

Southside Pride

We build Pride on the Southside

FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

**APRIL
2024**

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Cam's Corner



Making the case for an elected Met Council

BY CAM GORDON

Do you know the name of your Metropolitan Council member? Do you know their priorities? Do you see them at community meetings or reaching out in other ways to talk to you and your neighbors?

Chances are, you don't.

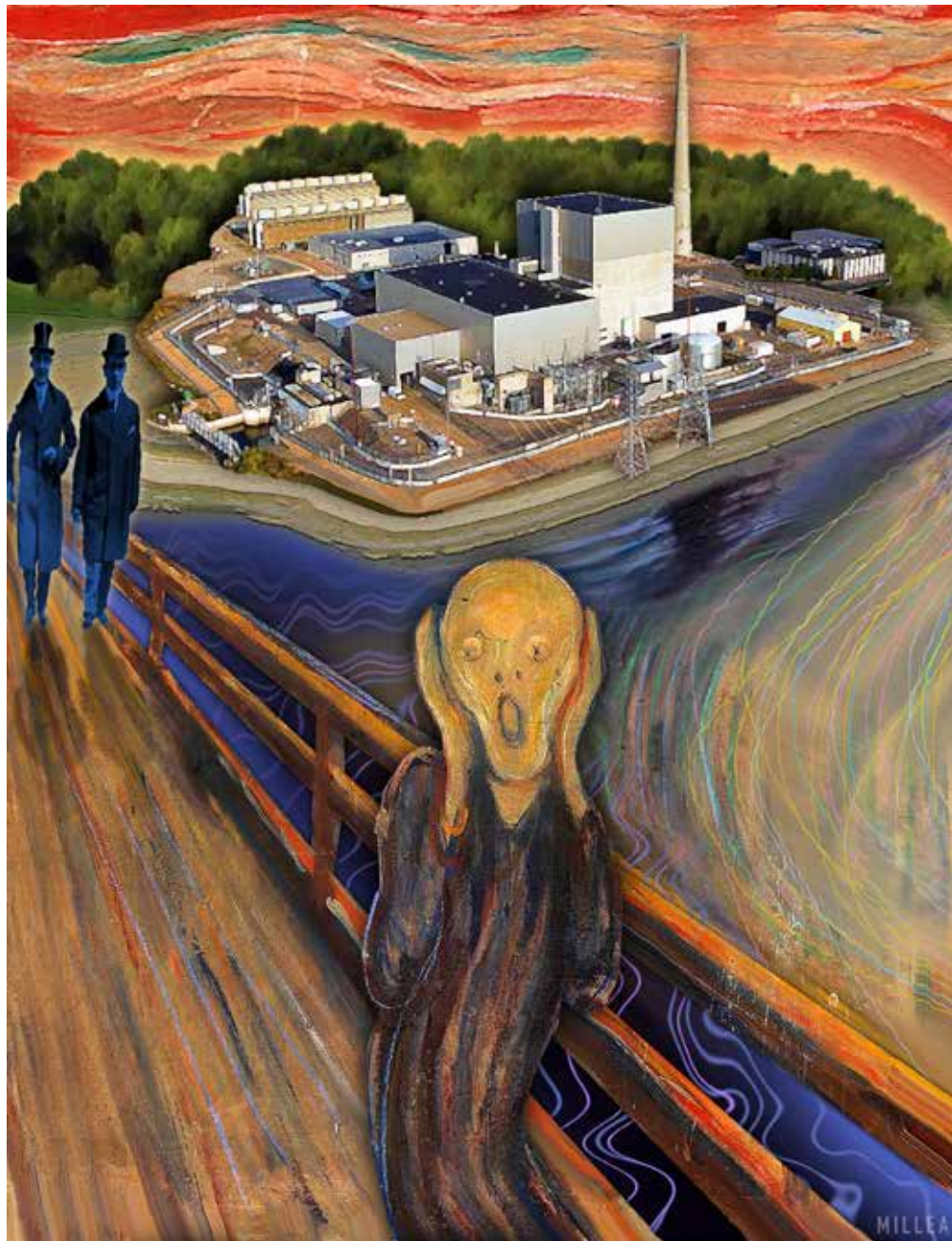
Some people have been trying to change that.

This winter a multi-party, multi-jurisdictional Metropolitan Governance Task Force agreed that "there is widespread confusion and widespread disagreement about who is and who should be accountable for Met Council vision, planning, execution (construction and operation), and performance evaluation."

In its report to the Minnesota Legislature, the task force said, "The basic issue the legislature should address in any Metropolitan Council reform or governance changes is how the Council should be accountable to the public and to state and local governments."

Established in 1967 by the state Legislature, the

See Cam, page 6



Misstatement: 'There is no pathway for the tritium to get into drinking water'

BY JOHN LAFORGE

Xcel Energy's Monticello nuclear reactor on the Mississippi River has leaked some 829,000 gallons of wastewater contaminated with radioactive tritium into the groundwater under its property, more than double

the 400,000 gallons it first estimated. The company has since replaced two leaking pipes, built an underground retaining wall, and is cleaning up after a second spill and its temporary reactor shutdown. Yet according to WCCO TV, for July 20, 2023, Xcel has said that a "small

amount of leaked water may have reached the Mississippi River."

On March 18, 2023, the Associated Press (AP) reported that a representative of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) told them that the tritium-contaminated wastewater from

See Monticello, page 5

District 62B

BY ED FELIEN

The 62nd District DFL endorsing convention will be Sunday, April 14, at Washburn High School. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the convention will be called to order at 10 a.m.

There are four excellent candidates seeking DFL endorsement: Bill Emory; Londel French; Ira Jourdain; and Anquam Mahamoud. We published responses from Emory, French and Jourdain in last month's edition. We were unaware of Anquam Mahamoud's candidacy. We asked her the same questions for this month's paper.



Anquam Mahamoud

1. Why should we support your candidacy for House seat 62B?

I grew up in Phillips, raised by a single parent. As a planning director at MNsure, I gained experience in the power of policy/budgets to change lives. Working in substance use and mental health with our most vulnerable/unhoused neighbors, I know how to marry compassion with policy to get results.

2. What legislation would you introduce on your first day as a legislator?

Advocate on day one for a MinnesotaCare Public Option and eventual single-payer system. Fund BIPOC teacher recruitment and retention for our public schools.

Build efforts/funding tools in East Phillips with community input to address large polluters.

Seek dollars for Lake Street's continued revitalization, prioritizing small businesses and workforce training.

3. What has been your most significant accomplishment?

As COO of Twin Cities Health Services (current position) I expanded our substance treatment center services to be need-blind to immigration status, current health coverage, or housing status. I also developed our team pro-

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Earth Day
Pages 2 & 3

Celebrate Spring
Lake Street
Pages 8 & 9

Celebrate Spring
48th & Chicago
Pages 10, 11 & 12

Celebrate Spring
Hennepin Ave.
Pages 18 & 19



Celebrate our Planet

Earth Day 2024



Rendering of design for boulevard to replace I-94 through Cedar-Riverside

BY DEBRA KEEFER RAMAGE

How do you 'celebrate?'

There are two major ways to relate to Earth Day, among those who are not climate-deniers or otherwise pooh-poooh the whole idea. One way is more for people who are broadly supportive of green solutions, climate concerns, voluntarism, and the environmental movement in all its forms. (Or most of its forms.) These people are very pumped by the idea of doing something "meaningful" on or around Earth Day. Often, like most of us, they have a vague, guilty sense of unease that their efforts year-round to reduce, reuse and recycle are not working, or are not enough. They are not climate activists, often because they consider themselves activists in another important area, and you can only do so much. These people, at least in the U.S., are in the majority.

The other group is the climate activists. This too is a heterogeneous group, because the "environmental problem" is huge and complex, and again, one person can only do so much. Often these people do their activism through a broader formation, such as socialism, anarchism, feminism, academics/science, or spirituality. This is usually done as a recognized group such as Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)

- my group of choice - or Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace, or the Union of Concerned Scientists. For these people, Earth Day may be neither a time to take special action, nor a time of celebration.

It's sort of like Easter for laid-back Christians versus Easter for a serious Christian. Or Mother's Day for a struggling mother versus Mother's Day for someone who just has a mother. It's like you're glad to see all these people out doing stuff for the cause, but you wonder where they were the last 11 months. And while everyone else

Local ongoing efforts for the full-time environmental activist

The Twin Cities is a hotbed of environmental activism. The organizations and projects covered here are by no means a complete list. Another qualification, if you are short on time and/or expertise but really care about any of these groups, is to not feel bad if you "just" give money. And if you don't have a lot of money, consider a recurring monthly donation of just a few dollars.

A lot of the most compelling

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EPNI activists demonstrated with art and dance in 2022.

is doing performative zeal, you are resting from your labors and taking stock.

Also it's possible, indeed likely, that you may have a foot in both camps. So in this article, we will provide handy information for both groups.

work being done locally is around environmental justice. There were several things that happened over the past five years that have brought crisis and opportunity for change in the environmental justice area:

- East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (EPNI), after a decade of struggle, won the right and acquired the money to purchase the former Roof Depot building, heading off a city plan to site a high-traffic maintenance facility after demolishing the building. The group is now working on transforming the building, which sits atop an arsenic-laden dump which would be released if the building were to be demolished, into an indoor year-round aquaponic farm.

- The DFL trifecta Legislature passed the Cumulative Impacts Bill, which will be a powerful tool for neighborhoods overburdened with toxic industries to block or close down those polluters.

- Also in 2023, the city of Minneapolis passed a Climate Equity Plan with ambitious goals for equitable conversion to sustainable solutions to climate change.

- Smith Foundry, in the same East Phillips neighborhood, was found to have been violating state environmental standards on toxic emissions.

- The HERC incinerator has surpassed 30 years of operation, considered the maximum lifespan for an incinerator.

- Hennepin County adopted a zero-waste plan. Since the HERC is county-owned, this is a great legal tool for hastening the shutdown

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Earth Day!

of the incinerator, since their zero-waste goals will be impeded by its continued operation.

- A study is underway for alternatives for I-94, which is also at an advanced age, and several groups have formed around the idea of replacing it with a boulevard, as well as various reparation measures for Black neighborhoods destroyed by its construction, particularly the Rondo neighborhood in St. Paul.

If you are interested in getting involved in any of these ongoing struggles - building the EPNI urban farm and associated social amenities, closing down the HERC as soon as possible, closing or relocating Smith Foundry and tightening up enforcement of environmental regulations, designing and building a more sustainable replacement for I-94 in the Twin Cities, attaining climate equity in our cities - here is a list of organizations working on one or more of them:

- East Phillips Neighborhood Institute, epnifarm.org.
- Minnesota Environmental Justice Table, mnejtable.org/anti-incinerator-campaign.
- Climate Justice Committee, linktr.ee/climatejusticecommitteemn.
- Twin Cities DSA, twincitiesdsa.org.
- Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, mnipl.org.
- Community Power, communitypowermn.org.
- MN350, mn350.org.
- Twin Cities Boulevard, twincitiesboulevard.org, streets.mn.

Local Earth Day activities for the concerned-but-busy-elsewhere environmental supporter

Earth Day celebrations and workday projects abound in the

Twin Cities. Here is a partial list:

Annual river gorge cleanup (Friends of the Mississippi River). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Place: West River Parkway and 36th Street (for individuals and groups of 10 or fewer), Minneapolis. More info: No advance registration needed; co-sponsored by MPRB and supported by Longfellow Community Council. Groups of more than 10 should meet at 44th Street and the Parkway.

Earth Day cleanup (Minneapolis Park Board). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Place: Numerous park locations to choose from! More info: See minneapolis-parks.org and go to Events - Earth Day to see locations and more information.

Earth Day celebration (Harriet Alexander Nature Center, City of Roseville). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, times TBD for scheduled events. Place: Harriet Alexander Nature Center, 2520 Dale St. N., Roseville. More info: See the City of Roseville website for forthcoming details and registration.

Nokomis East Neighborhood cleanup (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association, NENA). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to noon. Place: Shoreview Triangle, 5342 25th Ave. S., Minneapolis. More info: No RSVP for this event, but RSVP for pollinator workshop even if you're doing both.

Pollinator Workshop (Nokomis East Neighborhood Association, NENA). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 1 to 3 p.m. Place: Agrarian Seed and Garden, 5152 Hiawatha Ave., Minneapolis. More info: RSVP at www.nokomiseast.org/event-de-



Earth Day 5K Bee Run/Walk

tails/learn-to-grow-a-home-habitat/form; learn which plants are best for local wildlife; free with suggested \$10 donation.

5K Bee Run/Walk and Cleanup (Great River Coalition). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m. to noon. Place: Boom Island Park, Minneapolis. More info: Register at register.chronotrack.com/r/75196; \$40 in advance, costumes OK, prizes awarded.

Concordia Earth Day 5K (Concordia College, St. Paul). Date/time: Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m. to noon. Place: Concordia University, 1282 Concordia Ave., St. Paul. More info: Proceeds and donations to Minnesota Environmental Partnership; open to all ages and abilities.

Earth Day Gravel Grinder (Im-

More info: There are four separate rides, based on ability. Registration required, plus a donation of any amount to Climate Ride. See bikemn.org/events and scroll to Earth Day Gravel Grinder for registration form and details.



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Ilhan Omar community meeting

BY CLINT COMBS

Rep. Ilhan Omar feels nostalgic about her time as a state representative. Congress is passing continued resolutions just to avoid a government shutdown. These continued resolutions, long-form for C.R.s, are not even adjusted for inflation.

“We’ve seen an extreme challenge in passing our funding bills. It’s been incredibly hard for committees to come together to fund, to pass, any of the 12 funding bills that we normally pass in a regular fiscal year,” Omar told voters at Sanford Middle School on Feb. 26.

“We’ve been stuck in a space where we’re passing continued resolutions. Which is essentially to say, we’re going to continue to fund the government at the level that it was funded in the last fiscal year,” Omar said.

Meanwhile in Minnesota, with a DFL trifecta, lawmakers accomplished things like paid

sick leave, paid family leave, historic investments in housing, and codified abortion rights.

“I have to tell you, as somebody who served there in the minority, every time I’m there with them, I’m very jealous of just how productive they have been,” Omar said.

Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura, House District 63A, can’t help but brag.

“Sometimes when our friends at the federal level are a little slow to move on things, we here in Minnesota had the most transformative legislative session that we have had in decades, in centuries,” Sencer-Mura said.

“It brings me great joy knowing that our congressional district is being greatly represented by people who see us and care about us,” Omar said.

Social Security is one of several programs that Minnesotans and Americans rely on. The Social Security Administration is understaffed. There are long

wait times on the agency’s toll-free hotline.

“Social Security is in a state of crisis, as you know being the vice ranking member of the budget committee,” said Jessica LaPointe at the meeting. LaPointe is the president of the American Federation of Government Employees Council 220, a union which represents workers at Social Security field offices and call centers.

LaPointe said that current levels of flat funding will not keep pace with surging demand at Social Security call centers. “We are severely underfunded in our operating costs. Our budgets have been slashed 17% over the last decade while benefits are on the rise by over 25%,” she said.

LaPointe also noted that Minnesota faces similar problems. “And in your state alone, staffing levels have decreased by 17%, which results in lack of access for Social Security benefits and really destabilizes communities,” LaPointe said.

“And the backlogs,” Omar added.

A study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a progressive research and policy organization, showed that staffing fell to a 25-year low in 2023. The same study revealed that congressional cuts to the Social Security customer service budget totaled 17% since 2011.

“There are over a million claims pending right now for disability decisions,” said LaPointe. “It takes over seven and half months to get an initial disability decision, two and

a half years to get a decision for the hearing level, which results in about 10,000 Americans dying per year waiting for that decision.”

Large backlogs in disability applications and longer wait times on the agency’s toll-free hotline stem from budget cuts enacted by Congress going back to 2011.

LaPointe said that Social Security Administration Commissioner Martin O’Malley is promising action, but the agency is still helpless without a funding package from Congress.

“With flat funding, as you know, that is going to be a cut to our operating costs,” said LaPointe. “And we will see our lowest staffing levels ever at the administration, at a time when we have a confirmed commissioner that is the Babe Ruth of rehabilitated government. We want him to get some homeruns, but we can’t without a budget,” she added.

LaPointe outlined to the two-term congresswoman and Squad member a funding proposal that also accounts for inflation to help ease wait times and backlogs. “We’re asking for \$17.4 billion annually and a supplemental funding package like the Inflation Reduction Act of \$20 billion over the next 10 years to revitalize the program,” she said. “What is the hope for getting money for SSA, so that your constituents can have access to their FICA dollars?”

“I don’t see much hope at the moment,” Omar said, adding, “I say that because we are not on a path to approving a single funding bill.”

Omar appears to be feeling pessimistic about a fully funded Social Security workforce amid a dysfunctional Congress. “It’s

not even can we get a floor vote. It’s that we haven’t even been able to pass bills out of committees,” said Omar.

Unlike the DFL trifecta in the Minnesota Legislature, Republicans have control of the House while Democrats control the Senate. “We cannot pass legislation, specifically funding legislation one party wants. So there have to be changes in strategies,” Omar said.

“Not funding the government is not the right thing to do by our constituents,” Omar said. “I think we will continue down this path that is going to be destructive for so many programs that so many people rely on.”

Another voter asked Omar if she still would endorse President Joe Biden amid Israel’s bombing of Palestinians in occupied Gaza and a brewing crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saying, “I was wondering if you’re going to continue to endorse Joe Biden for president, as he continuously writes Israel a blank check to continue to commit genocide against Palestinians?”

“It looks like Biden is going to be the nominee for our party to win the election,” Omar said. “If there is a path forward we can find together to addressing a lot of the issues that we have, it is my job to push the president to do the right thing.”

This comes amid a campaign that started in Dearborn, Michigan, where voters were encouraged to vote “uncommitted” in the Democratic primary against President Biden.

Minneapolis City Council Member Aisha Chughtai and St. Paul City Council Member Mitra Jalali also asked voters to vote “uncommitted” in the March 5 Super Tuesday primary.

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Students protest General Dynamics in Bloomington

BY CLINT COMBS

On March 16 in Bloomington, activists in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza called for a permanent cease-fire, for schools and universities to divest from Israeli defense, and for a permanent closure of the defense manufacturer General Dynamics.

“There is nothing productive about General Dynamics in Bloomington,” said Shae Ross, a senior at Jefferson High School. “There is nothing productive about defense spending or weapon manufacturing in America.”

Activists are calling for a complete divestment from companies who support Israel through commercial contracts, academic and intellectual resources.

Emily Chu, a biomedical engineering major at the University of Minnesota and member of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), called for the university to cut business and academic ties to the defense contractor. “Divestment means not just pulling monetary resources from Israel but human resources as well,” Chu said. “I know that I didn’t slog away for hours each

week on my coursework just so that I can use that knowledge to hurt people.”

The university not only welcomes General Dynamics recruiters to their biannual college of science and engineering career fairs, but also allows them to regularly host career workshops and other individual recruiting events, alongside companies like Lockheed Martin, specifically targeting engineering students.

As a report from UNRWA noted: “This war affected more than two million people – the entire population of Gaza. Many will carry lifelong scars, both physical and psychological. The vast majority, including children, are deeply traumatized.” The publication added, “Israel’s weaponization of food to punish the Palestinian people is not a secret. It was declared months ago, in October 2023 by the highest-ranking Israeli government and military officials, some of whom publicly stated that such policies would hasten the decline of humanitarian conditions and provoke a mass exodus from Gaza or a so-called



General Dynamics protest in Bloomington

‘voluntary migration’ of this ‘demographic threat.’”

Chu said, “We have the resources that these companies desire and we need to starve them of those resources the same way that our government has chosen to starve the peo-



Shae Ross, student at Jefferson High School

ple of Gaza.” Chu is a university student, while Ross is in high school, with a five-year age difference between them. Both Chu and Ross feel it’s not enough to just call for a cease-fire. Both argue that it is a civic and moral obligation to push back against



Emily Chu, engineering student at University of Minnesota

companies that also provide intellectual and lethal support for Israel. “It is our duty as young people to continue to take a stand against these vile war profiteers who come into our cities and leech off our money,” said Ross.

.....

Monticello, from page 1

the reactor couldn’t contaminate the water people drink. The reporters quoted NRC spokesperson Victoria Mitlyng, writing: “Mitlyng said there is no pathway for the tritium to get into drinking water.”

In fact, there are two pathways for the tritium leak to get into drinking water. First, the tritium in the 829,000-gallon leak is now in a groundwater “plume” that can move beyond Xcel’s property and reach private or public drinking water wells. Second, the groundwater plume, which moves toward the Mississippi, will contaminate the river which supplies drinking water to one million-plus people in the Twin Cities and their suburbs.

Perhaps Mitlyng was misquoted, since the NRC and the AP have both reported that the plume of tritium-contaminated groundwater can move outside Xcel’s boundary. In fact, both agencies have reported that Xcel’s stated purpose in hastily building an underground steel wall between the reactor and the Mississippi is to prevent the radioactive groundwater from entering the river.

The AP reported on March 24, 2023, that Chris Clark, the president of Xcel Energy, acknowledged that the radioactive pollution can reach the Mississippi. The AP reported: “Even if the tritium reached the river, which Clark assured wouldn’t happen, it would dissipate within a few

yards.” Clark’s assurance is either a mistake or a deliberate fib, because “dissipate” means to disappear, vanish, dissolve or melt away. However, tritium contamination in water lasts 123 years, that is, 10 of tritium’s 12.3-year radioactive “half-lives.” Further, there is no way to remove tritium from water once it’s contaminated – as the 1.5 million tons of tritiated waste-

water being pumped into the Pacific Ocean from the 3-reactor earthquake/tsunami/meltdown site at Fukushima is showing.

Why is Xcel’s tritium in the groundwater and the great river such a threat to the people and animals that rely on it? As the NRC says, “This is because tritium travels as a form of water through the soil faster than other radionuclides.”

The city of Minneapolis

proudly declares, “Our water comes from the Mississippi River. Roughly 21 billion gallons of water are pumped from the river each year, and 57 million gallons of drinking water delivered every day.”

We can’t say, “There’s nothing we can do.” Everyone can comment to the government regarding the risks posed by Monticello’s operations, when Xcel issues (any day now) its draft envi-

ronmental impact statement regarding the firm’s request to extend its license and run the 54-year-old reactor until 2050, when it will turn 80.

John LaForge is a longtime co-director of the nuclear watchdog group Nukewatch, in northwest Wisconsin, and has edited its newsletter since 1992.

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Make corporate medical insurance conglomerates accountable

BY DIANE J. PETERSON AND JOHN KOLSTAD

April 15 is our all-American date for financial accountability on our taxable income. Therefore, this is an appropriate time to consider the Minnesota corporations that are evading similar accountability. The IRS requires documented proof of our personal income and expenses. Currently the state of Minnesota pays \$8 billion per year to a few corporate insurance conglomerates to provide care for Medical Assistance patients. In over 30 years of paying them, the state has never conducted an independent, comprehensive audit on those tax funds as required by state and federal law. The corporations are not compelled to account for how they spend our money.

In addition to requiring regular financial audits, there is also a need to ensure the quality of

care: is it medically necessary and appropriate for the patients? A federal study issued in July 2023 confirms the dangerous nature of Minnesota's lack of state government oversight and auditing of our Medical Assistance program. The study, by the Office of Inspector General, announced that corporate contractors controlling Medical Assistance patients imposed high rates of denying medically necessary care to those patients. (See <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-09-19-00350.asp>.) The frequent denials of necessary care by the contractors caused particular harm to people of color. Minnesota's lack of accountability on the Medical Assistance program is both a taxpayer and patient safety issue.

Frequent and solemn proclamations by the contractors that they spend our money efficiently are insufficient assurance. Their

claims that they have been audited do not withstand scrutiny.

The documents they cite as proof of being audited are produced according to the contractors' own criteria and paid for by the contractors, then submitted to the state. These alleged audits are not done according to generally accepted accounting principles.

Legislators ought to be confronted with the fact that no independent audits are done to check how the billions of public tax dollars are spent by these private corporations, such as Blue Cross and Health Partners, two of the contractors Minnesota uses to administer the Medical Assistance program. The state prepays the corporations for patient care. How this money is used should be examined by independent auditors chosen by the state. Such audits would also allow medical professionals to review whether or not appro-

appropriate treatments are delivered, ones which conform to standard medical care according to actual patient needs. The contractors and their allies may raise concerns about patient privacy. However, any IT professional will attest that such quality control review can be done while masking individual patient identity. Protecting patient medical confidentiality should not be considered a valid contractor argument to evade independent auditing.

Since all 134 seats in the Minnesota House are up for reelection in November, this tax month of April is a good time for voters to confront the incumbents on how they will act to get accountability from the Medical Assistance contractors for the first – and long overdue – time. Legislators are responsible for making sure our dollars are spent for the benefit of low-income patients, and spent

efficiently. With no reliable auditing authority overseeing how tax funds are spent, legislators put taxpayers at risk of the corporate contractors spending our money inappropriately or hoarding it for themselves. How well does that sit with taxpayers who are not given a pass to evade financial accountability every April?

How will legislators rectify the lack of proper accountability from Medical Assistance contractors? If your legislator cannot answer this question to your satisfaction, promote the election of a candidate who makes accountability on Medical Assistance funding an election goal by Nov. 5, seven months from now.

The authors are longtime members of Health Policy Advocates.

Cam, from page 1

Metropolitan Council is a regional policy-making, planning and service-providing governmental entity. It oversees Metro Transit's bus and rail system, Metro Mobility, wastewater treatment, regional parks and affordable housing projects. It has taxing authority and a budget of over a billion dollars it brings in from wastewater treatment and transit fees, state and federal sources, and a seven-county property tax.

It is managed by 17 members who are selected by the governor every four years following the gubernatorial election. The governor appoints a chair and one council member from each of the 16 districts, which are redrawn every 10 years to ensure near equal population in each district.

In the task force report, six options for governance were presented. Three of them included an elected Met Council. One, authored by task force member and Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene, was by far the simplest.

Greene's proposal would keep the districts roughly the same size as they are now, and continuing to be redistricted every decade after the census to be proportional by population, but the council members would be directly elected by the residents of their districts. The council members would then elect their own chair, choose the regional administrator and have the same responsibilities as the current council.

This kind of structure should sound familiar. We already have a school board, park board, city council and county board similarly structured, with minor differences. And when campaigns come around it allows us to focus on the issues and make our decisions based on responsibilities and areas each entity governs over.

It has also been recommended in the past.

In the 1967 report by the Citizens League that inspired the creation of the Metropolitan Council, direct election of its members was recommended.

After the provision for their election was not included in the

final draft of the legislation to establish the council that same year, amendments to elect them were offered by Wendell Anderson in the state Senate, and Martin Sabo in the state House. However, they were defeated by just a few votes in the House and with a tie vote in the Senate.

In 1994, a bill for the council's direct election almost passed in both state legislative houses but was vetoed by Gov. Arne Carlson.

Most recently, in 2022, a bill for an elected council (HF 1122/SF 938) was introduced but has yet to come up for a vote. According to Sen. Scott Dibble, one of the bill's champions, Gov. Walz has said that if such a bill were to come to him, he would sign it.

Some are calling to replace the appointment process with a "council process of governments" model where members would be appointed by elected officials of local government from within the seven counties. This approach would not bring the selection into the public domain, resulting in council members being more accountable to units of the local governments than to their residents, and would not yield the same benefits as direct election. It keeps the issues unique to the Met Council at arm's length, buried under other local issues in mayoral, city council, county board and town officer election campaigns.

Some have said that the ballot is already too long and that voters couldn't handle it. An elected Met Council would add only one more position on the ballot every four years for an office that sets policy and oversees services that directly impact the lives

of every voter. Perhaps moving the election to odd years, when the ballots are shorter, would be more acceptable.

The Metropolitan Council is a powerful body that controls much of our public transportation, regional housing policy, water treatment, and regional parks and trails. It operates the third-largest police department in the state, Metro Transit Police, and oversees the regional planning process, including review and approval of local comprehensive plans throughout the seven-county metropolitan region.

The voters deserve deep engagement and, if warranted, intense campaigning and debate to determine who can best be their voice and represent their values – not the governor's – when wielding this kind of power and making these kinds of long-term decisions for them and the region.

Such an arrangement could not only make the Met Council more responsive and accountable, but also its members more empowered.

As it is now, members of the council lack credibility among most stakeholders. Everyone assumes that they are more likely to follow the lead of the governor-appointed chair and professional staff and not those who live in the districts they represent.

An elected office holder who knows, and can show, that they have a committed and supportive community behind them on an issue will act with more confidence and be listened to more carefully by colleagues and staff.

We have tried this governor-appointed model for 57 years and, despite the best ef-

forts of its appointed members and a long list of governors, the Met Council still lacks credibility and is too often seen as out of touch, unresponsive and unaccountable to the residents it serves.

An elected council could attract better candidates to the position who would be more proactive and willing to take the initiative on solving problems and not rely on an appointing authority for direction.

The election process would be an open, public process that all could see and follow if they desired. Appointments, even with open appointment laws, too often leave space for behind-the-scenes campaigning for the positions, which may or may not even get the attention of an elected governor.

An elected Met Council might also give the Legislature a chance to explore improved procedures, including some form of public financing and enhanced voter education.

Most importantly, the election campaign would become a critical opportunity for council members, candidates and others to educate the public about Met Council policies and services and for council members to learn from the public about what they want and need from the council and for the region. Appointed officials have no particular reason to have such contact with the public.

What the Citizens League wrote in 1984 still holds true today: "The Met Council is making policy that will have a profound impact on the Twin Cities area in coming years. Such decisions should be made by elected, not appointed, officials."



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Save downtown by drinking there

BY JACKSON O'BRIEN

This March, the citizens of Minneapolis were hit with a one-two punch of bad news. First, the city announced that, for the first time in a decade, property values have fallen. The majority of this fall came from declining values in downtown office buildings, as it's become increasingly clear that for many former downtown workers, working from home is a preferable new normal. The second bit of bad news came after the city passed its measure guaranteeing a minimum rate of pay for rideshare drivers, resulting in an announcement that Uber and Lyft will be departing the city on May 1. While this impacts Minneapolis in a large number of ways, one of the biggest ones is that rideshares have become the default means of getting a safe ride to and from the bar, and critics both of the City Council passing the ordinance and of the rideshare companies that refuse

to abide by the ruling is a fear of more impaired drivers on the road.

To both of these pieces of bad news, I have a remedy. If you're going to go out for drinks, take the bus and do it downtown.

Decades of transit planning based around office commuting have made it so that downtown Minneapolis is practically the default destination for dozens of transit lines. Few people live more than a five to ten-minute walk from a bus line that runs frequently and runs through downtown, with the Southside being served by lines number 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17, 18, and 22, along with the BRT D line and the Blue Line train. In addition, smartphone technology has made planning a bus trip a breeze, with apps like Google Maps and Transit being able to provide both the most convenient lines to take and providing departure and arrival times that are updated in real time as the lines operate. Many times I've

scheduled a ride with a rideshare app where it's given me options to discount my trip if I'm willing to wait a few minutes for a more conveniently located driver. If one is willing to wait an extra 15-20 minutes so that a rideshare costs \$10 rather than \$15, why not consider that same 15-20 minutes in walking time as something that will discount the fare from \$15 to \$2?

With their desperate attempts to get office workers to voluntarily come back downtown, it's become obvious that the Downtown Council and Mayor Frey's only plan for revitalizing downtown is to "make it 2019 again by the power of magic or science." I worked downtown in 2019 and loved it. I loved wandering the skyways to find interesting hole-in-the-wall places for lunch. I loved walking to Target or Trader Joe's to run some errands before I caught the bus back home. I loved how vibrant and bustling it felt. What I hated was that outside of the Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 workweek, this vibrant and bustling place became a ghost town. If we revelers make it a point to meet our friends for a cocktail or go on a date night in the heart of the city, we can make downtown a destination for not just workers but for leisure. Armchair urban planners have suggested that unused office spaces be converted into affordable housing, but lacking substantial changes to building structures and housing codes, turning these offices into apartments will result in apartments that are unafford-

able, terrible to live in, or both. What is substantially more feasible is turning these offices into gathering places, be they shops, cafes, venues or taverns. That doesn't start happening until the gathering places that do exist are popular enough that entrepreneurs want a piece of a bustling downtown pie.

The idea that a leisure-focused downtown is a healthy one is backed by data. According to a study by the City Center District Foundation of Philadelphia, the downtown that has retained the most workers and residents, and attracted the most visitors since 2020, is Nashville, Tennessee, a downtown region that is indisputably dominated by leisure spots. In addition, cities with leisure-focused downtowns like Nashville, Austin, and San Antonio saw property crimes decrease in the last four years and saw increases in investment by the private sector in the same stretch of time. What Minneapolis has that Nashville doesn't is

a transit system that efficiently, safely, and cheaply gets its partyers from their homes to the party and back again (and pays their operators a non-exploitative wage to do it).

Where decreasing property values and departing rideshare companies signal a downward spiral of declining tax bases and more unsafe roads, a leisure and transit-focused downtown can start a virtuous cycle where downtown becomes both increasingly valuable and where transit service improves with more ridership, decreasing our reliance on private cars and increasing road safety. City government and downtown business owners can bring money back to downtown by offering Minneapolis a good time rather than berating them for being "losers" with a "dirty cat blanket." What I propose is the notion that downtown isn't for offices, but that downtown is for people.

PASSING

Robert Millard Baum

Robert Millard Baum passed peacefully on the day of his birth, March 6, 2024 at Good Samaritan Society in Maplewood, Minnesota.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years Heather, daughters Jennifer Kenna (Ron) and Jessica Baum, two grandchildren Nicholas and Bianca Kenna. Sisters Nancy Gibbs, Shirley Sackmann and sisters-in-law Naomi and Hannah Tilsen and Faith Lattimer.

A gentle man committed to peace and social justice, Bob was among the original 1961 Minnesota Freedom Riders. Arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, in June of 1961, he was a veteran of the Southern Civil Rights Movement.

Bob was a humanist who embraced international cultures. He was a global thinker committed to social justice and all living things. Bob taught his children about the world. And we all thank him for his strong spirit, gentle smile and the passionate work he has done to make this world a better place. He made a big difference in the lives of his family, his friends and the lives of so many more.

62B, from page 1

cesses so that we incentivize immediate service delivery first, and work with clients on paperwork later.

New legislator for 62B

BY DAVID TILSEN

District 62B will elect a new legislator this November. The DFL will endorse a candidate to fill this seat on April 14 at Washburn High School. Four neighbors are running: Bill Emory, policy aide for Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando; Ira Jourdain, a Minneapolis school board member; Anquam Mahamoud, a COO of a social service agency; and Londel French, a former member of the park board. I did Zoom interviews with these candidates and

have edited them into a YouTube video (see link below).

The work of being a legislator involves understanding the complexity and nuanced nature of public policy. The normal campaign debates with two-minute answers have always been unsatisfying to me. I believe we need the opportunity to see the thinking process and life experiences of our candidates. To that end, I have been very light-handed in my editing of these interviews. Yes, some do go on, but there are other opportunities to see short answers. It's my observation that decisions are not made immediately, they are made with research, analysis, and listening to constituents, experts and advisors.

I asked the candidates to talk about four topics: public safety, poverty, climate change and education. I hope this video is helpful in evaluating candidates.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eKvnOJkooE>



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Celebrate Spring on Lake Street

Spring on East Lake Street

BY DEBRA KEEFER RAMAGE

Where the action is (mostly) these days

Quietly, but there if you look for it, a lot of new places have come into being in the stretch of East Lake Street from Minnehaha Avenue to the Mississippi River. One big project that is not open yet (but with its preparation well underway) is the renovation and relaunch of the Coliseum building on the northeast corner of Lake and 27th Avenue. The last we heard, with renovation work

nearing completion, the grand opening is planned to coincide with Juneteenth, as part of the Soul of the Southside Festival on June 19.

An interesting fact about the Coliseum's reopening is that Du Nord Social Spirits' Shanelle Montana is one of three women representing Black-owned small businesses (the other two are Alicia Belton and Janice Downing) who are collaborating with Redesign Inc. to design and manage the renovation. Also, once it's complete, these three businesses will be both co-owners with Redesign

and tenants, with Du Nord having a full-service restaurant and cocktail lounge on the ground floor of the building.

Another great new addition to Lake Street is a small but powerful music and theater venue called Cloudland Theater. They announced their presence in August, opened in November, and have already had scores of shows and events. Right now they're having two to six events each week, and most of their music shows feature multiple artists. Check out their upcoming shows at cloudlandtheater.com or on Facebook or Insta-



Urban Forage Winery & Cider House



The Coliseum building renovation nearing completion

gram.

A lot of the eating establishments east of Minnehaha also have live music and other events from time to time, some quite regularly. Galapagos, an Ecuadorian restaurant with an intriguing

menu, also hosts live music events. Urban Forage Winery & Cider House at 3016 E. Lake St. has frequent live music, trivia contests, and other entertainment, as well as renting out its space, complete with drink service, for private

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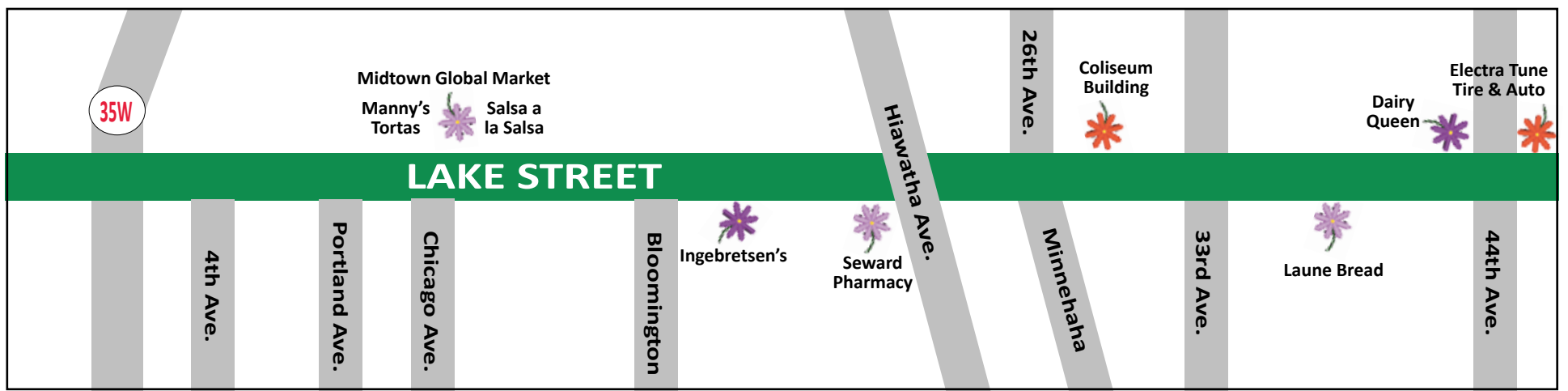
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events. Merlin's Rest has regularly scheduled music, usually some kind of Celtic traditional or modern, on Saturday nights (see event calendar at merlinsrest.com) and randomly at other times. They also have whisky tastings, pub trivia, and occasional sing-alongs. And west of Minnehaha, Midtown Global Market has live music almost every Saturday afternoon.

Next, we want to highlight a few service companies and non-profits found along this corridor. Lift Garage is a wonderful concept that I am considering availing myself of if I qualify. They provide "lifeline" car repairs and service to low-income people. While the YWCA announced the closure of their downtown and Uptown fitness centers last fall, the Midtown YW at 2121 E. Lake St. is still going strong. Their health and wellness programs include a fitness center with a gym and a pool, exercise classes both in-person and virtual, as well as child care, summer camps, and myriad activities for kids and adults alike.

The May Day Workers' Center, located in the CWA Union Hall at 3521 E. Lake St., is a program of COPAL, which was launched in 2021. Its mission is to organize Latino workers and their families in South Minneapolis, to help them with a range of issues that Latino workers often face, and to build generational wealth.

Fun places to eat and drink, old and new

Lake Street remains a place to get good food. It is dominated by Mexican, Ecuadorian, and other Latino food places. I was thinking of doing a count and including a list of all the Latino restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries and groceries within a block of East Lake Street from I-35W to the river. Well, I did the count, but I'm not going to be able to include the list, because it was much bigger than I expected - 53 to be exact.

I have already mentioned one of those, Galapagos, and there is a new taco bar rumored to be opening soon at Midtown Global Market. Meanwhile, there are a few others I will highlight. From aficionados of Mexican cuisine, I hear a lot of praise for Alborada Market, at 1855 E. Lake St. Many of my restaurant news sources sing the praises of Taqueria la Hacienda, which has two locations on Lake Street and one suburban location. Panaderia San Miguel at 1623 E. Lake St. is an old stalwart, having been established in 2000. Dulcemex is a retailer of Mexican candy and party supplies such as pinatas. They are at 325 E. Lake St. and there is also one in St. Paul.

More eating places and food retailers that are not Latino also can be found on East Lake Street. These include India Kutir, which is new (or at least new to me),



Statue of Emiliano Zapata on Lake Street

Midori's Floating World, a Japanese comfort food eatery which relocated about a mile east of their location that burned down in 2020, and Savory Bake House and Laune Bread, which are both small retailers of artisanal baked

goods. Laune Bread started out some years ago as a micro-bakery subscription service with bike delivery, but has since opened a storefront with regular hours Wednesday through Saturday. They still offer a subscription service as well, so you can sign up for biweekly, weekly or even one-time orders, with a small discount. Laune bakes sourdough and vegan breads as well as pastries, and they even have pizza on Fridays (until it sells out!) with various toppings, including pepperoni, three cheese, veggie and vegan options.

Midtown Global Market

Midtown Global Market (MGM) recently lost one food retailer, the arepa place, but has a couple of new ones plus some additional new vendors. One of the incoming food places is Latino - El Taco Torro. I don't know anything more about this than what's on the website, where it is noted as "coming soon." The other one is open,

and that's Irie Jamaican Express, which will be a welcome addition to our community, I'm sure.

And let's not forget about some longtime favorites at MGM - Salsa a la Salsa and Manny's Tortas. The family-owned and operated Salsa a la Salsa has been around for over two decades now, serving up traditional cuisine from central Mexico, as well as offering a new vegan menu. They also do catering for all kinds of events, large or small. And Manny's Tortas is always worth a stop when you're at MGM, with their menu of mouth-watering gourmet Mexican sandwiches. Since opening

their first location on East Lake Street 25 years ago to their current home at MGM, Manny's also operates a food booth at the Minnesota State Fair, and they provide event catering, too.

The Artist Space has been a feature of MGM for a while now, but I have neglected to mention it. This is a sort of pop-up residency program for artists. It's a 275-square-foot semi-private area made available as a free workspace, hosting artists for two to six weeks per project. At completion, the artists feature their work for 30 days in a high-traffic area in the Market.

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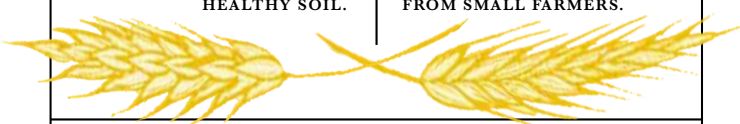


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One of the custom watches at Caliber Works Watch Repair

BY DEBRA KEEFER RAMAGE

Chicago Avenue in South Minneapolis is an interesting street filled with loads of interesting places. We're focusing right now on the section that goes from 46th Street south to the Richfield border. This is a stretch that's a little more than half residential, especially toward the southern end, but with lots of services, retail shops (mostly small and independent), nonprofit of-

fices and facilities, entertainment venues, recreational facilities and eateries. Here is a sample.

Services

Ray N. Welter Heating Company (4637 Chicago Ave.), which also supplies air conditioning and air purification, is both a very old and stable company, and a modern, forward-looking one. The company has been around since 1912 and is now on its fourth generation of family ownership. They are a trusted source for heat pump-based systems, by which both winter heating and summer cooling for an entire house can be had with a single mechanical unit, and no combustion, so no greenhouse gases.

Minnehaha Animal Hospital (4809 Chicago Ave.) is a full-service veterinary clinic that has been in the neighborhood for over 40 years and is

highly rated by pet owner clients. So highly that they had to temporarily pause taking new clients! The original founding vet-owner, Dr. Joyce Tesarek, also founded Pet Doctors on Franklin Avenue. In April of 2020, Dr. Bobbi Soule became

Family Dental Clinic (4454 Chicago Ave.) has been caring for teeth for exactly 40 years this year. They offer all conceivable types of dental care, from checkups to alignment, veneers, dental implants and dentures. Check out their

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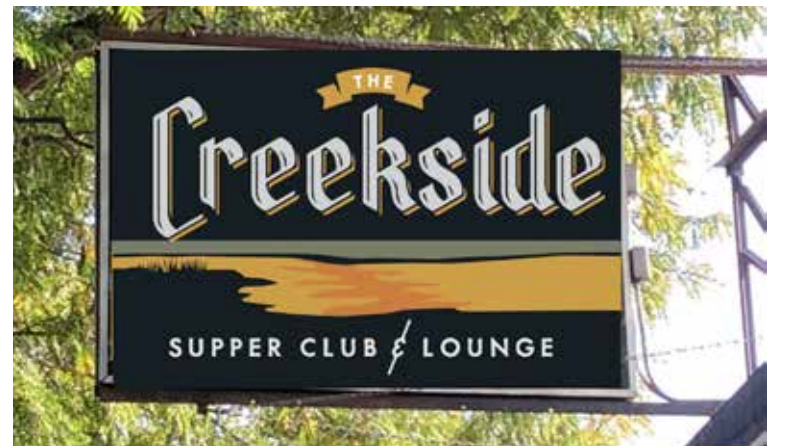
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the new vet-owner and Medical Director at Minnehaha, and later that year she purchased Pet Doctors as well. Dr. Soule currently sees her animal patients at the Minnehaha clinic.

great website at fdcminneapolis.com, and read the story of historical pioneers of women in dentistry on their blog (currently, both dentists at the clinic are women) where you can also read health tips and FAQs about oral health.

Caliber Works Watch Repair is an interesting service shop at 815 E. 56th St. They have a truly fascinating website (caliberworkswatchrepair.com) teeming with oddball FAQs, watchmaker lore, and gorgeous graphics. In addition to doing repairs that match up with their extremely specific set of skills, they also teach classes in watch tinkering as a hobby, including "mods."

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Tubman is now the name on the door of the facility at 4432 Chicago Ave., Tubman Chrysalis Center. It's just one of the locations of the 48-year-old organization named for Harriet Tubman. They also operate two separate centers, one just for youth, in Maplewood. Tubman's mission is centered on three words: safety, hope, and healing. As their website states: "Tubman has helped people of all ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds who

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Minneapolis Granite

Family Dental Clinic

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are experiencing relationship violence, exploitation, mental and chemical health issues, and other forms of trauma. Throughout the Twin Cities, Tubman provides safe shelter, housing, legal services, counseling, youth programming, violence prevention, community education, and other wraparound services."

Just a couple of blocks away is another organization offering hope and healing, the Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance, or MOCA. They are celebrating 25 years of education, support, and direct service this year at their annual "Black, White and Teal Gala." (The color teal represents ovarian cancer awareness.) The gala is on Saturday, April 13, at Quincy Hall in Minneapolis and you can still purchase tickets via their website, mno-varian.org.

St. Mary's Cemetery at 4403 Chicago Ave. is one of the Catholic Cemeteries in Minnesota. The others are located in St. Paul, New Hope, Mendota Heights and Northeast Minneapolis. Although not the oldest of the Catholic Cemeteries in the Twin Cities, St. Mary's is one of the oldest institutions in South Minneapolis, having been founded in 1873. St. Mary's includes a "Caretaker's



Heat pumps being tested for cold weather

Garden" on its grounds where the caretaker grows peppers and tomatoes, which neighbors and visitors are free to harvest in season. Currently, they serve a lot of Latino families, and the Memorial Day Mass this year will be in both Spanish and English, on Monday, May 27, 10 to 11 a.m.

Recreation, entertainment and dining

The Parkway Theater presents both classic films and live music entertainment, as well as occasional live come-



Registration is open for MOCA's Teal Strides for Ovarian Cancer fundraiser on Sept. 7.

dy presentations. Sometimes these forms are combined. For instance, they have series on various themes where a film and a short music show or a film and a trivia contest are combined. Or the impossible-to-describe "Scream it off Screen" shows. Lately they are also branching out into author

talks and storytelling shows, which are proving popular. I am forcing myself to pick just ONE of these amazing shows to share. I'm going with the Friday, April 26, performance by the Skatalites, inventors of the ska music genre, who will play at the Parkway as part of their 60th anniversary tour,

with the local ska band The Prizefighters opening. Doors at 7, music at 8.

I finally visited Pizza Biga. In looking up their hours on the internet, I encountered the following search result title: Which is better, a biga or a poolish? What the heck? I con-

sider myself a foodie, but I had never heard of either of those. And had no idea what it had to do with pizza. Well, it turns out that these are two types of what are called "pre-ferments," and the two other

See 48th & Chicago, page 12

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Celebrate Spring on 48th & Chicago

48th & Chicago, from page 11

main ones, sourdough and sponge, I had heard of. Biga pre-fermentation is preferred for pizza because of the way it brings out a nutty flavor from the grain and a chewy texture in the finished crust. So now you know. I liked Pizza Biga

But that crust is mighty tasty, so probably yes.

Creekside Supper Club's good reputation is growing. Although a supper club is never going to win a James Beard award (why not?) Creekside has appeared on many "best of" lists for such categories as brunch (which they now

ed. One of the cheekiest things they have there is a cigarette machine in the entry vestibule. I had forgotten those things ever existed.

Retail

I also was able to visit CannajoyMN recently, where one of the friendly and knowledgeable co-owners recommended some non-THC gummies that are half CBD and half CBN to help with insomnia. Cannajoy carries a wide variety of weed products, including its



Biga pizza and N/A beer from Germany



St. Mary's Cemetery

a lot, and I never did find out if they use a biga to make the dough; my server had no idea, and the baker was too busy.

serve), classic cocktails, or good date night places. Their popovers and their relish tray are particularly recommend-



Baltazar Cardoso, head caretaker at St. Mary's Cemetery

premium marijuana seed bank and Minnesota-grown hemp and THC products, as well as

offering classes and community events. Just one example is their "Bake and Wake Yoga" Sunday morning class held on multiple dates (the next one will be on April 14), billed as a "chill yoga flow class that induces you to ganja plant medicine." Check out their website at www.cannajoymn.com for more details and to browse their online shop.

Stirling Castle Vintage, the vintage clothing, accessories and tchotchkes place I

mentioned last fall before it opened, is open now. But it is only open on weekends, and not every weekend. The deal is you have to follow them on social media, unless you want to just chance it. Go to the Stirling Castle Vintage Facebook page on any Wednesday and it will tell you the hours for the upcoming weekend and where they'll be "popping up" if they're not there.

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'Babble Lab' – a celebration of the curious spirit

BY KAY SCHROVEN

In "Babble Lab," the Children Theatre Company's new play running now through April 14, letters become characters and take over the Babble Lab! The Scientist whose experiment goes wrong, played by writer and actress Autumn Ness, can't control them. They bounce, pop, fly, crawl, spring and leap. They escape from drawers and pipes and fall from the sky. They can make the Scientist happy, sad, angry, frustrated, delighted and scared. The play is inventive and thoroughly entertaining. It is aimed at preschoolers, yet enjoyable for all ages.

This is Autumn Ness's 23rd season with CTC. And what better way to celebrate than to premiere her own play, her first, penned and produced as a one-woman show full of surprises and magic. Autumn says, "I'm nervous and excited." She is especially excited to work with director Sarah Agnew, whom she has a great deal of respect for. "When Sarah played Alice in 'Alice in Wonderland' I became

enthralled with her. She is a creative, generous team leader."

Ness, our Scientist, enters the atrium where the excited children and their adults are waiting to enter the theater. She is dressed in packing foam, with headphones and a large plastic horn that amplifies all sorts of sounds; trains, traffic, jangling keys, flushing toilets, clocks ticking, bird calls and so on. Led by our zany Scientist we enter the theater amidst this cacophony of sound.

In the laboratory, cleverly designed by Michael Sommers, our Scientist in white lab coat begins her experiment handling and examining a number of random objects such as balloons, paper, chattering teeth, etc., and ends up throwing each one into a large canister which bubbles and brews and lets off steam. When the inevitable explosion happens the letters come to life and the technology blossoms throughout the theater, transporting us into a surrealistic world via projection, animation and puppetry. The letters tease, entertain and baffle our Scientist, who performs mute, much like a mime, using body language and animated facial ex-



Autumn Ness in Children's Theatre Company's 2024 world premiere production of 'Babble Lab.' (Photo/Glen Stubbe Photography)

pression to convey a multitude of ideas, thoughts and feelings.

As the play unfolds our Scientist begins to babble, that is, speak gibberish. And the children who are seated in the front rows near the stage seem to understand it perfectly. They giggle, shout and even give advice. When one of the "letters" is bothering our Scientist by squirming around on her back, a little boy shouts out "Use a back

scratcher!"

Ness loves performing for this early learner audience and the interaction it creates. She says she was inspired by her own young children, as she witnessed them experiencing sound, letters, words and eventually language. Here, in "Babble Lab," Ness has created an incubator of sound, image, light, and most importantly, the unique language of Babble. It is nonsensi-

cal and Ness speaks it fluently. This is the amazing thing about "Babble Lab" - it communicates clearly without using any known language. Ness says she was also inspired by Dadaism, an avant-garde art movement of the early 20th century, which rejected logic and reason and introduced such concepts as collage and abstract art.

If you have a youngster in your life or even if you don't, you don't want to miss this thoroughly upbeat production now on the Cargill Stage at the Children's Theatre Company, 2400 Third Ave. S. in Minneapolis. Tickets are available at childrenstheatre.org or 612-874-0400.

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• COMMUNITY CALENDAR •

Southside Pride / NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION

EVENTS

Author Talk: Lorna Landvik Thursday, April 4, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Roosevelt Library
4026 28th Ave. S., Mpls.
Please join us in welcoming New York Times bestselling author, performer and local community member Lorna Landvik as she discusses her books and writing process. Find her books in the HCL Catalog: Books by Lorna Landvik and at Roosevelt Library in March. Q&A to follow. This program is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. More information at <https://hclib.bibliocommons.com/events/65d55d24b7ed963d-008b81e3>.

Yoga for Strength and Balance Four sessions, April 11 – May 2

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
2730 E. 31st St., Mpls.
Yoga is perfect for those who want to improve their flexibility, strength and balance. The benefits include muscle improvement, management of some chronic conditions, and increased well-being. The class is taught by certified yoga instructor Dyan Anunson. The cost is \$3 per class or \$10 for all four sessions. Call 612-729-5799, email juliaockuly@LShealthyseniors.org, or go to www.lshealthyseniors.org/registrationform.html to register.

Sabathani Spring Health Fair Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sabathani Community Center
310 E. 38th St., Mpls.
Join us for the Sabathani Spring Health Fair, a free event dedicated to promoting health and

wellness in the South Minneapolis community. Attendees will benefit from complimentary health screenings and vaccines, including diabetes screening; eye and dental examinations; blood pressure check; COVID-19 vaccines; HIV testing; prostate/PSA screening; lead poisoning testing (for children under 6); and Medicare/Medicaid enrollment assistance.

There will also be speakers, presentations and demonstrations throughout the day, as well as fun activities for all ages, including dance classes, healthy cooking recipe samples, kids' activities, prize drawings, gift cards and incentives. **Register by April 6 to receive a complimentary lunch** from WholeSoul Eatery. Registration link and more information: <http://sabathani.org/spring-health-fair>.

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors Disaster Preparedness

Tuesday, April 16, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
2730 E. 31st St., Mpls.
Meghan Burian, MPH, a Public Health Specialist with the City of Minneapolis Emergency Management Department, will discuss emergency preparedness topics including personal preparedness and resources for learning more. Senior Social and Health Talks occur on the third Tuesday of each month and feature guest speakers on health/wellness issues, birthday celebrations and time to socialize! Refreshments are provided! A Nurse is In/Blood Pressure Clinic is also offered. Suggested donation is \$1. No registration required. www.lshealthyseniors.org

WAMM Peace Bridge Vigil 25th Anniversary

Wednesday, April 17, 5 p.m.
Join us for the 25th Anniversary of the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Peace Bridge Vigil on Wednesday, April 17. Meet on the Lake Street bridge from 5 to 6 p.m., followed by music and program at St. Albert the Great Church, 3216 E. 29th St., in Minneapolis. Pizza will be provided. Sponsored by Women Against Military Madness.

'Joy is the Justice We Give Ourselves' by J. Drew Lanham, with Michael Kleber-Diggs

Wednesday, April 17, 6 p.m.
Milkweed Books
1011 Washington Ave. S., Mpls.
Join us as Milkweed Books welcomes J. Drew Lanham for a reading from his new poetry book, 'Joy is the Justice We Give Ourselves,' a lush journey into wildness and Black being, in his signature mix of poetry and prose. Drew will read from his book and sit in conversation alongside poet Michael Kleber-Diggs, followed by time for audience questions and a book signing. Enjoy a social hour in our brick-and-mortar indie bookstore Milkweed Books beginning at 5 p.m., followed by the reading and conversation beginning at 6 p.m. Free and open to the public. More information at milkweed.org.

Schmidt Spring Art Crawl April 19-21

Schmidt Brewery
900 W. 7th St., St. Paul
The Schmidt Spring Art Crawl, in coordination with the St. Paul Art Collective and the West 7th Arts District, will take place April 19-21. Start your art crawl adventure at the historic Schmidt Brewery-turned artist lofts and creative workspace. From the tunnel to the rooftop overlooking the St. Paul Skyline, you will find over 75 artists, artisans and makers exhibiting and selling their work. Schmidt resident artists, as well as local visiting artists will exhibit many styles and mediums, including paintings, ceramics, illustration, jewelry, photography, block printing, glass, digital work, healing arts, fiber arts, sand art and more. Open Palette live painting and art demonstration will be conducted by a selection of artists. Attend a session and get inspired! The 43rd Annual MN Congressional High School Art Competition will be displayed in the atrium. Buna Coffee Cart will be on site, as well as crowd favorites Egg Roll Queen and Red Rocket Pizza food trucks.

Make a whole day of it (or the whole weekend) in the West 7th Arts District of St. Paul. Hours are Friday 6 to 9 p.m.; Saturday

noon to 7 p.m.; and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. Enter at Door 1 on the north side of the building by the tall smokestack. Attendance is FREE and all are welcome. Parking is FREE on nearby streets.

South High Foundation Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

Sunday, April 28, 8 a.m. to noon
South High School
3131 19th Ave. S., Mpls.
(enter on 32nd St.)
Please join us for a delicious pancake breakfast to raise funds for the South High Foundation. \$12 for adults; \$6 for kids ages 6 to 18 years; FREE for ages 5 and under. Tickets will be sold at the door, or online at www.southhighfoundation.org. See you there!

Minneapolis American Indian Center Grand Re-opening and Powwow

Wednesday, May 1, noon to 8 p.m.
MAIC
1530 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls.
Please join us for a celebration of the reopening of the Minneapolis American Indian Center, which has been closed for renovations since 2022. The public is invited to an open house and powwow to explore the upgraded center and celebrate the reopening. Please note that there will be zero tolerance for alcohol, drugs or firearms at these events. Earlier in the day there will be a parade to celebrate the start of American Indian Month, beginning at Cedar Avenue Field Park at 10 a.m. and wrapping up at the Minneapolis American Indian Center at 11:30 a.m. Full schedule of the day's events at www.maicnet.org/events/grand-reopening-open-house/.

Beyond Guilt: Writers Reflect on Climate Change

Thursday, May 2, 5 p.m. social hour, 6 p.m. program
Open Book
1011 Washington Ave. S., Mpls.
Join Milkweed Editions for the May entry in our monthly reading and panel discussion event series Milkweed Presents, hosted by "The Seedkeeper" author Diane Wilson. Diane will lead readings and conversation about writing amidst climate change with Erin Sharkey, editor of "A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars," with special guest poet Halee Kirkwood. This event is FREE and open to the public, please register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/milkweed-presents-hosted-by-diane-wilson-tickets-778513624207>.

Enjoy a social hour and book-signing in our brick-and-mortar indie bookstore, Milkweed Books, beginning at 5 p.m.,

followed by the reading and conversation in the Open Book Performance Hall beginning at 6 p.m. milkweed.org

Minnehaha Creek Duck Race Saturday, May 4, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Minnehaha Pkwy., 12th Ave. to Cedar Ave.
Get ready for the Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group's 4th Annual Minnehaha Creek Duck Race on Saturday, May 4! The Duck Race begins at 11 a.m. at the 12th Avenue bridge and Minnehaha Parkway, and finishes with a neighborhood festival just before the Cedar Avenue bridge, when all the ducks have floated downstream to complete the race. Event highlights include raffles; free face painting; food trucks; Minneapolis Fire Department truck and firefighters; fun activities and info tables from neighborhood groups; bags and gloves for anyone who can help to collect trash and recycling along the creek. Everyone is welcome, so bring your family and friends and enjoy the outdoors with us! More details at www.frnng.org.

Heart of the Beats 'MayDayAnyway4'

Sunday, May 5, 2:30 to 7 p.m.
Powderhorn Park
Southwest corner of the lake Lake Hiawatha/4200 Cedar Drum and Dance presents "May-DayAnyway4" (no affiliation with the Heart of the Beast Theater intended or implied). What we once recognized as a true sign of spring's arrival – the Heart of the Beast parade and festival in Powderhorn Park on the first Sunday in May – is now no more. But for us drummers, there is nothing saying that we cannot drum in the park at the same time and place as usual. Last year's "May DayAnyway3" drumming (and dancing!) event was loved and appreciated by all who attended. We even drummed for the canoe and puppet regatta as it crossed the lake at 3 p.m.! While it is too soon to know who will show up this year or what might be done to make our own fun, rest assured that a fine afternoon of rain-or-shine drumming will occur. Plan to be there and spread the word! (Tarp-covered drum dry space and waterproof percussion available for loan in case of rain.) Also, do not forget our monthly drum jams at Lake Hiawatha Park on first Saturdays, May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3 and September 7, from 7:30 to 10 p.m.

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Trash into treasure

BY STEPHANIE FOX

Most people in Minneapolis know that those blue trash bins, the ones next to the gray garbage cans, are the place to toss recyclables. The trucks come by every two weeks, some with side-loading mechanical arms and others with two-member teams with a driver and a worker who wheels the bin to the back of the hauler where it's grabbed and unloaded. But where it ends up is, to many, a mystery.

In Minneapolis and St. Paul, the contents of those bins end up at the Eureka Recycling facility in North Minneapolis.

Eureka Recycling is a non-profit mission-based organization, collecting and processing recycled waste from Minneapolis and St. Paul and from other waste haulers around the Twin Cities. The top brass is an all-female team, not the norm for such a facility, said Katie Drews, the organization's co-president.

Until 2013, it was up to the residents in Minneapolis to sort their own recyclables and to put them in separate containers. But now, the blue bin is for any sort of recyclable waste and the sorting falls not on the public but on the workers at Eureka's facility.

The trucks arrive at the Eureka warehouse where they are weighed, emptied of their items and piled into mountains of mixed waste. Weighing lets the

facility determine how much of what comes in is not recyclable, with an average of about 10-11% of the haul deemed unsuitable for reuse.

Items are first put onto conveyor belts where they are sorted into categories, including unusable items. At the end of the process, usable recyclables are bundled and made ready for pickup, to be reworked into new products.

The facility collects from 350 to 500 tons of material each day.

"It's dangerous work," said Drews, "but we pay a living wage. Our workers are full-time and work four 12-hour days with three days off, so workers get a consistent amount of overtime."

Employees stay at a line location for one to three hours, then move to a different position in order to avoid fatigue and repetitive stress injuries. Eureka has a high retention rate, with some workers staying for more than 20 years. Eureka's drivers and maintenance teams are unionized.

Workers first sort the material by size, weight and shape, grabbing items off the conveyor belts, looking for problem materials that can't be recycled, including milk cartons, juice boxes, diapers, black bottles and Styrofoam. These are discarded, to be sent to landfills and the city burner.

Inside, it is very loud. There

are the machine engines and then the sound of thousands of glass containers crashing down to the floor below. There are robotic arms grabbing items. An optical sorter can process 1,000 pieces of material a minute.

Not everything collected is usable and some things can cause major mechanical and safety problems.

Problems are caused by items such as holiday lights, extension cords, garden hoses and plastic bags, which can wrap around equipment. "We have to shut down the line a couple of times a day because of this," said Drews.

Even more dangerous are lithium batteries. Even tiny ones can combust and cause a fire in the facility. "Take them to hazardous waste," Drews said, "along with helium tanks and gas cans."

About 20% of what Eureka takes in are hard plastics. Most are acceptable, but black plastic is too hard for the machines to sort and is not accepted. Six-pack yokes, the flat plastic pieces that can hold six packs of soda or beer cans together, are difficult for the sorter to recognize.

Colored plastic is less valuable than clear plastic, and now a few companies are starting to change their packaging to make it better for recycling. (Recently, the soft drink Sprite changed

from green bottles to clear.)

Drews says they are trying to keep the business local.

The recycled paper and cardboard they recover are made into cereal and cracker boxes in St. Paul. Glass bottles and jars are sorted by color in St. Paul with clear glass ending up in Shakopee to be made into bottles for drinks, pickles, salad dressing and other foods.

Plastic milk and laundry detergent containers become landscaping, decking and fencing. Many plastic drink bottles are made into new plastic containers.

"We are creating material for someone local to use, with 75% staying in Minnesota and 85% staying in the Midwest," Drews said.

So what should good citizens who want to recycle properly do?

The most valuable items are large cardboard boxes. The box should be the size that could fit in the blue recycle bin. Break them down if possible, Drews said, but if it's not possible, leave them by the blue bin to be picked up.

Keep lids on larger glass bottles instead of removing them. When the bottles are broken, these lids can be separated but an already separate lid can be hard for the workers (and the machines) to find. Smaller metal

lids, the kind found on wine bottles or condiment bottles, should be removed and put in the trash.

Keep plastic lids on plastic containers as well.

Clean out food containers (you don't need to scrub them) as a consideration to the workers. Check plastics for the recycle number. Acceptable plastics are #1, #2 and #5. Clean aluminum foil should be crumpled into two-inch or larger balls.

Mail with the see-through windows and items with paper labels are acceptable. Stick Post-It notes on other paper items. Check with your local supermarket - some collect soft plastic bags to send to recycling facilities that make other plastic bags.

There are no national rules for recycling, with each locality creating its own. In Minnesota, the goal is, by state statute, to reach a 75% recycling rate by 2030. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has the same goal for the county, in order "to enhance the health, safety and quality of life of our residents and communities in a respectful, efficient and fiscally responsible way."

Eureka is also moving ahead and has begun to add AI and to explore solar energy to help power the facility. They recently added the first electric truck to their fleet and hope to add more soon.



Southside Pride
NEIGHBORHOOD EDITION

Southside Pride is a monthly community newspaper delivered on the first Tuesday of each month to convenient locations in and around our Southside communities. We are proud of the racial and cultural diversity of the Southside, and we oppose racism and other efforts to keep us apart as a community.

If you want to share some news of your church, school or organization, please write us at:

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55406
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email: editor@southsidepride.com

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EVENTS

Saint Mark's Music Series

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
519 Oak Grove St., Mpls.

Concert: 'Letters to Jackie'

Saturday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.

15 settings of letters written to Jackie Kennedy in the aftermath of her husband's assassination in 1963.

Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor, and Karina Kontorovitch, piano. Free admission.

Music for Violin and Piano

Sunday, April 21, 2:30 p.m.

Archer Brown with Gloriana Wolf. Free admission.

<https://ourcathedral.org/saint-marks-music-series/>

The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning

Tuesday, April 16, 5 to 9 p.m.

Hamline University
Kay Fredericks Room
3rd Floor of Klas Center
1537 W. Taylor Ave., St. Paul
Scriptural Reasoning is a practice in which members of different faiths engage in the study of their sacred scriptures together. According to Scriptural Reasoning co-founder Dr. Peter Ochs, this form of communal interpretation promotes understanding and acceptance of the respective religious traditions. This mutual understanding is the basis of interreligious reconciliation. Dr. David Ford of the University of Cambridge offers a keynote at this year's Mahle Lecture. To learn more and to register for this FREE event, go to www.hamline.edu/event/mahle-lecture-interreligious-peacebuilding-through-study.

Thomas Keesecker in Concert

Friday, April 19, 7 p.m.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
1720 E. Minnehaha Pkwy., Mpls.
Thomas Keesecker will share music from his bestselling piano collections in a 75-minute concert. Keesecker, a composer and church musician as well as performer, is known around the country for his sensitive, delightful and meditative piano arrangements of hymns. At this concert, we'll be able to sing some of them together,

as well as listen to his interpretations. The hymns will be interspersed with poetry by Mary Oliver and Wendell Berry, two of the most beloved and profound poets of the 20th and 21st centuries. CDs of his music will be available for purchase after the concert. Freewill offering.

Developing Alternative Ways to Resolve Conflict

Thursday, April 25

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Anoka Ramsey Community College
11200 Mississippi Blvd. NW
Coon Rapids, MN
Mediation and Restorative Services (MARS) is excited to present timely topics in conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative practice, industry-leading speakers, stellar networking opportunities, broaden your horizon by collecting and sharing information, cultivate and catalyze sustained learning for professional development and CLE opportunities. To learn more and buy tickets, visit <https://aesbid.com/ELP/MARS23/>.

Align Mpls. Furniture + Drive

Saturday, April 27, 9 a.m. to noon

Mount Olive Lutheran Church
3045 Chicago Ave., Mpls.
Parking lot at SE corner of Chicago and 31st St.

It's time for spring cleaning! Bring your gently used furniture, household items and clothing to contribute to this drive. Donations will then be given to guests of Align Minneapolis outreach ministries to assist in furnishing new apartments in a dignified and safe manner. Please, no beds, large office desks, appliances or construction materials. Let's celebrate the season by making a positive impact!

'Lift Every Voice' Through April

Conn Gallery
Plymouth Congregational Church
1900 Nicollet Ave., Mpls.
"Lift Every Voice" features 15 rugs recently hooked by American and Canadian women based on block prints from 1947 by the African American sculptor and graphic artist Elizabeth Catlett. Catlett's "The Black Woman"

is a series of linocuts commemorating African American women's historical oppression, resistance and survival. The prints were later published as part of a children's book about James Weldon Johnson's 1900 song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which today is the Black National Anthem. During the pandemic in 2021 and 2022 the rug hookers met via Zoom, chose the prints, discussed the artist, and reflected on how they might create their hooked pieces to accurately reflect what Ms. Catlett conveyed in her block prints 75 years earlier. "Lift Every Voice" will run in the Conn Gallery through late April.

Central Lutheran's Free Store needs donations!

Restoration Center at Central Lutheran Church
333 S. 12th St., Mpls.

The Free Store is a critical community resource that allows guests to shop for what they need at no cost. Items especially needed: blankets, towels, sheets, kitchenware and clothing. Donations accepted from 4th Ave. loading dock, Sunday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Press the call button and someone will come to help you. All donated items should be clean and in good condition. Questions? Call (612) 870-4416.

SHARING FOOD

Align Minneapolis

Sunday Evening Community Meals

These Sunday evening community meals are hosted and provided by Align Minneapolis member congregations and are free and open to all.

1st Sunday: April 7, 4:30-6 p.m.

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church

511 Groveland Ave., Mpls.

In-person meal around tables

2nd Sunday: April 14, 5-6 p.m.

Plymouth Congregational Church

1900 Nicollet Ave., Mpls.

(Enter from Nicollet Ave. side near 19th St.)

To-go meal, produce and groceries from Groveland Food Shelf

3rd Sunday: April 21, 5-6 p.m.

Plymouth Congregational Church

1900 Nicollet Ave., Mpls.

(Enter from Nicollet Ave. side near 19th St.)

In-person meal around tables, produce and groceries from Groveland Food Shelf

4th Sunday: April 28, 5-6 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Church

1200 Marquette Ave., Mpls.

In-person meal around tables

Calvary Emergency Food Shelf

3901 Chicago Ave., Mpls.

612-827-2504, ext. 3

The Calvary Food Shelf has returned to 3901 Chicago Ave. now that the building renovations are completed. The Food Shelf will continue its mission of providing access to fresh, nutritious food for the community. Call 612-827-2504, ext. 3 for more information.

New Creation Baptist Church

1414 E. 48th St., Mpls.

612-825-6933

We're still here to serve you on the first through the fourth Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We have re-opened the food shelf to choice shopping. We do require mask, sanitizer and temp check. Be safe and God bless! <https://www.facebook.com/NCBCfoodshelf>.

Saturdays (except 5th Saturdays)

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

(Grey door on the corner of 48th St. and 15th Ave.)

Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church

5300 10th Ave. S., Mpls.

612-825-6846

Serving Loaves and Fishes free community meals on Wednesdays from 5 to 6 p.m. Free, to-go meals served from side door on 53rd Street. Open to everyone, no questions asked. Whatever your circumstances, you are welcome. You can simply drive or walk up to the church and receive a meal any Wednesday evening between 5 and 6 p.m.

First Nations Kitchen

3044 Longfellow Ave., Mpls.

612-791-1253

First Nations Kitchen, an outreach of

All Saints Episcopal Indian Mission, welcomes all to our weekly To Go meals and Produce Give Away every Sunday from 4-5 p.m. outside our building. We cook fresh, organic, indigenous meals and give away organic produce rain or shine. This is a barrier-free food program. To donate or volunteer contact us at director@firstnationskitchen.org or go to our website: <https://firstnationskitchen.org>.

Minnehaha United Methodist Church

3701 E. 50th St., Mpls.

612-721-6231

The Minnehaha Food Shelf serves food for the hungry on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. We help distribute up to 30,000 pounds of food each month. In response to the COVID-19 virus, we have changed many things to protect both our guests and our volunteers – rigorous cleaning routines, streamlined procedures, moving outside, wearing face masks and following the 6-foot social distancing guideline. Please be patient as we continue to improve what we do. <https://www.facebook.com/MinnehahaFoodShelf/>

Soup for You! Café

2511 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls.

612-978-7974

Monday - Friday, noon to 1 p.m. –

Lunch

Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m. –

Groceries

Soup for You! operates out of the basement of century-old and deeply-rooted Bethany Lutheran Church. Things have changed and continue to be in flux. Soup For You! has not skipped a beat ... COVID-19 lockdown, we were there. People were fed. Unrest and our very neighborhood looted and set to flame. Our volunteers came to this place, the people were fed, clothed, nourished and hopefully comforted in this most extreme time of trauma and need. We will continue with the good support of The Village to feed, nourish and comfort all that come to our doors. <https://soupforyou.info/>

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Minneapolis.Bahai@gmail.com

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See www.minneapolisbahai.org
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612-827-2504 or www.clchurch.org

Sunday Worship at 10 am
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612-724-3643
www.santalbertthegreat.org
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Sunday 9:30 am (also live-streamed on Facebook)

Sunday 12 noon
Weekday Masses M, T, TH, F at 8:15 am in the Chapel

FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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612-729-5463

www.faithlutheranmpls.org

Sunday Worship 9 am and online on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/felc-mppls/>

Blind Ministry – April 20, noon to 2 pm

AA group - Mondays 6:30 pm
Senior Exercise Class - Mondays 10 am

NA groups - Tuesdays 7 pm and Wednesdays 7:30 pm

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www.messiahlutheranmpls.org

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Sunday 11 am Praise Worship (Holy Communion 1st and 3rd Sunday)

Sunday 12:30 p.m. Fellowship

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4101 37th Ave. S., 612-722-9527

www.minnehahacomunion.org

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612-825-6933

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<https://newcreationbaptist-churchmn.org/>

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612-825-6846

www.nokomisheights.org

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Office: 2001 Riverside Ave.



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BY DEBRA KEEFER RAMAGE

Openings, closings, and crosstown moves

Keefer Court has been reborn in the Asia Mall in Eden Prairie. It has different owners from the original, long-lived, tiny, mostly to-go spot on Cedar Avenue that was named for the building it was in, Keefer Court. But the new owners have the blessings and the recipes of the old owners, and their new digs are large and posh by comparison.



The reborn Keefer Court at Asia Mall in Eden Prairie

They had a soft opening in early March.

A Bar of Their Own officially opened March 1 on East Franklin Avenue in Seward and it was packed and rocking on opening night. It was even covered by Eater.com, the national one! Read it here: eater.com/24097469/womens-sports-bars-rise-trend-openings. All the local news channels were there. Most of my shy friends did a drive by (or bike by or walk by) and said they'd come back later when it had calmed down a little.

A new coffee shop opened in February in the Nokomis neighborhood, called Sunbean Coffee, on 34th Avenue. Another big opening is coming soon, hopefully in the very near future. The Birchwood spot in Seward finally sold to Juell and Ray Roberts, known as Prince's personal chefs and then as the owners of People's Organics. They are opening a new restaurant called Darling, possibly as soon as late April.

I am covering soup kitchens and church suppers and other restaurant alternatives for the masses, in case you didn't notice. So here's the latest news from my friend and comrade CJ's soup kitchen of choice, Soup for You! Cafe. The old church building on Franklin where it lives, that was given or sold to Augsburg College, has been sold again. The Somali Museum of Minnesota is moving into the space where Soup for You! has been operating for almost a decade.

According to a chat on Facebook with Jean-Claude Patrice Nataf, the chef at Soup for You!, the lunch service will shut down for the last two weeks of May for them to move into their new facility, and have a grand re-opening Monday, June 3. And where is the new site? Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, on 31st Street just east of Minnehaha Avenue.

There are also two closings to report, both sad because I wanted to visit these places and never did. One was there for quite a long time, in that parking night-

had two food-related pieces of note recently; one was a listicle of places to eat and drink along the D Line BRT, and the other chronicled how the Twin Cities has become the boomtown of the burgeoning trend of artisanal N/A beers.

Mini-review - Heather's again

On St. Patrick's Day, amid below-freezing temps and light snow flurries, I impulsively decided to try brunch at Heather's again. I reviewed it a few months ago when I went there with my sister, and had the Autumnal Hash. I was tempted to have it again since it was so awesome, but in order to be a more useful restaurant reviewer, I didn't. (I hope you dear readers appreciate the sacrifice.)

Instead I had the Sweet Potato Quinoa Bowl, which also featured arugula, poached eggs, black beans, avocado and pickled jalapenos. It wasn't quite as good as the hash, but still in the running. It's probably lighter, seeing as how hash is fried, whereas this bowl had no detectable fat or oil, just half of a small avocado. I accompanied this with a wine and blood orange spritzer which was great but, as usual, I could not finish it.

If you prefer a sweet brunch, Heather's has you covered there, too, with two sumptuous French toast dishes. One is an Orange Caramel Pecan French Toast and



Heather's Sweet Potato Quinoa Bowl for brunch



Blood orange spritzer for brunch at Heather's

then there is a weekly special, such as Lemon Cream Cheese French Toast with fresh strawberries. If you prefer burgers for brunch, there's a wide choice, as

well as other creative sandwich and bowl offerings.

By the way, Heather's was one of the places to eat along the D Line.

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mare of the Lyn-Lake area. The restaurant, I am sorry to say, is Galactic Pizza. The other, in downtown Minneapolis, hasn't been there that long: Coconut Whisk, an interesting concept



Cafe con leche at Guavas Cuban Cafe on the D Line

selling vegan pancake mixes, bubble teas and other ingredients to go, as well as offering sit-down brunching.

Boston Tea Party 2.0 and other news

From Eater.com, Michelle Franci's new book "Steeped: The Chemistry of Tea" sparked an international debate over which country makes the best tea. British readers were outraged at the idea of Americans teaching them anything about tea. The U.S. ambassador in London was forced to send a conciliatory letter

Twin Cities Eater has a listicle of 14 local feasts for \$10 or less. Only four of them were in South Minneapolis - Lu's Sandwiches, Taco El Kevin, Matt's Bar and Bull's Horn. Racket.com

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Celebrate Spring on Hennepin Avenue

Spring on Hennepin Avenue

BY DEBRA KEEFER RAMAGE

The decline and fall

The big debate in local media is, “Is Uptown dead and if so, whose fault is it, and why are they not getting as much help as downtown?” OK, technically that’s three debates. But only if the answer to the first one is “yes.”

Media-wise, Axios kicked off this debate with its November 2022 piece, “Uptown closures mark the end of an era.” They were not the only ones singing this hymn, and they never said, “Uptown is dead.” Instead they put that media refrain into context, noting how it means vastly different things to different people.

In the interim, numerous other outlets have weighed in, some negatively, focusing on the closings, the crime, or whatever. Twin Cities Business, in a piece reprinted by MinnPost in August 2023, asked, “How long can Uptown’s malaise last?” They interviewed David Frank, who had been interviewed in the Axios piece as director of

the Uptown Association but had since quit and gone into private consulting. He noted that the city would intervene only if it perceived a “market failure.” Lisa Goodman, then Ward 7 City Council member, stated, “There is no market failure. Uptown is undergoing a correction.” This is a view held by many, and a common aftermath of real es-



Ann Kim of Kim’s, a new Korean American restaurant in Uptown

tate overvaluing and rapid gentrification.

Southwest Voices had a more positive spin, in a January 2024 piece: “In two months, five new spots open in Uptown.” Well,

yes, but by mid-March, two of the five had closed. What is happening in Uptown, in my view, is neither growth nor failure, but a sort of creative chaos. Lots of new businesses are coming in every month, but a portion of them don’t last long. But some do!

Do we live here, shop here, or party here?

Maybe it’s an identity problem. Like a popular female fashion doll, perhaps Uptown needs to ask itself, “What was I made for?” Some things to note:

- Hennepin Avenue reconstruction opened up some of the divides in residents between valuing shoppers and drivers versus valuing pedestrians, bikers and locals. Business vitality versus social vitality.
- These scaremongering “Uptown-is-dead” pieces focus on anomalous incidents or spectacular failures in the retail or nightlife scene, but rarely men-



Julia Chon’s ‘Guardians of the Flame’ mural at Kim’s

striking recent addition to the mix is a condominium in the former horse-and-buggy era firehouse at 3524 Hennepin Ave. It had been put to other purposes over the years, including housing a civil defense non-profit in the 1950s and ‘60s. It was bought to develop into condos for a little over \$300,000, and now the individual units in it sell for two to four times that.

to save lives, literally. Some of the intersections being reconfigured along Hennepin were among the most dangerous in the city. It is also preparing the way for a new rapid bus transit service.

Caring organizations

Among the long-haulers are some amazing organizations and businesses. One such



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The former firehouse on Hennepin and 35th once housed a 1950s civil defense office. Now it has been renovated into condos.



tion the many longstanding institutions that are flourishing in Uptown, from grocers to coffee shops to small neighborhood clinics, to schools and places of worship.

- While commercial real estate has vacancies and may be overpriced, the residential real estate market is still one of the best in the city.

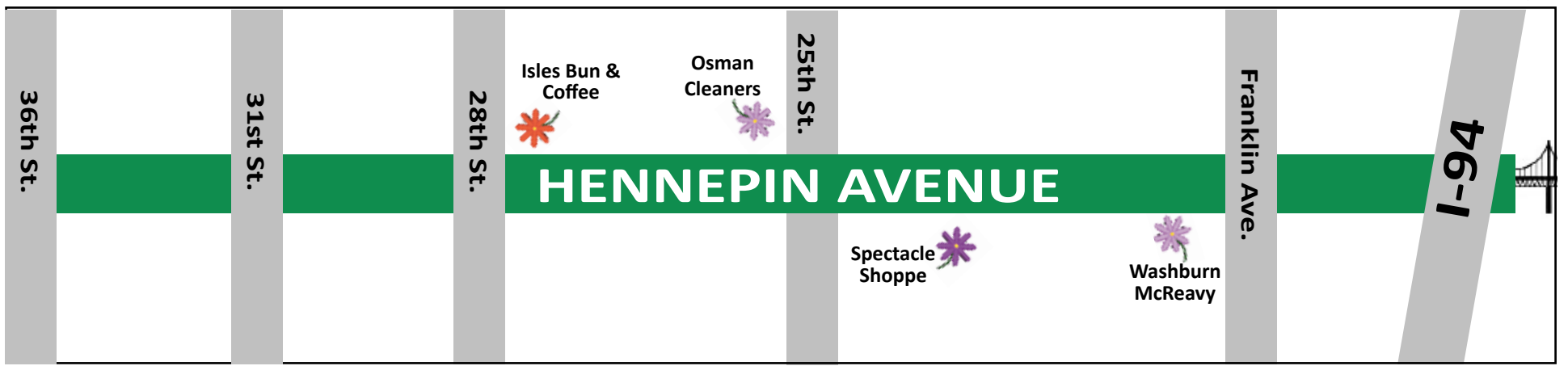
Housing is extremely mixed in the Uptown area, from affordable units to luxury dwellings, mini-mansions to bungalows, condos and studios. One

Hennepin Avenue reconstruction – villain or savior?

Hennepin Avenue reconstruction is actually underway at last. Currently you will find only two lanes open between West Lake Street and 26th Street. A number of the businesses (not all) which made the largest clamor about parking and got some concessions have now moved out anyway, or closed. At any rate, the construction is happening, and it was not done in order to boost businesses, but

is Pathways. I was a member of Pathways in its infancy, when it first pivoted from focusing mainly on people with AIDS to serving anyone with a life-threatening, terminal, or challenging conditions. I was delighted to see it’s still in business (although all of its services are provided free) and survived the pandemic. Check out their website if you’re interested in learning more.

Then there is the wonderful Walker Library, resplendently visible since its complete



rebuild which was completed just 10 years ago. The library has many programs for kids and adults, including two chess clubs, one for kids from kindergarten to sixth grade, and one

most 100% turnover of names and ownerships in the past five or so years, there are still plenty of venues in Uptown for performances and partying. Here is where we get that chaotic

become Green Room, a concert venue with a bar. And the Uptown Theater? Well, it's still called the Uptown, but now it hosts major concerts, having been bought and rebranded by Ned Abdul of Swervo Development, also owner of the Minneapolis Armory.

Let's go out to eat - in Uptown!

Although Uptown has lost a lot of good restaurants over the years, new ones have come in to fill the gaps or cater to a new generation of diners. Since I'm running out of space here, I'll just list a few that have a current buzz, or caught my eye for their uniqueness.

- Kim's (Korean restaurant) and Bronto Bar - former owner and location of Sooki and Mimi.
- Namaste - very nice Indian food, good vibes.
- Red Cow Uptown.
- Barbette - in my view the best of the Bartmann places.
- Rinata - fine dining Italian-style.
- Urban Skillet - halal burgers and chicken wings.
- Boludo Pizza Uptown -



LITT Pinball Bar

- Isles Bun and Coffee - for all things bun: cinnamon, sticky, caramel pecan, and puppy dog tails. There's a reason people line up out the door.
- Uncommon Grounds (I was thrilled to see it's still in business).
- Curioso Coffee.

- Sencha Tea Bar - a small local chain which has just merged with Five Watt Coffee.
- Fawkes Alley Coffee - non-profit, off Harmon Place.
- LITT Pinball Bar - stuffed with pinball machines and open to all ages until 8 p.m., then 21+ until 2 a.m.



for teens and adults. Another service-oriented firm is Justicia Law, at 3539 Hennepin Ave. They specialize in defending immigrants from exploitation, deportation, or other problems. And just a few blocks away from Hennepin Avenue is the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, the mothership of the Twin Cities' many meditation centers.

energy I was talking about. As of early this year, two former movie theaters and one former cocktail bar with live music, all shuttered for several years, are now hosting live music shows, all of a distinctly different type of vibe and surroundings.

The former Suburban World cinema is now the Granada Theater. It's sort of a dinner

You may not need the immediate caring services of Lakewood Cemetery right now, but did you know they also offer programs to the public? One great example is a book club led by funeral celebrant and death doula Emily Stacken. Their next sessions will be April 16, July 16, and Oct. 15. See the Events page on the cemetery's website at www.lakewoodcemetery.org. They also have music programs in the chapel, and evening walks and bird-watching walks on the grounds.



The Walker Library

Places to go and things to see

To some people, Uptown is mainly a place to party. Although there has been an al-

though there has been an al-

though there has been an al-



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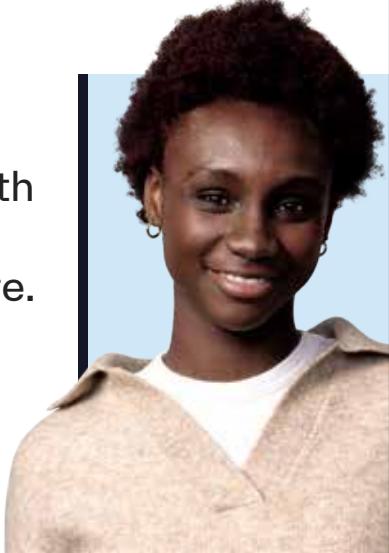
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