

## Como wrestler earns second in state

*Impact extends beyond the mat for Makiya 'Meme' May*

By **Eric Erickson**

The stage was set. And it was a mighty big stage for Makiya May to perform on as a Como Park wrestler in the state tournament at the Xcel Energy Center in downtown St. Paul.

Beyond being the first female from Como to ever qualify for the girls' state meet, it was a huge leap to go from wrestling in high school gyms to a professional sports arena with over 10,000 fans in attendance.

But May (who goes by Meme) conquered any stage fright as well as her first round opponent who she pinned in the second period. May, the No. 4 seed, then proceeded to upset the No. 1 seed in a grueling three-period decision. A moment of pure joy punctuated by a triumphant scream. On to the state championship match!

That required a wait of several hours, which was time spent with Como's coaches at Patrick McGovern's for burgers, and in the arena for responsibilities. When the evening's championship session commenced, May was buoyed to see family and friends in the stands who had been cheering for her all day.

The state championship went to a senior from Northfield who defeated May by technical fall. May was consoled and congratulated by coaches and loved ones.

COMO WRESTLER » 2



Como Park wrestler Meme May took first place in the section tournament and finished as the runner up at the state meet held at the Xcel Energy Center. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

## HMC disavows former board president Cole Hanson

*Resolution states that current Ward 4 city council candidate jeopardized organization's tax-exempt status*

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Stating that former Board President and current Ward 4 city council candidate Cole Hanson engaged in activities that jeopardized the Hamline Midway Coalition's tax-exempt status and public trust, the Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) has disavowed Hanson.



Cole Hanson

Hanson is running for the Ward 4 City Council seat vacated by Mitra Jalali.

Hanson's run for the Ward 4 city council seat probably should have begun with his resignation as president from the Hamline Midway Coalition. However, unlike many of St. Paul district councils, HMC's bylaws do not have rules on whether its board members can run for office.

Hanson officially launched his candidacy on Feb. 26 with a Facebook page and website. On it, he used the Hamline Midway Coalition slogan, "With our neighbors, for our neighbors." Coinciding with using it on his campaign materials, Hanson logged into the HMC website and changed the slogan there.

Hanson has since changed his campaign slogan to be: "For our Neighborhoods/Our Neighbor's Choice."

The slogan for the district council was created last year and has been in HMC printed materials, local advertisements, and community outreach efforts, in addition to being on its website.

Hanson also used a photo featuring himself and HMC staff on his campaign website, creating the appearance of an implicit organizational endorsement, such endorsement is expressly prohibited by 501(c)(3) regulations.

According to the HMC resolution, while serving as board president, Hanson engaged in campaign-related activities at an HMC-sponsored event, in violation of IRS rules prohibiting 501(c)(3) organizations from engaging in campaigning.

HMC DISAVOWS HANSON » 3

## Network Now increasing transit service in St. Paul by 70%

*Metro Transit restoring light rail service to every 10 minutes, making changes to bus routes, adding BRT options across region*

By **Jane McClure**

Metro Transit's Network Now framework, which outlines numerous bus and rail service investments to be made through 2027, won Metropolitan Council approval March 26, 2025. The council's action sets the stage for future changes to several Monitor area bus routes and to Green Line light rail.

Work on the changes has been something the council and Metro Council staff have spent much time on, said Council Chair Charlie Zelle.

Council Member and Transportation committee Chair Deb Barber agreed, citing the 8,000 plus public comments and

many months of staff time and outreach involved. She also called out the fact that overall, the transit system will grow by more than 30 percent.

"I'm very excited for this," she said.

For longtime area bus riders, the vote means a final goodbye to the longtime Route 16 along University Avenue, Route 53 along part of Selby Avenue, and Route 84 along Snelling Ave. All three routes had been suspended or cut back in recent years.

For example, after Green Line light rail began operating in 2014, Route 16's original downtown-to-downtown connection was eliminated, with service ending at Prior Ave.

Another area route eyed for change is Route 94, which will eventually become part of the Gold Line extension. The first segment of Gold Line bus rapid transit (BRT) began rolling in March, connecting downtown St. Paul to Woodbury.

Other area routes will see increased service and other changes, which will be rolled out in the months ahead. A Line BRT will expand service from every 15

minutes to every 10 minutes. Green Line and Blue Line light rail will expand service from every 15 minutes to every 10 minutes.

One big change is the upcoming replacement of Route 21 with the B Line bus rapid transit service, which will start mid-year. It is meant to provide faster service, payment before boarding, and other improvements.

In its place in St. Paul, Route 70 will be extended to replace Route 21 service between the Selby Ave. corridor and Midway shopping area. Route 70 will travel between Sun Ray Transit Center and Snelling Ave. and University Ave. every 30 minutes daily.

Another route seeing changes is Route 67, a longtime area "cross-town" route including much of Frogtown and Hamline-Midway. It will be restructured, with portions of the route on Thomas Ave., Rice St. and downtown eliminated. The route will serve Western Ave., University Ave., Marion St., Kellogg Blvd and down-

NETWORK NOW » 3



Learn about local businesses in this year's Midway Chamber Directory

PAGE 6



'Bitterroot' features Hmong-American family, two upcoming viewings

PAGE 6



A LOOK BACK Broomball since 1938 in St. Paul

PAGE 8



## COMO WRESTLER

>> from 1

Shortly thereafter, May's image was projected on huge arena screens as the public address announcer called her name to receive her second-place state medal.

A remarkable journey for Meme May – a Como Park junior who only began to experiment with wrestling two years ago as a freshman.

For those in May's inner circle, they know the journey involves much more than just wrestling. Her hard work and achievements in the sport have helped develop discipline that positively impacts her life.

Reflecting on the past, May described herself as a "bad kid who did a lot of fighting and stuff. I had a rough time keeping my grades up. I wasn't benefiting from the things I was doing."

As her commitment to wrestling grew, so did self-advocacy and positive relationships. "Wrestling helps clear my mind and I like the adrenaline rush. I like the competition. I don't always like the training, but it keeps me motivated," May said.

Como's coaches are essential to the training and May is grateful for their consistent support. "I appreciate the team I have behind me. Each of them has individual things that made them spectacular."

The team in reference includes coaches Anthony Minus and Roy Magnuson, plus young assistants including Thay Ler See and Peter Yang. Combined with teammates and a loving family, May's support



Meme May takes control of her opponent during the state wrestling quarterfinal match. (Photo by Roy Magnuson)

network has become stronger.

"Coach Minus kept me minding my p's and q's. He said that you wouldn't be successful in wrestling unless you're successful with your grades and academically – so I got my grades up, so I could be eligible to wrestle."

"Coach Roy – I loved the pep talks. Love the pep talks," May said with a smile.

"Coach Thay gave me the intensity I needed. He kept me on my toes and wrestled me like I was somebody his size. And coach Peter gave me the technique I needed to be a good wrestler," May explained with enthusiasm. "I love all of them for that."

Gratitude and growth. Relationships and rigor. Accountability and achievement. Wrestling has been a game changer for Meme May and many others, at Como and beyond. With the rapid expansion of girls' wrestling (it's the fastest growing high school sport in the country), the benefits are more available across genders.

Minus is proud of the culture Como wrestling is creating in this new era of the sport. May's experience is a prime example of how wrestling can help young people.

"I believe Meme has grown in terms of being disciplined and choosing to do what's asked of her to be successful

every day," Minus said. "Learning to be a self-advocate, seeking out adults who can be supportive of her, and taking those supports applying them into the athletic space."

"She has resolve and the ability to block out distractions. Wrestling has helped her unlock something that was already there."

Magnuson has coached wrestling for decades and guided many Como boys to state with multiple state place winners. In helping May become the first Como girl to reach state, he saw familiar skills and strengths of top-level talent emerging.

"Meme's strength starts in her ability to score takedowns when the wrestlers are both on their feet," Magnuson said. "She effectively puts her opponent off balance which lets Meme's offense have a chance to work."

"Meme's willingness to see the benefits of having a plan, of matching her strategy to her strengths, has allowed for great progress in a relatively short period of time."

Great progress has led to swift success, and the byproduct of praise and recognition which May is learning to accept. When asked what she's most proud of from her wrestling accomplishments, her introspection reveals a young, positive, and maturing mind.

"Staying consistent and improving throughout the year," May said. "I never dreamed of making it to state, but it was cool that I did. I was just doing what I love."

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## HMC DISAVOWS HANSON

&gt;&gt; from 1

In the resolution approved by the board on March 31: "By taking the above actions – each constituting prohibited political campaign involvement – Mr. Hanson created the appearance of organizational support for a partisan candidate and misused organizational resources to directly benefit his candidacy for public office. Such conduct placed HMC at risk of IRS penalties, including the potential revocation of its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

"WHEREAS, these actions have exposed HMC to potential legal liability, public scrutiny, and reputational harm; and,

"WHEREAS, HMC affirms its commitment to strict adherence to nonprofit law, including IRS regulations and the Johnson Amendment, and to maintaining neutrality in all political campaigns; and,

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that HMC officially disavows the actions taken by Cole Hanson, as outlined above, and affirms that these actions were unauthorized and contrary to HMC's policies and legal obligations; and,

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that HMC reaffirms its commitment to non-partisan conduct, explicitly stating that no board member, staff member, or affiliated individual may use HMC resources, branding, or events for any political campaign." Full resolution at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com).

Following the passage of the resolution, staff discovered that Mr. Hanson had downloaded sensitive internal HMC data – including donor information, event sign-in sheets, and community contact lists – shortly after

announcing his candidacy and prior to losing access to his board email and Google Drive following his resignation," observed HMC Director of Organizing Justin Lewandowski. "The organization is actively consulting with legal counsel to review the matter, and an updated board resolution will likely be required to explicitly address the unauthorized downloading and use of this sensitive information."

HMC has consulted with two attorneys related to these issues. HMC officials point out that they had communicated concerns with Hanson throughout the launch of his campaign.

HMC Board members include Grace Liu (president), Anna Best (secretary), Ilya Garelik (Co-Vice President), Melissa Tallman (Co-Vice President), Gunnar Aas, Kaitlynn Fuller, Cameron Fure, Dawn Einwalter and Ahmed (Meddy) Ali. Executive committee members include Liu, Best, Garelik, Tallman and Aas.

Hanson officially resigned as board member, a role he held since 2023, on March 4. Grace Liu was voted in as the new HMC Board president.

HMC is currently in the middle of board elections. Applications and questionnaires were due on April 7, with the election April 14-28.

It is unclear how many board members have been involved in Hanson's campaign.

In a statement to the Monitor on April 6, Liu wrote: "I am not currently involved in Cole Hanson's campaign in any way. I've remained focused on my responsibilities as board president and on protecting the integrity and neutrality of HMC as a nonprofit organization."

Liu had volunteered for Hanson's campaign prior to being elected as board president, and she knows of at least one other board member that is currently helping with Hanson's campaign.



Grace Liu

### NEXT STEPS FOR HMC

"As a board, we've worked hard to ensure HMC remains a trusted and nonpartisan neighborhood institution," stated Liu. "While the majority of the board does not believe there was malicious intent behind the former board president's actions, we acknowledge the serious nature of the concerns and are committed to learning from this experience and strengthening our internal policies."

About half of the city's district councils do not have a policy requiring that when board members seek an elected office that they either resign from the district council or take a leave of absence. HMC intends to adopt a new bylaw provision following this incident.

The HMC board also intends to strengthen its conflict-of-interest policy and expand board education to provide clearer guidelines and comprehensive training on nonprofit compliance, ensuring board members fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of maintaining HMC's nonpartisan integrity.

In an effort to reaffirm its commitment to non-partisanship in elections, HMC will not be involved in candidate forums for the upcoming special election. HMC will not host, co-host, or sponsor any candidate forums, but may promote forums organized by neighborhood partners.

HMC is a 317A Minnesota nonprofit corporation exempt from income tax pursuant to 501(c)(3) and, as such, is bound by the regulations set forth in the Internal Revenue Code that explicitly prohibit charitable organizations from engaging in partisan political activities.

### HANSON'S STATEMENT ON 'MISSTEPS'

When asked about the issues in the HMC resolution, Hanson labeled them "missteps, driven by inexperience."

He added, "I want to be clear: I never intentionally misused HMC resources or intellectual property, nor did I knowingly act in a way that would harm the organization. I was simply unequipped to navigate the finer points of nonprofit and campaign law as a first-time candidate and longtime volunteer leader."

### BOARD PRESIDENT SEEKS TO PREVENT STAFF FROM TALKING TO MONITOR

The current HMC Board President sought to prevent HMC's Organizing Director from speaking to the media about this issue.

On April 2, Liu emailed the Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, writing, "I was recently made aware that our organizing director, Justin Lewandowski, may have made statements to you regarding a resolution passed by the HMC board this Monday, March 31 relating to Cole Hanson, former board president. Justin's statements were made to you without the permission of the executive director or board of directors. He was acting as an unauthorized spokesperson for the organization, and any statements he made to you should be retracted."

Currently, Lewandowski is the only staff member in the HMC office as executive director Jenne Nelson has taken a leave of absence and is working in the Ward 4 City Council office.

Per the HMC media relationship policy:

- "The executive director or their designee will be the primary spokesperson for the HMC. Only the executive director or their designee is authorized to provide statements to the media on behalf of the organization. The executive committee of HMC can designate an alternate spokesperson for HMC at any time. HMC staff and executive committee are encouraged to seek out resources for media training."

Lewandowski considered himself the official designee of the executive director while on leave, with the authority to be the spokesperson for the organization, when he responded to the Monitor's questions in a timely manner, which is called for in the HMC media policy. On April 3, the HMC executive committee suspended Lewandowski for two weeks.

Liu emailed her resignation letter to fellow board members late on April 7.

### WARD 4 CANDIDATES

In addition to Hanson, three others have announced their bid for the vacant Ward 4 seat: Molly Coleman, Cristen Incitti and current school board member Chauntyll Allen. Former Ward 4 council member Mitra Jalali's term was set to end in 2028. A special election will be held on Aug. 12.

>> Find updates on this story at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com).

### WARD 4 COUNCIL MEMBER CANDIDATES, ELECTION ON AUG. 12



Chauntyll Allen



Molly Coleman



Cristin Incitti



Cole Hanson

## CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS CAN'T AGREE ON WARD 4 APPOINTEE

At three recent city council meetings, the council has failed to agree on a procedure or new appointee to fill the vacant Ward 4 City Council seat. The seat has been officially vacant since March 8, following Jalali's leave of absence. According to the city charter, the city council has 30 days to appoint an interim member following a resignation.

The council took an unexpected recess at its Wednesday, April 2, 2025 meeting, holding conversations behind closed doors before reconvening to take a third unsuccessful vote on a new council appointment.

Confusion followed council President Rebecca Noecker's call for an impromptu recess midway through the meeting. Most council members rose from their seats, including Noecker, Kim, Bowie and Johnson. Jost was calling into the meeting remotely and later said she didn't know what was happening. Yang remained back in the chamber.

The four who left the chamber did not all meet together during the recess. This is important because, if they had all met, the meeting would have constituted a quorum and could have been considered an unauthorized closed session. Instead, council members Noecker and Kim confirmed later that they met with council member Bowie. They said they were trying to confirm that Bowie understood what they were voting on during the portion of the meeting dedicated to filling Jalali's seat.

Johnson decried the decision to call a recess after holding virtually no conversation about the items publicly during council meetings. "Community members have constantly asked for us to be transparent," Johnson said. "They trust in our government elected officials to make decisions, sometimes easy ones and sometimes hard ones. But it is the deals that happen behind closed doors that repeat centuries of issues and disparities and lack of trust from community."

Because the council failed to come to an agreement on this interim replacement before its deadline, the appointment will now go to the mayor.

Jalali's former aide Matt Privratsky and Union Park District Council member Lisa Nelson are being considered for the seat. Privratsky does not plan to run for the permanent seat and it is unclear if Nelson plans to.

Tensions around the interim appointment first came to a head last week when council member Jost moved to name Privratsky to the interim seat while Noecker was absent on bereavement leave.

Kim and Yang opposed the motion, saying the council had agreed to address the issue when all members could be present last Friday. When the Friday special meeting rolled around on March 28, Noecker adjourned after only three minutes, stating her disappointment in the council not having reached consensus.

- Information from the MinnPost article by Winter Keefer, "St. Paul City Council disagreement reaches boiling point behind closed doors."

### MAYOR APPOINTS PRIVRATSKY

On Monday afternoon, April 7, Mayor Melvin Carter appointed former Ward 4 aide Matt Privratsky as the interim Ward 4 city council member.

## NETWORK NOW

&gt;&gt; from 1

town streets to Union Depot. It will retain service on much of Minnehaha Ave. and Fairview Ave. Part of the route in Minneapolis will be eliminated.

Some routes, including Routes 63, 65, 83 and 87, will see more frequent service.

Other Monitor area routes eyed for changes are:

- Route 3, which serves portions of Washington Ave. in downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, Como Ave., Front Ave., downtown St. Paul and Union Depot Transit Center. Route 3A will no longer serve downtown St. Paul. In-

stead, it will continue Maryland Ave. to White Bear Ave. and Sun Ray Transit Center. Riders can make transfer to get downtown. This route will also have frequency changes.

- Route 33 operates in a circular pattern along portions of Territorial Rd., Berry St., University Ave., 4th St., 15th Ave., Rollins Ave., 17th Ave., Elm St., Kasota Ave., Energy Park Dr., and non-stop on Hwy. 280 in Minneapolis. Saturday service will be discontinued due to low ridership. Weekdays' span of service will be reduced during morning rush hours.

- Route 61 will become a Larpenteur Ave. crosstown route in St. Paul. All trips will be extended east from Larpenteur

Ave. and Arcade St. to Larpenteur Ave. and Century Ave. Frequency will increase.

- Route 83 will see some change beyond frequency of service, to supplement a new Route 60 and provide more service to the Midway shopping area.

Some area district councils have had presentations on the upcoming changes by Cyndi Harper, manager of route planning, and Barrett Clausen, area route planner.

Network Now is meant to address changing transit needs in the region, said Clausen. It includes new or redesigned routes, changes in route frequency, elimination of suspended routes and new types of service.

Harper said many changes reflect post-pandemic realities. "COVID really did a number on us," she observed. Ridership is bouncing back but not with the same travel patterns as before.

The framework will expand transit service regionally by more than 35 percent, and will make changes to commuter and express service to meet today's travel patterns. It calls for improved frequency on more than 60 bus routes, and will restore light rail service to every 10 minutes.

In St. Paul, transit service will increase by more than 70 percent by 2027.

Learn about the framework at <https://www.metrotransit.org/network-now>



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

# Spring into reading: 5 new children's books for learning and family fun

## FIRST EDUCATOR

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



Spring is the perfect time to read together as a family. Books are filled with the resources and information needed to support each child's development. They cultivate language skills, cognitive development, and emotional awareness. They also help children relate to the world around them and become global citizens.

The five children's books published by Planting People Growing Justice Press as part of its 2025 Spring Book Collection, do all that and more. They inspire life skills and leadership potential, while relatable characters and positive messaging instill cultural pride and awareness.

Meet the Books

1) "Akua Goes to the Post Office" by Dr. Artika Tyner. Life skill: The importance



of written communication – Young readers join an inquisitive young girl, Akua, and her family on a trip to the post office. They are introduced to how mail is sorted and delivered. They learn how fun it can be to keep in touch by writing letters.

2) "Kojo Goes to the Library" by Dr. Artika Tyner. Life skill: The importance of literacy and education – By following a bright young boy, Kojo, on his first trip to the library, young readers are introduced to the joy that can be found in the world of books, storytelling, and learning. They

watch him as he gains a love for reading and realizes the power of knowledge.

3) "Carl Walker: The Sound of Justice" by Majeste Phillip. Life skill: The importance of using your leadership skills to uplift the community – Young readers meet a Rondo community leader, Reverend Carl Walker, who brought the joy of music to thousands of people of all ages. They learn how Walker West Music Academy gives students the musical skills to tell their own stories and a space to come together around music.

4) "Shirley Chisholm: Champion for Change" by Dr. Tonya Allen. Life skill: The importance of courage and justice – By learning about the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress, young readers are inspired to become difference-makers. In 1972, she demonstrated what it meant to be "unbought and unbosomed" when she ran for president of the United States. Our youth can see how her legacy of change lives on and continues to inspire future leaders.

5) "The Amazing Foods of Africa: A to Z" by Dr. Artika Tyner and Dorthy Gbolo. Life skill: The importance of culture and history – Families are introduced to the

foods from the continent of Africa. This experience encourages young readers and families to explore their cultural history and celebrate their heritage through food. It is an invitation to learn and grow while cooking and enjoying a meal together.

## A CALL TO ACTION

A "first educator" refers to the fundamental primary role that parents and caregivers play in a person's early development and education. They instill essential life skills, morals, and behaviors.

By incorporating personal narratives into daily life, first educators can help children develop important literacy skills, emotional intelligence, and social understanding. Storytelling is not just a way to preserve history or teach morals. It is a powerful tool for connecting with others and fostering personal growth. Encourage your children to share their stories and watch as they grow into confident, empathetic, and articulate individuals.

Through her organization, Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute, Dr. Artika Tyner offers resources to foster literacy and education.

## PEACE BUBBLES

BY MELVIN GILES  
[peacebubbles@q.com](mailto:peacebubbles@q.com)



*"It's a beautiful day. Thank you for sunshine, thank you for rain, thank you for joy, thank for pain. It's a beautiful day." – TRINIX x Rushawn*

*"I smile, even though I'm hurt see I smile... it's so hard to look up when you look down. Hate to see it when you give up now. You look so much better when you smile, so smile." – Kirk Franklin*

*"Don't worry, be happy!" – Bobby McFerrin*

Hello Monitor readers,

Fresh and awesome spring greetings! Like some of us, I've been struggling trying to accept the changes in our government leadership, particularly, with the corporate-like mentality of profits over people and the cut-and-slash model of the everyday person. Therefore, I've been so happy for the late-night comedian tv shows. They provide excellent laugh therapy in our current times of what's really up with our national government and lawmakers. I started writing this column at the end of February because it seemed like our government was being run by the Keystone Cops or the Three Stooges. I trusted that by the middle or end of March that things would be more settled and grounded; and that our lawmakers would be awake enough to stop the dismantling of our great constitutional democracy instead of allowing it to become a Scam Grifter Democracy. Instead, America has continued taking a degrading fall of being unpopular and

# Keep calling out your better angels

continue with a toxic bullying role globally and with our close allies and nearby adjoining countries.

For instance, on the last day of February, the world watched America be a Big Bully and lose its greatness as the world leader of justice and democracy and become the world's image of shame by joining the forces of Russia and North Korea. Wow, I never thought America would succumb to such a toxic and Hitlerian manner.

I need help to understand or find the benefits of denying federal funds to universities and helpful mutual aid organizations while attempting to dismantle other essential departments, in order to empower states. I am also wondering about the purging of historical experiences of Indigenous, Black, and Brown people, in the name of making America great by us not being educated and knowledgeable about what has made America great even with our little and big flaws? I believe one of America's values has been in investing in our greatness through education and documenting our great explorational work is progress in the making of a democracy (We the People, For the People, By the People).

Likewise, on the fifth anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic, we heard another announcement by the chainsaw slashing and dysfunctional thrashing of our powerful democratic government. This time it was dismantling of our Department of Education! The department that ensures that America stays powerful, skillful, and capable of being the world's great leader. On this same day, we also heard sad and understanding responses from Canadian leaders, naming the dangers of anticipated worldwide high inflation and the

cause of it! I can only send extra prayers to our federal workers and gratefulness to our first responders and frontline health staff and volunteers; thank you.

I'm starting spring with reframing and checking/catching myself when I feel that I'm falling down that rabbit hole of despair, fear, and hopelessness. I know as a country that we can and will rise again to answering the questions: "How are our children; how are our mothers, fathers, and grandparents, and how are our country and We the People? Just as the spring brings extended daylight, I am renewed and restored with new hope in these cloudy days of confusion and daily inconsistency and incompetent practices from our national lawmakers. I was so relieved that finally our Supreme Court Chief Justice attempted to put the brakes on our elected, out-of-control civil servants on behalf of the American, We the People.

Shout-outs to our branch of justices, to the America's free-speech news networks, to our wonderful and creative artists and entertainment industries, to our health care workers, to our first and essential workers, our scientists and students of every age, to our transportation workers, and to our responsible and accountable law enforcement peacemakers, and other folks who truly have and continue to make America great, particularly, the everyday 'We the People'. I believe it is vital that at this time, we don't give up because of fear of standing-up, speaking-up, and sharing our truth to power in our own personal way. Yes, we want our national borders secured and we all want bad elements/people to be deported or put in jail. However, I don't think we want a mob-mentality like the one that

caused the genocide of Indigenous nations and stealing of Indigenous lands, the enslavement of African people, or the forced encampment of Japanese people, or the disempowerment of women and of the disregard and destruction of our beautiful Mother Earth. Although, I have no clue on the how, I do know that We the People can put American back together again in due time.

Please keep the faith, keep calling on your better angels and your ancestors for guidance, patience, insights, and wisdom of how we can work, play, sing, and live together without retribution but with justice, without greed but with equity, and without hate but with love. Start with one day at a time by smiling from your heart when you see someone; even giving a grateful nod to someone. We all need signs that we are not alone. Practice bringing out your light of kindness for yourself, which will be reflected in others. Be okay with expressing joy even in these unpredictable and hard times. Send good thoughts and prayers to those who have been unthoughtfully fired, laid-off, and/or kept in the dark about their families' next steps.

We are in this together including those who are conscious or unconsciously doing harm.

And, as my opening quotes suggest, listening to music and songs that inspire and give you hope. It is darkest before the dawn and dark clouds and thunderstorms do have aftermaths of silver linings and golden sun shines. Be well, we are in tough times, however, we will arise again!

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

# Monitor

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News for you!

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

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

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

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## BUILDING A STRONGER MIDWAY

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



It's April, which means the Midway Chamber's annual directory is out. If you get the Monitor delivered to your house, the directory should have been included. If you're a member of the Midway Chamber, you will get one when you renew your membership, or you can grab one at an event.

Creating the directory is always a fun project because it allows me to both look back on the memories of the past year and to also look ahead of what's to come. As I look at the images in the directory, I can see ribbon cuttings of new businesses like Dilla's, expanded businesses like Udo's Market, and businesses with new owners

# Learn about local businesses in this year's directory

like Black Garnet Books.

I'm reminded of the first parts of the United Village development as they take shape – the playground (PK's) and the Calling (the giant loon). Along with what's already there, I'm also looking toward the future to more groundbreakings as we near spring. The restaurants, office space and hotel should all start construction this year.

Other images remind me of the events we held this year, including bringing back our Taste of the Midway event where guests sampled items from many local restaurants, our Nonprofit of the Month award presented by Blaze Credit Union, and offering members a chance to meet with elected officials and candidates for office. Seeing the photos of our board of directors reminds me of the work they did to help our organization, especially creating a three-year strategic plan.

But the biggest piece of the directory is just what the name suggests: a place to

find names of local businesses, schools, government offices, and nonprofits. I'm reminded of how years ago, before I worked for the Midway Chamber, my house in Frogtown would get a copy and I'd place it on top of my fridge (along with the Yellow and White Pages, because I'm apparently old). It was my go-to source for finding businesses close to my house.

Why support the local businesses? I know I'm biased, probably more than anyone, but there are several reasons! The convenience of finding businesses close to your residence is pretty obvious, but also consider that these are organizations who have chosen to give back to our community. Many live in or near the Midway and even more have chosen to put down roots professionally here, too.

So, take a look at the new directory. You may learn something and discover new businesses. I'm already thinking of what fun things will be part of the 2026 edition.



**FIND THE E-DIRECTORY online at**  
[www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com)

## 'Bitterroot' features Hmong-American family

*Two opportunities to see film: MSPIFF 44 and at the Walker May 16-17*

By Jan Willms

"Bitterroot," a film reflecting on Hmong-American culture, explores the struggles of a man challenged by the trauma of divorce and also the need to care for his aging mother.

The film is directed by Vera Brunner-Sung and stars Wa Yang as Lue, the man coming to terms with the changes in his life. Kazoua Vang is a co-producer and assistant director.

### MEET THE CO-PRODUCER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

K. Vang said she became involved with "Bitterroot" through another producer, Yeej Moua, whom she met at an art gathering.

"We became friends, and we eventually went to Montana. I had always wanted to go to Montana, and we had conversations around the project of 'Bitterroot'."

"Being part of the Hmong film community in Minnesota, I have always wanted to make sure the Hmong American experience is captured correctly," K. Vang said. She was invited to be a part of the production crew. K. Vang said that although she grew up in Minnesota, being a Hmong woman and daughter translates to the Hmong community in Missoula, where the picture was filmed. She said her journey with "Bitterroot" led to working with the script, stories, characters and Missoula Hmong community to make the film authentic. She also worked on the set.

K. Vang said she grew up around film, but has always been an artist and storyteller at heart. "I have used these skills in being a producer," she said. "I have always loved film and movies, and I think what I can bring to a film as a producer are the values I have and wanting to make sure those values are also present on the set." K. Vang said that for "Bitterroot," because it is a western American film as well, she wanted to make sure Lue and Song, his mother, were portrayed and displayed in a way that feels right for the Hmong American community.

According to K. Vang, her work as both a producer and assistant director on "Bitterroot" was a matter of building trust. "Film-making can be very transactional, but for me, it is important to build trust and relationships that last longer than the movie."

K. Vang observed that one of the most challenging parts of making the film was



"Bitterroot" stars Hmong American actor Wa Yang in the titular role of Lue. Previous credits include St. Paul's Theater Mu and Pom Siab Hmoob Theatre.

working during the COVID pandemic. "We were filming while we still had to follow protocol policies. It didn't make or break the movie, but it was definitely challenging."

K. Vang said she appreciates that "Bitterroot" gave opportunities to so many more Hmong to join the film-making process, both in front of and behind the camera. "If that can happen, I am always happy to share the process. The process is what's important to me."

### MEET ACTOR W. YANG

W. Yang, who stars as Lue in "Bitterroot," has been a part of the Hmong film-making community in Minnesota for many years. As a high schooler, he had participated in an Asian Media summer program in Minneapolis that catered to young Asian American students interested in videography. "I was in my senior year, and I learned a lot about film stuff and camera work," W. Yang explained, "but they also needed actors. I got to act, build some friendships and started in some small films."

He achieved the starring role in Bryan Vue's film "Journey to a Fallen Sky," and moved on from there in acting and production. He traveled to Los Angeles. There were a lot more opportunities there in going out and seeking projects, since that is the city where the industry is. But there were not a lot of roles for Asian American men.

W. Yang said that today, back in Minnesota, he is in a very different frame of mind. "In LA, I wanted to make acting my day job. And when I returned to Minnesota, I was asked to be a part of many different projects. I didn't have to go looking for them."

W. Yang considers himself more extro-

verted and colorful than some of the roles he plays. His characters are usually more reserved and speak less dialogue. "Not that I don't do that in my personal life, so it is not such a big stretch. Growing up in a culture where being too vocal is looked down upon, that kind of reserve is cultivated and fostered."

He said that the part of Lue was reflective of his own life-view, and that helped him with the role and the character. "It was more challenging to play the spirit," he said. "That took some time to figure out and how the spirit interacted with Lue."

W. Yang said he could see that his day job as a psychiatric nurse practitioner could help him with his acting. "I have only been doing it for three years, but in future projects if there are characters who resemble my patients I teach, it could be helpful." He said that observing family dynamics and taking bits and parts of that could help him utilize his experiences into roles and characters.

W. Yang said the scenery of rural Montana provided a sense of calm that is very different from the hustle and bustle of the Twin Cities. "The flowing river, the mountains, just the whole scenery was really relaxing," he said. "The film captured that with its pacing."

W. Yang commented that for those who have not seen the film but are interested, "Bitterroot" is a film that follows a certain rhythm. "There is something to be said regarding that pace and that rhythm. It is reflective of us as human beings, taking time to process and redefine yourself when you're lost. My character was very lost."

### MEET THE DIRECTOR

As a director, Brunner-Sung has said

her work explores the connection between identity and place. "It is something I am always thinking about for myself, based on my life experience. How do we decide where we belong? What makes us belong somewhere?"

Brunner-Sung connects to other people who have created that connection for themselves, like every immigrant everywhere, or anyone born in one place and moved to another. "There is something about the way 'Bitterroot' wants to hold and share this one specific family experience from this one specific Hmong community that I hope exemplifies this."

"I wrote this script with a lot of consultation and feedback with collaborators as well as actors and the Missoula Hmong community. We shared story outlines and got their thoughts on what felt right and what didn't. We listened and made adjustments because authenticity was the goal."

Brunner-Sung said the dynamic between the mother and son in the story came from conversations with them and the translator.

"I wrote the script in English, and some of it did not make sense in Hmong. The story was the result of listening to the folks I had the privilege of connecting with to understand what might feel real. And what might resonate. The project took many years."

"I am attracted to loner characters," Brunner-Sung continued. "I knew there would be a lone man and there would be a process of discovery in understanding who he was and his relationship with his family and community."

Brunner-Sung said she feels motivated to make films that are a way to connect with people. "The process behind the camera as well as the sharing of the finished film is a way to communicate and connect across our differences and distances," she explained. "The characters may have very human flaws and struggles. I don't know if I come with the intention of making the characters likable, but I want to be honest."

Experimental, documentary and narrative films are all a part of Brunner-Sung's interest. "I like them all, but a feature film can be so different from a 10-minute film. Sometimes you have an 86-minute idea, and sometimes a 16-minute idea."

Brunner-Sung said "Bitterroot" will be showing at festivals and in Hmong communities, then go to distribution so people will have the opportunity to see it on the big screen.

"For me, film-making is about the connection both in front of and behind the camera," Brunner-Sung said. "That is especially true for 'Bitterroot.' This project involved a lot of trust and collaborative effort, and I'm just really proud of what we accomplished together. I can't wait for audiences to see it."





# SPEAK OUT AND LEAD

**April 26th 2025, 12-5PM**  
 Food Trucks | Art | Performances  
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# Broomball goes back to 1938 in St. Paul

*Fred's Tire, Wizards, Vanelli's Patrick's Lounge teams*

By **Matthew Johnson**

From April 11-13, the American Broomball Alliance National Championships will be held at Bob Suter Legacy 20 Arena near Madison, Wis. Around 40 teams will compete in two Women's divisions, two Co-Rec divisions, and three Men's divisions. The year is 2025, but Saint Paul's history with the sport runs back much further.

Fame goalie and broomball historian Al "Woody" Stauffacher wrote a college research paper in 2001 "History of Twin Cities Broomball." He wrote, "I viewed a videotape from the Minnesota Historical Society of the 1938 St. Paul Winter Carnival" which showed men playing broomball on Lake Phalen. Decades later broomball would grow from an exhibition at the Winter Carnival to having enough teams for four divisions of Men's, three divisions of Co-Rec, and two divisions of women's broomball.

## COMO REC VS. STILLWATER PRISON

Jack Pojar remembers the city's broomball league starting in the early 1960s. He was playing for a hockey team sponsored by a bar called Como Rec, now called Half Time Rec, at 1013 Front Ave. He played softball and hockey for Como Rec, and several of the hockey players joined a Como Rec broomball team back in the early 1960s.

Pojar recalled, "We won the city championship, and then a teammate got a call from the Stillwater penitentiary, and they said, 'We would like city champions to come down here and play the inmates.'" Pojar said that there were five or six gates to get to the rink: "They got a rink out in the courtyard in the back. They had the broomball nets and the boards set up like a hockey rink. So we're playing, and we finally scored a goal. Then we scored one at the end, and we barely beat them 2-0. In the meantime, the one wall that faces the rink, every window had inmates looking out watching."

Pojar explained that inmates "made their own brooms. They made the handles like two inches in diameter, like a baseball bat. So if you hit the ball, it'd go 50 yards." The Como Rec team asked the inmates if they could have some of their custom-made brooms and received four large brooms to take back to St. Paul. Pojar remembered, "The prisoners said, 'Oh yeah, we make these all the time' Wow, when we had them, my goodness: the goalie could score from the other side of the rink." Pojar now runs Knight Promotions that prints hockey and broomball jerseys, as well as promotional t-shirts and other items.

## FRED'S TIRE

Ozzie St. George interviewed Fred Macalus Sr. for the Jan. 27, 1974 issue of the Pioneer Press. The article mentions the four bars at the corner of Dale and University: Lendways, the New Bar, the Badger Lounge, and the Belmont. Macalus Sr. said, "That's where broomball – I mean organized broomball, broomball as we know it today – got its start."

Retired Hall-of-Famer Chris Blair grew up in St. Paul. His first broomball memory was from the mid-1970s. Blair was about 10 when his dad took him to watch Fred's Tire play at an ice rink outside Mangini's at 1177 Clarence St. The Parkside Lounge right next to it also supported broomball. "You cannot talk about St. Paul broomball history without talking about Fred's Tire," Blair said.

Sean Gibbons also grew up in St. Paul. In the 1980s, he remembered skat-



*Wizards Broomball playing at McMurray in the mid 2000s. They have been playing in St. Paul since 1977.*



*Jack Pojar at Half Time Rec, a bar with which he has over 60 years of experience since when it was named Como Rec and sponsored his softball, hockey, and broomball teams. (Photo by Matthew Johnson)*

ing outdoors with his brother Casey at West Minnehaha. From their rink they could see a rink at the Overtime Bar on Pierce Butler Rte. Gibbons said, "Tommy Macalus and his dad had league going there. It was 8-man broomball, and it was the craziest thing I ever saw." Sean and Casey would eventually become teammates with Tom Macalus, whose earliest broomball memory was before his playing days: "riding in a bus to the Thunder Bay tournament and sleeping in the luggage rack above the seats."

Fred's Tire was sponsored by the automotive shop of the same name, once at 519 University Ave. According to Tom Macalus, his dad Fred Macalus Sr. started the broomball team in 1953. The team started competing in the St. Paul city league from the 1970s through the 1980s. Fred's



*Goalkeeper Craig Garcia started his broomball career playing at McMurray in street clothes. He played and managed Vanelli's broomball team which won the top Men's division in the 2004 Outdoor State tournament. Vanelli's eventually merged with USA Blue. His many championships earned him an induction into the 2024 class of American Broomball Alliance Hall of Fame this past December. (Photo courtesy of American Broomball Alliance)*

Tire would win the AA (highest level) State Championships for the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) from 1973-1985.

Stauffacher noted, "Fred's teams were the first to travel to Canada and play Canadian teams. Fred brought back the smaller Canadian broomball that would eventually replace the soccer-style ball" Minnesotans had previously used. Eventually, Fred's sons all joined the team: Fred Jr., Frank, and Tom. All four are in the USA/ABA Broomball Hall of Fame as individuals or as part of teams.



*Del Montes Women's Broomball after winning the 1977 State tournament in Duluth. Top row: Tami Pehoski, Polly Jacobson Cisco, Gwen Schmidt, Mary Gliniany, Tima Edberg, Marty Bergman, [unidentified]. Bottom row: Cindy Fish, Sue Mitchell, Lynn Brown, Mary Hoissier, [unidentified], Deb Taney, Linda Wolf, Linda Buccelli.*

## STANDOUT WOMEN PLAYERS

Deb Holtkamp first played broomball at North Dale Recreation Center when she was in seventh grade. "That was with actual broom brooms. You cut them down and then taped them up." She remembered the North Dale director Chet Petrie had enough kids for four teams. Her adult career would start in the 1970s when her friend Mikki Mascotti asked her to play on the women's team Steamers at the World Tournament at the Civic Center, which sat where Xcel Energy Center is now. Holtkamp and Mascotti became friends because their dads worked together at the St. Paul Dispatch newspaper.

Mikki Mascotti remembered playing softball leagues at Arlington playground because women's high school sports didn't exist yet. She got her start in broomball looking for more sports to play: "I played softball with the same Steamers team in St. Paul, and we just continued to play every sport that they had." The Steamers got the name from their sponsor Showboat Bar in downtown St. Paul, likely named for the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, a steamboat theater on the Mississippi River. Eventually, that women's team were sponsored by Patrick's Lounge on Larpenteur. They played against Fred's Tire (women's), Maplewood Bowl, and Taney's Construction which consisted of women from Como Park area.

Eventually, Mascotti would manage a women's indoor league that first played at the Doug Woog Arena (South St. Paul) and eventually the Oscar Johnson Arena near Bandana Square. Mascotti and Holtkamp both remember when the top indoor women's league eventually moved to Augsburg Ice Arena.

Mascotti spoke of Holtkamp: "She's just a great team player. She's a phenomenal athlete." In 2004, Deb Holtkamp became the first women inducted in the U.S. Broomball Hall of Fame. Holtkamp not only played broomball and softball, but she also managed the city broomball league for years. At age 16, she worked at the Northwest Como Rec Center and over time became a Rec Leader. Around 1989, she took an opening in the Municipal Athletics office under Bill Peterson. Holtkamp recalled, "We had hockey leagues at that time, broomball, basketball, volleyball, everything. Then somehow, because I played broomball, I just kind of fell into the role as the broomball coordinator."

## BROOMBALL COMPETITIONS AT ST. PAUL CIVIC CENTER AND AUDITORIUM

According to Al Stauffacher, Minneapolis sporting goods store owner Kurt Curry started the Metropolitan All-Star game pitting Minneapolis' best men against St. Paul. At the Saint Paul Civic Arena in 1973, St. Paul beat Minneapolis 7-1. A few years later Fred Macalus Sr. and Terry Walfoort continued All-Star games, adding a women's and recreation divisions. Eventually, these all-star games were combined with a World Tournament which was held every year from 1974-1980.

Stauffacher wrote, "Fred created the World Tournaments at the St Paul Civic Center and Auditorium, giving the Twin Cities their first taste of highly competitive broomball." Mikki Mascotti said that Canadian teams did come down to play in the Worlds Tournament but usually just one men's, one women's, and one Co-Rec team each year. It would be 11 years later in 1991 when the International Federation of Broomball Associations (IFBA) organized their first World Championships in Victoria, BC.

## WINTER CARNIVAL TOURNAMENT AT MCMURRAY, COMO PARK

Al Stauffacher said that Deb Holtkamp and St. Paul Municipal Athletics probably started the outdoor Winter Carnival Broomball Tournament held late January. For certain, the first was in the early 1970s. Perry Coonce of the Minnesota Sports Federation (MSF) took over



## COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY ERIC ERICKSON  
Social studies teacher



Eighteen seniors currently studying AP Government and AP Economics spent the final week of February in Washington D.C. as part of the national Close Up program.

Close Up is a nonpartisan foundation dedicated to bringing students together from across the nation for civil discourse and immersive learning with the nation's capital serving as the classroom.

After months of planning, intensive college-level study of U.S. government and politics, and significant fundraising including extremely generous donations from members of the Como community, the motivated and dedicated student group embarked upon a memory making experience.

Highlights included study visits to national monuments and memorials including Jefferson, FDR, Martin Luther King, Jr., Lincoln, World War II, Vietnam, and Korea. There were also study visits to museums of the Smithsonian, Arlington National Cemetery, and different Washington D.C. neighborhoods.

On Wednesday, Feb. 26, Como stu-

# AP Government students visit D.C.



Como AP Government students with Senator Tina Smith after their meeting in the Hart Senate Office Building. (Photo courtesy of Senator Smith's office.)

dents visited Capitol Hill for an unforgettable day. They observed the Senate Agricultural, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee discussing the impact of proposed budget cuts, with Senator Amy Klobuchar speaking as the Democrats' ranking member.

After touring the U.S. Capitol building and rotunda, Como students engaged in a policy meeting with Senator Tina Smith who graciously responded to their questions and concerns. From there, the

group was escorted through the Congressional tunnels and subway into the House of Representatives chamber for a viewing from the gallery.

A brief stop in the Supreme Court allowed students to see the chamber for oral arguments, before a walk across Capitol Hill to Congresswoman Betty McCollum's office.

The Congresswoman hosted a 45-minute policy meeting for the Como students. In response to a student ques-

tion, McCollum shared her perspectives on the current situation in Washington and the federal government. Students were grateful for her insight, and how she addressed their inquiries about climate change, foreign policy, education, and the reduction of government resources.

The memorable day continued with a night at the National Theater where a Broadway touring company performed the Tony-nominated musical comedy "Shucked."

Additional noteworthy events from the week included going to the top of the Washington Monument for awe-inspiring views of the capital city below, visiting the African American Smithsonian Museum, and seeing the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution in the National Archives.

The collective experience was bolstered by the bonds Como classmates made with each other during an educational experience that will impact the rest of their lives and inspire political participation. Students gained knowledge they can use to try and preserve and impact our democracy going forward.

"Seeing the history and government in person that used to be just words in my textbook brought on a sense of deep responsibility," said Como senior Aymelee Xiong. "I really owe my family, my ancestors, and the countless individuals who built this country to always strive for my best and not give up hope."

## HAMLIN TO HAMLIN COLLABORATION



We hosted our annual Discovery Expo event on campus in March and it was a wonderful success. Hamline Elementary students from all grade levels visited Hamline University's Anderson Center for hands-on learning experiences from a variety of campus organizations, programs, and academic departments. The goal of the event is to provide college and career exploration in a fun and engaging way and – as we do with all our programming – build strong relationships across our two campuses. Many thanks to all who attended and supported this event! And that spring in our step continues as we prepare for a second grade academic pairing with a "Business in Society" class, kindergarten tours of Bush Library, and continuing our partnership with Hamline University Athletics for an all-school field day on Klas Field in May.

We are so grateful for the people who fill our "two campuses and one community" with learning and connection. We'd like to introduce you to one of those people who spends her day with Hamline Ele-

## Meet teacher, Midway resident Amanda Jagdeo

mentary's littlest learners.

Meet Amanda Jagdeo - a dynamic and talented teacher at Hamline Elementary. This is Ms. Amanda's fourth year as a pre-K teacher at Hamline.

"Teaching pre-K in the Midway feels like the most important job to me because I deeply believe that if I can eliminate the opportunity gap before it exists, students will be on a path toward future success, both inside and outside of the classroom," said Ms. Amanda.

This neighborhood and the students within it mean a lot to her, and she's always looking to change lives and provide an enriching education with the opportunity to teach at Hamline Elementary.

"It feels important to me that it happens in our community because kiddos who live where I live, look like I look, and come from the kind of family I came from should have the same opportunities as their White, more affluent peers in the suburbs. I work hard to make sure kiddos in our classroom feel loved and safe, so they know it is okay to take risks and make mistakes as they problem solve, try new things and figure out what makes them excited about coming to school every day. I want them to love learning and carry that love with them for years to

come," said Ms. Amanda.

Ms. Amanda does more than just teaching in the classroom, however. She also participated in Hamline University's Teacher Field School, a series of retreats focused on helping teachers develop fluency in standards-aligned, equity-centered, multidisciplinary approaches in nature-based education.

Her participation in this program led to walking Wednesdays, where "we take walks to local parks, open fields or to Hamline University to engage with nature," said Ms. Amanda.

"The Midway neighborhood in Saint Paul where my students and I live is urban, which makes it especially important that students are able to build a relationship with nature, regulate their bodies and brains outside and have the opportunity to learn in an alternative setting. This led me to create a weekly walking field trip we call Walking Wednesdays, which allows us to take our learning into the nature spaces our neighborhood has to offer," said Ms. Amanda.

Hamline Elementary is truly fortunate to have a neighbor and educator like Ms. Amanda and her good and great work is not just apparent to those who see her work every day, but to others, as well. We



Amanda Jagdeo is a semi-finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Finalists will be announced in April.

are happy to share that Ms. Amanda is a semi-finalist for Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Finalists will be announced in April. We're so proud of her and her accomplishments here at Hamline Elementary and at the Hamline to Hamline Collaboration, and are thankful for all she's done to contribute positively to our community.

Written by Hamline University student and Assistant to the Collaboration, Darby Comiskey.

## BROOMBALL >> from 8

the tournament around 1982. Years later, it was known as the MSF Outdoor State Tournament.

Craig Garcia played hockey growing up as a left wing. He and Casey Gibbons were tiny mites together. When Garcia was 21 he wanted to go out with his friends Bill and Mike Crouch, but they had broomball league game at McMurray. Since they were going to go out afterward, Garcia came to watch broomball but was "all dressed up." However, their goalie didn't show. Garcia played goalie "in jeans, penny loafers, and a dress shirt" and played well. They asked him to be their goalie from then on.

Casey Gibbons also played boot hockey with his brother Sean and Ron "Fish" Lopez for Rice Street VFW. Eventually, Garcia would add those three players when he formed his own broomball team sponsored by Vanelli's in St. Paul. They had

many other talented players: Chris Gatti, Michael Bauer, Scott Tempest, Ira Hackner, Tom Macalus, Jason Revels, Jeff O'Neil, Jeff Kittelson, and Chris DeMorett.

Due to roster rules at the time, they had to split into two teams for the Men's Winter Carnival tournament. In 2004 at McMurray, Vanelli's II beat QA for the Men's Class BB (top division) championship with Garcia as manager and goalie. In Men's Class B, Vanelli's I beat the Flames to win that championship with Carl Prestly goal-tending.

Sean Gibbons said this about Garcia: "Obviously, the best goalie I ever played with or against, only played against him a few times. Hall of Fame says it all right there and his breakout pass: there are many times he's won a game where goals were scored off his break out passes."

Chris Blair also remembered playing at McMurray for the Winter Carnival tournament. Despite playing for St. Paul Park VFW in an Inver Groves Heights league, he remembers referee Bill "Buzz" Evans

encouraging him to play up in St. Paul. The late Bill "Buzz" Evans was head referee and helped grow broomball in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. He developed the referee training program, and he refereed and played into the early 2000s.

### THE ST. PAUL WIZARDS: AMERICA'S OLDEST BROOMBALL TEAM

Broomball isn't just a sport played at the highest level. Broomball is accessible and the lower leagues provide a fun atmosphere for veterans and new players. The Wizards competed in the city league at McMurray at the Men's D level.

According to their previous website, Pat Cunningham made the case that the Wizards were "America's Oldest Broomball Team" by considering that their roster was unchanged roughly 1977-2001. Cunningham was joined by Bill "Buzz" Evans, Mark "Quiche" Strandberg, Terry Reeves, Tom Wenzel, Tom Boesen, and others.

In honor of their 20-year anniversary, Governor Norm Coleman declared

Wednesday, Jan. 8, 1997 to be "International Broomball Wizards Day." In 2006, the were the Ambassadors to the IFBA World Broomball Championships in Blaine, MN. During the 2000s and 2010s, they also fostered a relationship with CoRec team Japanese Ice Ducks, who would frequently travel from Hokkaido to North America for the IFBA World Championships. While the Wizards' roster has changed considerably, original members Strandberg and Bosen still play. They are joined by younger players like Marcus Michelich and Kevin Thompson. They still compete at McMurray, managed by the 42-year-old Travis Dahlen.

Whether you have lived in Saint Paul your whole life or just moved here, know that your city has a broomball tradition extending from 1938 to the present. Registration for next year's outdoor league will start around October, but the Saint Paul Municipal Athletics offers many youth and adult sports year round.



FROGTOWN  
GREEN

BY RENNIE GAITHER



Spring has arrived! "Meteorological spring" began March 1 and will last until May 3. The spring or vernal equinox kicked off on March 20 this year, marking when the equator receives the sun's most direct rays. For many of us in the upper Midwest, spring, especially around the vernal equinox, can seem like the "season of springboks," with temperatures sometimes "prinking" from freezing to very mild.

Would it be a stretch to say that the political winds in America these days feel somewhat akin to this tempestuous seasonal changeover? With his clamorous promise to "Drill, Baby, Drill" and decision to pull the United States from the Paris Agreement – again! – President Trump's agenda vis-a-vis climate change bodes ill for environmentalists working to mitigate the effects of global warming.

Which sparked questions in my mind around local government's role in helping support greater community resilience in the face of these and other challenges. So I reached out to newly-elected Ramsey County Commissioner Garrison McMurtrey for his thoughts and ideas. Commissioner McMurtrey lives in Como Park; he represents District 3, which includes Midway, Como and Frogtown.

I asked him about the role of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. McMurtrey said: "Ramsey County has a budget of over \$800 million, which includes investments in things like infrastructure and housing. Additionally, nearly half of the county budget goes towards social services, including elder protection, food assistance, foster care, etc."

These social services help support residents in vital ways. The board's importance as a decision-making body in terms of fund allocation rests on strong public policy options. Importantly, the board and county agencies are part of a nexus of government agencies tasked with identifying

## Talk with County Commissioner McMurtrey



Garrison McMurtrey is sworn in as the new Ramsey County District 3 Commissioner, and got to work right away. Staff members include principal aide Matt Hill, and administrative assistant Beverly Hammond.

and deciding where capital can best be utilized and policies made actionable.

Commissioner McMurtrey also shared some of his priorities. "I want to ensure that we are centering economic justice. There are three particular priorities that I want to focus on as county commissioner," he offered. "First, I want to ensure we are prioritizing the development of affordable housing. Second, there is also an opportunity for us to invest in key corridors throughout the county. That investment includes funding for multimodal transportation infrastructure and support for small businesses. Finally, I want to ensure that our county services are welcoming, accessible and responsive to the needs of our community."

Affordable housing, infrastructure investment and small business support contribute to the economic health of communities and help fulfill human needs. So, too, investment in environmental health.

Commissioner McMurtrey related some specific areas: "I will ensure that we are investing in an infrastructure that prioritizes modes of transportation other

than just cars." He identified bicycle lanes, bus rapid transit, and sidewalks. He added that he'd work closely with the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center to support their work in sustainable waste processing. "I want to ensure that the county is investing in urban canopies, especially for our neighbors who are disproportionately impacted by climate change," he stated. The latter is especially important for those of us working to build natural green spaces. We look forward to continued county partnership in helping to address disparities in environmental impact.

Hope to see everyone at the annual Frogtown Spring Cleanup, Saturday, April 19th at Frogtown Park and Farm. Be sure to keep up with all our Frogtown Green events and opportunities at <https://www.frogtowngreen.com/copy-of-programs>.

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](https://www.frogtowngreen.com) or call 651-757-5970.

## EVENTS

## SPEAK OUT LOUD AND LEAD FESTIVAL APRIL 26

The 4th Annual Speak Out and Lead (SOAL) Festival is back, bringing together youth from across the Twin Cities for a day of creativity, self-expression, and community on April 26, noon to 5 p.m. at 825 Arts (825 University Ave. W). This event will include live performances featuring musicians, spoken word artists, and performers; Interactive workshops; and an arts market with original artwork and handmade goods directly from artists ages 13-21.

## 66TH ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER MAY 3

Scouts of Troop 9013 will be hosting their 66th annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser 3-7 p.m. Saturday, May 3 at Church of St. Columba 1330 Blair Ave. Adult meal \$10, youth age 12 and under \$5. Dine in and take-out available. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

## MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE MAY 17

Ramsey County Master Gardeners are hosting their annual plant sale on Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Aldrich Arena, 1850 White Bear Ave, Maplewood. The sale includes a large selection of native plants, vegetables, favorite and unique varieties of tomatoes, herbs, annual and perennial flowers, houseplants, quality garden gloves, and other great items to get your garden growing strong. Funds raised support Master Gardener community and youth education programs in Ramsey County. Cash, checks and credit cards accepted. For more information, visit [www.RamseyMasterGardeners.org/plantsale](https://www.RamseyMasterGardeners.org/plantsale).

## BRIEFLY

## LIONS CLUBS GIVE BACK

The Lions Clubs of Maplewood North, Maplewood Oakdale, North St. Paul, St. Paul East Parks, St. Paul East Side, St. Paul, and St. Paul East Metro Branch held their Community Day of Service on Saturday, April 5, 2025, at the NALC Hall, located at 1715 Van Dyke St, Maplewood, MN 55119. For questions or more information about the event, please contact Lion Paul J at [pauljacobsen98@gmail.com](mailto:pauljacobsen98@gmail.com).

## LIBRARY TORN DOWN

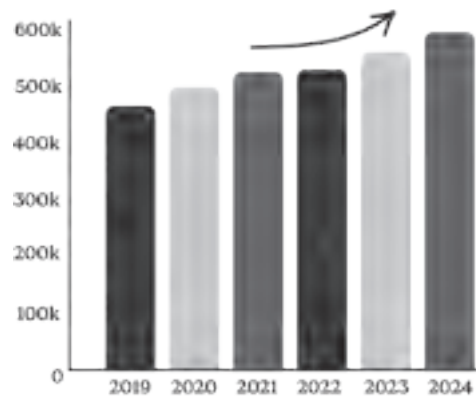
Over the past few months, contractors removed items from the historic Hamline Midway Library building and salvaged materials for reuse. Brick, wood, and the stone archway were moved to storage and will be rebuilt into the new library building, and additional materials are being recycled. Removal of the remaining building is nearly complete, making way for construction to begin. Stahl Construction will serve as the general contractor, and they'll use a team of specialized subcontractors. Full construction is anticipated to take 16-18 months.

## MINNESOTA BUSINESS FILINGS SURGE IN 2024

In Minnesota, 2024 was a big year for business. Here's a look at some of the Minnesota Secretary of State filing data from last year:

- Total business filings increased 27.9% since 2019, reaching 597,077 in 2024.
- Online filings dominated, making up 94% of total filings (563,347 online, 24,101 by mail, 9,629 in person).
- New entity filings grew 36.6% since 2019.

The most popular entity type was the Minnesota Limited Liability Company (LLC) with 59,964 filings.



## CRWD AWARD RECIPIENTS

Capitol Region Watershed District announces the following awards:

- 2024 Watershed Community Member Award: Jens Kvaal and Barb Thoman
- 2024 Watershed Partner Award: Saint Paul Sewer Utility
- 2024 Young Watershed Steward Award: Right Track Program Interns
- 2024 Watershed Project Award: Frogtown Crossroads
- 2024 Watershed Construction Leadership Award: Brian McDonough of LS Black
- Lifetime Stewardship Award: Kerry Antrim, North End Neighborhood Organization

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- Holy Thursday and Good Friday Services April 17 & 18, 6:30pm
- SPOC Community Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, April 19, 3pm
- Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025 : Divine Service, 9:30am

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Ads must be received by the Monitor by Monday, April 28 for the May 8 issue. Call 612-345-9998 or email Denis@tmcpub.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 612-345-9998, tesha@monitorsaintpaul.com.

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~Amy Mrozek, The Odd Couple Team



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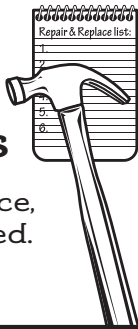
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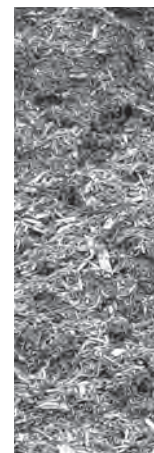
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