, and now comprises a portion of the Schuylkill Recreation Path which parallels the Schuylkill River in the heart of downtown.

This year I moved in time to experience a glorious, prolonged spring in full bloom.

MINNESOTA AND THE TWIN CITIES WILL ALWAYS BE MY SECOND HOME

I am gratified for my combined quarter century as a Minnesotan. I marvel at the opportunities I've had to impact the very face of the Twin Cities, from my role in designing the Minneapolis Riverfront: Vision and Implementation project for my longtime and cherished client, Cuningham Group Architects, to creating a newspaper column and a committee for the business chamber that focused on the outstanding Creative Class at the heart of our metro area.

I have lived a full and satisfied life as a member of the Twin Cities community. I enjoy a deep and dear circle of friends and acquaintances whom I will greatly miss and will continue to stay in touch with. And while most of my innermost circle are transplants, I am sincerely appreciative to those Minnesota natives who fully have embraced me as a member of their family of choice.

It is indeed with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to these beautiful cities: to my amazing sunrise view over the majestic Mighty Mississippi River, and to my many colleagues, friends, and acquaintances.

I especially will miss the readers of this great group of community newspapers that provide a top-quality forum for the residents of Longfellow, Nokomis, Midway, Como, Frogtown and Southwest.

During my final year as a resident, it has been this role as contributing columnist that has allowed me to sample the very best of the humanity, culture and nature that the Twin Cities has to offer. Thank you for the privilege. I will be back to visit and hope you come to experience the Cradle of Liberty, this City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

Drop me a note if you. I'd like to show you around!

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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CALLING ALL SWIFTS

By PATRICIA OHMANS
Frogtown Green

It's a beautiful Friday night in Frogtown. On a vacant lot at the corner of Dale Street and Lafond, members of the local motorcycle club laugh and holler greetings, as fellow bikers roar up. Two police cars speed by, sirens blaring. Dogs bark. And toward the back of the lot, near a brightly painted wooden tower, a small, determined woman tries to communicate with some birds flying by.

"This is my homemade rig for calling chimney swifts," explains Susan Willis, a birder by avocation. She hoists a 20-foot pole with a megaphone at the end of it alongside the wooden tower and presses the button on a CD player that's wired to the megaphone. A series of high, squeaking calls and rapid-fire knocking sounds ensue. And up in the cloudless twilight sky, a pair of small, boomerang-shaped birds swoop nearer, in a breathtaking arc. They chitter back, as if responding to the recorded calls. Willis beams.

These chattering aerialists are chimney swifts, once a common sight in cities and towns throughout Minnesota, but now much more rarely seen. Swifts once nested in hollow trees and holes. As forests were logged, swifts moved on to cities, where they made use of the chimneys for which they are named. Now that many household chimneys have been capped to prevent rainwater leakage and damage, swift nesting options have dwindled, as have the numbers of the birds themselves.

By one estimate, swift populations in America are down more than 65%.

The alarming decline in chimney swifts, (along with so many other bird species) has led groups to build special towers designed specifically to serve as substitute chimneys. The tower at Dale and Lafond was built in 2021, by Frogtown Green. Towers host both nesting pairs and roosts for large numbers of non-nesting swifts. A popular tower can offer a spectacular natural show; during migration, thousands of swifts may funnel around a chimney or tower at dusk, pouring inside to spend the night.

Bird lovers like Willis serve as ornithological real estate agents, patiently alerting migrating swift pairs to these likely new homes. The process is slow and requires commitment, a tower with plenty of space around it, and the recorded calls that summon house-hunting pairs. There's no guarantee that it will work right away.

"I've been trying to locate the swift towers in the Twin Cities and to see if I can attract migrating birds to them for three years," Willis explains. She's aware of several church steeples and school chimneys where swifts hang out and is thrilled that more people seem to be interested in the fate of chimney swifts. Interest is warranted, since swifts spend almost their entire lives in flight, like sharks of the air, gobbling up mosquitos, gnats and other flying insects as they swoop and dive. One swift can consume up to 12,000 insects per day!

Willis' devotion compels her to con-



Susan Willis sets up her equipment for chimney swifts. Frogtown Green's swift tower at Lafond at Dale Street was built by Daniel Westhoven, with support from the St Paul Audubon Society. For more information about chimney swifts and how to help them, contact Susan Willis, swillis143@gmail.com.

CHOOSE HOW YOU MOVE, FROGTOWN

There are so many ways to move around the city these days, from scooters to electric cars and bikes, skateboards, buses, trains and of course, one's own two feet! Frogtowners are invited to explore all these ways and more at "Choose How You Move," a fun outdoor resource fair. Stop by the Lily Pad at 625 N Dale Street on Saturday, June 17 from 1-4 p.m. for treats, games and prizes, a chance to check out Evie electric cars, win free bike tune-ups and learn more about transportation options that keep our air cleaner and our neighborhood healthier. Co-sponsored by Move MN and Frogtown Green, the event is free, and all are welcome. Details at www.movemn.org/event/choose-how-you-move-frogtown-fair/

tact homeowners when she sees that they are renovating their chimneys, to offer advice on how to make the renovation more swift-friendly. "It's so neat that you can just look up and see these amazing birds right here with us in the city – and to know that they have flown here all the way from the Amazon, where they spend their winters," she says. "I feel like providing a summer home for them is a magnanimous thing to do, to help a species survive. And it's something I can do right here in my home town."

Frogtown Green is 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 frogtown-green.com and our phone is 651-757-5970.

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Keystone moves ahead on new center

By JANE McCLURE

Keystone community services' planned community food center got a \$2.6 million boost from the 2023 Minnesota legislature. The funds were tucked into the bonding bill legislators passed before the session ended May 22.

Incoming Keystone President and CEO Adera Riser Cobb and operations director Julia McCarthy have been providing community groups with project updates. They met with Union Park District Council's land use committee in May.

Demand for food and aging facilities mean Keystone needs more space. Work is underway to convert a former furniture store and transmission repair shop at University Avenue and Beacon Street into a new, 20,000-square-foot food center. Demolition is well underway and the goal is to open later this year.

The new facility would replace food shelves on University Avenue and Rice Street. It would allow for expanded and evening hours, more food storage, freezer and refrigerator space, and private space for meetings with clients.

The food shelf setup would be more like a grocery store than the typical food shelf model. "This site will be a game changer for us," said McCarthy.

Keystone would expand its foodmobile fleet and would have secure parking for those vehicles. The theft of catalytic converters several months ago hampered the mobile food program. The fleet is two vehicles now; Keystone hopes to add a third.

Free farmers' marks and food distribution would continue, as would home delivery of food.

The women noted the great increase in demand for food, especially from people ages 65 and older. Child hunger issues

are also a big worry. Keystone has seen a 70 percent increase in demand for food over the past two years.

That demand continues. An example is March 2023, which saw 1,663 new clients. That compares to 863 new people in March 2022.

The buildings at 1790 University Ave. and 1800 University Ave. date from the early 20th century. They have off-street parking, which can be fenced and secured. Keystone is in the process of pulling needed city building permits.

Fundraising for the renovation is the focus of Keystone's Opening Doors to Food Security campaign. The goal is to raise \$8.5 million for the food center. Funding from the state provides a boost to the \$4 million from individuals and foundation, and \$2.7 million in city funds.

This was the second try for legislative bonding money. An attempt fell short in 2022.

OTHER PROJECTS

Keystone is not the only area project that received legislative support. Plans for a new Playwrights Center in the University-Raymond area got a needed \$4 million for its building renovation project. FilmNorth's project in Vandalia Tower was awarded \$2 million.

Reconnect Rondo's work to study and build a land bridge over Interstate 94 got \$1 million to help fund an innovation campus. The Irreducible Grace Foundation's work toward a healing arts center for Black teens was awarded \$1.5 million.

But there's disappointing news for historic preservationists as more than \$4.5 million was awarded to demolish the old Ford Motor Company building on University Avenue in Frogtown. The building, which is more than a century old, has been vacant for several years.

50,000+ that's how many people read each edition of the Monitor.

New principal announced, JROTC scholarships top \$1.5 million



DR. DIANA BROWN NAMED NEW PRINCIPAL

A leadership change at Como Park High School was announced in early May. After the candidate selection process and interviews by a committee of Como stakeholders, Dr. Diana Brown accepted the offer to become principal beginning this July.

Brown has served as an assistant principal at Como for the last two years, working alongside Dr. Kirk Morris who has been Como's principal since 2020. Morris accepted the position of assistant superintendent on the St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) leadership team and will start that new responsibility in July.

The transition for Como staff, students and families should be smooth as Brown and Morris will continue to work together this summer in preparation for the 2023-2024 school year.

Dr. Brown's experience in SPPS is extensive going back to her time as a student in the district. She has served as a SPPS classroom teacher and in administrative roles for 11 years.

Dr. Brown's academic credentials include a masters in teaching and education from St. Thomas University, a master's in education at the College of St. Scholastica, and an educational leadership doctorate at Concordia University in St. Paul.



Seniors in the JROTC scholarship ceremony wore masks as Sgt. Major James Kirkland spoke about COVID-19 challenges experienced on the path to graduation. (Photo submitted)

COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher

JROTC CADET SCHOLARSHIPS

Through a unique high school experience that included a year of distance learning beginning in the spring of their freshman year, and masking requirements for nearly a year upon return, Como's Marine Corps JROTC cadets have achieved excellence.

Their academic, service and leadership accomplishments have been rewarded by an astounding amount of college scholarships – a collective \$1,593,000.

The JROTC program at Como is an elective course that becomes a lifestyle for committed cadets in each grade level. Emphasis on personal development through patriotism, community service, and leadership leads to executing extra-curricular activities and life-changing events.

Como JROTC Instructor Sergeant Major James Kirkland, and Pat Dolan, Vice President of Communications for the Navy League of Minnesota, compiled and shared the following specific scholarships for the graduating class of 2023 cadets.

- Alex Le \$250,000 (Air Force Academy Scholarship)
- Jesiah Mason \$190,500 (Augsburg Full Tuition Scholarship, Olga B. Hart Scholarship, Wallin Scholarship)
- Cindy Thao \$172,500 (Augsburg Full Tuition Scholarship)

- Gay Ler Htoo \$246,500 (Augsburg Full Tuition Scholarship, Wallin Scholarship, Travelers Edge Scholarship, Ray Eva Hope Miller Scholarship)
- Chong Her \$48,000 (Travelers Edge Scholarship)
- Ve Shar \$193,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship, Wallin Scholarship, Royal Merits Scholarship, Bethel Opportunities Scholarship)
- Sophia Moore \$10,500 (North Star Marine Veteran Scholarship, Le Family Scholarship, CSP University Scholarship, CSP PSEO Scholarship, SPPACE Alexander Scholarship)
- Gwenivere Thao \$1,500 (North Star Marine Veteran Scholarship, USMC

- Minnesota Coordinating Council Scholarship)
- Pah Meh \$500 (USMC Major Foley (Ret) Foundation Scholarship)
- Dallas Beilke \$80,000 (United States Navy Scholarship)
- Ju Hei \$80,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship)
- Paw Htoo \$80,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship)
- Ze Vang \$80,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship)
- Bae Reh \$80,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship)
- Sandar Htway \$80,000 (Minnesota National Guard Scholarship)

Thanks, volunteers!

DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

BY SHEVEK MCKEE
Executive director
district10@district10comopark.org

District 10 Como Community Council would like to thank everyone in the neighborhood who has been participating with us! None of our community events and initiatives would happen without our Como Volunteers, and the folks participating in our committees who help plan and prepare.

- So far this year:
- We held a Blizzard Breakfast at North Dale Rec, where we Bethel Luther-

an volunteers helped us serve a Pancake breakfast to 300 community members.

- We helped coordinate two Como Zoo blood drives, with over 100 donors.
- We partnered with St. Paul Parks and Rec for an earth day Como Cleanup, another 140 volunteers!
- We hosted the 2nd annual Pick Up and Party at Orchard Rec, hosting 100 community members.
- We helped coordinate the Como Garage Sale, with over 40 households participating again.
- This week, in partnership with Capitol Region Watershed District, we kicked off our 2023 Lake Como Cleanup season where 32 volunteers helped clean the lake-shore.

The year is only half over and now is a great time to get involved in our work! Find upcoming events on our website. We can find a place that works for you to get involved in the community. Reach out to info@district10comopark.org if you have any questions.

COMO TREE TREK

The D10 Environment Committee hosts Tree Treks where community members can learn how to identify and appreciate the multitude of different tree species living in Como Park on June 24 - or self-guided any time. Volunteer tree expert Stephanie Mirocha is our fabulous second-generation Tree Trek guide.

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

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Como Park's Annual Ice Cream Social will be on July 14, 5:30-8 p.m. at the Historic Streetcar Station in Como Park, 1224 Lexington Pkwy. N. Because parking is limited, we encourage community members to walk, bike, roll, car-pool, or take public transportation.

NEW EAST AFRICAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) announces that a new East African Elementary Magnet School will open in September 2023. The PreK-5 school is being designed in collaboration with members of the East African community who have asked the district for a high-quality, culturally responsive educational program that meets their needs. The school will focus on the cultures and languages of East Africa, specifically the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, and the languages of Somali, Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Arabic and Swahili.

Based on SPPS data on families' home languages, East African students represent approximately 7.5% of the district's K-12 enrollment (approximately 2,400 students). According to census data, 2.7% of the population in the Twin Cities metro area speak an East African language at home.

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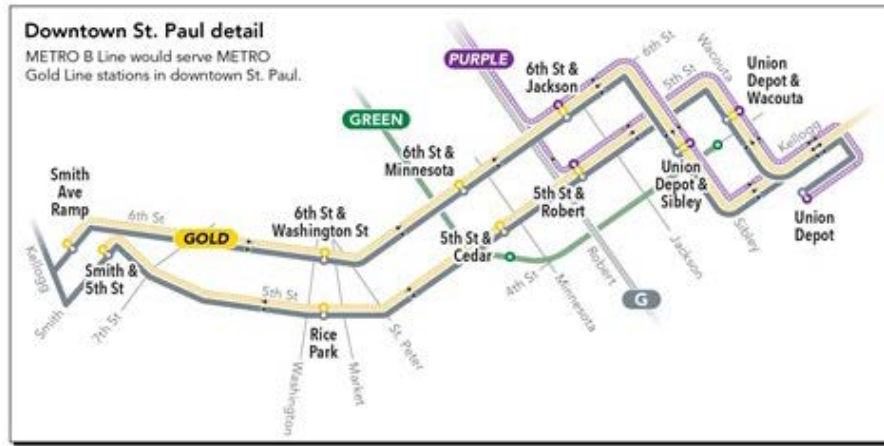
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METRO B Line

March 2022



PROJECT SCHEDULE

- 2020: Project station locations approved
- 2021-2023: Design of stations and other improvements
- Spring 2023: Construction starts on stations and improvements east of Hiawatha Avenue
- Spring 2024: Construction starts on stations and improvements west of Hiawatha Avenue
- Late 2024: B Line service begins

5 EXISTING BRT LINES

- Orange Line follows I-35W between Burnsville and downtown Minneapolis.
- Red Line travels on Cedar Avenue between Apple Valley and Mall of America.
- A Line travels mainly along Snelling Avenue and 46th Street, linking Rosedale with the METRO Blue Line's 46th Street Station.
- C Line travels mainly along Penn Avenue, linking downtown Minneapolis with Brooklyn Center Transit Center.
- D Line links Brooklyn Center Transit Center and Mall of America, serving north Minneapolis, downtown Minneapolis, Richfield, and Bloomington along the way.

COMING BRT LINES

- B Line on Lake Street and Marshall and Selby avenues, scheduled to open in 2024.
- E Line on Hennepin and France avenues, planned to open in 2025.
- Gold Line will connect St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, and Woodbury generally along I-94 and is scheduled to open in 2025.
- F Line on Central and University avenues is advancing through project planning and is scheduled to open in 2026.
- Purple Line will connect St. Paul, Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, White Bear Township, and White Bear Lake and is scheduled to open in 2026.
- G Line on Rice and Robert streets is advancing through project planning and is scheduled to open in 2027.

B LINE >> from 1

portant step on Lake Street's road to recovery from the dual impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest," remarked Lake Street Council Executive Director Allison Sharkey. "The B Line will help more people reach the corridor to experience its cultural and commercial vibrancy while improving service to people who use transit for commuting, shopping and daily life."

"Expanding public transit is an economic, racial, and climate justice priority. Having the B Line Rapid Transit on Lake Street also represents a significant investment in the East Lake Street corridor recovery after the uprising," stated Ward 2 Council Member Robin Wonsley.

District 61A Representative Frank Hornstein pointed out that even in the midst of the pandemic, travel along the existing bus rapid transit lines remained stable.

"Transportation is one of the things that – if done right – will create economic prosperity," said District 61 Senator Scott Dibble.

"This is the line I will be taking to work and this is the line I will be taking home," observed District 63A Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura.

"The world is on Lake Street and Lake Street is the world," said District 3 Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene. She pointed out that the B Line will connect with others, including the Blue Lightrail Line, Green Lightrail Extension, Orange BRT Line and coming BRT E Line. "Not only can you find the world here on Lake Street, but you can access the world beyond Lake St."

"I am feeling the energy here," remarked Ramsey County Commissioner Rena Moran.

The B Line will have about two to three stops per mile. The initial plan called for ending the line at Snelling and University; but the city of St. Paul and other stakeholders requested that it go all the way to downtown St. Paul. Planners also considered whether to route the line through the Midway along University as the Route 21 bus line does now, but ultimately decided upon Selby instead.

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter shared that for his first job after college, he took the bus along Selby Ave. He still remembers the people he saw daily on the bus, and the sense of community he felt. If he



"I am feeling the energy here," said Ramsey County Commissioner Rena Moran during the groundbreaking event for the B Line on May 8, 2023. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

missed a day, "my day would be off because I didn't get a chance to do my morning routine with the people on the bus," he recalled. "One of the things we don't talk about enough is the amount of community building that happens on the train or bus."

"It's not about the buses," agreed Zelle. "It's about the community inside the buses."

More than 30 stations will be built between Union Depot in St. Paul and the Uptown area of Minneapolis. In Minneapolis, stations will be at West Lake St. (connecting to the Green Line lightrail), Lagoon and East Bde Mada Ska, Lagoon and Hennepin, Lyndale, Nicollet, Interstate 35W, 4th/5th, Chicago, Bloomington, Cedar, Midtown, Minnehaha, 31st, 36th and 44th. In St. Paul, they will be at Marshall and Otis, Cretin, Cleveland, and Fairview; Snelling and Dayton; Selby and Hamline, Lexington, Victoria, Dale, and Western-Arundel; John Ireland and Marshall; and six locations in downtown St. Paul before ending at Union Depot.

Stations for BRT lines are not in turn lanes or parking lanes like other bus routes. Instead, they are in traffic lanes, which eliminate buses merging in and out of traffic.

Bus-only lanes will be implemented on portions of Lake Street, Lagoon Avenue and Marshall Avenue.

The first BRT line to operate is the A Line that begins at the 46th and Hiawatha lightrail station (Blue Line), proceeds across the Mississippi River into St. Paul and then follows Snelling Ave. up to Rosedale Mall in Roseville.

"The new B Line will make it easier for Saint Paul residents to get to work,



"One of the things we don't talk about enough is the amount of community building that happens on the train or bus," stated St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

school and recreation by increasing service and reducing travel times. Efficient transit is key to reducing the emissions that contribute to climate change. The new B Line is a win-win for our community," said Russ Stark, chief resilience officer for the city of Saint Paul.

562,000 RIDES IN FOUR MONTHS

In the first four months of 2023, there were 562,000 rides on the 21, pointed out Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. "It is the most ridden line in the city." He added, "When you have a diversity of transportation options, more and more people will decide to take that trip."

Four open houses were held in 2019 to solicit community feedback, at South High and Walker Library in Minneapolis, and Merriam Park Library and Oxford Community Center in St. Paul. Additional meetings were held along Selby Ave. in St. Paul in the summer of 2019. Over the next few years, Metro Transit used postcards, flyers at bus stops, limited in-person conversations, emails to subscribers, and targeted social media posts. About 660 comments were submitted on the draft plan, and approximately 160 comments were submitted on the recommended plan.

The B Line will use 60-foot "articulated" buses with wider aisles, more seating capacity, and additional doors.

A fiber optic network will be built along the length of the whole corridor to link technology at stations.

Pedestrian and signal improvements will be constructed at an additional 50+ intersections.

Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue will be resurfaced to improve pavement conditions.

In Minneapolis, construction will be staged to allow two-way traffic flow on Lake Street at all times, as well as allow traffic flow in the Lake and Lagoon sections of Uptown.

In St. Paul, construction on Marshall Avenue will be staged to allow two-way traffic flow at all times. On Selby Avenue, intersections will be fully closed to auto traffic for about a month with additional lane restrictions for longer time periods.

There will be bus detours during construction.

Construction is being coordinated with other projects in the area:

- The B Line will serve stations in downtown St. Paul that will be constructed in 2023 and 2024 as part of the METRO Gold Line project.

- Stations at Lake & Nicollet, I-35W & Lake, and Lake & 4th/5th Avenue were mostly constructed as part of the METRO Orange Line project in 2020-2021.

- Stations at Lake Street / Midtown Station are being constructed through coordination with Hennepin County's Hi-Lake Improvements project in 2024.

The B Line is fully funded through a mix of federal, state, and Metropolitan Council funds. The estimated cost of the project is \$65 million.

Local bus service on Route 21 will continue to run every 30 minutes along Lake St. between Hennepin Ave. and Minnehaha Ave. A new route 60 will run every 30 minutes in St. Paul to connect Selby Ave. with the Midway area and the State Capitol area. Changes to Route 53 along I-94 will be evaluated as the B Line approaches implementation.

Sign up for construction updates at www.metrotransit.org/b-line-project.

"This doesn't stop here," said Frey. "When you think about Lake St., not only is it an important corridor but it is going to shine. Let's keep the momentum going."

✳️ **VIEW MORE PHOTOS** in the online version of this story at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com



Justin Lewandowski (at right) lives with his family in the Midway. (Photo submitted)

MEET JUSTIN LEWANDOWSKI

Lewandowski is the new community organizer for Hamline Midway Coalition.

Lewandowski: My wife and I moved to the neighborhood in the summer of 2020 and we fell in love with the area despite the initial challenges the pandemic created in building community. We had our first child, Sullivan, who is about to turn one this June, and we love how close we are to so many local parks and community events. Besides my background in policy and issue organizing, my heart beats for live music and the arts, as well as supporting local organizations and events that provide community mutual aid for individuals and families in need. I think the arts play a crucial role in connecting us to the causes and issues that are important to us, and am eager to bring that passion into my new role with HMC.



WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE POSITION?

I have been a policy and community organizer over the last 10 years here in Minnesota and across the country. I bring a deep commitment to creating pathways for folks to participate in public policy in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them, as well working to build energy, excitement, and campaigns around local issues.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH HMC?

For me, the value of HMC to the neighborhood is having a local vehicle for everyday neighbors to steer in shaping the neighborhood's future. I believe that participation in public policy at the municipal and county level requires us to create meaningful and accessible avenues for participation, and I believe HMC can play a big role in connecting people to pathways for them to feel seen, heard, and be local leaders.

But the value of HMC doesn't stop there. It's also about bridging connections, linking neighbors to local resources and championing resident-led initiatives that get right to the grassroots. It's this bottom-up change that can truly transform a community.

As a resident, these are things that I value, and I'm excited to be a part of the Hamline Midway Coalition's goal of making our area not just a place to live, but a thriving community to be a part of.

knowledge that they can leverage in other wealth building activities.

On a community scale, the cooperative can help keep wealth in the community by prioritizing collective community ownership over out of town landlords, favoring locally owned and operated businesses over national chains, and investing in existing businesses as an anti-displacement strategy. The cooperative can also boost the local economy by investing in vacant properties that bring new jobs and revitalize key commercial corridors.

Board Chair Heather Worthington, a 25-year homeowner in the Hamline-Midway Neighborhood said, "The Midway Investment Cooperative will be an important tool in maintaining and growing our community's commitment to a diverse and vibrant business presence, providing a tangible hedge strategy against market forces that lead to gentrification and displacement, and ensuring that the Hamline-Midway neighborhood remains accessible to everyone."

MIDWAY INVESTMENT COOPERATIVE LAUNCHES

Beginning in 2015, Hamline Midway residents coalesced around the idea of purchasing real estate as an anti-displacement strategy for local business owners, especially in light of the market impact of developments like the Green Line LRT and the Allianz soccer stadium. Since then, the Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) has made significant progress in establishing a neighborhood Real Estate Investment Cooperative (REIC). A REIC is a tool that allows neighbors to pool their money and invest in real estate to help prevent displacement due to market forces that increase costs for business owners and tenants.

The coop will officially launch on June 10, 2023 from 12-2 p.m. at the Lake Monster Brewery (550 Vandalia Street, #160). The goal is to build community wealth. Wealth building under the REIC model takes place at both the individual and community levels. Individual members collect modest returns on their investment based on project performance and receive benefits like training, tools, and



Jenne Nelson (at left) lives in Como with her family. (Photo submitted)

MEET JENNE NELSON >> 1

I started my career as a high school English teacher, and when I started volunteering with a nonprofit program for adults learning English in Minneapolis, I grew to love that work and eventually shifted my career into nonprofit management. On a personal level, I believe strongly in the power of community. I have spent time living in Hangzhou, China, and Dourados, Brazil, and in both cities, I was warmly welcomed by the communities I lived, worked, and volunteered in. I strive to create that same sense of radical hospitality in the communities in St. Paul that I am part of.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THE HAMLINE MIDWAY COALITION?

For the last three years, I have been volunteering with the Como Community Council (I am currently the board chair). I love this work, and I see district councils as unique and powerful entities that can do grassroots, neighborhood-based organizing and promote robust civic engagement. Professionally for the past few years, I have been building up my fundraising skills with the goal of leading a small, community-based organization in St. Paul. Needless to say, when the executive director role at the Hamline Midway Coalition opened up, it felt like a dream job that I couldn't not apply for.

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE POSITION?

I bring experience and comfort with the district council system in Saint Paul, a strong history of nonprofit leadership, and a love of Hamline-Midway's parks, thriving small business community, and fantastic restaurant scene. I'm an optimistic person who thrives on building relationships with community members.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE ORGANIZATION TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

HMC is a resource hub and a place for residents to bring ideas, questions, and concerns. It is also a venue for neighbors to work together to create the Hamline-Midway we all want to live, work, study, and play in. From planting free trees, to supporting local art, to connecting residents with everything from food re-

sources to city processes, HMC is here for the community.

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH HMC?

Running a small, community-focused organization has long been a professional dream of mine, and I am humbled to have the opportunity to contribute to the health and vigor of the Hamline-Midway community. This is a special neighborhood in Saint Paul, and to get to work alongside the folks here who make it so feels like a real privilege.

I am also grateful to be able to work in my home geography and to feel deeply embedded – in both a personal and professional way – in a city I care so much about.

WHAT INITIATIVES ARE YOU WORKING ON?

One initiative that I am really excited about is our new Renter Engagement Committee. Last year, the board named renter engagement as a priority, and this year, we'll welcome a VISTA tenant organizer (a joint position with Saint Anthony Park Community Council) to share resources and engage our renter neighbors in HMC and city activities. Our goal is that the committee will be led by renters and that HMC will be able to support the launch of tenant associations across the neighborhood.

I am also just starting to delve into the numerous activities that our Environment, Development, and Transportation Committees are leading. I am blown away by the breadth and depth of the work these dedicated volunteers do on behalf of the organization, and I am very much looking forward to engaging more deeply with all three committees.

PLEASE SHARE A BIT ABOUT THE OFFICE MOVE, WHAT PROMPTED IT, AND WHERE YOU LANDED.

Our lease at the Hamline Midway library ended in February of this year, and we were fortunate to land right next door at the Knox International Building, which made the physical move pretty convenient. Everyone who visits our new space (literally, everyone) comments on the stately round table that functions as the centerpiece of the office. Come on over to check it out yourself!



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BUSINESS NEWS



The Midway Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting and a short presentation for The Arc Minnesota on Monday, April 17, 2023. The Arc moved its central office to 641 Fairview Ave. N. Suite 195. The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People with disabilities and their families trust The Arc for information, assistance, education, and public policy leadership. (Photo submitted)



Affinity Plus Senior Leadership team, community members and local dignitaries celebrate the grand opening of the Midway's first credit union on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union is at 1315 University Ave. W. All staff members at the Midway location are bilingual in Spanish or Tagalog, and since its soft opening in February, the branch has welcomed many new members from the community, including the credit union's 250,000th member. (Photo submitted)



Mohamed Dini, (center) a Minnesota-based member of the Somalia Parliament, visits the Midway-based Books for Africa warehouse on May 11, 2023. He is flanked by Mike Essien, president of the BFA board (left), and Patrick Plonski, executive director of Books For Africa. (Photo courtesy of Tom Gitaa of Mshale)

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GARDEN CLUB

The St. Anthony Park Garden Club will host its self-guided garden tour on Saturday, June 24th from 9:45 am to 3 pm. Eleven local gardens will be featured. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased before June 24 at StAnthonyParkGardenClub.com. Details of the tour

and photos of past tours are also online.

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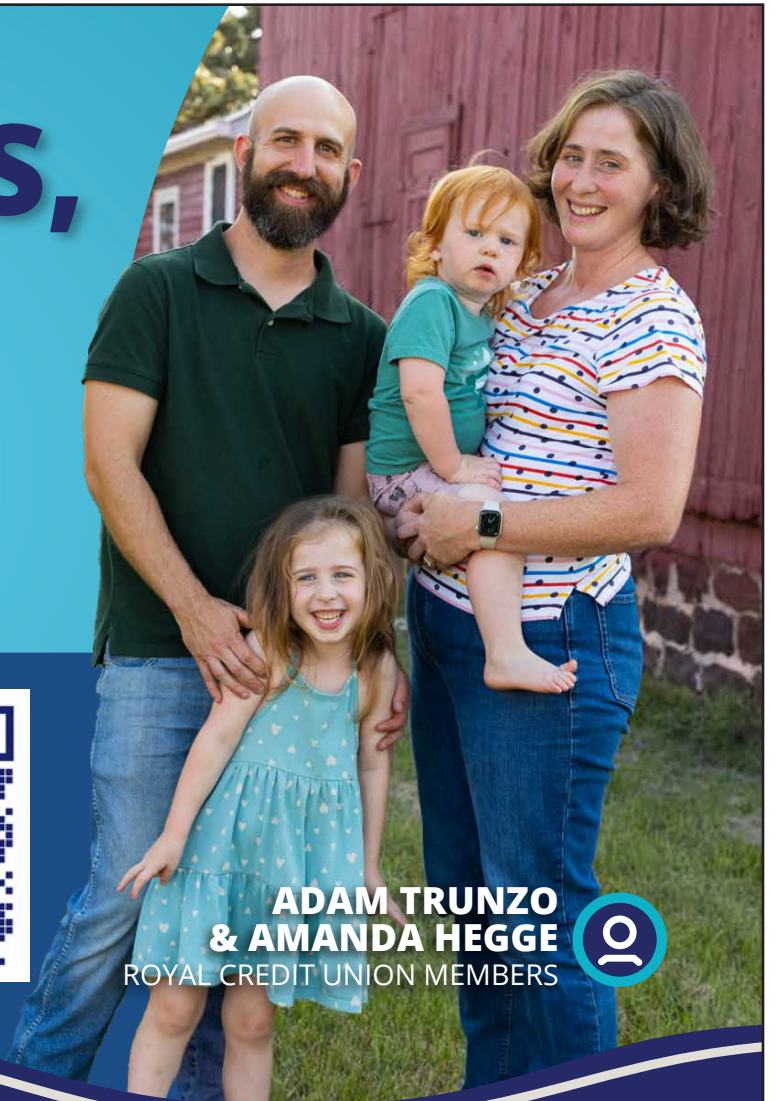
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