



Toy Library
opens third
location
» 2



Sixty-two sections make up the 32.5-foot-tall loon sculpture with a 90-foot wingspan that was recently installed on the southeast corner of Snelling and University. "The Calling" was made by artist Andy Scott, fabricated by Dyson-Womack, and transported in pieces from Los Angeles to St. Paul. (Photo by Aurora Pass)

Will shelter guests be safe?

Model Cities eyes move of 25 beds to Central Baptist

By JANE MCCLURE

The move of 25 overnight shelter beds from downtown St. Paul to Central Baptist Church, 420 N. Roy St., takes effect Nov. 12, 2024. Central Baptist, which has operated different shelter programs for more than a decade, will work with the nonprofit Model Cities to house the Safe Space program.

But will shelter guests be safe? That's a concern some neighbors have raised.

The shelter in the Merriam Park neighborhood takes the place of some of the 64 beds that are at Ramsey County Government Center East, 160 E. Kellogg Blvd. County officials will put that building on the market so it will not be a shelter in the future.

Central Baptist could replace the 64 beds that have been downtown. That would require a conditional use permit from the city, which is in process. Permits are required based on number of shelter beds as well as underlying zoning.

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'The Calling' stands 32.5 feet tall with a 90-foot wingspan Loon lands at Allianz Field

By MATTHEW JOHNSON

"This is the area that I grew up. This is the area that drives Midway and Snelling-University. It's good to have something that represents and a part of the community," remarked District 65A Representative Samakab Hussein during the unveiling of "The Calling" on Oct. 17, 2024.

Minnesota United FC owner Bill McGuire and community leaders were present to officially unveil the giant loon sculpture at the corner of University and Snelling avenues. Over 5,000 stainless steel



We can't let this [sculpture] be the only thing that happens here in this Hamline-Midway neighborhood. We have to make sure that we have a thriving community and a thriving neighborhood and a thriving business corner here that augments and compliments this wonderful investment."

Senator Sandy Pappas



feathers adorn the loon that stands 32.5 feet tall with an 89-foot wingspan. "The Calling" project was funded by the William and Nadine McGuire Family Foundation with the help of the Minnesota State Arts Council and Snelling Midway Redevelopment.

Other local leaders present were State Senators Sandy Pappas (District 65) and Fong Hawj (District 67). Joining Hussein from the Minnesota House were Leon M. Lillie (44B), Ethan Cha (47B), and Kaohly Vang Her (64A). St. Paul Council members Anika Bowie (Ward 1) and Mitra Jalali (Ward 4) were both present, along with Mayor Melvin Carter.

Mayor Carter reflected, "As we think about just the phrase 'Minnesota united' that is the calling that this block, that this parcel of land represents." He added, "The Calling' comes to us at an important time, and it's a time right now where we're called to think about our world. We're called to think about our city. We're even called to think about this block that we stand on right now differently than we have before."

LOON LANDS » 7

Can Snelling-University area be fixed?

Citizens speak out during series of meetings

By JANE MCCLURE

Open-air drug use, crime and loitering at and around the Snelling-University intersection have community members demanding change. The upcoming expansion of the troubled Kimball Court single-room occupancy building, and an officer-involved shooting have raised more red flags.

Area residents and business owners were to meet again Nov. 7, 2024 to discuss Kimball Court, where an expansion is planned on the former Star Market site. Behavior of some Kimball Court residents and visitors has become a flash point for neighborhood complaints. That meeting was held after the Monitor deadline.

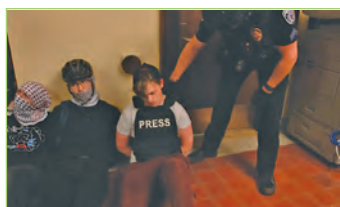
The St. Paul City Council Oct. 8 okayed \$335 million for owner-operator Beacon Interfaith Action's expansion and

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Library fight comes to an end, historic structure will be torn down

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Journalists under fire in America, latest incident at U of M campus

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Meeting the AI moment: expert advises using it for ideas not answers

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Minnesota Toy Library opens third metro location

Members save money on toys while reducing waste

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The Minnesota Toy Library (MTL) is a toy lending program for families with children ages birth to five years. Members can check-out up to five toys at a time, and take them home for 2-4 weeks. And now, thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, there's a new location on the east side of St. Paul.

The mission of the toy library is three-fold: to reduce waste, promote development, and build community.

Rebecca Nutter is MTL's executive director. She said, "We started lending toys nine years ago, using public library meeting rooms. When our toy inventory got too big to be mobile, lending events were held in my garage. In 2017, we established our first brick and mortar in South Minneapolis."

REDUCE WASTE

In the last generation, the state of Minnesota has seen a gradual transformation from a system that manages solid waste – to one that recognizes the complete life cycle of materials. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 80% of toys will end up in landfills or incinerators. This statistic highlights how critical it is to prioritize reduction and reuse strategies.

Nutter explained that the average American family spends \$485 annually on toys, most of which will end up in landfills or municipal incinerators. She said, "Through the toy library, families can access an almost unlimited collection of toys for as little as \$40/year. Annual membership is on a sliding scale from \$40-\$100."



The Minnesota Toy Library is for parents, grandparents, educators, occupational therapists, and mostly, for kids, to come and choose toys that are fun and that help them learn. MTL Executive Director Rebecca Nutter said, "We can't just keep consuming things. We need to do better." (Photo submitted)

The Minnesota Toy Library is really driven by a commitment to reduce waste. Nutter said, "We are passionate about re-using toys. Many of our toys come from families whose children have outgrown them. The toys are in great shape, and there's just no reason why they can't be re-used. Children ages birth to five change so quickly that they don't tend to wear their toys out."

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

MTL has more than 8,000 toys in their inventory, spread across their South Minneapolis, Northeast Minneapolis, and St. Paul locations. Members can visit any of the three locations. However, because it's still getting up and running, toys borrowed from the St. Paul location need to be returned there.

Toys come in as donations, are bought second-hand by staff, or sometimes bought new. If the toys are purchased second-hand, they're inspected for

GRANT FUNDS NEW LOCATION

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) awarded grant funding to the Minnesota Toy Library as part of their Waste Reduction and Reuse Grants Program. The purpose of the funding is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, reduce demand for resources, and reduce waste sent to landfills. With the \$50,200 grant, the Minnesota Toy Library was able to open a St. Paul location. At its now three locations in the Twin Cities, the Minnesota Toy Library provides families and educators a low cost way to borrow toys that expand play options for kids, and is less wasteful than buying new.

safety and washed thoroughly before becoming part of the community toy box.

Nutter said, "We don't have a large staff, so we educate our members about how to clean toys before returning them. We follow CDC recommendations, and advocate for green cleaners whenever possible. We encourage the kids to get involved, too; they learn about taking care of the planet by helping to clean their borrowed toys."

"No one likes borrowing a dirty toy. Always set aside time to clean toys well before returning them to the toy library. Wash hands before and after cleaning toys to help keep everybody safe."

The MTL inventory is separated into these categories: Adapted Toys, Board Games, Blocks, Dramatic Play, Fine Motor, Literacy, Large Motor, Math/Cognitive, Manipulatives, Music, Puzzles, Science/Sensory, Vehicles and more.

There is something for every stage of development in the first five years of a child's life.

BUILD COMMUNITY

The toy library offers opportunities for families to connect with each another

TOY LIBRARY >> 3

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By JANE MCCLURE

The Midway YMCA will double its child care capacity to about 280 children per day, with a new facility planned northeast of the main building. The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved needed variances Oct. 28, 2024. Approval allows for demolition of a building converted for child care, and construction at 530 Wheeler St. N.

The YMCA is at 1761 University Ave.

The child care project is complicated by its location, which is largely within the Green Line light rail's Fairview Avenue station area. Being in a designated station area brings additional regulations for redevelopment.

The Y's Child and Family Wellbeing Center of Excellence project needs two variances. One is for the size of parking and entrance drives. Surface parking areas and entrance drive that are accessory to a principal building or use may occupy no more than 60 feet of the total lot frontage; 110 feet are proposed for a 50-foot variance.

The second variance is for floor area ratio (FAR), which is the measurement of a building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot/parcel that the building is located on. It is calculated by dividing the total area of the building by the total area of the parcel. In St. Paul, it is typically used to encourage more dense development. A minimum FAR of .855 is required and .36 is proposed for a variance of .495.

During land use planning for the Green Line more than a decade ago, station areas were established to promote

Midway Y daycare center grows



A drawing shows what the new building will look like at 530 Wheeler St. N.

density in new developments. BZA members agreed that the project is appropriate for the area and is the type of high-intensity use that was envisioned during station area planning. That justifies granting the variances.

BZA staff recommended approval of the variances, noting the constraints of the site, state requirements for day care facilities, and the added regulations that come with being in a light rail station area. Hamline Midway Coalition made no recommendation and no one from the public spoke in support or opposition.

Midway Y Executive Director David Dominick, and Brian Kirk, director of de-

sign and construction for the umbrella organization YMCA of the North, described the project. Y officials have used part of the Wheeler Street building for several years for school-age child care. But the building is dated and isn't compliant with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Past printing uses left chemical contamination in soil around and beneath the building. The Midway Y installed a vapor mitigation and monitoring system to ensure safe conditions. Tearing down the structure will allow for contamination cleanup.

"We want to provide a quality expe-

Variances approved for new building along Wheeler St N

rience for child care," Dominick said. It would expand on current services, which are for infants through school-age children.

The child care center would have about 60 staff members, doubling the current staff.

Dominick also pointed out that the YMCA as an organization is one of the largest day care providers in Minnesota.

Easements on the north and south sides of the property, and design requirements for child care facilities also drive the need for variances, including the need for a one-story building, a state requirement that an outdoor play area be provided and a need for a safe drop-off and pickup area for children.

The new building will have 25,600 square feet of space, with a fenced playground of 5,500 square feet. It will have a total of 67 parking spaces, with 42 spaces on its south side and 25 on the north side.

Costs and a timeline for the new facility haven't been announced.

The structure at 570 N. Wheeler was built in 1949, with an addition in 1965. It housed Deluxe Check operations for many years, and later was home to Western Graphics.

The Y bought the Wheeler Street property in 2014 as part of the redevelopment of the old Midway Y. In that project, a 1915 building was replaced in 2016 with a new structure.

By JANE MCCLURE

The long fight to renovate and save the historic Hamline Midway Branch Library came to an end Oct. 31, 2024 as Ramsey County District Court Judge Stephen Smith ruled that a new library project can move ahead. The decision ends 16 months of litigation over the project.

The \$8.1 million project will be built on the current library site at 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. The project was set to start a year ago.

"I applaud this decision and look forward to finally fulfilling our promise of an accessible, safe, and modern public library that all of our Hamline-Midway families can enjoy," said Mayor Melvin Carter in a prepared statement.

"The Midway deserves major city investment in vibrant public spaces for the future of our diverse community," said Council President Mitra Jalali in a prepared statement. "I am thrilled that the Hamline-Midway Library will be rebuilt to better serve our neighborhood. This is a victory for all our residents."

Hamline Midway Library is one of three total libraries slated for transformation through Saint Paul Public Library's Transforming Libraries initiative.

"Libraries are essential spaces of belonging and connection in our city," said Library Director Maureen Hartman in a prepared statement. "We are so excited to honor the voices of our neighbors and deliver on this vision with the new Hamline Midway Library."

The project is anticipated to take 18 months for completion.

The Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch, begins in 1890 when Hale, a St. Paul attorney and property owner, wrote a clause into his will that left a bequest for the city to use funds from

Library fight comes to an end



The historic Hale Library at 1558 W Minnehaha Ave. will be demolished and a new facility built by the city for \$8.1 million following a court order. The project is expected to take 18 months to complete. The library has been closed since May 28, 2023.

his estate to build a free library and a free medical dispensary. The funds were to become available 25 years after his death. The Panic of 1893 and property value declines delayed his projects and his wife Mary had to provide support.

Two Hale libraries were built, one in Merriam Park and one in Hamline Mid-

way. The Hamline Midway building replaced small storefront libraries.

Architect Carl H. Buetow, who worked for the city in 1929, prepared three preliminary sketches for the building. One was chosen, construction began and the library opened in October 1930.

Renovate 1558 issued a statement ex-

Hale Library will be demolished in Midway and new one built for \$8.1 million

pressing disappointment in the decision, calling it "yet another blow to historic preservation in St. Paul." The preservationist group said Smith ignored judicial precedent in how the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA) should be applied in historic preservation matters.

"While MERA requires that demolition of historic resources is only appropriate when the defendant can demonstrate that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to such a step, the court wrongly concludes that alternatives under MERA are only prudent if they are the city's preferred alternative and that exploring alternatives is, itself, imprudent. The Judge also gives credence to the city's absurd argument that demolition of the library is consistent with its listing on the National Register due to social and community factors," the Renovate 1558 statement said.

The group also expressed disappointment that its argument comparing the Hamline Midway Library with the Riverview Branch Library were ignored. Riverview will be renovated as part of the Transforming Libraries project. Hamline Midway project planner LSE Architects brought forward a plan to renovate the existing library.

Renovate 1558 also made the point that the judge sided "with the political agendas of cities, such as the desire to spend valuable resources on new buildings when existing buildings can be successfully renovated to meet community needs."

TOY LIBRARY >> from 2

– supporting their children's development through play while reducing their impact on the environment. The new St. Paul location is in the lower level of the Progressive Baptist Church at 1505 Burns Avenue. The toy library is open on the first and third week of each month:

- Sunday 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday 5 – 8 p.m.

In addition to borrowing toys, members can also bring the following items to any of the toy library locations for recycling:

- Broken or whole crayons.
- Squeeze pouches: pouches must be empty, clean, and dry and have caps. All brands are accepted.

- Broken Hasbro toys and games.
- Broken Spin Master toys, games, and packaging.

- V-tech and LeapFrog electronic learning devices and electronic toys.
- Barbie®, Fisher-Price®, Matchbox® and MEGA™ toys.

Check out the new space, become a member, and celebrate with the Minnesota Toy Library as they bring reuse and toy

lending to St. Paul. Parking is available in the church parking lot. MTC bus routes 3A, 3B, 62 and 67 serve the area. Contact: stpaultoylibrary@gmail.com with any questions about hours, toy inventory, or membership.

New members can join the MTL on their first visit. No proof of income is required to join at any point along the sliding fee schedule.

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.

TOO MUCH COFFEE

BY TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN
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Photojournalist Linda Tirado, 42, is dying.

When she arrived in Minneapolis to cover the civil conflict after the murder of George Floyd, she had impact-resistant goggles, a respirator, and a large PRESS lanyard around her neck. Despite this, Linda found herself targeted by Minneapolis police officer Andrew Braun, who deliberately shot her in the face with a 40 mm impact projectile, instantly blinding her left eye and causing a traumatic brain injury on May 29, 2020.

That injury to her brain is killing her, and she recently announced she is in hospice care in Tennessee. Linda's husband is trying to cover the bills for her care. They have two children watching their mother die.

Tirado sued the Minneapolis police, and received \$600,000 as part of a settlement in 2022.

Last week, Communities United Against Police Brutality (4200 Cedar Ave. S.) launched a scholarship fund to honor Tirado. Four \$5,000 scholarships will be given in Linda's name to Minnesota photojournalism students each year. "These scholarships will ensure that Linda's legacy, bravery and service to the community are not forgotten and that others will follow in her footsteps," wrote CUAPB in a press release.

SHOCKING NUMBER OF THREATS

The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) recently surveyed 610 journalists who attended 26 IWMF safety trainings across 11 states. The data revealed a shocking number of threats to American journalists' safety and well-being, they report.

A decade ago, we would have been stunned to hear that these incidents are taking place in the United States, they point out.

Journalists experience physical violence, harassment, threats of gun violence, verbal attacks and sexual harassment while on assignment and in the workplace. While working as journalists:

- 36% (of 597) respondents reported being threatened with or experiencing physical violence
- 33% (of 566) respondents reported being threatened with or experiencing digital violence
- 28% (of 568) respondents reported legal threats or action against them
- 24% (of 582) respondents experienced sexual harassment and an additional 6% (of 582) were threatened with sexual violence

Find the full report at www.iwmf.org/underfire/.

JOURNALISTS UNDER FIRE HERE IN AMERICA



Linda Tirado in 2014 (left) and recently (right). She lost her eye when she was shot at by Minneapolis Police officer Andrew Braun while covering the protests after George Floyd's murder, and is now dying from the traumatic brain injury she received.



TEAR-GASSED, PEPPER-SPRAYED AND SHOT AT

Linda isn't the only journalist injured here in this country that prides itself on freedom.

A shocking one-third of the attacks on journalists in 2020 that occurred in the U.S. happened in Minnesota. Members of the press were attacked, tear-gassed, pepper-sprayed, and shot at with rubber bullets/projectiles.

Like Tirado, journalist Jared Goyette was also was shot in the face by police while covering the Uprising. He was joined by news photographer Craig Lasig; photojournalists Tannen Maury, Stephen Maturen, Tim Evans, Ed Ou and Chris Tuite; and Katie Nelson, a journalist, photographer and videographer in a suit against the city with the help of the ACLU of Minnesota because of the injuries they got while covering the protests. The suit also cited several instances in which Star Tribune reporters were detained or injured by law enforcement projectiles, although none was a plaintiff. The city paid out \$950,000 in February 2024.

"This is a major victory for journalists covering protests in the United States of America," said NewsGuild-CWA President Jon Schleuss. "We joined this lawsuit to support America's journalists who were brutally attacked by police while doing their job. We are proud to support and fight for journalists defending a free press in our democracy."

Other journalists were harmed by the State Patrol.

As written in a Star Tribune article by Liz Sawyer:

Two Los Angeles Times journalists trapped and targeted by Minnesota State Patrol troopers while reporting on civil unrest in Minneapolis following the killing of George Floyd settled their federal lawsuit with the state agency for \$1.2 million in April 2024. Photographer Carolyn Cole and Houston bureau chief Molly Hennessy-Fiske were battered with blunt projectiles, tear gas and chemical spray by

troopers interfering with their constitutionally protected First Amendment rights ... on May 30, 2020 ... at E. 31st Street and Nicollet Avenue - near the Fifth Precinct police headquarter. ...

"Being attacked by the [Minnesota] State Patrol four years ago was an experience no other journalist should have to face," Cole wrote in a statement. "I hope this ruling, upholding our First Amendment rights, will help to protect other photographers and reporters trying to do their jobs." ...

Both women have covered dangerous conflict zones abroad for decades and know the risks involved, but say that until 2020 they had never been singled out this way by police.

"During my nearly 25-year career, I have covered numerous law enforcement agencies and protests in various states and overseas," said Hennessy-Fiske, who now works for the Washington Post. "This was the first time that I was attacked by authorities."

The vast majority of the settlement - \$1 million - is expected to pay legal fees for their Minneapolis-based law firm. Cole and Hennessy-Fiske have agreed to split the remaining \$200,000, their attorney confirmed.

WHY AREN'T THINGS GETTING BETTER?

When I first wrote about this issue in 2020, I hoped it marked a turning point and that things would shift back to protecting the vital work journalists do. It's pretty disheartening to see these current statistics come across my desk.

Over the last four years, I've asked myself and others how change happens.

How do we protect each other from those who might abuse their power?

One thing I know is that the press is a powerful force, shining light in dark places. And I'm worried when journalists are dying here in America, the land of the free and the brave.

UNIVERSITY POLICE TARGET JOURNALISTS

University of Minnesota Police officers detained Minnesota Daily reporter Tyler Church for three hours on Monday, Oct. 21, 2024 and confiscated the bag containing his credentials, notes and schoolwork for three days. This meant that Church couldn't write his article or do his schoolwork in the meantime.

According to the Daily articles written by Spencer White:

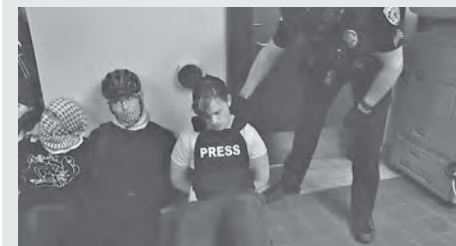
Church was covering the Morrill Hall occupation when officers entered the building through the basement tunnels with their weapons drawn. Officers confiscated Church's backpack, which contains his laptop, schoolwork and reporting notes.

After being released from handcuffs, Church, two other Daily reporters and a reporter from the Minnesota Star Tribune were told to wait in the basement of Morrill Hall by police for three hours before eventually being released through the GopherWay tunnels.

Church and the two other Daily reporters present were wearing vests with "PRESS" printed on the front and back in large, bold letters.

Officer Josh Betts told Church that his belongings were being held in "safe keeping" until UMPD comes out of lockdown. There was no timetable given for when this lockdown would end.

They held onto his belongings for two days. (Photo by Hannah Kovnar)



STATEMENT FROM MN DAILY BOARD

"President Rebecca Cunningham, University administration and UMPD should be ashamed of UMPD's violation of Tyler's rights as a reporter. Their actions are an affront to the First Amendment from a university whose own mission statement says it is 'dedicated to the advancement of learning and the search for truth; to the sharing of this knowledge through education for a diverse community; and to the application of this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world.'

"The Minnesota Daily board is committed to working with university administration and UMPD to make sure journalists' rights are not violated in the future."

The board asked for a public apology, requirement that university police undergo annual media law training; the university make a public commitment to uphold local, state, and federal laws that protect journalists; and that administration open a dialogue with Minnesota Daily editors and reporters.

View the entire letter at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com.

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Story ideas always welcome.

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

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guest column



BY CINDY HOLLISTER

A DIFFERENT WAY TO VOTE

Since the age of 18, I have voted in every single general election. Since my mid-30s, I have voted in every single mid-term election. And once Minnesota switched from caucus to primary elections, I voted. My various employers always allowed an hour to vote, but I never lived within a distance where that worked for me.

During all the years I worked full-time, and for a period of 12 years as a single parent, it was a burden getting to

the polling location on time. Tuesday is a business workday and the 13-hour voting hour window at times was tight for me. Traffic congestion was always an issue, the weather could be as well, and my polling location was never part of the driving route home. I was one of those people that came screaming into a polling place in the last hour to vote hoping the line wasn't overwhelming.

I retired from full-time work in 2017 and trained to be an election judge in 2018. It was very pleasurable to perform the various positions and procedures that year. I also decided to be an election judge during the 2020 COVID year. I performed the same duties as before, but there was a noticeable difference in voters' affect and

behavior and so I declined to be an election judge for the 2022 mid-term election. Voting in person was very satisfying and mattered greatly to me, but it changed that year causing me to be more vigilant for who and what I give my vote to.

I always research and review candidates' profiles and policy positions along with any specific initiatives and referendums on the ballot. Local newspapers did a wonderful job of consolidating and providing this information when it was my normal method of being informed. I'd make a list to bring with me to fill out the ballot at the polling location. Now online searches are needed, which is cumbersome since I have not yet found a consolidated location with information for all the bal-

lot choices or without having to provide my personal information to receive it.

I have voted by mail since 2020 and strongly support that method along with broadening the number of election days. COVID demonstrated that voting by mail was a great new way to perform our civic duty. Expanding the number of election days would also help those that have full workdays filled with childcare, elder parent care, non-flexible work schedules, long commutes, transportation or physical complications, plus all the other normal daily life activities. Being able to spend more time with the ballot to search through multiple information sources helps me be a more thoughtful and informed citizen.

Cindy Hollister has worked in the billing department at TMC Publications since 2021.

GOT VOICE, GOT POWER: CULTIVATING CHANGE THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PLANTING SEEDS



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

Civic engagement is a key tool for building more vibrant and inclusive communities. For many civic engagement begins with casting a vote at the ballot box. This is an integral step yet there is so much more. Civic engagement is when you participate in activities that improve your community and participate in the democratic process. Examples include: attending city council meetings, volunteering at your local food bank, signing petitions on issues that matter to you, and mentoring youth.

My latest book, "Kwame Votes," explores the transformational power of civic engagement through an intergenerational approach. Through conversations with his family, Kwame learns important lessons on how to serve and lead in his commu-

nity. His grandmother teaches him the importance of focusing on issues like equal access to quality education. His mother demonstrates how volunteerism can support democracy by serving as an election judge. With each family interaction, Kwame learns the importance of his family's daily commitment to civic engagement in their community. He witnesses firsthand the positive impact of this labor of love.

Kwame's grandmother teaches this key leadership lesson. She reminds her family to use their voices to make a difference: "Voting in an election is your opportunity to be heard, hold elected officials accountable and have a say in important issues involving our community."

I found inspiration for writing this book while reflecting on my experience growing up in the historic Rondo community. I grew up watching our community organize for change. Everyone was ready to lend a helping hand, safeguard the future of the children, and stand up for crucial issues affecting the community. I can still hear our community elder's voice rising above the crowd at a community meeting, strong and unwavering, chanting

with conviction: "Got voice, got power." It served as a constant reminder that each of us holds the power to uplift and empower our communities.

When we need inspiration for the journey ahead, we can embark on a Sankofa journey where we look to our ancestors for inspiration. Sankofa is a Twi word from the Akan Tribe of Ghana that means "go back and get it." It is a reminder to look to the past for inspiration for our present and future. Ancestors like Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell built new inroads to justice and freedom through the power of civic engagement.

Ida B. Wells was a suffragist who fought for the passage of the 19th Amendment providing women with the right to vote. She also advocated for racial equity to ensure Black women had equal access to the ballot box.

Mary Church Terrell dedicated her life's work to advancing racial equity and gender equality. She fearlessly addressed these issues at the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in the early 1890s.

Through their example, we are reminded that change starts from within.

First, we must have an unwavering commitment to leave the world a better place than how we found it. This is anchored in our collective vision for the future. Pioneering scientist, George Washington Carver, wisely stated, "Where there is no vision, there is no hope." Hope for the future is the motivation for civic engagement.

In addition, setting an agenda is essential. You can begin by exploring questions such as: What do you seek to accomplish? What steps will you take to achieve this goal? How will you measure success? An exploration of these questions will aid in developing a plan of action.

Finally, this is a call to unleash our moral imagination – a vision of a future where children can thrive, communities have the resources they need, families are resilient, and neighborhoods are flourishing. It envisions a world of endless possibilities, where the seeds of change bloom into hope for a better tomorrow.

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.

LETTER

NEW LEADERSHIP NEEDED IN ST. PAUL

Many articles have been written lately on the plight of the Midway. Anyone familiar with the Midway neighborhood along Snelling and University is aware of this issue: shuttered businesses, empty lots, open drug use and feces on the sidewalk. This issue is not new, but has

reached a nadir this summer and fall.

My question is: where has the city been while Hamline Midway languished? Why hasn't the city been acting to facilitate new businesses, new buildings and find solutions to open air drug use?

Attending Hamline Midway Coalition meetings, one can hear wonderful and innovative ideas to bring life back to University and Snelling. Where is our council and mayor, with their near-billion dollar budget? Only after several negative

articles and bad press does our council president or mayor show any concern for our neighborhood. We need leadership who is proactive about the issues facing our community, not merely reactive in the face of bad press. I love our unique and caring neighborhood – we deserve new leadership who will address Hamline Midway issues in a proactive manner.

Stuart Orłowski

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PK's Place, a 16,000-square-foot, accessible playground, is named after the soccer club's mascot PK. PK's Place has 25 different activities intended to engage the minds of bodies of all kinds of children. It is open to the public daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. (Photo by Matthew K. Johnson)



Bill McGuire speaks during the unveiling of *The Calling* on Oct. 17. Also present were Ethan Cha (47B), Leon M. Lillie (44B), Mayer Melvin Carter, Fong Hawj (67, obstructed), Sandy Pappas (65), Kaohly Vang Her (64A), Anika Bowie (Ward 1), Samakab Hussein (65A), Mitra Jalai (Ward 4). (Photo by Aurora Pass)

Stabilize Snelling and University Campaign launched

HAMLIN MIDWAY COALITION

BY JASON ELYEA-WHEELER
Communications Specialist
comms@hamlinmidway.org



The Hamline Midway Coalition cares about our neighborhood because it's where we live, work, play, and have built a strong sense of community. We also hear from our neighbors every day about the urgent need for change around one of the Midway's most crucial intersections.

The challenges at Snelling and University aren't just local – they impact the entire University Avenue corridor and resonate throughout the Twin Cities. This intersection sits in the heart of the Midway, a gateway for millions, and serves as a vital link between St. Paul and Minneapolis, functioning as both an economic and transit hub. Addressing public safety, vacancy, and public health here will create ripple effects across the metro and the state.

This campaign is grounded in what our community has clearly voiced: a desire for safety, livability, and compassionate, long-term solutions. Through direct engagement – whether at doorsteps or in neighborhood meetings – we've listened. Transforming vacant spaces like the CVS into community assets, expanding outreach to those most vulnerable, and improving transit safety all reflect the collective desire of this neighborhood for a safer, more vibrant future.

Revitalizing this corridor isn't just about the Hamline Midway; it's about stabilizing a key artery that connects us all. By investing here, we strengthen not only our community but also the broader economic health and vitality of St. Paul and the entire state. The future of this critical gateway impacts everyone – and it's something we all have a stake in shaping.

Our work to achieve these goals has been underway throughout 2024, as we've engaged our neighbors, businesses, and city leaders to take meaningful steps forward.

In February, we hosted a neighborhood listening session with the General Manager, Chief Operating Officer, former Chief of Metro Transit Police, and the Metropolitan Council Transportation Chair, drawing over 75 attendees.

- In March, we intensified our community engagement through door-to-door outreach, online feedback collection, and our Hamline Midway Coalition open house, gathering valuable input from residents focused on the priorities laid out in our 10-Year Plan.

- Additionally, we co-hosted a community meeting at Allianz Stadium to address neighborhood concerns about the state and future development of United Village. This event was part of our ongoing efforts to ensure that residents' voices are heard on major developments in our area.

- In June, our development committee brought together community members and Director Angie Wiese from the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) to discuss the vacant CVS property. The meeting was attended by approximately 50 neighbors, highlighting the community's investment in the future of this space.

- Throughout the spring, we reached out to dozens of local businesses, particularly those near Snelling and University, to provide information about Promise Act loan and grant funding while also listening to their ongoing concerns about the area.

- In August, we organized a meeting with leadership from Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative to address ongoing neighborhood concerns about Kimball Court. This led to the establishment of direct, ongoing communication with dedicated staff, focused solely on ensuring accountability and transparent dialogue with the Hamline Midway Coalition.

- Furthermore, we have organized nearly two dozen neighborhood cleanups between our monthly community events and regular efforts at the Snelling Avenue Green Line stations through the Adopt A Stop Program. These cleanups have given us firsthand insight into the public health crisis developing at this intersection.

- On the topic of community safety, we met with Commander McCabe of the Saint Paul Police Department's Western District and over two dozen neighbors on Minnehaha Avenue to address concerns about speeding, crime, and other pressing issues in the neighborhood.

- Most recently, our staff and board leaders met with Council President Jalali, SPPD Commander Yang, Director Brooke Blakey, and numerous business and community partners, including Raks and Sophia Pham of Tuan Auto, to discuss further community safety initiatives.

Through this ongoing engagement

and action, we've heard loud and clear that changes are needed at the corner of Snelling and University and surrounding area. While we recognize that we cannot single-handedly solve the opioid epidemic and housing crisis, the Hamline Midway Coalition believes there are meaningful, feasible actions our elected officials must take and help us pursue in order to stabilize this key corridor in our neighborhood.

We are committed to leading a local campaign focused on the issues raised during our Metro Transit Listening Session, our meeting with the Department of Safety and Inspections, our 10-Year Neighborhood Plan engagement, countless conversations, and other community events. These issues include:

1. Establish a new, expedited response system through the Department of Safety and Inspections for problem vacant properties, like the CVS, prioritizing abatements for those that pose immediate public health risks. This system would go beyond the current abatement process, ensuring faster action on issues such as trash, drug paraphernalia, and graffiti, and creating a more effective framework for addressing urgent public health concerns.

2. Urge Metro Transit to allocate more resources for the Snelling Avenue and nearby Green Line stations to improve safety for all riders and provide support for vulnerable individuals. Stabilizing Snelling and University requires a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing safety at adjacent Green Line stops throughout the Midway.

3. Advocate for increased street outreach and services from Ramsey County to directly support unhoused neighbors and those struggling with addiction along the Snelling and University Avenue corridors. Stabilizing the Snelling and University intersection requires extending support to the broader neighborhoods, ensuring that vulnerable individuals throughout these areas receive the help they need.

4. Transforming the vacant CVS property into a community-centered space or comparable asset is a long-term vision identified as a top priority through community input. The goal is to convert the building into a valuable part of the neighborhood, with the potential for a mix of for-profit and non-profit, mixed-use development. We are exploring similar projects throughout the city and along the Green Line corridor, with plans for ongoing community engagement and idea-sharing opportunities.

opportunities.

Redeveloping the CVS property will require collaboration with the private owner, developers, funders, and city, county, and state partners to explore all avenues for acquisition, capital investment, and redevelopment. We are fully committed to pursuing every possibility to make this vision a reality.

We believe these four neighborhood priorities are possible and necessary for the stabilization and improvement of our community. ...

These issues and the responses we are organizing toward are more than just campaign priorities – they are rooted in the lived experiences of people who love and care for this community, along with our shared vision for the future.

By addressing these four neighborhood priorities, we can begin paving the way for a stronger Midway, where businesses thrive, public transit is reliable, and community development flourishes, all while caring for those in crisis and our most vulnerable. We believe this approach has the potential to foster long-term stability and prosperity for both the Hamline Midway neighborhood and the broader Midway area, with impacts that extend far beyond.

Alongside these campaign priorities, HMC is also committed to several key actions:

1. We will partner with elected officials attending our Hamline Midway Town Hall [held Oct. 17] to coordinate hybrid constituent meetings throughout 2025. These meetings will improve communication with neighbors about ongoing initiatives, assess their effectiveness, and provide updates on new efforts and resources.

2. Additionally, HMC will continue attending the Third Thursday Saint Paul Police Department's Western District monthly community meetings and maintain regular communication with the Office of Neighborhood Safety.

3. We are also scheduling a meeting with Mayor Melvin Carter by the end of 2024 to discuss these priorities and explore broader solutions.

4. HMC will remain dedicated to our existing neighborhood-led initiatives, focusing on the environment, transportation, development, renter engagement, and community building across the entire neighborhood.

To review the full **Stabilize Snelling and University Campaign** document and find the link to endorse the campaign, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/stabilizesnellinganduniversity>

WANT TO REACH 47,000 PEOPLE AT THEIR FRONT DOORS?
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LOON LANDS

>> from 1

Senator Pappas also emphasized the surrounding neighborhood: "We can't let this [sculpture] be the only thing that happens here in this Hamline-Midway neighborhood. We have to make sure that we have a thriving community and a thriving neighborhood and a thriving business corner here that augments and compliments this wonderful investment."

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST ANDY SCOTT

McGuire said that after he and then Mayor Chris Coleman had discussed the bus barn site around 2014-2015, he met with Senator Lillie and Representative Hawj about including public art in the development. McGuire and his team were impressed by The Kelpies, a metal sculpture of two large horse heads in Falkirk, Scotland. The artist was Andy Scott. Scott would join McGuire on Zoom meetings. These later included Minnesota-based Mortenson Construction, who laid the foundations and executed the landscaping around the sculpture.

Scott recounted, "I looked at a wider subject matter and come up with the notion of the loon as being representative of the state, and by coincidence, I know now is also the emblem of the soccer team."

McGuire echoed this: "We did not tell him what the sculpture would be, but said, 'What could you do? What would you envision that would capture Minnesota?'" McGuire added, "Serendipity: it came out a loon."

Minnesota United CEO Shari Ballard said, "I think that, from a club perspective, our mission and very genuine focus for the club is to use the platform that is soccer to try to bring people together and inspire and unite the community. While this is not a club initiative, this is very much a Bill-and-Nadine-McGuire initiative, it still has the same thread to it: really trying to use the background that is soccer, and in this case use art as a way to bring the community together and inspire people."

Before Scott came to Minnesota to oversee the assembly of "The Calling," he and his wife visited in February. Scott spoke of Saint Paul, "In some ways, it reminded me of Glasgow. The people were super friendly everywhere we went. It was like, 'Oh, what brings you here?' and 'Why you in town?'"

DESIGN, BUILD, TEAR DOWN, REASSEMBLE

Chris Dyson grew up in Scotland and first met Scott there. After they met in Glasgow, both took separate journeys to get to their current homes in Los Angeles. Dyson and Emily Womack now run Dyson-Womack, a company that assists with design and installation of public art. Scott brought drawings and a one-third scale model to Dyson-Womack. Together, Scott, Dyson-Womack, and Nous Engineering worked out the logistics of building, breaking the sculpture into separate pieces, and fitting them on 12 flatbed trucks that traveled from LA to Minnesota.

Dyson said that what struck him was



Minnesota United Chief Development Officer and Senior Technical Advisor Manny Lagos (left) and Minnesota United CEO Shari Ballard pose in front of the new loon statue at University and Snelling. (Photo by Matthew K. Johnson)



Chris Dyson of Dyson-Womack observed, "When you do look at these large projects, just to think about the amount of hands and thought and years of time that's gone towards something of that size is really, really impressive. And I think sometimes we can lose sight that it's actually individuals, people, workers, that are turning up every day and giving it their all." (Photo by Aurora Pass)

the scale. He stated, "It's testament to all the people involved, and it's only as good as the team.... When you do look at these large projects, just to think about the amount of hands and thought and years of time that's gone towards something of that size is really, really impressive. And I think sometimes we can lose sight that it's actually individuals, people, workers, that are turning up every day and giving it their all."

Mayor Carter agreed: "I got a chance to come out here the day it was being assembled here on site, and those crane operators ... it was really a sight to behold.

The level of precision that it requires to pick up these giant pieces and put them down and get them placed right in the right spot was really something to behold."

YOU CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE

Scott said, "I don't make abstract pieces." He explained, "It's public, and like anything else in the public realm, you can't please all of the people all of the time. And I do my very, very best as an artist. I'm very conscious that it's going to be seen by the widest possible audience. I deliberately make work which is approach-



Artist Andy Scott stands in front of his well-known sculpture, "The Kelpies" in Falkirk, Scotland. When he and his wife visited St. Paul last February, he was impressed by how friendly residents were. "In some ways, it reminded me of Glasgow," Scott said. (Photo courtesy of Instagram)

able and can be understood by the widest audience of any of any locality."

Dyson likens a city's collection of public art to a collection of books in a library. "Public art should be a representation of all of its people, and there's going to be things that you don't like in that library and things that you like. But if you actively search out what's in that library,



'The Calling' comes to us at an important time, and it's a time right now where we're called to think about our world. We're called to think about our city. We're even called to think about this block that we stand on right now differently than we have before."

Mayor Carter



or through the example of a public art, you're going to find something that does interest you and does engage you."

PK'S PLACE

Another addition to the United Village area intends to engage the public in a different way. On June 20, 2024, PK's Place, a 16,000-square-foot playground, opened on the east side of the stadium. The playground is a gift from the William and Nadine McGuire Family Foundation and the Minnesota United Football Club. Named

after the club's loon mascot PK, PK's Place has 25 different activities intended to engage the minds of bodies of all kinds of children.

Odilia Pérez is from Guatemala whose first language is Mam, a Mayan language. She and her family are not Minnesota United fans but live a couple blocks away. She and her children come "three times a week here because this place is beautiful. My children love this park."

Both PK's Place and The Calling are open to the public from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

LIVING 50+

GOOD NEIGHBOR

Know someone aged 50+ that contributes to the Midway/Como/Frogtown community and inspires those around them? We want to hear about them! Send your nomination to tesha@tmcpub.com. Please include your contact information, their name, age, and contact information, and a paragraph about what they do that you find amazing about them. We can't wait to amplify the stories of our good neighbors aged 50+.

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Whether you're just getting started with energy efficiency, or you've already checked all the boxes in this guide, a home energy audit is a professional review of your home's energy efficiency. An auditor will inspect the places you could be losing energy, and offer free energy-saving products (like LEDs, weatherstripping, and more) and plans for future improvements.

TIP: See what happens during an energy audit.

HEATING & COOLING

- ❑ Don't heat or cool the outdoors. Close windows and doors when running the furnace or air conditioner.
- ❑ If you have air registers, make sure they aren't blocked by furniture or other objects so the air can circulate.
- ❑ Program your thermostat to heat or cool at specific times. A smart thermostat (may be available for free from a home energy audit) can be programmed to cool or heat spaces in advance rather than maintaining a constant temperature.
- ❑ In cool weather: set your thermostat to 68°F during the day, and lower it at night or when you are away.
- ❑ In warm weather: set your thermostat to 78°F and use a fan (ceiling, box, oscillating, etc.) when in the room for comfort and to reduce air conditioning costs. Close curtains and shades during the day and open windows at night to take advantage of cooler night time temperatures.
- ❑ Replace furnace filters monthly. This will improve the efficiency of the furnace, extend its life, and reduce dust.
- ❑ Regularly maintain your heating and cooling system. Use ENERGY STAR's HVAC Maintenance Checklist.
- ❑ Consider replacing your furnace or boiler when it nears the end of its expected life (15-20 years for furnaces, 20-30 for boilers), requires frequent repairs, or is inefficient.

TIP: Air source heat pump — a high efficiency way to replace or supplement your heating or cooling system.

TIP: Avoid individual space heaters. While they seem like a solution to heating small spaces, space heaters are very inefficient and a fire hazard.

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NEIGHBOR NIGHT



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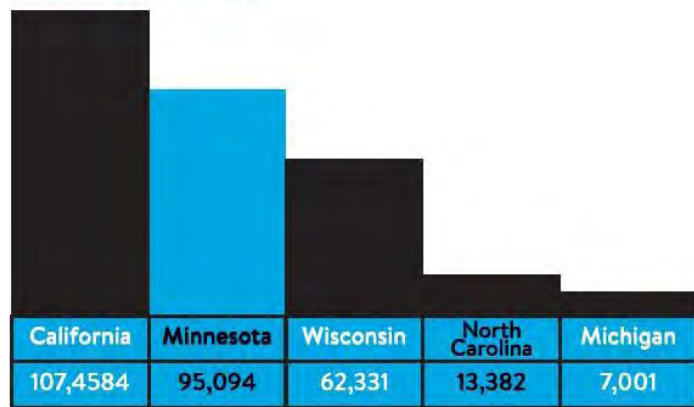
U.S. CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST Hmong POPULATIONS 2020 U.S. Census

St. Paul, MN	36,177
Fresno, CA	27,705
Sacramento, CA	17,483
Milwaukee, WI	12,251
Brooklyn Park, MN	9,169

MINNESOTA Hmong POPULATION BY DECADE U.S. Census Bureau

1980 Population	1,331
1990 Population	17,764
2000 Population	45,443
2010 Population	66,181
2020 Population	95,094

STATES WITH THE HIGHEST Hmong POPULATIONS 2020 U.S. Census



MINNESOTA Hmong POPULATION BY COMMUNITY 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

MINNESOTA PLACES	YR 2020
St. Paul	36,177
Brooklyn Park	9,169
Minneapolis	6,942
Maplewood	5,614
Brooklyn Center	5,410

CENSUS DATA: Hmong IN AMERICA

The Hmong Cultural Center is working with Museology Museum Services on updates to several panels in its "Hmong Minnesota: Yesterday and Today" exhibit to include 2020 census data. These revised panels focus on the Hmong population in Minnesota and the U.S., mapping changing Hmong residential patterns in the Twin Cities Metro since 1990 and Hmong American demographics. The new panels should be incorporated in the museum by the end of the year.

SNELLING-UNIVERSITY FIX? >> from 1

renovation project. The council acted as the Housing and redevelopment Authority (HREA) Board.

Kimball Court expand from 76 to 98 units. The \$19 million project will draw on a variety of financial resources including funds from Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Metropolitan Council, Red Lake Nation and St. Paul Public Housing Authority Section 8 vouchers.

Area residents who attended the HRA meeting were unhappy that they didn't get a chance to address the council. The action wasn't a public hearing. Council President Mitra Jalali, whose fourth ward includes Kimball Court, said the renovation will provide improved security and facilities for residents. But she used the vote to comment on how St. Paul bears more than its share of issues of homelessness, as people come here from other areas.

"The city can't do it by ourselves," she said.

The demands for change escalated after Oct. 29, when reports of shots fired and a man walking and holding a gun to his head turned into an officer-involved shooting. Earl Bennett sustained life-threatening injuries in the incident. He refused to drop his weapon and pointed a gun at officers. Six police officers were placed on leave while the incident is being investigated.

Bennett is linked to two recent shootings in Minneapolis: a fatal shooting at a Minneapolis homeless encampment on Sunday and another incident at a Minneapolis sober house. Three of four people shot died of their injuries.

If turnout at an Oct. 17 meeting is any indication, area residents and business leaders were expected to turn out in force Nov. 7. More than 400 people packed a Hamline University ballroom to hear elected officials explain what they are going to do to change the situation. Jalali, County Commissioner Rena Moran and legislators Leigh Finke, Samakab Hussein and Sandy Pappas were on a panel answering questions.

One oft-repeated message Oct. 17 was



A new sculpture now sits at the southeast corner of Snelling and University in an area that residents had previously complained of there being a lot of trash in. Kitty-corner from the sculpture is the vacant and boarded up CVS building. (Photo by Matthew K. Johnson)

that while problems are solvable, it will take time. But that met pushback from community members who said they don't feel safe. That's despite more police presence and stepped-up cleanup efforts.

Some attendees became frustrated with the meeting's town hall format and prepared questions, calling out for more focus on the trouble Kimball Court single-room occupancy apartment building at 545 N. Snelling Ave. and issues along Snelling. They handed out a Sept. 19 St. Paul Police Department report, which stated that Kimball Court "is the hub of most of the narcotics traffic in the Western (police) district." Stepped-up police patrols have only served to spread the activity throughout the Hamline-Midway neighborhood.

"Kimball Court has security, but it has done nothing to slow the traffic of narcotics from both inside and outside of the building. ... Business owners are afraid for their employees, residents are afraid for their children, and multiple people in the area are victimized on a regular basis. And everyone in my experience including myself is pointing at Kimball Court as the main case," the report stated. The report called out fentanyl use in and outside of Kimball Court "multiple times on a daily basis."

Kimball Court is just one problem spot, meeting attendees and panelists said. The other is Snelling and University, where a vacant CVS drugstore is a center of

illegal activity.

"Snelling and University needs help," said HMC Board Member Nate Roisen. Neighbors waited for a long time for the former Midway Center superblock to have redevelopment plans. They are now worried about the adjacent Midway Marketplace block's future. He called for redevelopment to expand the property tax base.

Meeting attendees disagreed as to the CVS site's future. A drive to stabilize the neighborhood has suggested a community center there, which has some people calling for future development to be property tax-paying. Moran's suggestion about a possible county service center there drew a mixed response from the crowd.

Finke said more needs to be done to regulate out-of-state property owners, who buy rental houses and commercial properties on speculation.

Issues of drug addiction and unsheltered people were also a key topic. One focus needs to be on ending the cycle of opioid, especially fentanyl, addiction, said Moran. She called for more use of the drug Suboxone, which is used to treat withdrawal from opioids. "We can create opportunities to help people get off of drugs." She and other panelists said that until there is stable housing, many problems cannot be solved.

The town hall recording is posted on the Hamline Midway Coalition Facebook page.

SHELTER GUESTS

>> from 1

Model Cities officials have met with Union Park District Council members to discuss the permit. The district council hasn't made a recommendation.

Central Baptist Pastor Craig Dahl said that providing shelter for unhoused people is central to the church's mission. "This what we're about," he said. "Obviously there is a huge, huge need for shelter."

The shelter's move has raised questions among some neighbors and business owners, who learned of it through the news media.

Dahl and Model Cities leaders said they are glad to answer community questions. He emphasized that the church has years of experience providing shelter and has been vetted for that purpose. He has had positive response from neighbors, some of whom have made donations for the program.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Central Baptist housed the Project Home overnight program run by Interfaith Action for several years. That program housed families in faith-based institutions for a month or two at a time.

Last winter the church housed an overnight drop-in shelter in cooperation with Ramsey County, for families and youth ages 14-25. Space reasons preclude Central Baptist from housing both programs going forward, Dahl said.

As it did for the other programs, the church will use part of its 1913 building to house Safe Space. The program will be staffed by Model Cities.

Model Cities has a two-year lease with the church, with a third-year option, said Dahl.

The long-term intent is to find as permanent home for the shelter.

"We are incredibly grateful for the partnership with Central Baptist Church," said Model Cities CEO Kizzy Downie in a press release. "Their support has been instrumental in making this relocation possible. This collaboration embodies the strength of community and shared compassion for our fellow neighbors experiencing crisis."

Safe Space began in 2017 in the basement of the Government Center East Building, as a winter overnight space operated by Ramsey County. In 2019, Model Cities came in to manage the space for the county. The space also transitioned to year-round use that year.

In 2023, county officials announced plans to sell the building. For several months Model Cities officials weighed relocation to a vacant dormitory building at Luther Seminary in St. Anthony Park neighborhood. Seminary officials dropped that proposal in the face of neighborhood opposition.

Safe Space isn't a drop-in facility. It operates on a referral-only basis, with everyone requiring a reservation to stay there. It is open 10 p.m. to 9 a.m. People are referred there through a county shelter entry and vision program. Those who stay must make a reservation every night and cannot store their belongings at the shelter. Once someone is in the shelter, they cannot come and go.



Craig Dahl serves as pastor at Central Baptist Church, which aims to operate a small homeless shelter at its location near Snelling and University.

Reuse, replay, or recycle your old acoustic piano

Pianocycle keeps pianos out of landfills and incinerators

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

It's one thing to cull outgrown or unused clothes from your closet, but what do you do with a piano that's outlived its usefulness in your home? Pianocycle is a Public Benefit Corporation in southeast Minneapolis that finds new homes for acoustic pianos in the Twin Cities area, or a second life as art materials if the pianos are no longer playable.

Their mission, according to owner Zero One, is to extend the life of acoustic pianos whenever possible, and to reduce waste through reusing and recycling piano parts.

One has been tinkering with pianos for as long as he can remember. He grew up taking lessons, and by age 18 was selling used pianos out of his parents' garage. He went on to found the non-profit Keys 4/4 Kids, and served as the executive director until 2017. As the years went by, he felt the need for recycling pianos was growing more urgent.

REST IN PEACE

Acoustic pianos are big and heavy, weighing anywhere from 500-1,200 pounds. Their parts are many: hardwood, metal, wire strings, and keys made of various materials.

All pianos are brought back to Pianocycle's workshop before their future is decided. If a piano isn't playable or the cost to repair is too high, team members dismantle it into its component parts.

One said, "Pianos often have high sentimental value. Even if your family piano can't be played anymore, we ensure



Pianocycle founder Zero One is a music maker and mathematician, as well as a piano recycler. "Pianos often have high sentimental value. Even if your family piano can't be played anymore, we ensure that it still leaves a legacy," said One. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

that it still leaves a legacy. Usable wood is donated to local artists and hobbyists for creative projects, and we recycle the metal responsibly. Most of the weight of a piano comes from the metal harp, as it's called, which holds the strings in place. It's a high priority to keep these out of landfills and incinerators, due to their size and weight."

Pianocycle gives away the upcycled wood sourced from retired pianos free of charge. Check their website for open houses or Facebook Marketplace for availability. The wood may have sharp splinters or leftover screws. Always use protective gloves, eyewear, and appropriate tools

when working with this material.

In addition, Pianocycle often gives away free piano benches, piano lights, and music.

NEW HOMES FOR WORKING PIANOS

Pianos in good working order are available through Pianocycle's online inventory at www.pianocycle.com. There is no cost to receive a piano, other than the \$88 fee to deliver it to the main floor of a home or apartment in the Twin Cities metro area. Additional charges for stairs or distances greater than 20 miles outside the metro area will apply.



Wood salvaged from recycled acoustic pianos is available to artists and makers at no cost. Piano benches, sheet music, and lamps are sometimes available, as well. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

There is a cost to have a piano removed from your home, starting at \$299.

One said, "We delivered a piano to a young couple recently. The husband had played when he was younger, but it had been awhile. They were dumbfounded to receive a free piano and, like most people, wondered if there was a catch. There was not, and there never is."

Pianocycle stands behind their pianos with a 30-day warranty. Pianos are inspected before going to their new homes but if an issue develops, you can exchange it for another or return for a full refund during that time period.

One and his team are looking into replicating Pianocycle in other U.S. cities. This combination of re-homing and recycling isn't being done anywhere else – and the need exists everywhere there are pianos.

In 2023, Pianocycle picked up 215 unwanted or outgrown pianos. Of those, 195 were recycled and 20 were given away to new homes.

For information about receiving/donating an acoustic piano, or future Pianocycle Open Houses where you can get piano wood and other component parts for free, call 612.208.0553. You can also send a text to 651.343.4703 or email drew@pianocycle.com.

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Free popcorn!

Expert advises shifting mindset to view AI use as an interactive one to help generate ideas versus getting one right answer

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

"There's going to be a huge impact on media and the culture based on Generative AI," said Danny Olson during a Midway Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Oct. 16, 2024.



Danny Olson

He's the AI and Emerging Platforms Lead at Weber Shandwick, a global communications agency, and his background includes sales, digital marketing, and public relations.

Olson pointed to the new Google overview summaries generated by AI that are appearing at the top of search pages that can pull information from a variety of sources. They can be read without clicking into another source, which means people won't be going to other businesses or media websites, using their information without paying for it. AI is bringing new gatekeepers, he pointed out. "It dictates how we learn about the world and go about our day."

Olson quoted former Google CEO Eric Schmidt: "We're going to have a very different world and it's going to happen very quickly. Imagine if you had Aristotle to consult with you on logic. Oppenheimer to consult with you on physics. Not the person but rather the knowledge, the scaling intelligence of these truly brilliant people who were historically incredibly rare. What are we going to do when super intelligence is broadly available to everyone?"

AI CHANGES EVERYTHING

"Let's talk about how this changes everything," remarked Olson.

This changes search.

"We're not even getting to the click," he said, pointing to how this will have a huge impact on media.

It changes learning.

Olson observed that right now he's using generative AI to write about 80% of his performance reviews. He puts all the feedback and information into AI, which then generates a summary, saving him hours of time.

It changes media.

People can create reporters, background and voices that are entirely generated by AI.

It changes influencers.

There are now individuals on social media who are not real. Their photos and the accompanying text are completely created by AI.

MEETING THE AI MOMENT

Text prompt

Pretend you are a communications strategist for Anheuser-Busch specializing in stakeholder engagement and reputation building. Take the following outline and turn it into a 1,000-word newsletter for wholesalers detailing upcoming events and special promotions. The author's tone should be friendly. Here is an outline:

A detailed persona helps the AI understand the overall tone and direction of the command

Clear instruction for a specific task

Adding tone helps guide the AI

Clear instruction for a specific task

Adding tone helps guide the AI

Visual prompt

Elements for a detailed image prompt

What's in the scene
Subject, description of action, state of being

How the scene feels
Art form, mood, style references

How the scene is set up
Lighting, colors, framing

Syntax matters. Here's a sample Midjourney prompt.

CONTEXT INFO DESCRIPTION

A photograph of an angry full-bodied wolf in the foggy woods during sunset, with dramatic lighting and shot with a wide angle lens – ar 16:9

STYLE COMPOSITION

Danny Olson of Weber Shandwick provided examples of and tips for writing good text and visual prompts when using generative AI during a Midway Chamber lunch on Oct. 16.

It changes experiences.

Researchers at Shenzhen People's Hospital in China using an AI fusion of multisource data to identify key features of vitiligo, a skin condition characterized by the loss of skin pigment, and to help with its diagnosis and treatment.

It changes risk.

"It changes us," said Olson.

He acknowledged that there is a great deal of fear around AI right now and people are worried that AI will replace people in jobs.

His personal belief is that there won't be fewer jobs but that there will be different jobs for people. "You and technology working together," Olson said, "not you versus technology."

WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI?

Generative AI maps patterns and relationships in large data sets, and uses that knowledge to create new content, such as images, video or text, explained Olson.

WHAT IS AI GOOD AT NOW?

- Producing coherent and contextually relevant text.
- Translating text with high accuracy.
- Creating images and art from descriptions.
- Analyzing large datasets for patterns

or trends.

- Summarizing documents into different formats.
- Tutoring and explaining a wide range of topics.
- Generating new thoughts for ideating and brainstorming.
- Generating creative content like art, music and fiction.

AI is useful not for answers, but for ideas, said Olson. "It is meant to be iterative where you go back and forth with it, versus expecting a single polished answer."

WHERE DOES AI STRUGGLE?

- Suffers from vulnerabilities in data privacy.
- Encounters difficulties performing basic math.
- Limited in creating truly original ideas or concepts.
- Biases present in its training data.
- Liabilities due to complex AI ownership laws.
- Struggles with recent events post-training cut-off.
- Hallucinating nonsensical or irrelevant results.
- Inaccurately generating images of specified text.
- Lacks deep understanding in specialized fields.

• Struggles with adhering to specific word counts.

"AI will give you an answer but it doesn't always have the right information to give the answer," observed Olson. "That's where the interrogation comes into play." AI is a collection of data but it doesn't necessarily have all of the data on a subject.

"It's not truly creative," he added. "It can only imagine what exists."

WHERE TO START?

Current AI platforms include:

• SENSING: Blackbird.ai and NextAtlas

• SEARCH: Perplexity, ChatPDF, Opinionate.io, and Consensus

• CREATION: Adobe Firefly, Leonardo.ai, DALL-E, Runway and ChatGPT

Olson pointed out that there is a typical learning curve that moves beyond the hype. First, people are excited that ChatGPT can answer all their questions. Then they realize that ChatGPT doesn't understand what it is saying and is only predicting plausible answers. They realize that ChatGPT will return incorrect answers that are statistically plausible but not based in fact. They begin to understand that ChatGPT is best used when there isn't a precise "right answer." Only then do they recognize how to get value from ChatGPT and avoid the risks.

A mindset shift is required. AI isn't a silver bullet.

This makes the "prompt" really important.

"We are serving as editors or as people engaging with the product," said Olson.

The process should involve a prompt from a human that is detailed with clear instructions for a specific task.

It isn't about giving one prompt and getting one answer. It's about doing a prompt, getting an answer, doing another prompt, getting another answer, and doing that multiple times before a human edits and creates the final human output.

Olson's mom is an esthetician and small business owner. She isn't a marketer. But she can use AI to generate email subject lines.

There are also legal issues about taking information directly from a prompt and using it as is. All of the information in AI was pulled from someplace else. The legal consensus, according to Olson, is that you can't take stuff from a prompt and use it directly "much like you wouldn't take a piece of text from Google search and reprint it as your own."

It's tricky right now because generative AI isn't providing a source for where the information came from.

"Assume you are using copyright material," Olson recommended.

The other issue with AI material is that the programs are biased. "They are built by people," said Olson. "There might not be explicit bias but [there is] implicit bias. Don't take it word for word."

"The interactive use of it is how you get the most value."

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**COMO PARK
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



BY ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher

CROSS COUNTRY BOYS FINISH 4TH IN STATE



The Como boys cross country team earned the Section 4AA championship trophy. That victory qualified them for the state meet where they finished fourth. (Photo by Paula Caballero.)

The Cougar boys produced the most successful season in program history, punctuated by a fourth-place finish in the state meet on Nov. 2, 2024.

The team qualified for state by winning the Section 4AA championship in late October. The Cougars were dominant in that meet, finishing with six of the top seven times in a field of 84 runners. Sophomore Charlie Loth was first across the line to become the individual section champion.

Prior to the section meet, Como won their second consecutive St. Paul City Conference title after a regular season filled with victories in several large events. Those successes gave a young team the confidence needed to be competitive on the big stage at state.

Loth was the first Cougar across the line again at state, finishing the 5K course (3.1 miles) in 15:54 which earned the seventh-place individual medal and all-state honors. Sophomore Arthur Anderson also earned all-state, finishing 19th with a time of 16:15.

Cougar scoring was rounded out

by junior Ben Clark, junior Hazel Small, freshman Luna Small, senior Niko Turnure, and junior Colin Johnson. Coach Tim Kersey said it was a race that went pretty much according to plan. The posted result revealing Como as fourth in state was not surprising, but it provided confirmation that hard work pays off and that next year is going to be exciting.

The optimism carries over to the Cougar girls team. Sophomore Lily Coyle and Murray eighth-grader Lu Beckman both represented Como with excellent efforts in the state meet as individual qualifiers. They both finished in the top 10 individuals in the Section 4AA meet and combined with their teammates to place third out of 12 teams.

AVID WILDERNESS INQUIRY

Ninth grade AVID students spent a warm October day outdoors at Como Lake for a memorable day of canoeing, water quality testing, and team building games.

The AVID classes partnered with Wilderness Inquiry, a local non-profit that connects people to the outdoors. Learning to paddle together in large, 10-person canoes was a highlight and wonderful example of an AVID emphasis on collaboration.

AP NIGHT AT COMO NOV. 21

Prospective students and families who would like to learn more about Como's college-level coursework are invited to the school library on Thursday, Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. Como faculty and students will share their experiences in Advanced Placement, concurrent college classes, and post-secondary enrollment options. Light refreshments will be served.

THEATER PRODUCTIONS IN DECEMBER

The cast and crew are rehearsing for not just one, but two plays which will be presented on Dec. 7 and 8 in the Como Auditorium. Showtimes on Saturday the 7th are noon and 7 p.m. The Sunday performance will start at 2 p.m.

The plays will be "Property Rites" by Alan Haehnel and "The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet" by Peter Bloedel. Visit comoparkhs.brownpapertickets.com for tickets.



TASTE OF THE MIDWAY

The Midway Area Chamber of Commerce brought back Taste of the Midway on Oct. 31, 2024 at the Arc Minnesota. Above Ginkgo Coffeehouse owner Kathy Sundberg passes around cupcakes that are part of their catering services. Also

participating were Bole Ethiopian Cuisine, Homi Restarante Mexicano, Jersey Mike's Subs (427 Hamline), Slice Brothers Pizza, Udo's African Restaurant and Groceries, and Urban Growler Brewing Company. Restaurant partners included Elsa's House of Sleep, TSE Inc. and the Midway Como Frogtown Monitor. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)



**AFFINITY PLUS:
PAY IT FORWARD**

On Monday, Oct. 14, Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union staff members (left to right) Bryce Paulson, Molly Priddy, Paige Comer, and Jade Ptacek spent the day volunteering with the Sanneh Foundation during

the 12th annual Plus It Forward Day. All local Affinity Plus branches were closed to give employees a full day to give back and help make their communities a better place to live and work. Since its founding in 2013, Plus It Forward Day has inspired other credit unions and evolved into a movement called CU Forward Day. About 60 credit unions participated.

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BY MELVIN GILES
peacebubbles@q.com



"Imagine what a harmonious world it could be if every single person, both young and old, shared a little of what he/she is good at doing." - Quincy Jones

"Can't you feel a brand new day?... Everybody look up And feel the hope that we've been waiting for...Because our silent fear and dread is gone... Can't you feel a brand new day?" - A brand new day (The Wiz, Diane Ross)

Hello Monitor readers,
Happy grateful month of November. As of this writing, the elections are still a few days away so I don't know the outcome; however, I'm optimistic and hopeful that the American people voted in the same joyful and responsible manner as the folks of Minnes. Were you happy with your vote? Do you feel it made a difference? Please send your thoughts and comments to our editor (tesha@monitorsaintpaul.com).

With the elections over, we can really start reflecting on the leap year and our 2024 resolutions: did we/you achieve our personal and/or collective goals? What do we/you need to re-commit to pursuing? What went well or not, what would we/you do different or not do at all? Now is the time for us to make our 2025 resolutions while we are in the season of Thanksgiving and moving into the month of Giving and Accepting Universal Love, Light, and Energy of the World. One of my collective 2025 resolutions is that we as a nation start finding common-ground-based respectful solutions and let go of di-

BUY LOCAL AT FRIENDS FOR A NON-VIOLENT WORLD BOUTIQUE

visiveness fearfulness. One of my personal resolutions is re-committing to look on the bright side and continue to cultivate being optimistic within myself regardless of natural or human-made challenges that cross my path.

This year I've had so much fun participating with wonderful, pro-active, and courageous people in both old and new adventures of working and playing together in our efforts to bend the arc of justice forward. Although, there has been much stress, confusion, and frustration, there were also more spaces for patience, understanding, and celebrations of achieving mutual work and goals. For example, I'm hopeful, that we are learning to keep our balance when transitioning from "drill, baby, drill" to "think and act green." Our future is as bright as we grow, teach, and prepare our children. I am very grateful for the lessons I have learned from my family, friends, educators, faith leaders, and ancestors. I am also thankful for being able to share with others in the Midway Monitor.

BUY LOCAL, SUPPORT NON-VIOLENCE GROUP

This month, I want to share about an excellent way to do some of your holiday shopping.

From Jim Lovestar:

"Have you ever considered where your money goes when you buy something for the holidays? What does that money support? Much of what is sold in this country comes from The People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC is an autocratic regime that routinely abuses its workers to produce what we consume. Yet, picking up that thing we want without regard to its true cost is so seductive.

Are there alternatives to this painful scenario? I can name one. A wonderful one. Are you ready? Okay, it is the Friends for a Non-Violent World (FNVW) Holiday

Fair on Dec. 13 (1-9 p.m.) and 14 (10 a.m.-4 p.m.).

<http://www.fnvw.org/holidayfair>

Where you say? Why, at the Friends School of Minnesota, 1365 Englewood Avenue in Saint Paul. <https://fsmn.org/>

"How is that a viable alternative?" you may ask. There will be many people, local people from our communities, offering their wares for your pleasure. Handmade ceramics (the potter is usually there), organic preserves, homemade jewelry (again, the artist is there most of the time for personal connection), bargain-priced gift certificates to local merchants, artwork, antique treasures, a simple foods cafe if you are hungry, and, yes, live music! Wait, I forgot to mention the books, gently used, you know. So many delightful books at such low prices. Invite someone who will tell you what he/she wants for Christmas and perhaps dance with you to the live music.

If you buy something at the Holiday Fair this is what your money will support:

- Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) provides experiential conflict resolution workshops for youth and adults in schools, prisons, jails and communities. AVP empowers people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, building and enhancing of community, cooperation, and trust.

- People Camp is a week-long inter-generational experience of cooperation, community living, peacemaking, and the exploration of ideas and issues. This is a summer camp experience for the whole family and for anyone who enjoys warm, supportive community, challenging workshops and lots of recreation in a camp setting.

- Everyday Nonviolence is our podcast that highlights people using nonviolence to transform themselves and the

world around them. Their stories deepen our understanding of the impact of violence and the many ways nonviolence can be used for healing and social change.

- Advocacy and outreach initiatives include hosting community dialogues, actions and workshops on topics such as public safety, active nonviolence, and protecting and expanding our democracy. We also build power for social change through relational organizing and by working in coalition with other groups.

You can find more information here: <http://www.fnvw.org/>

Top off your adventure with a delicious meal in the Friendly Cafe where you can enjoy hot meals with vegetarian and meat options, a warm drink, and homemade sweet treats. Check the serving times when you arrive so you can plan a pleasant time with your companion." Thank you, Jimbo!

Have a great Thanksgiving and stay optimistic and get a head start on your New Year's Resolutions.

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FROGTOWN GREEN

BY RENNIE GAITHER



FROGTOWN GREEN KICKS OFF NEIGHBOR NIGHT

November has arrived! Temps have fallen. The 2024 presidential election has concluded. Please don't mind the rash of autumn lovers, like myself, prowling city streets, relishing sounds, smells, dances of leaf litter and occasional sleet or snow. Full disclosure: We're happily mad and thankful for full moons, raw winds, and nature's leavings.

Wait! Did I leave out communion and knowledge sharing with others? Frogtown Green has developed a new package of programs designed around public health and environmental issues of importance gleaned from conversations with Frogtown residents. This best practice, bottom-up approach to programming using direct feedback from neighbors is a winning strategy!

The idea of planned face-to-face information sharing with neighbors began with casual conversation. Ironically, serendipity has a way of seeding planned deliberation. I have to put that thought to use in my poetry!

Xiem Busch-Vuong, the outreach co-

ordinator and Americorps member serving at Frogtown Green, helped develop the Neighbor Night program and explained its origin. The story goes that after a summer gardening session, one of Frogtown Green's regular volunteers proposed a Frogtown Green happy hour of sorts, according to Xiem. "He wanted us to have an evening, at least monthly, where we could stay in contact with our volunteers over the winter. He didn't want to say goodbye to us!"

Xiem thought the idea was not just fun, but essential to maintaining connections to the community year-round, especially during winter, when people need something to look forward to. "I hope with these meetings, we can meet and develop community leaders, learn to trust and rely on each other, and find strength and pride in being Frog-towners," Xiem said.

Funding for the Neighbor Night series comes from a Ramsey County Trusted Messenger Initiative Grant. The initiative works to bridge the gap between county public health information and marginalized communities by empowering local organizations - termed trusted messengers - to "give residents better access to accurate, culturally specific, and linguistically appropriate public health information and healthcare services that align with the community's needs."



Xiem Busch-Vuong, the outreach coordinator and Americorps member serving at Frogtown Green, helped develop the Neighbor Night program. "I hope with these meetings, we can meet and develop community leaders, learn to trust and rely on each other, and find strength and pride in being Frogtowners," Xiem said.

In October, Frogtown Green, partnering with a resident, hosted a block party on the corner of Lexington and Lafond. Around 30 adults and children attended and filled out

surveys that assessed their interest in learning about or receiving resources about topics at Neighbor Night.

Six topics rose to the top among those surveyed: Soil health and remediation; waste reduction network building; tool maintenance; mending and sewing; air pollution education; and best gardening practices, including ripeness identification of common crops. These and other topics will be covered in upcoming Neighbor Nights, always the first Thursday of the month, on Dec. 5, Jan. 2, Feb. 6, March 6, April 3, and May 1. Neighbor Night is housed at the Frogtown Community Center, 230 Como Avenue in St. Paul.

On Nov. 7, the inaugural Neighbor Night, happenings included a free meal and a used item swap. Frogtown Green co-director, Chris Stevens prepared a plant-based dinner, lovingly served in upcycled bowls.

Frogtown Green hopes future session topics will continually take shape and evolve through community feedback in the busy year ahead!

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.

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SHARE AN E-EDITION WITH A FRIEND.

Ads must be received by the Monitor by Monday, Nov. 25 for the Dec. 5 issue. Call 651-917-4183 or email Denis@MonitorSaintPaul.com for more information. Classified ads will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com. Contact Tesha to place a Help Wanted ad at 612-260-7967, tesha@monitorsaintpaul.com.

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Home

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Lutheran Social Service of MN is seeking volunteers age 55+ in your area to provide companionship to older adults or mentor school-age children. Volunteers commit to regular weekly hours for a tax-free stipend and mileage reimbursement. Please contact Tina at 651-310-9425 or Tina.Voss@lssmn.org for more information and to make an impact in your community.

AmeriCorps Seniors
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Hamline Church Holiday Market

9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Sat, Nov. 23
1514 Englewood

Lots of great vendors and good things to eat. Shop our makers' market and bring a nonperishable donation for Keystone.

Questions?
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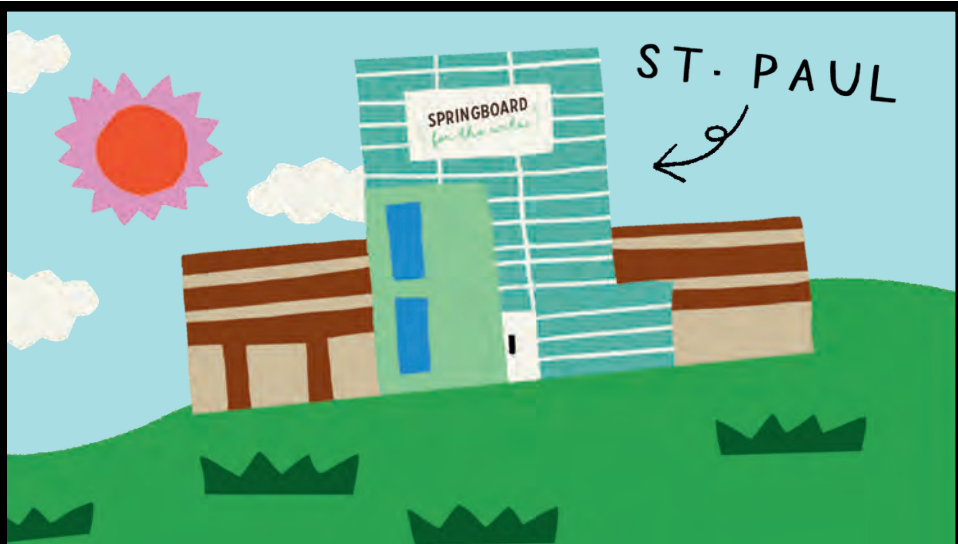
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Lyngblomsten Community Services supports family caregivers of older adults through education, respite programming, memory loss caregiver support groups, local resource recommendations, and more. Lyngblomsten Community Services is supported, in part, by the Lyngblomsten Foundation and is funded under an award with Trellis as part of the Older Americans Act.

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Ignite curiosity at the Bell Museum



Collectors Day 2024

November 9, 10 am - 3 pm

Join us at the Bell Museum for our third annual Collectors Day, a day long event where members of the community are invited to share and showcase their own personal collections. Interact with collectors as they share stories about their gathering process and their passion and enthusiasm for their collections.



Sensory Friendly Saturday

November 16, 8 - 10 am

This monthly series provides a welcoming and accessible environment for individuals, families, and children who have sensory sensitivities. Experience our Minnesota Journeys gallery, temporary exhibits, the Touch & See Lab, and a brief planetarium show at 8:45 am—all with lowered lighting, quieter sounds, and fewer visitors.



Planetarium Shows

Catch a show!

Tour the cosmos and beyond in the Whitney and Elizabeth MacMillan Planetarium. Learn about seasonal constellations and visible planets in *Minnesota Night Skies*, dive into the solar system's lesser-known residents in *Comets, Moons, and Asteroids Revealed*, and more!

bellmuseum.umn.edu

