

Midway Como Frogtown

Monitor

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE



Clean streets = clean water >> 11

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New Como plan lays out next 20 years

Pavilion changes, closing East Como Lake Drive, and funds for more trees and native plants are high priorities

By JANE MCCLURE

With St. Paul City Council approval July 17, the Como Regional Park Long-Range Plan is en route to Metropolitan Council for final review and approval.

Metropolitan Council action is needed because Como is a regional park. Having the plan in place sets the stage for future funding and improvements including changes to streets and trails, modifications to the pavilion, added lighting and park fixtures, wayfinding improvements and other changes. Plans are meant to shape a park's development for 20 or more years.

The city council vote ends more than two years' work on the plan. Work began in January 2022 with schematic design. That was followed by community engagement and work on a draft plan. The final document was completed in May of this year, with parks and recreation commission review and an approval recommendation this summer.

Como is the largest and most visited regional park in the city. It had almost 3.8 million visitors in 2022 and 4.5 million

COMO PLAN >> 5

10th Annual Little Africa Festival and Parade



Djenna Saint-Juste was part of the 10th annual Little Africa Festival at Hamline Park on Aug. 4, 2024. Saint-Juste is a Haitian teacher who decided to write her own novels after being inspired by her grandmother and schooling. Books are written in Creole, English, French, and Spanish, and they help children grasp what the book is about if they do not speak the language. The African Economic Development Solutions hosts the annual festival to bring together diverse African immigrant communities. The event celebrates African Minnesotan culture, heritage and community and features live music performances, art shows, and vendors. (Photo by Terbutu Ochothow) >> More photos online at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

After 15 years, grassroots organizers will celebrate preserving historic theater on Aug. 25 with Frogtown Arts Festival

Victoria Theater reopens as 825 Arts

By JOSEPH PALUMBO

Since it first opened nearly 110 years ago, a space on University Avenue has captured the spirit and history of Saint Paul. The building at 825 University Avenue was first opened as Victoria Theater, a silent movie theater, in 1915 before quickly shifting to a speakeasy at the onset of Prohibition. Well into the 20th century, this space has taken on different forms (including as a cafe and a lamp store), but for much of its history it has served the community as a venue for the arts.

In 2009, the potential for a renovated Victoria Theater was a grassroots project that with dedication and persistence began to take shape and grow. After much anticipation, the space will celebrate its grand reopening at the Frogtown Arts Festival



The mission of the organization is to create a vibrant neighborhood where the arts welcome, heal, transform and build power for the people of Frogtown and Rondo.

825 ARTS >> 13

First tribal college opens in Twin Cities

Red Lake Nation College's downtown Minneapolis campus is one of first tribal colleges in a major U.S. city

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The newly open Red Lake Nation College in downtown Minneapolis is one of the first tribal colleges in a major U.S. city and is reaching a "never-served" community," according to Dan King, Hereditary Chief at Red Lake Nation and President of Red Lake Nation College (RLNC).

"Our grand opening represents a significant step towards providing accessible education to Native American communities living in urban areas," said King. "By establishing our Minneapolis location, we are pioneering a new era of tribal college presence in major metropolitan centers,

offering globally relevant courses steeped in Ojibwe culture to prepare students for success in the modern job market."

Close to the Franklin/Lake St. Native community, the Minneapolis campus at 900 S. 3rd St. across from the U.S. Bank Stadium is near bus and light rail lines. The new facility is a blend of old and new, in keeping with the RLNC vision of honoring and adapting. Two 1905 brick buildings are

FIRST TRIBAL COLLEGE >> 8



"Culture is embedded in everything we're learning," stated Como resident Marrison Martin. "It all comes down to identity and feeling really safe here." (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



Maia Maiden leads Ordway theater fellowship for budding Minnesota artists

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BACK 2 SCHOOL How the art of one reaches the hearts of many

PAGES 6-8



Como high school has a new weight room thanks to Thielen Foundation

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Maia Maiden leads Ordway theater fellowship for budding artists

By TALIA MCWRIGHT

Tears streamed down 62-year-old Myra Curry's face as she sat in a circle receiving praise from her cohort fellows. One after the other, people took turns telling Curry how proud, and inspired they were by her.

"We did a speech where she told a story that was deeply personal, and it just felt like that speech needed to be heard by others," said 2024 GreenRoom fellow Imagine Joy. "I'm happy that she was brave enough to do that in this space."

GreenRoom is a six week, paid intensive musical theater training fellowship that focuses on uplifting intergenerational BIPOC artists in Minnesota at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in downtown St. Paul. Artists must have a background in either singing, dancing or acting. Development for the fellowship began in 2021, and the first official cohort was formed in 2022. Maia Maiden, director of arts, community and engagement and the Ordway, leads the fellowship, but it was Kelly Foster Wader who she says "planted the seed," for the program.

"The program is custom made to bring them [fellows] to their next level," Maiden said. "So it's going to be challenging, but it's well worth it."

A professional dancer, as well as a former medical laboratory technician educator at Rasmussen University, Maiden had the knowledge to build an impactful curriculum for artists interested in honing their craft. Along with help from supporters, Maiden fused her passions of program development and art to create GreenRoom.

"By nature I am not a musical theater artist," Maiden said. "I'm a dancer. I come from a dance background, so you can imagine creating something that you don't do, but what I do know about myself is that I can create anything with excellence."

The application process consists of three steps: written application, video submission, and an interview with the faculty, Maiden and GreenRoom manager Oloade Gbadamosi-Alashe. Applicants must have less than three years of professional experience in the arts post high school. The process is highly competitive and, in 2023, 11 fellows were chosen out of 66 applicants. This year 10 artists were chosen to participate.

"I always dreamed of having the opportunity to access an education space in the performing arts, to be able to go to a school or conservatory, but that was never a reality for me," said 2024 fellow Paulina Morera Quesada, age 24. "Being able to be here and learn everyday in an environment that is not competitive or toxic has been incredible and rewarding."

Maiden named the program GreenRoom, because the GreenRoom is the space in a theater where people prepare. She said that "Green" represents newness and growth, while "Room" is about expansion and space. That is why the G and R are capitalized. The GreenRoom fellowship trains artists, equipping them with new skills and increased confidence to emerge on stage as even stronger artists than they were before.

To ensure that Maiden brought Wader's vision to life, she researched and



GreenRoom fellows practice dancing and performing together at the Ordway Center for Performing Arts on Friday, July 19, 2024. (Photos by Talia McWright)



"I really try to make this a cohesive 360 experience that extends beyond the Ordway walls."

Maia Maiden

formed relationships with multi-talented artists across Minnesota who would instruct the fellows in different areas of artistry. Her intention was that the fellowship would be intensive.

"People had to say yes to this," Maiden said. "It's very unique. It's the only one of its kind in Minnesota."

One of the most pivotal components of the fellowship is that it provides fellows with networking and relationship

building opportunities. The fellows take classes taught by masterclass teachers, and well-established, Minnesota-based artists. The GreenRoom faculty each bring their own knowledge and wisdom expertise, which Maiden honored by encouraging them to create classes that aligned with their skills and would push the fellows towards growth.

"In our interview Maia Maiden had said to me, 'You're going to be meeting people that it would take you years to access or even know who they are, and you're going to be meeting them and learning from them in a matter of weeks,' and she has been absolutely correct," 2024 fellow Ebony Ramquist said. "Not only had she kept her word in that, but above and beyond even."

During the six week program, the fel-



GreenRoom fellows Myra Curry and Keira Kowal Jett stand together at the Ordway theater on Friday, July 19, 2024.

lows train at the Ordway from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and can have between four to five classes a day. Examples of classes include the Alexander technique, sound bathing, breath work, yoga and business. Each week fellows have a one-on-one session and mentoring with each faculty member and Maiden to check in on their experience and plans for the future. Near the end of the six weeks, fellows also receive professional headshots done by Diggy Made studios.

"I really try to make this a cohesive 360 experience that extends beyond the Ordway walls," Maiden said.

Wellness and self-care are an emphasized component of the GreenRoom curriculum, and the fellows experience this as they discover their talents and challenge their insecurities. Thirty-two-year-old 2024 fellow Bri Salhus came in as a dancer, and was encouraged through GreenRoom to find her voice as a singer.

"I never realized how emotional everything would be and the things that I would move through during this experience," Salhus said. "I think there's only so much you can talk through in talk therapy until it can come out through art. It's just a different experience, a different kind of healing."

The fellows also find strength in each other, as they walk through vulnerable moments together during and outside of classes. Salhus recalled a moment when Imagine Joy sent her a text message after she'd had a difficult day. She said she felt seen in that moment. Program manager Gbadamosi-Alashe described the fellows as a family rather than a collective.

"In a space where coming into this - most of us didn't know each other - we've all exhibited incredible courage to share some of the deepest parts of ourselves with each other, and it's helped us grow closer and invigorated this sense of community," said 2024 fellow Kyle Camay.

After the six weeks, the fellows have a closing session free and open to the public in which the fellows will share their craft with the public. This year's presentation will be on Aug. 20 at the Ordway.

"I went to the presentation last year and saw a lady named Patricia Lacey who's one year older than me get up there and do her thing, and after raising three kids I wanted to discover if I still have my art, and I do," Curry said. "It's been amazing working with the experienced instructors. They're very talented. They're very wise, as well as the masterclass and guest speakers."

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BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY



BY CHAD KULAS,
Midway Chamber of
Commerce Executive Director
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At a recent Midway Chamber event, we were joined by Priya and Vikas Narula. They are a married couple who created Neighborhood Forest, a nonprofit organization who gives kids trees every Earth Day, and led a presentation titled "Your Organization is a Forest: Make it Thrive." The presentation was one of the most thought-provoking I've seen and I believe people can use the tips from it in both their personal and professional lives.

The nonprofit was started in 2010 to give back to the community. Vikas had learned about nonprofits who give trees away to kids and had started one while in college. He thought of the idea again when their kids were in school and started the program at their elementary school. Today, the nonprofit has partnerships with over 2,000 schools, libraries and youth groups in all 50 states and in six Canadian provinces.

The lesson could be as simple as finding a way to give back. After starting a successful business, they wanted to do more

GROWING YOUR FOREST



Midway Chamber Board President Christine Noonan (left) of the Minnesota State Fair presents Vikas and Priya Narula of Neighborhood Forest with mugs following their presentation titled "Your Organization is a Forest: Make it Thrive" during the chamber Leadership Summit in June.

and what better way than starting a nonprofit? But the story is more than just finding a passion that gives back.

In the presentation, Priya and Vikas talked about trees and how they can "talk" to each other in their own way. There are also hub trees, connectors and seedlings and all play important roles in the health of a forest. The parallels between trees

communicating and humans are very interesting, and they talked about the dynamics of a workplace. Who is the hub? Who are those who connect and who are the seedlings who we think can grow?

In addition to thinking about the hub, connectors and seedlings of a particular group, the presentation talked about the importance of being a part of many

networks. They referred to a study which found people with different friend networks show more dynamic brain activity than those with only close-knit social circles. Meeting and building connections with different people from different backgrounds can help you grow as a person and greatly helps in the workplace. The presentation referenced a study in the Journal of Corporate Finance which stated a CEO with a diverse social network can have a direct impact on the success of an organization both in terms of business opportunities and innovation. According to the Harvard Business Review, "Public companies with greater diversity in management are more likely to have better financial returns."

Are you up for a challenge?

Consider meeting new people in the next month and actually get to know them.

Find people from different backgrounds than yours (maybe who vote different than you?) Or if you know people like this, get to know them better. Unlike in many places, we are fortunate to be in a neighborhood with density and a mix of people who are lifelong residents and those who moved here in the past year. Expanding your network can help you grow too.

If you focus too much on the tree, you might miss the forest around you.

PLANTING SEEDS



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

Black Philanthropy Month is celebrated during the month of August. This annual celebration focuses on uplifting the Black community and building a more just and inclusive society. The theme for Black Philanthropy Month 2024 is "Afro Futures of Giving." Grounded in the theory of Afro-futurism, this is an invitation to reimagine a better world and take action to build it. Afro-futurism is about unleashing our moral imagination by building a collective vision, establishing partnerships, setting an agenda, and taking strategic action. The theme is inspired by the writings of the late science fiction writer and activist, Octavia Butler. Black Philanthropy Month 2024 serves as a roadmap for advancing racial justice.

HISTORY OF BLACK PHILANTHROPY MONTH

Black Philanthropy Month was launched in August 2011 by Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland and the Pan-African Women's Philanthropy Network. It is celebrated each August in recognition of those of African American descent and focuses on topics like promoting economic justice and empowering funding equality in the nonprofit sector. It encompasses more than 19 million individuals in 60 countries. The underlying tenets of Black

BLACK PHILANTHROPY MONTH: AFRO FUTURES OF GIVING

Philanthropy Month reach far beyond financial considerations. Giving during Black Philanthropy Month is a matter of universal human rights that supports racial, social, economic, gender, and environmental justice.

BUILDING A BLACK ECOSYSTEM

A focus on philanthropy is essential for supporting a Black ecosystem that ministers to the needs of the community, inspires change, and creates access to justice. This is an invitation for everyone to invest their time, talents, and resources. Investing in Black-led youth-serving nonprofit organizations can aid in building a solid foundation for the future. It will provide youth with the tools to learn, grow, and lead.

Supporting Black-led youth-serving nonprofit organizations also provides a remarkable yield on the investment. Did you know for every dollar invested in a youth program or early childhood education yields up to \$16? Further, for each additional dollar invested in education, another \$2 is gained in future earnings per student.

This August, you can build a more vibrant future for the next generation by donating and supporting local, Black-led nonprofits that are making a difference in the lives of our youth. These organizations rely on the generosity of supporters and strategic partnerships within the community to provide youth-oriented programs, initiatives, and services.

- Irreducible Grace Foundation: healing, arts



Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland and the Pan-African Women's Philanthropic Network launched Black Philanthropy Month.

- JK Movement: sports enrichment, creative arts
 - Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute: literacy, leadership development
 - Sweet Potato Comfort Pie: healing, arts
 - 30,000 Feet: educational programming
 - W.E. Win Institute: educational programming, leadership development
- Black Philanthropy Month is not

just about a month-long commitment to building a more vibrant and sustainable ecosystem. It is a long-term commitment to advancing racial justice and equity.

Throughout the rest of the year, continue to reflect on these key questions with others:

1. Describe your ideal future for Black giving and/or social finance.
2. What factors are driving the future of Black giving and social finance available to promote wellness, equity, and justice in Black families, institutions, and communities?
3. What are three concrete actions that you will take as a change agent in your family, community, workplace, and/or other affiliations during 2024 to increase the chances that your vision of a Black Giving Future comes to fruition over the next five years?

Remember, Octavia Butler once stated: "All that you touch You Change. All that you Change Changes you. The only lasting truth Is Change..."

When we support Black philanthropy, we are igniting social change, strengthening our communities, and transforming society.

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

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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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The Monitor is for profit and for a purpose – and we don't sacrifice one for the other. We

consider ourselves a zebra company, one that is both black and white, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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Neighbors concerned about noise from Allianz Field music festivals

By JANE MCCLURE

Any future music festivals outside of Allianz Field need more pre-event community notice and sound level monitoring during the events themselves. Some area residents are seeking such changes in light of the two-day Breakaway Music Festival, held June 28-29. The event was the first major concert held since Major League Soccer stadium opened in 2019.

News that an eight-hour college student-focused music festival could be coming Sept. 21 is generating more demands for change, as well as expanded neighborhood notice.

Union Park District Council (UPDC) sent a letter to city officials stating a number of concerns.

April King, a UPDC board meeting who lives south of Allianz Field, said her home's windows were shaking during the Breakaway event.

"I live in a city – I get it... I want more of these events. But I'd also like to be able to sleep," said King.

Some area residents initially thought they were dealing with noisy next-door neighbors, said Leah Timberlake Sullivan, UPDC executive director.

Some social media posts indicat-

ed that people as far south as Mendota Heights could hear the sound. Most noise complaints came from residents south of Allianz, although there were some complaints from Hamline-Midway and points north.

Others said they could enjoy the concert from the Cub Foods parking lot without paying high ticket prices.

Ramsey County dispatch reported more than 200 calls about noise.

UPDC and its land use committee discussed the noise issues at the regular board meeting July 10 and with Mike Hahm July 15. Hahm is a project consultant with Snelling Midway Redevelopment LLC, which is working on building and public amenities plans for the area around Allianz Field.

One issue some district council members raised is that as the property is developed, there will be less event space and potentially smaller gatherings in the future.

Events are being held outside of the soccer stadium. While saying that the Breakaway festival went very well for the most part and that the Ohio-based promoter wishes to return, Hahm said everyone involved will learn from what happened and do a better job with future

events.

The event stayed within the sound level allowed with its variance, which was approved in June by the St. Paul City Council. The variance was sought for sound levels at 103 decibels. The variance granted was for noise to not exceed 95 dba as measured at 50 feet from all sound sources for the event hours.

The level of allowed noise varies by zoning district, 55 dba in residential areas to 80 dba in industrial areas. The city further limits noise between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

No members of the public attended the hearing although council members had questions about the event and the genre of music.

One question is who got city notice about a sound level variance. Neighbors within 300 feet be notified, most people would not have been aware of the festival taking place. The notice list in city council files shows five commercial property owners who were notified, including Allianz Field area developer Snelling Midway Redevelopment LLC.

"The city needs to step up its game on the sound monitoring," said Mark Morrow, land use committee co-chairman. While acknowledging that events bring

visitors and vitality to the city, he also said that there needs to be a balance.

The Breakaway fest and its dance music drew about 24,000 people. Fest organizer issued a written statement promising changes including sound engineering studies and site layout improvements before a "hopeful return" here in 2025.

A check of the site during the festival showed that St. Paul Police were there both days. The city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) indicated that after neighbors complained, sound levels were turned down.

But the city did no sound level testing during the event itself. DSI has since issued a statement citing the role that concerts and other public events play in supporting local businesses and adding to the city's vibrancy. DSI also said it will work closely in the future with event promoters and residents.

Committee and community members have questioned the Sept. 21 Forbidden Festival, an eight-hour event targeting college students who are age 21 and older.

It will also have an open bar. Its organizer is University of St. Thomas student Breno Bueno. He has applied for a variance to allow 90 decibels of sound. No hearing date has been set.

COMO PLAN >> from 1

visitors in 2021.

The last long-range park plan was completed in 1984. Plan goals implemented include the Lexington Parkway reroute, adding pedestrian spaces near the pavilion, turning East Shore Drive into a one-way street, and adding native vegetation along Como Lake.

The new draft plan is more than 70 pages long. It includes an overview of past history and current park conditions, and details the many groups the plan was shared with. The plan also draws on an array of city plans, ranging from the 2040 comprehensive plan to the climate action plan.

The draft plan gives detailed demographics about park users and what activities are enjoyed at the park. One key point is that the park needs to be designed for users that are becoming older and more diverse.

The new draft plan identifies opportunities and issues in the park, and outlines future projects and how those should be prioritized. Enhancing lake water quality and improving safety and accessibility for all park users are emphasized.

PAVILION CHANGES

Not all of the changes have unanimous community support. Pavilion changes are seen as forcing some longtime users out of the facility.

Priorities were ranked. Highly ranked are changes to the trail system (\$894,000), possibly consolidating trails, removing unneeded pavement, resurfacing and widening paths where needed and improving access to the lake's shore and other features. Increasing pedestrian lighting and adding benches, bike parking, picnic tables and drinking fountains where needed would cost \$900,000.



Events are regularly held in the Como lakeside pavilion. Built in 1992, the pavilion is an exact replica of the one built in 1905 along the lakeshore. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Also ranking highly is the idea of planting and maintaining trees for shade (\$85,000) and adding more native plantings (\$20,000 per year). That is joined by seeding and stabilizing the shoreline (\$20,000 annually). Various safety and accessibility improvements at trail crossings and transitions has a price tag of \$950,000.

One of the most costly high priorities is that of updating and changing the lakeside pavilion, at a cost of \$38.4 million. Another big ticket high priority is considering the closure and/or removal of East Como Lake Drive to improve water quality and bicyclist/pedestrian safety, at a cost that could reach \$12 million.

One medium priority that is already

being implemented is to add more seasonal programming at the park. An example, which has costs to be determined, is grooming trails for winter sports.

Other medium priorities include implementing two-way bike traffic along the Grand Round route and around the lake (\$14.5 million), improving wayfinding signage (\$680,000), incorporating stormwater best management practices in park improvements (\$66 million). Designing paths for improved snow plowing is a medium priority with no cost attached pending further planning.

More medium priorities include working with public works to improve sidewalk connections to the park at a cost of \$3.1 million, and adding seasonal restrooms to meet demand. The latter prior-

ity has costs ranging from \$12,000 to \$1.2 million.

Low priorities include connecting incomplete trail segments on the west side of Lexington Parkway and adding a trail connection to the golf course club house, and a sidewalk along Beulah Lane (\$568,000). Another low priority, which also has no cost estimate, is to reserve areas for unprogrammed green space.

Additional low priorities are updating Nagasaki Road to provide more space for an off-street pathway and improving the intersection at Como Avenue (\$1 million as a stand-alone project and \$6.8 million when paired with other improvements). Other low priorities include various bicycle accommodations including storage and e-bike charging stations (\$120,000) and amenities for recreation options such as disc golf, skills park, bike pump track, fitness stations, pickleball courts and a dog park (\$65,000 to \$800,000). Yet another low priority is public art, which has no cost attached.

Several projects are outlined but aren't ranked. One of those is to acquire the area south of Jessamine Avenue to support facilities on the west side of the park, at \$422,000. The land is owned by the BNSF Railroad.

Other unranked projects include expansion of the parks operations and maintenance facility (\$3 million), improve parking area (\$380,000), constructing a warming house for winter activities (\$1.92 million), conducting a cultural landscape study (\$500,000), updating the path from Chelsea Street (\$590,000), providing a path connection to the Wolf Lot (\$60,000) and increasing seating at Como Pool (\$166,000).

Read the plan and learn about other projects at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/como-regional-park-projects>.



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We're proud to be a part of it and represented in the Monitor."

~ Liz Lonetti of Career Pathways

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How the art from one reaches the hearts of many

Local artist Bri Harrington encourages people to do what makes them happy

By LUCIA BODLING

Bri Harrington always wanted to paint, but never thought it was practical, so she put it off until she couldn't any longer.

"I feel like it just bubbled out of me, and I just had to paint," she said. That was in 2020 and the pandemic had begun so she had a lot of time locked up at home.

Bri Harrington is an artist whose main medium is paint. She has a studio located in St. Paul on Grand Ave. Her studio is in a small building with many other artists studios in it, as well.

When Harrington started painting at home she would spend all day locked up due to the pandemic so she filled her days with art. She painted on the floor of her spare bedroom, and she kept painting day after day to the point where she had to call her husband and tell him to maybe not come home yet because she had so many paintings that filled up almost every room in their home.

Harrington realized painting was something she really wanted to pursue and get good at, and so she needed somewhere to make and store all of her art. The first step was finding a studio. She put a couple of inquiries out and all the places she contacted didn't even have waitlists because they were all so busy. But not all hope was lost. She filled out a form online and later received an email that seemed kind of sketchy but she went and toured the space, and was pleasantly surprised to find all these awesome qualities: a sink, a bathroom, high ceilings, windows, and a nice neighborhood. Harrington also wanted



to have a space where people felt comfortable because she teaches classes.

Harrington paints in her studio for the joy of it. She doesn't like the idea of having to do something just for profit, when she could spread joy instead.

"I feel like people need more moments of joy in their life, and I think sometimes when we really focus on the capitalist, like 'oh okay if you can't sell it' 'if you're not making money doing it' then is it really worth your time or the investment or like the energy? And it really is," she stated.

"I think that it can be really easy to put off the hobbies that you have as a kid," said Harrington, but she wants to help people realize that sometimes it can be really good and beneficial to hold on to those hobbies.

Harrington does this by teaching classes at her studio called watercolor for recovering perfectionists. "I just want people to be doing more of the things that

make them happy," said Harrington.

Harrington wants to keep painting and keep sharing but not be attached to an outcome.

"A lot of my work is based around something I've been reading or something that I've been meditating on, or just like something I'm struggling with in life, and then I'll paint a series of them."

Harrington talks about "a growth mindset, the importance of looking at whether you're approaching things with a fixed attitude or a growth attitude."

She added, "When I said I was going to pursue art full time, my family was like, 'You're gonna do what? And it took them a couple of years to come around to the idea that oh, this makes you super happy.' Now her dad is making her cradled canvases, and her family is giving her ideas on what they think she should make next."

Harrington believes that it's important to have something to talk about that is not

STUDENT INTERN LUCIA BODLING

Central High School Student Lucia Bodling participated in the Right Track internship program through the city of St. Paul during spring semester 2024. She worked to hone her journalism skills, and wrote this article. Overseeing the interns were Work Based Learning Coordinator Emily Punyko at Central High and Midway Como Frogtown Monitor owner Tesha M. Christensen.



Local artist Bri Harrington holds "Forest Child," an exploration of the relationship with "the parts of ourselves that are unknown even to us." (Photo by Lucia Bodling)

all the different stresses of life, something that's just joyful, which she believes is really good for the community.

She explains some of her art pieces: "'Forest Child' explores the relationship with our unknown self. The playful inner child and the unconscious mind. The recognition of the parts of ourselves that are unknown, even to us. The idea is that your mind is a forest and all you see is one or two little clearings."

"'Mini But Mighty' series, from my research as a wellness coach – the biggest predictor of your well-being is if you have friends/a supportive community. The goal is to buy one to remind someone that they're loved."

"'Progress not Perfection' is a series about letting go of perfectionism and allowing yourself to enjoy the process of placing marks on the canvas."

Recently Harrington has enjoyed switching it up a little and is working on some acrylic/carved pieces.

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FIRST TRIBAL COLLEGE

>> from 1

joined together with a new addition that features the same graphite siding as the U.S. Bank Stadium. The original wood floors were preserved, and the brick and timber highlighted. New large, storefront glass windows were installed, along with new wood glulam ceilings. The architect on the project was Sam Olbekson of Full Circle Indigenous Planning, an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe.

Construction occurred from April 2023 to April 2024. The tribe paid \$4.2 million for the three buildings, and another \$12 million for the renovation. The \$16.2 million facility is fully paid off. Native-owned Loeffler Construction oversaw the project. RLNC expects to earn revenue through rentals based on their prime location and rooftop views.

According to Minnesota Compass, 44.2% of Minnesota's American Indian population resides in the Twin Cities, yet until now, there was no TCU (Tribal College and University) in the cities that provided culturally-based higher education. RLNC began offering courses through distance education in downtown Minneapolis in fall 2021.

"It's not an under-served community. It's a never-served community," said King during the grand opening on Thursday, June 6, 2024.

CULTURALLY BASED

"I had been looking for something that was more culturally based," said Marissa Martin, who lives in the Como neighborhood of St. Paul near the State Fairgrounds. She had considered other options in the Twin Cities around where she grew up, as well as going to the Red Lake Nation College campus in Red Lake. But she didn't necessarily want to move and was glad to be able to attend a tribal college near her home when she enrolled last year.

She appreciates the course offerings in Indigenous knowledge and small class sizes. It's also valuable to her to be taking classes with other Indigenous students who have similar goals and to be taught by Indigenous teachers, she said. "Culture is embedded in everything we're learning," stated Martin. "It all comes down to identity and feeling really safe here."

A PLACE SHE FOUND HERSELF

Minneapolis resident Eliza Washington lives in Mino-Bimaadiziwin Apartments – a multi-use, affordable housing complex in Minneapolis developed by Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians at 2107 Cedar Ave. She was the second person to move in there, and that's how she heard about the new RLNC campus. She started taking online classes in the spring of 2022 when the Minneapolis location was occupying one building. "It's been kinda neat to watch it unfold," Washington said.



Minneapolis resident Eliza Washington said that Red Lake Nation College "gave me a place to find myself and learn about myself, my history and where I come from. They don't teach you that stuff in mainstream schools." (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



Diginataries, students and community members gathered to celebrate the opening of the first urban Indigenous college campus on Thursday, June 6, 2024. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen) >> Find more photos online at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

One year previously, they had stood there with a pile of shovels as the project to renovate and unite the two buildings began. She was part of brainstorming sessions to discuss what they wanted in the college campus building. The new campus is bright and open, with natural light from windows with scenic views of downtown. There are indoor and outdoor spaces to study and learn. It has the latest in technology with multiple screens in various rooms.

Washington grew up in Duluth, graduated from a public non-tribal high school in 1996, and moved to the Twin Cities in 2006. She attended Lake Superior College and checked out Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, but she didn't have the same experience at those two schools as she has at RLNC. "Here I feel like I'm more seen, hear and valued. It's like a family feel here," said Washington, who is part of the

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

She values the Native history and Native language that are part of the core curriculum at RLNC. It's the first time she has learned these subjects in a school setting. "It gave me a place to find myself and learn about myself, my history and where I come from," she remarked. "They don't teach you that stuff in mainstream schools."

Washington is also part of the staff at RLNC, working full-time as a business office specialist. "They like to grow their own," she observed. She has two classes left before she graduates with an associate of arts degree in tribal education.

Initially, Washington was worried about going back to school in her 40s, but she found a student body made up of people ages 20 to 50. "There's a good group of us. We all hang out together," she observed. The student body is expected to grow from 100 to 180 for the 2024-2025

Seven Grandfather Teachings – Ojibwe Values

- Dabasendizowin - Humility
- Debwewin - Truth
- Zoongide'iwin - Courage
- Gwayakwaadiziwin - Honesty
- Manaaji'idiwin - Respect
- Zaagi'idiwin - Love
- Nibwaakaawin - Wisdom

school year now that the construction project is complete.

73 PERCENT OF STAFF IS INDIGENOUS

Red Lake Nation College (RLNC) was established in 2001 to serve the Red Lake Nation in Red Lake, Minn. Red Lake Nation College offers a range of certificate and academic degree programs designed to empower students and strengthen the Red Lake Nation community in a higher education environment that honors students' Indigenous identities.

About 80 percent of the students at RLNC are first-generation college students. Over 73 percent of staff and faculty are Native. The school seeks to serve students anywhere – which includes a HyFlex option that gives students the ability to attend remotely.

RLNC welcomes students of all tribal backgrounds through its open-enrollment policy.

Their "secret sauce" according to King is small class sizes, personalized, one-on-one attention, intrusive counseling, family connections with students, a Native perspective stemming from the seven Ojibwe values, mentorship and role modeling, and a support system that includes tutoring, counseling, emergency funds and food.

The school is experiencing a 35-40 percent increase in enrollment each year.

RLNC has earned the highest level of accreditation in the United States through the Higher Learning Commission. It involved a 10-year, \$15 million investment. This means that RLNC meets the same academic standards as other major universities, including the University of Minnesota, Purdue University and the University of Michigan. Through academic partnerships, there is an ease of transfer with no cost for RLNC students to transfer to all MNSCU schools and articulation agreements with other four-year universities such as Augsburg University.

RLNC students typically leave with zero debt as there are no loans, only grants. All students receive a tech backpack with a computer and internet access. The average debt load for a two-year college graduate is \$33,000.

RLNC two-year graduate rates are at 45 percent – which is at or near the top 10 percent in the U.S. for two-year colleges.

Students are graduating at the highest rates ever and graduates are transferring to the University of Minnesota, Bemidji State University, Metro State, Augsburg and even Dartmouth.

"Our motto is 'we're a great place to start,'" stated King.

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PLAN IT

HIDDEN HERALD

Wonderlust Productions announces the launch of a unique downtown St. Paul experience called "Hidden Herald," a series of short audio plays telling 31 secret stories about the Capital City's downtown, written by nine local playwrights and performed by 13 professional Twin Cities actors. Starting July 26, signs are located across downtown with the "Hidden Herald" logo and a QR code to listen to individual audio plays anytime. Custom maps designed by Jeff Nelson of Jephemera will also be available at several of Wonderlust's partner locations, including Lost Fox and MetroNOME Brewery. The 31 short stories that make up "Hidden Herald" contemplate everything from naturalization ceremonies at the Landmark Center and the inner musings of benches in Mears Park to business lunches at the St. Paul Grill and people without homes in Rice Park.

BOOK GIVEAWAY AUG. 15

Capstone Publishers will give away 1,000 free books to students at the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) Food Truck this summer. The next giveaway is on Aug. 15. SPPS provides summer meals at more than 50 schools, recreation centers, libraries and community sites at no cost to all children 18 and under, and those with a disability currently enrolled in a school program.



CLIMATE CARNIVAL AUG. 17

Frogtown, Saint Paul's most diverse and vibrant neighborhood, will be hard hit by the climate crisis. Residents of this low-income neighborhood are already suffering from increasing temperatures, loss of tree canopy, and elevated air pollution levels. Frogtown Green's Climate Carnival will help Frogtown residents and visitors learn ways to cope with and combat these and other impacts of climate change—in a lively, fun-filled event on Saturday, Aug. 17, from 1 to 4 p.m.

In festive tents on a large community garden space, the Climate Carnival will feature games of dexterity and skill; contests of brute strength; displays of esoteric knowledge, and more! Each carnival tent focuses on a different aspect of sustainability, with fun, hands-on activities, make-and-take opportunities, and exhibits. Kid carnival-goers will create beautiful art using pedal power; build compost "sundaes" complete with gummy worms; and learn about freaky fertilizing pollinators, while their parents learn the latest

about electric vehicles, curbside organic scraps collection, seed-saving for native plants and more. Delicious food and drink will be free, along with face-painting and other family-pleasers. For information about Frogtown Green, visit www.frog-towngreen.com.

BLACK ENTREPRENEUR STATE FAIR AUG. 25-31

The fifth annual Black Entrepreneur State Fair runs Aug. 25-31 at Midtown Global Market. Founded by sisters Destinee and Keandra Shelby, the Black State Fair aims to empower, celebrate and promote "the talents, achievements, and economic growth of Black entrepreneurs."

EXPERIMENTAL JAZZ SHOW SEPT. 19

The recently launched Experimental Jazz on Lafond Series continues with a concert on Sept. 19 at Zion Community Commons in the Midway neighborhood. The concert will feature JC Sanford, Anthony Cox and Davu Seru. JC Sanford applies a unique approach to the trombone, essentially transforming the instrument into a hipper realm of trombone-ness. This is what Jimi Hendrix or Frank Zappa would have sounded like had they picked up the trombone instead of the guitar. Anthony Cox, a local legend who needs no introduction to jazz aficionados, has recorded and performed with a range of stellar musicians such as John Scofield, Joe Lovano and Pat Metheny. Davu Seru uses his creative energy at the drum kit in fascinating ways, carrying on the tradition of avant-garde drumming while also taking it in new directions. Tickets \$15.

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MAKE THE TWIN CITIES MORE BIRD-FRIENDLY

Birds collide with windows on homes as frequently as those on office towers. Consider making your windows more bird-friendly.

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Cradling the Mississippi River on either side, the Twin Cities are a critical, yet hazardous, resting place for migrating birds. An estimated 40 million birds migrated through the Mississippi River flyway on their way to northern breeding grounds this spring – navigating obstacles in the human-built environment as they flew. The flyway is one of four major migratory corridors in the US.

Jeannine Thiele is the interim president of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. She said, "A 2019 study revealed that North America's bird population has declined by almost 30% since 1970. Responsible for this are climate change, habitat loss, pesticide use, cat predation, and collisions with glass."

These mortality numbers are so big that they're hard to wrap one's head around. But bird deaths, at least in the last category, can be prevented one crash at a time without even leaving home.

FLY BY NIGHT

Most migratory birds travel at night, relying in part on the moon and stars to guide them. Night flying has other advantages too: the air is smoother, the temperatures cooler, and the predators fewer. But there is one huge disadvantage – artificial light attracts and confuses birds. When they see it, birds often crash into wherever the



What can one person do to help birds avoid collisions with windows? Close your curtains at night, especially during the migration season, to reduce light spread. Make sure outdoor light is directed downward and use minimally. And consider using window markings. (Photo courtesy of Feather Friendly by Tony Stoddard)

light is coming from: houses, office towers, transit shelters, car windows, greenhouses, solariums, and skyways. Collisions with windows on homes are about as frequent as collisions with those on office towers.

So, what can one person do? Close your curtains at night, especially during the migration season, to reduce light spread. And give consideration to your

STOP THE 'THUD'

Local examples of buildings with bird-safe glass include the Bell Museum, Bakken Museum, Minnehaha Academy, Minneapolis Central Library, Allianz Field, and Hennepin County Government Center skyways.

choice of outdoor lighting. Beams of light should only be directed downward, never up into trees, and used minimally as safety needs require.

FLY BY DAY

Daytime flight has its challenges too. Thiele said, "Birds can't interpret glass. They 'see' the reflections of trees, shrubs,



Birds can't interpret glass. They 'see' the reflections of trees, shrubs and open skies as real – and try to fly on through. A bird's first interaction with glass is usually fatal, so there isn't much opportunity for learning. Migrating and juvenile birds are especially susceptible to window strikes."

Jannine Thiele

and open skies as real – and try to fly on through. A bird's first interaction with glass is usually fatal, so there isn't much opportunity for learning. Migrating and juvenile birds are especially susceptible to window strikes."

Thiele continued, "Glass looks transparent, reflective, or dark to birds depending on available light. Markers placed on the outside surface of windows makes glass visible to them, while still being transparent to the human eye. Markers placed inside windows are not nearly as effective."

Research from the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has shown that birds will not fly through spaces less than two inches high and two inches wide. This is the recommended spacing for marking windows to help birds "see" glass, and there are a variety of products to choose from.

MAKE YOUR OWN BIRD-SAFE GLASS

Feather Friendly (www.featherfriendly.com) is a Canadian company that has been designing window markings to prevent bird collisions since 2006. Visit the small-scale DIY section on their website to see a variety of adhesive products that can

BIRD-FRIENDLY >> 11

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FROGTOWN GREEN

BY RENNIE GAITHER



Enjoying the summer? On balance we've had our share of sweltering heat, counterpointed by consistent downpours and bratty algae blooms. Last month saw the hottest day on earth ever recorded. Global warming due to man-made climate change is a wicked problem. Yet scientists are using a critical tool to better understand and combat climate risks, one that's quickly become ubiquitous in our lives: Artificial intelligence (AI). AI applications are among the most promising tools in the fight. However, critics have warned against AI's increasing environmental impacts, setting up a kind of "green dilemma" for this highly-touted technology.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF AI

AI's use in sustainability projects has grown and evolved exponentially. Researchers and businesses have developed an array of AI applications, from interpretation of large datasets gathered from satellite imagery to track global methane emissions to shifting through spectroscopic data to improve detection of unharvest-

AI'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

ed rare earth minerals and metals. These metals have wide-ranging industrial applications for sustainable technologies, including manufacture of magnets for wind turbines, inexpensive solar panels, and lithium batteries for electric vehicles.

AI has helped improve waste recycling, reforestation, and a myriad of agricultural needs such as soil/crop monitoring and pathogen detection, among others. Environmental scientists use AI to enhance climate modeling, improve methods and data gathering in research, and speed interpretation of large datasets to improve policy quality.

AI'S DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

AI makes for a phenomenal data sifter, but it's an energy hog! The technology's environmental footprint is huge. Researchers at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst reported that training a couple large AI models can emit over 626,000 pounds of carbon dioxide – which equates to five times the emissions of an average American car over its lifetime.

AI technology is also hoggish on resource consumption like fresh water. Data centers house large numbers of computers driven by AI models that sift through data and provide a designed response according to the model. This complex of machinery consumes vast amounts of water for

cooling.

This may be particularly acute where data centers are located in water scarce regions. A researcher at the University of California, Riverside found that training a software model using GPT-3 in a data center evaporated 185,000 gallons of water. GPT-3 is an AI technology that processes text input to generate natural language. You know, things like stories, news reporting, even poetry. Explosive growth in AI use will only exacerbate these problems without creative new ways to make AI use more sustainable.

AI COUNTERMEASURES

One novel idea is to turn AI modeling on itself. Aware of the sustainability problem, some data scientists are using a program called Carbontracker to monitor AI training sessions' environmental impact to some degree. The program is reported to be able to predict energy consumption in these sessions, the carbon footprint, and length of training time. This at least can begin to create baselines for implementing energy reduction measures.

Another ongoing initiative is to design more efficient AI models and algorithms to speed up training to reduce resource use. Better management strategies to balance computing and non-computing resources can further sustainability ef-

forts, especially in terms of taking into account resource disparities geographically. It wouldn't make sense to increase water footprints of data centers in states in the southwest that are already grappling with chronic overuse of water resources and drought conditions.

MITIGATE CLIMATE RISKS WITH TREES

We can also take measures to help make our communities more sustainable and climate risk resilient. Chief among them is planting trees. Trees are a natural system for pulling carbon dioxide and other pollution particulates out of the atmosphere efficiently. Unlike AI, which is at least a step away from fighting the effects of climate change, trees directly contribute. Simply, trees store captured CO2 and release oxygen into the atmosphere. Additionally, trees can help prevent flooding and provide wildlife with food and nesting sources.

Frogtown homeowners can now choose a tree variety for free fall planting by Frogtown Green volunteers. Learn more at:

<https://www.frogtowngreen.com/copy-of-urban-forestry>

Rennie Gaither is a Frogtown Green volunteer. Frogtown Green is a resident-led and volunteer-powered environmental initiative in St Paul's most diverse neighborhood. If you'd like to know more, browse frogtowngreen.com or call 651-757-5970.

BIRD-FRIENDLY >> from 10

be applied to home windows.

In partnership with Feather Friendly, the American Bird Conservancy offers a product called ABC Bird Tape. The white or light blue vinyl tape can be applied to windows in long strips or patterns of squares. The tape lasts an average of four years, and is translucent enough to let natural light through.

Acopian Bird Savers (www.acopi-

anbirdsavers.org) are a simple solution made of parachute cord hung in two-inch strips across the width of a window. Note that cord should be cut longer than window length, as rain will cause cord shrinkage. Acopian Bird Savers can be purchased ready-made through their website, or you can make them yourself.

And the most economical solution of all? Apply tempera paint (available at most art supply and craft stores) free-hand with a brush or sponge, or use a stencil. Tempera paint is long-lasting, rain-proof



and non-toxic, but wipes off easily with a

The combination of glass amended by Feather Friendly decals, and a cat that is kept indoors, combine to make a more bird friendly home environment. (Photo courtesy of Feather Friendly by Sara Sharp)

damp rag and a little elbow-grease.

The hawk decals many of us thought were sufficient for alerting birds don't work, it turns out. If you have a window or windows prone to bird strikes, try one of these other methods to prevent bird deaths at home.

HAMLIN MIDWAY COALITION

BY JEN HADLEY



My obsession with picking up trash in the neighborhood began late 2019 with adopting five nearby drains with the Adopt A Drain (<https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org/>) that Rennie so nicely wrote about in the May 2024 edition of the Monitor. After I began noticing the trash and natural debris in the drains almost everywhere I looked, I saw trash that I didn't want to end up in the Mississippi River.

Since June 2020, I've been part of a group effort to get together about once a month and pick up trash in the Hamline Midway neighborhood, which has resulted in 1,500 pounds of trash removed from our streets each year (that's roughly 200 bags of trash!), preventing all this from polluting our waterways. Annually, about 100 Midway residents have spent about 200 hours picking up trash from 2020 until now. It's a great way to get to know some neighbors, maybe even develop some friendships, and be active outside!

As residents of the Mississippi River watershed, what gets washed down storm drains ends up in the river. You may not think about this too much, but leaves and other natural debris like grass clippings contribute to excess nutrients to the river, which is bad for fish, bugs, and other animals that live in the water. Sometimes it even leads to less oxygen available for fish and other things that live in lakes, and we don't want that!

So, if grass clippings blow from the boulevard into the street or when leaves

CLEAN STREETS LEAD TO CLEAN WATER



Hamline Midway residents Jennifer Hadley, Zack Messenger and Kevin Sands (co-organizer of these events with Jen) gear up to clean the streets. (Photo submitted)



The Midway clean-up squad was out on Saturday, July 13 at the abandoned CVC parking lot. The next events will be Aug. 10 and Oct. 12. A September event is being planned in partnership with Allianz Field. (Photo submitted)

fall from trees in the boulevard in autumn, be sure to sweep or rake those up to keep our water clean and aquatic life happy.

To make a bigger impact, a fun thing to do is borrow a storm drain stenciling kit from Friends of the Mississippi River (<https://fmr.org/st-paul-storm-drain-outing-kits>) and spray paint "Keep Em' Clean, Drains to River" on your nearby drains. This serves as a reminder to anyone walking nearby not only to help clear drains of leaves and trash, but also that whatever goes down those drains ends up in the river.

Finally, a note about something that is necessary for people to stay safe in winter but is not good for our waterways: salt and chemical deicers. We have to use salt or other deicers to keep our sidewalks and roads safe in winter, but we can be more careful about the amount of salt we use or use an alternative to salt.

Did you know that just one teaspoon of salt or a chemical deicer permanently pollutes five gallons of fresh water? One option I saw someone use, and I then adopted, are black oil sunflower seeds. Not only are you creating a nonslip surface that absorbs heat and assists with melting, you're also feeding neighborhood birds! You could also try sand and even kitty litter!

Join me and other neighbors in making a difference locally – in your own neighborhood – and clean the streets in order to ensure we have clean water! If you're on Facebook, join the "Keep the Midway Clean" group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/keepthamidwayclean/>). You can also email info@hamlinmidway.org to get in touch with Justin Lewandowski, Hamline Midway Coalition's Organizing Director.

Kent Krueger brings readers back to Tamarack County

20th book in Cork O'Connor series releases Aug. 20

By JAN WILLMS

With the 20th book in his Cork O'Connor mystery series ready to be published on Aug. 20, 2024, local author William Kent Krueger took some time to ruminate on his career.

"When I think of every writer I know, none of us believed that after that first book we wrote, there would be 15, 20 or more books to follow," he said.

With his latest offering, "Spirit Crossing," Krueger takes his readers back to Tamarack County, Iron Lake, Crow Point and the house on Gooseberry Lane.

The half-Anishinaabe, half-Irish O'Connor's children are grown now, but their lives are still connected to the small town of Aurora where they grew up. Even Annie, the daughter who has spent many years working in Guatemala, is back home.

"A good series continues to grow its characters, yet they remain the same. It's like watching your family grow," Krueger said. "Writers try to give their readers people they care about." And for Krueger, that includes many familiar characters as well as the introduction of new ones who interact with the O'Connor clan.

In his latest book, Krueger digs into the tragedy of missing Indigenous women.

"You can't deal with any Indigenous culture in this country or any other country without becoming aware of all the issues they have to deal with," Krueger said. "A lot of stories arise about issues. For a long time I have been aware of the tragedy of missing Indigenous people. The Natives

have known about it for a long time. Only now is the White population becoming more aware of it.

"When I was looking for the next story for the Cork series, I decided this was what I was going to write about." Krueger said he checked in with his friends in the Ojibwa community to be sure that as a White man, he had their blessing to deal with this story. "To a person, they said to go ahead," he said. "So I have done my best to bring these issues to what is essentially a White demographic and write about what happens not just in this nation, but in other nations around the world." Krueger cited the negative treatment of Indigenous people in the past in Canada and New Zealand, where the government has recently acknowledged all the horrors the Maori, in particular, faced. "Indigenous people everywhere are threatened and challenged in so many ways," he said.

In "Spirit Crossing," Krueger has simultaneous stories taking place. "I look for a braiding of the stories, so they all come together as one solid story line," he said. "I don't know why I do that - it's just the way I tell stories. And there are so many to tell."

He said it has been a long time since he had written about Annie, one of Cork's daughters, so he decided to bring her back in this book. "It comes naturally to tell a story from different viewpoints, but the series is often written from Cork's point of view," Krueger said. "This book has a different perspective."

Krueger said there are several ways to create suspense in a book. "The most effective way is to ask a question and not answer it right away or to pose a threat and not resolve it right away. It is that

space between asking a question and answering it or posing a threat and resolving it that true suspense arises.

"I try to create suspense in as many ways as I can. I am not always putting people in danger," Krueger continued. "Of course I do that, but that's not the only way I try to create a compelling mystery."

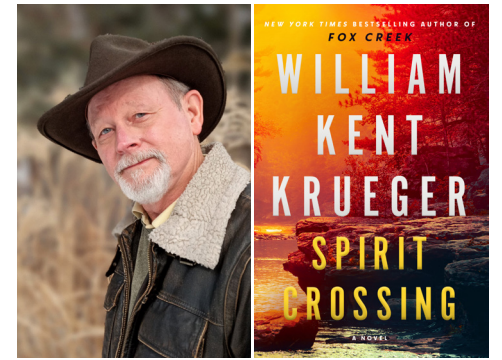
According to Krueger, he is well aware of the familiarity with characters and place that are such important parts of his series of Cork O'Connor books. "Readers have come to love Tamarack County and embrace all the characters, not just Cork and his family, but other characters they connect with."

Krueger said "Spirit Crossing" deals with a difficult subject, and he wanted to give it the attention and seriousness it deserves. "But I am a storyteller," he said. "It's what I do. So even when I am creating a story that might be difficult for my readers to read, I know it is the path I should be on."

FILM OR TV NEXT FOR CORK O'CONNOR SERIES

Krueger is moving forward on the process of turning the Cork O'Connor series to either film or television. He said he signed an option a year ago, then the Hollywood strike occurred, so nothing happened for several months. Now he is taking two producers on a trip up North to visit the Iron Range, attend a powwow and a blueberry festival. "I'm looking forward to it," he said. "I want them to see northern Minnesota through the eyes of a guy who loves it."

He said it will be a challenge to put together a show about Cork, who is not a detective or a cop. He is a private investigator, but the stories don't revolve as much around that work as they do the



Kent Krueger's latest book, "Spirit Crossing," will be released Aug. 20.

personal connection he often has with a case.

"I want to ask them how they chose my work, from all the books that are out there," Krueger said. "What is it they believe they can use from my books to reach viewers everywhere?"

Krueger said he will wait to see what happens. At one time he had thought Sam Shepard or Ed Harris would be good choices to play Cork, but Shepard is deceased and Harris too old to fit the role. "I think it would be best to get an unknown face to play Cork," he said.

"If it does go into production, I think the most intriguing question will be who is going to play Henry." Henry is the elderly Anishinaabe healer who lives at Crow Point and provides a sense of peace in the stories.

Meanwhile, Krueger is at work on his next Cork O'Connor novel, which is set to be published in the fall of 2025. "I was putting it aside for awhile, because I didn't have an idea for the story. And then suddenly I did," he said.

Once he finishes that, he will start to work on his next stand-alone book. He has written three so far. "This should keep me busy for the next few years," Krueger said.

PEACE BUBBLES

BY MELVIN GILES
peacebubbles@q.com



"We now stand together on that mountain of which we never thought we would see." - Sheila Jackson Lee.

"Don't take America and the values reflected in our form of government for granted. And never forget that in our democracy, the government is not 'them' - it is 'us.'" - John Glenn

"I cannot tell the truth about anything unless I confess being a student, growing and learning something new every day. The more I learn, the clearer my view of the world becomes." - Sonia Sanchez

Hello Monitor readers,

What a big difference a month can make! July was definitely one of the most challenging and exciting rollercoaster months this year. It feels like there is energy forcing us re-look or re-think how we lean into and stretch our values, faith, and living-beliefs; particularly, where our kids and young people are concerned, just as our parents and grandparents did before, doing the best they could for us and the good of the country. Today, however, we are learning it is really about doing the best that we know, in order to do our best. We have to take time to listen more carefully and use our internal filters of right and wrong, good and bad, and of truths and lies.

We can also take deep breaths and reflect on the Four Agreements:

1. Speak Your Truth, Be Impeccable With Your Word,
2. Don't Take Things Personally,
3. Don't Make Assumptions, and
4. Do Your Best Knowing That Our Best Changes From Time To Time.

STUDENT GARDENERS REFLECT ON REPARATIONS



Urban Farm and Garden Alliance workers this summer include: Respect Djunga, Preston Meyers, Caris Worsham, Dr. Claudia May, Megan Hayton, Shari Cueto, and Megan Phinney. (Photo submitted)

STUDENT GARDENERS

This month, I'm sharing brief expressions from the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance (UFGA)'s summer gardening work-study team from Bethel-U. This year's team is known as the Golden Team. Their expressions were prompted by a question during their early June orientation period.

"One possible definition of a creative reparation is something done to promote the healing and flourishing of a community impacted by historical injustice that does not necessarily involve monetary compensation. For example, providing people living in food deserts with the knowledge and resources to grow their own food promotes food justice and helps to create vibrant communities. My experience working with the Urban Farm and Garden Alliance this summer has deepened my appreciation for how gardening and the sharing of the harvest brings peo-

ple together and cultivates a culture of radical hospitality and generosity." - Caris

"The privilege I've had working with UFGA for this summer has been nothing short of inspiring. Connecting with different organizations and people through a shared prospect and love for gardening - while also making a difference to combat food insecurity and injustice - has only grown my passion for social work and community outreach after my studies are done at Bethel. And my own interpretation of creative reparations has molded and shifted this summer. Reparations should be more than just giving money. There needs to be an emphasis on giving back and promoting opportunities for those who have been harmed, so there can be reparative generational flourishing." - Preston

"To me creative reparations is the United States being more intentional about listening to the communities that are demanding reparations, and doing ex-


actly as they ask. I don't believe reparations should be a matter of negotiations as it currently is. This summer I got the opportunity to learn more about the efforts for reparations being spearheaded by the descendants' inhabitants of Old Rondo. From what I understand there is currently an initiative by Reconnect Rondo to get the government to build a land bridge over I-94 as a form of reparations for the destruction of the old Rondo community. (More information can be found at <https://reconnectrondo.com/landbridge/>) Learning about this initiative, I found myself feeling very hopeful and inspired by the agency and effort going into making this land bridge a reality. However, these feelings were compromised when I found that the government is only willing to contribute a partial amount instead of the full cost of building this land bridge. This is something I find myself getting very frustrated about. Why is it that the people who have been wronged still have to settle and compromise for less than what they are owed? Why does it feel like the ones who caused the harm are the ones who have more of a say when it comes to how reparations should be handled. Something about this doesn't sit right with me." - Respect

HAVE THE BEST AUGUST EVER!

Enjoy our State Fair, which is our Great Gathering and appreciate the Summer Olympics, which is a celebration of world citizenship. And, stay optimistic and don't buy into the negative hype; or, as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. once said, "Keep the faith, baby!"

May Peace Be In the Rondo, Frogtown, Hamline/Midway, Como, and Surrounding Communities... May Peace Be In Our Homes and Communities... May Peace Prevail On Earth (MPPOE).

**COMO PARK
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



BY ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher

NEW WEIGHT ROOM DONATED BY THIELEN FOUNDATION



Adam and Caitlin Thielen joined Como students for the dedication of the school's new weight room. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

Recognizing the need to replace outdated equipment in the school's weight room, Como Park Athletic Director Koua Yang placed a call to the executive director of the Thielen Foundation. Months later, that outreach resulted in the weight room's full remodel featuring brand new equipment, lighting, flooring, paint and unique Como decor.

The Thielen Foundation was established in 2018 by NFL wide receiver Adam Thielen and his wife Caitlin Thielen. Born and raised in Minnesota, Thielen was a two-time Pro Bowl selection while playing for the Minnesota Vikings. He currently plays for the Carolina Panthers.

The Thielen family is grateful for the support and love they've received in Minnesota and have responded by generously giving back to communities across the state. Their goal is to "create programs that serve, educate and inspire individuals so they're equipped and empowered to reach their full potential in life."

Adam and Caitlin arrived at Como on the morning of July 19, 2024 to see student athletes awestruck by the space. They

visited with Cougar students and staff, presented Thielen Foundation workout t-shirts, and then listened to remarks from Yang, Como principal Dr. Brown, and a couple students including 2024 graduate Isis Davis.

"I wish my teams had a weight room like this!" Davis said. "This gift is amazing, and I hope the student athletes that use this space will treat it with the upmost respect."

Adam Thielen concluded the dedication with inspirational words before dozens of photos with happy and thankful recipients. "It's important for us that when we do these spaces, that it looks nice and gives you everything you possibly need to help you reach your full potential," Thielen said.

PUERTO RICO ADVENTURE

Como social studies teacher Justin

Mann and three additional adult chaperones accompanied 17 students to Puerto Rico for seven days of immersive experiences as part of an EF Tour (Education First). The group returned to St. Paul on July 1 with a rich appreciation for the island and its culture, geography, and history.

The group - a mix of grade levels at Como - also had a lot of fun and bonded through their travel to the U.S. territory in the Caribbean. Based in San Juan, there were daily bus rides to different parts of the island for unique lessons and adventures.

Puerto Rico's varying terrain made it possible to hike through El Yunque National Forest in the morning and swim at Luquillo Beach in the afternoon. El Yunque is the only tropical rain forest in the U.S. national forest system.

An engaging historical overview of the island's indigenous people, Spanish colonization, slavery, and U.S. annexation was provided at Hacienda La Esperanza. Other days included activities such as a Salsa dancing class, a cooking class in Ponce, touring El Morro (Spanish fort from 1500s), and historic Old San Juan sites.

An unforgettable highlight for all travelers was the snorkeling excursion in La Parguera followed by swimming in the bioluminescent bay.

825 ARTS >> from 1

tival on Aug. 25, 2024 as 825 Arts (pronounced 8-2-5).

Tyler Olsen-Highness, executive director of the project since 2019, explained why the organization has rebranded. The new name was chosen to move beyond Queen Victoria's colonial legacy, but also to give the space a more personal appeal. Despite limited pushback, the idea of changing the name was underway for as long as the organization has existed.

Olsen-Highness expressed optimism about the emerging art space and its potential to reach people of disparate backgrounds. "We think everyone's an artist," Olsen-Highness said, a philosophy that carries over to the many possibilities this space will provide. From painting pictures to open mic performances, and even double-dutch jump rope, people from all walks of life will be welcome to explore their artistic endeavors.

Some of the many activities offered include MC Summer Camp, Summer Art BBQs, and Minecraft meetups, with many more yet to come. With a capacity of up to 200 people, the space will lend itself to various uses and will be available to rent. Using both standard and stadium seating arrangements, the theater space will be flexible for both intimate gatherings

and large audiences. Olsen-Highness states that the space, while extensively renovated, maintains much of the building's historical character.

The upcoming Frogtown Arts Festival, a collaboration with 825 Arts and the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, will not only herald the opening of 825 Arts but will also provide a homegrown community that will ensure the location's role as a neighborhood mainstay. The festival will include local artists, musicians (including Lewiee Blaze), and food vendors. The event will take place from 1 to 8 p.m.; admission is free.

While focusing primarily on youth arts opportunities, intergenerational outreach is paramount to the organization's goals. Olsen-Highness has stressed that the organization employs various public relations strategies to gain mass appeal for people of all ages. Social media is certainly a viable choice for getting in touch with the younger crowd, but the media campaign will also include direct advertising at other venues and community events.

Dantes Ha, healthcare architect and board member of 825 Arts, reaffirmed the organization's mission of creating "a vibrant neighborhood where the arts welcome, heal, transform and build power for the people of Frogtown and Rondo." Alongside his leadership position on the board, Ha has offered insight by highlighting the importance of community land-

marks. Saint Agnes Church, a place of great importance to Ha's upbringing, was used in a test pilot for the organization's Minecraft program. The program will engage with elders in the community about places where they grew up and have youth teams recreate those places on a dedicated Minecraft server. The goal is to create a virtual representation of the surrounding neighborhood in which visitors can explore, socialize, and create digital art.

Community members Jay Kistler and Haley Wagner-Sweirs have expressed support for the project and look forward to the benefits it will provide for the Frogtown-Rondo area. Wagner-Sweirs is particularly excited to see the revitalization of this historic location and greater accessibility to theater in general. "More arts, less car dealerships!" said Kistler, eager to see the emerging space as a step towards sustainable living and healthy urban renewal.

The broader Twin Cities Metropolitan area appears to share this commitment. Over \$7.25 million has been raised for 825 Arts from various arts organizations and nonprofits, such as the Knight Foundation and Twin Cities LISC, in addition to a grant from the State of Minnesota. This support not only showcases a widespread desire to expand the arts but also a widespread faith in the ability of this project to bring people into this historically underserved community.

"The creativity and imagination of

FROGTOWN ARTS FESTIVAL AUG. 25

The yearly Frogtown Arts Festival is always a blast, and this year's event is right around the corner! On Aug. 25, from 1-8 p.m., the street outside 825 University Avenue will explode with art, food, and music. This year, the event is bigger than ever, and includes the interior of 825 Arts's freshly opened building, which will host performances and workshops for festival goers.

The festival will feature dozens of local artists, who will sell work and run workshops throughout the festival. Alongside them, the festival also features a huge musician lineup for a bodacious show, as well as a contest to determine who makes the best egg rolls on University Avenue!

In 2009, the community joined together to save 825 University Avenue from being turned into a parking lot. This event recognizes the work of Frogtown Neighborhood Association to save the building.

our community and the ability to connect through them is what we're about," said Olsen-Highness.

For more information about the Frogtown Arts Festival or to get involved, visit <https://www.frogtownaf.org/>



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TOAST TO 10 YEARS – Urban Growler celebrates its 10th anniversary on Friday, July 19, 2024. Back row (left to right): Steve Badger, founding member; Dr. Bruce Corrie, Concordia University; Chad Kulas, Midway Chamber; Mike Logan, founding member. Front Row: Angela Casselton, Creative Enterprise Zone; Catherine Reid Day, Creative Enterprise Zone; Bo Thao-Urabe, University of Minnesota; Jill Pavlak, Urban Growler; Deb Loch, Urban Growler; Jennifer Galus, founding member; Diana Pierce, retired KARE-11 anchor. (Photo submitted)

TIDBITS

DIRECTOR OF RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY

Pang Yang has been named director of the Ramsey County Library after serving as deputy director since 2021. In her new role, Yang will provide the overall vision, long-range strategic planning, leadership and direction for seven library locations and more than 100 employees.

NEXT RAMSEY COUNTY MANAGER

Following an extensive national search, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has selected Ling Becker to be the next county manager. The county manager is the chief administrative officer of the county responsible to the county board. The county manager is responsible for implementing policy and overseeing daily operations of the county and county staff.

ELECTION

A RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION ABOUT ELECTION

Bethlehem Lutheran in the Midway invites the community into a Respectful Conversation that will focus not on changing minds, but on softening hearts while discussing our future together.

“Conversations about elections feel like pick-a-side and fight-it-out discussions. With all the news about this campaign we have so many emotions – and so much to respond to that it’s hard to know where to begin. When we do talk about the election we can leave feeling worse about the people we disagree with, and sometimes worse about ourselves. There is a way to talk about it all that feels open and honest. You can actually be heard and learn about people with other perspectives. Thousands of Minnesotans have participated in Respectful Conversations since 2012. These facilitated, structured conversations are designed not to change minds, but soften hearts on topics that divide us,” say organizers.

Experience a Respectful Conversation for yourself on Wednesday, Aug. 14, from 6-8:30 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran in the Midway (436 Roy Street North). This congregation has chosen to be a source of peace, cooling the heat of divisive conversations through a Respectful Conversation. Join in to learn how you can have a great conversation that builds empathy even over division.

Reserve your spot by registering online at <http://bit.ly/signupRC>

The Respectful Conversations Project is a program of the Minnesota Council of Churches designed to strengthen civic life in Minnesota. Congregations throughout

Minnesota have hosted conversations that explore issues through the lens of deeply held convictions while maintaining, even enhancing, relationships among those who disagree.

The Minnesota Council of Churches’ mission is to manifest unity in the church and to build the common good in the world. The Minnesota Council of Churches programs align with two broad categories: welcoming refugees and community engagement and civic life. For more information, visit www.mnchurches.org

SILLY QUESTION SATURDAY

Majority in the Middle is hosting three “Silly Question Saturday” events this fall, to help introduce the public to the state capitol and demystify the legislative process. “The state capitol can be an intimidating place. It’s big, it’s easy to get lost, and it’s full of customs and rules and norms that seem... well... abnormal.” said Shannon Watson, executive director of Majority in the Middle. “So we’re hosting an opportunity to come learn more about the legislative process from the people who know it best, before the next legislative session begins.”

These free events are appropriate for students, citizens, issue advocates, new (or new-ish) lobbyists and staff – anyone who wants to learn more about what goes on during a legislative session and why.

Events are being held 10:30 a.m. to noon on: Aug. 17, Sept. 21 and Oct. 26. The events are free, but space is limited and pre-registration is required. Registration, information on parking, what we mean by “silly questions” and the experts helping to lead the conversation can be found on the Majority in the Middle website (www.majoritymiddle.com/events).

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