



'It should never have happened'



Leigh Ann Block visits the bench in Mattock's Park in St. Paul dedicated to her daughter, Mikayla Olson Tester, who was murdered by her father on Labor Day weekend 2004 at age 5. (Photo by Tessa M. Christensen)

St. Paul mother warned officials ex-husband was dangerous before he killed child and himself

By **TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN**
Mikayla Olson Tester might be a happy 21-year-old woman today if the family court system had listened to the warnings of her mother.

Instead, it's been 15 years since she was murdered by her own father, and the weight of not being believed by the court system still weighs heavily on mother Leigh Ann Block (formerly Olson). She has spent the last 15 years putting together the pieces of this tragedy, trying to figure out how to prevent this from happening to anyone else.

"Fifteen years later I'm trying to protect women and chil-



This series seeks to put a face on domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

dren from going through what we did because I can't save her," said Block.

"It should never have happened."

Calculated murder 2 weeks after he took daughter on vacation

It was her father's turn to have the five-year-old on Labor Day weekend 2004, right before she was going to start kindergarten at Randolph Heights School.

The Ramsey County court had given St. Paul resident John Tester, age 41, joint custody and over 50 percent parenting time, over the objections of Block.

IT SHOULD NEVER >> 2

HEALTH & WELLNESS

GIFTS OF DARKNESS

By **MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN**

In mid-January, daylight lasts only nine hours and 15 minutes in the Twin Cities. That means we experience almost 15 hours of darkness every 24 hours. While this can be hard for some people, especially those with seasonal depression, Midway resident Eily Marlow believes that time spent in the dark can be regenerative.

The ordained Presbyterian minister led a day-long retreat at the Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery last month called "Reclaiming Darkness."

"In the workshop," she said, "participants explored their preconceptions about darkness." After an opening meditation, Marlow and co-presenter Kiely Todd-Roska asked, "How do we learn to walk with courage in the dark? What practices and rituals can we cultivate to increase our comfort with darkness?"

Marlow shared some of the ideas around engaging seasonal darkness that she and her spouse Mary have tried with their two elementary school-aged children. She said, "When our daughter turned five, she asked to have an in-the-dark party for her January birthday. Candles and sparklers made her party special. We also like to string holiday lights in our kids' bedrooms, and leave the overhead lights off as much as possible. This creates a magical atmosphere in the long winter months."

She continued, "Mary and our daughter often sleep out on the porch in the winter months to enjoy the fresh air and darkness: it's sort of like winter camping, but they use an electric blanket."

Marlow and her family have found several ways to be sociable, and safe, outside in the dark. All four of them enjoy pajama walks to a park near their Midway home. Marlow said, "The kids love to run through the ball field in every season. No matter what time of year, these walks give us a chance to observe the moon in its different phases – and to be together after dark."

GIFTS OF DARKNESS >> 5

Couple provides a safe space for women in recovery

"At Central Village Housing, we provide a place where women coming out of addiction can be successful. When we first got this idea, we knew we didn't want to have a program -- we wanted to have a home."

~ Georgia Giles-Jones

By **MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN**

Five years ago, Georgia Giles-Jones and Bernard Jones realized they didn't need such a big house anymore. Instead of putting a "For Sale" sign in the front yard, they turned their six-bedroom home near Dale St. and University Ave. into a recovery house for women working their way out of addiction.

Called Central House, it is one of three St. Paul recovery houses they now own and run under the name Central Village Housing (CVH).

"A recovery house is different from a halfway house," Bernard explained. Most halfway houses are overseen by the Department of Corrections, and residents are court-ordered to live there. Sober living or recovery houses are



Bernard Jones and Georgia Giles-Jones, partners and owners of Central Village Housing in St. Paul. Bernard said, "With the growing drug and opioid epidemic in the community, facilities like ours are greatly needed. We want to shine a light that it's okay to go into recovery." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

structured like a home, and give residents more privacy, comfort, and sense of place.

The three CVH properties are spacious, attractive, and above

all, safe. They have amenities such as gardening in the summer, easy access to the Green Line and MTC bus routes, wifi, and in-home laundry at no cost. Meals

are not provided, but kitchen space is ample.

SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN >> 12



Get a glimpse inside the lives of families navigating education decisions

PAGE 6-7



How do you create an exhibit like 'Our Home: Native Minnesota'?

PAGE 11



Plan to attend a Pollinator Workshop in Hamline-Midway

PAGE 12

'It should never have happened' >> from 2

and mimicking killing motions. Ten minutes later he would deny everything. The gaslighting became more regular.

"He was very smart," said Block. "He never physically left marks."

He told her she was fat and made fun of her crooked teeth. He told her that she'd never find anyone as great as himself if she left him. She remembers suffering from the cognitive dissonance of hearing him talk about how great he was and listening to the terrible things he said to her.

At night, when the baby was hungry and started to cry, he screamed at Block to "shut her up! Some of us have to work."

Due to his rages and his frequent marijuana use, Block avoided leaving Mikayla home alone with him. "It's a horrible thing to not want to leave your children with their father," Block remarked.

At home, Block did all the childcare while Tester went boating or snowmobiling with his friends almost every weekend, but out in public Tester was a doting dad. In fact, five months before he murdered Mikayla, he took her to Disney World.

He tightly controlled their finances, and gave her a paltry \$20 a week allowance. Friends and family helped Block buy diapers and other baby things.

She told herself that she was going to "stick it out" until Mikayla was in kindergarten.

Then came the day in March 2000, when she couldn't stop herself from calling the police because she was so scared. It was a Saturday, and she had planned to buy tickets for "Bear in the Big Blue House." Tester refused to let her leave the house, so she called her sister-in-law to tell her she couldn't go. Angry, Tester ripped the cordless phone out of her hands. She ran to another room to use the old-fashioned wall phone, and told her friend that "things aren't ok right now," and returned upstairs. His behavior was so threatening that she grabbed the cordless phone again, ran out on the porch, and called 911. The phone went dead when he ripped the line out of the wall.

When the three squad cars arrived, Block asked herself, "What have I done? He's going to kill me."

She obtained her first order for protection (OFP), and he was banned from the house except to pick up Mikayla for visits. Angry that he'd been kicked out of "his house" due to an order for protection, Tester filed for divorce. Block had no money for another home, daycare, or an attorney.

Post-separation abuse unchecked

Fearing what Tester would do despite the OFP, Block put a baby monitor in the garage. Tester worked third shift, but one night she heard a noise in the garage and called the police. The cops found him inside with the hood of her vehicle up and a quart of oil sitting by the open gas tank. He told the cops he was just there to pick up some tools. He was arrested for violating the OFP.

The morning after Halloween, Block looked out the window of her new apartment, and her Blazer was missing again. She had changed the vehicle's door

1 in 3 women experience domestic violence by their partners



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key after an earlier suspicious incident, but not the ignition key. She reported it stolen, and three weeks later it was found wrapped around a tree in Rochester. It had been involved in a vehicular homicide when two kids took it on a joyride despite the passenger seat having been cut out.

Shortly after, Block flipped through the notebook she and Tester exchanged with their daughter, recording important details to share with the other parent. Inside, she found the ignition key to her Blazer.

Tester was letting her know he could get to her, despite the OFP and their divorce papers.

Before he murdered Mikayla, Tester quit his job in order to get his child support reduced, and then worked secretly for cash while receiving unemployment benefits.

Tester put Mikayla in the middle of Block and himself, because he couldn't control Block any more as she started a new life with Mikayla. Mikayla started asking her mother distressing questions like, "why is Daddy mean?" One day Mikayla asked her mom if she was going to die. "No," Block told her. "Why do you ask?" "Because Daddy said you were," replied Mikayla. He told her that if mom starting dating that she wouldn't love Mikayla anymore.

He stole and refused to return their daughter's favorite stuffed animal, even though she had trouble sleeping without Hippity. He told their daughter she was fat.

Block was always on alert, waiting for the next thing to happen.

Tester continued to threaten Block and yell obscenities at her during exchanges of Mikayla. But when she told the officials involved in their case – the people she thought were supposed to help her – they didn't give him any real consequences. After Tester tampered with Block's vehicle, he had been instructed to see Mikayla at the Children's Safety Center for supervised visitation. After a month or two, Tester wanted to take Mikayla to a family reunion, and Ramsey County custody evaluator Kelly Gerleman allowed it, despite Tester's threats to take Mikayla away from Block and despite his threats to kill them both. Moreover, Gerleman removed Mikayla from the Safety Center indefinitely. Gerleman told Block, "John needs to be given the chance to demonstrate good behavior."

Block was warned by officials

that if she fled with her daughter, she would be arrested for kidnapping. And then, Tester killed Mikayla.

Block called each one of these professionals after Mikayla was murdered, but she never got an apology, nor did any suffer consequences in their jobs for their role in Mikayla's death.

"They failed miserably," said Block. "I didn't get any help. Nobody listened to me. I was not some crazy ex-wife. I was a loving mother trying to protect my child. This is what parents are supposed to do – keep their children safe from harm. There's something really wrong with the system and that's an understatement."

She added, "They were minimizing. I still feel like I'm being minimized because I didn't have any bruises."

Not hit, but still victims of abuse

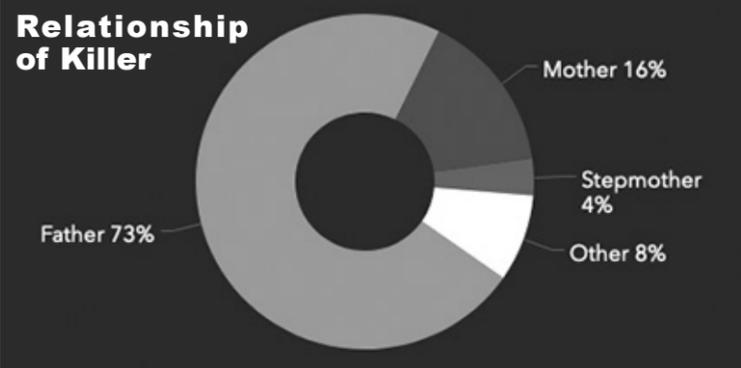
Block is tired of hearing the common myth that "it takes two to tango."

She's tired of the stereotypes about the kind of woman who gets abused. "It doesn't matter how much money you make or your status," she observed. She doesn't think people want to believe that someone with a few kids who lives in a nice house could be an abuser or a victim, but that doesn't stop it from being true.

She's tired of hearing that women are vindictive and make up abuse to get back at their spouses. She's ready for people to start believing women and children.

"Abuse survivors are constantly trying to prove themselves," she observed. "There should be no question." She supports a national resolution, H. Con.Res.72, "expressing the sense of Congress that child safety is the first priority of custody and visitation adjudications, and that state courts should improve adjudications of custody where family violence is alleged" (115th Congress [2017-2018]). This resolution makes it standard to put the safety needs of children first rather than parental rights, and Block and friend Bonnie Roy are pushing for state legislation that will also support putting the safety of children first through the Minnesota Chapter of the Stop Abuse Campaign.

Block began recording her abuse in journals in the spring of 1999, and now it's 2019. Kids are still not being protected, despite the Adverse Childhood Experi-



Graphic courtesy of Center for Judicial Excellence

Four murdered in Twin Cities

19 killed in intimate partner homicides in 2019

On Thanksgiving Day 2019, Raven B. Gant's ex-boyfriend shot and killed her in front of her minor daughter in North Minneapolis. Later, over the holiday weekend, Kjersten Marie Schladetzky, and her two sons, William and Nelson were killed in a triple murder-suicide by their father and Kjersten's ex-husband, David, in south Minneapolis.

Raven, Kjersten, William, and Nelson are Minnesota's most recent confirmed intimate partner homicide victims. There have been 19 confirmed intimate partner homicide victims as of press time on Dec. 21.

On the morning of Dec. 1, David Schladetzky, 53, shot and killed his two sons, William, 11, and Nelson, 8, outside of their home at 2738 Oakland Ave. He then entered the house and shot and killed his ex-wife, Kjersten, 39, before killing himself. Police officers responded to calls of gunshots and found the two boys in the front yard. As officers arrived, they heard shots coming from inside the house. Kjersten and David's bodies were later found inside the home. A divorce was finalized between the two in June 2019.

Randall Watkins, 41, faces a second-degree murder charge for the killing of 27-year-old Raven Gant, who was shot in the back. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office says it will seek an enhanced sentence in this case due to the presence of

the child.

Intimate partner homicides have a devastating impact on children. Children are injured and killed. Additionally, witnessing the murder of a parent due to intimate partner homicide can have long-term adverse effects on children. In the Violence Free Minnesota 30-year retrospective on intimate partner homicide in Minnesota, a child witnessed the homicide of their parent in 22% of the 685 cases from 1989-2018.

"The safety of our children is directly linked to intimate partner violence of their parents," said Violence Free Minnesota Executive Director Liz Richards. "Protecting our children is an essential part of our work to end intimate partner violence. We must find the words – and the solutions – to say that these deaths are the fatal result of power and control; and we can take action as a community to end intimate partner violence."

Raven Gant, and Kjersten, William, and Nelson Schladetzky's lives will be honored at an intimate partner homicide memorial on Jan. 28, 2020, and included in the 2019 intimate partner homicide report to be released on Oct. 1, 2020.

If you are a victim experiencing abuse, contact Day One at 866-223-1111 to connect with services.

Information courtesy of Violence Free Minnesota, formerly the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

ences (ACEs) research on how much kids are affected by threats, intimidation and physical violence.

"I may not have been hit, but Mikayla was still a victim of domestic violence," she said.

"There's still no law that protects children in abusive situations."

Minnesota has nine best interest factors, and only one is related to domestic violence. "The best interest is not putting your children with an abusive father," said Block. She believes that if a parent is abusive, they should not have joint custody. They should not have access to their children.

"I want to be part of a positive change that will prioritize these kids' lives," said Block.

And so she keeps telling her story.

"We shouldn't have to beg for these laws to protect our kids," said Block.

"We need to start looking out for each other."

She has devoted her time to promoting prevention, testifying

at government hearings against 50/50 custody laws, and speaking out so that no more children die because of domestic violence.

According to the Center for Judicial Excellence, at least 728 children have been murdered by a divorcing or separating parent since 2011. Seventy-three percent of the perpetrators are fathers. Many of these children are killed in murder-suicides, as Mikayla was.

In the 30 years that Violence Free Minnesota (formerly the Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition) has been tracking femicides, at least 685 people were killed due to relationship abuse. The youngest victim was just 22 weeks old; the oldest was 88.

"Mikayla was mentally and physically abused by her father, as was I. And we dealt with it basically from her birth in 1998," said Block.

"I don't want any other child to have to go through what Mikayla went through."

Contact editor at Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com.

The Motley Conversation

Monitor

Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse and varied thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to news@MonitorSaintPaul.com or call 612-345-9998.

Let's give a hand to our newspaper carriers, those wonderful people who are out delivering the news before many of us wake up. As winter sets in, give your newspaper and mail carriers a hand. Keep sidewalks shoveled and ice-free, and make sure there's a clear pathway to your front door. Some folks even clear a house-to-house trail on their lawns so the carriers don't have to go up and down steps. It could speed delivery, just a tiny bit.

Nearly 30 million U.S. households still get a newspaper delivered to their doorstep, according to 2018 data from the Pew Research Center.

The job hazards are what you'd expect – dogs, sprinklers, rain, snow and sleet.

The carriers may not be what you'd expect. Henry Huggins, the beloved fictional character created by Beverly Cleary, epitomized a time when kids filled the majority of newspaper routes. Today, most carriers do the routes as a second job. This side hustle pays for vacations, cabins, and home repairs. For some, it's a way to stay active and fit when they retire.

Delivering newspapers has been a crash course in business training for many famous folks, including Walt Disney, Warren



Too Much Coffee

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN, Tessa@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com

Shovel the walkwalks, say hi to your newspaper carriers

Buffett, Kathy Ireland, former Vice President Joe Biden, actor Tom Cruise, and director David Lynch.

Our newspaper carriers aren't TMC Publication staff members, but employees of Fresh Heir, a small business that delivers for a variety of neighborhood newspapers in the Twin Cities. They earn their wage based on the number of papers and routes they deliver. Carriers can earn \$13-15 an hour and their hours are flexible. To accommodate those without cars, the Fresh Heir van drops bundles off at street corners. Carriers can then fill their bags multiple times over the next hour or so without them becoming too heavy, and then work their way up and down the street. A 12-inch stack of newspapers weighs about 35 pounds, so a carrier is always balancing how much they can carry versus the length of the route. In poor weather, the carrier places the newspapers in polybags (that

can be recycled by readers), and in better weather they roll them with a rubber band to make it easier to throw.

It takes some muscle and fitness to deliver a paper to your front steps. I can tell you that my arm got pretty tired by the end of my routes this summer, and some papers didn't make it exactly where I was aiming. My apologies for those of you that found your papers closer to the bushes than your front steps.

Some of our carriers have been delivering the same routes for years, and although I tried to talk them into being interviewed for this column, they all declined, leaving the spotlight for others. These carriers regularly walking our neighborhood streets help keep them safe. And they feel connected to the homes they're serving.

Every once in awhile a newspaper carrier makes it into the newspapers they're delivering.

Here are a few stories compiled by the News Media Alliance:

• In 2018, Howard Shelton was shot on the job. He is a carrier for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The 60-year-old was delivering to customers on his route when his car was stolen and he was shot. His customers set up a GoFundMe to help with his expenses while out of work. It was the first time in 20 years Shelton missed work.

• In 2017, Mari Schlegel was delivering the *Lincoln (Nebraska) Journal Star* when she noticed a home on her route was on fire. After calling 911, Schlegel knocked on the door of the house to wake up the resident, Debra Sherard, and alert her to the fire. Thanks to Schlegel's quick thinking, Sherard and her pets escaped the house unharmed, and the fire department was able to put out the fire before it spread further through the house.

• When Debbie Brazell, a newspaper delivery woman for Columbia, South Carolina's *The State* newspaper, noticed that papers were piling up in the paper box of a long-time subscriber on her route, she thought something had to be wrong. And she was right. The 93-year-old resident had fallen and couldn't get up, so Brazell called 911. The woman, it turned out, had fallen and blacked out on Friday, and was not found until Brazell arrived on Monday.

Feel free to leave a tip for your carrier during these tough winter months (it's customary to tip a carrier \$5 to \$10 per month, and up to \$25 during the holidays), and I'm sure they'd also appreciate a smile and a thank you.

Newspaper carriers don't just deliver papers; they also deliver democracy door to door, according to Lindsey Loving, a spokesperson for News Media Alliance. "Without newspaper carriers, many people wouldn't receive the news that keeps them informed about their communities," she said. "Both the news and newspaper carriers play critical roles in preserving our democratic society, and we couldn't be more grateful to them."

I completely agree.



Building a Stronger Midway

By CHAD KULAS, Midway Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

Here are some resolutions you can keep

It's January 2020, which means a new year and a new decade. For many, the start of a year is the best time to make resolutions – to change your life for the better. Unfortunately, we know how well many resolutions work. The gym is always the busiest in January. Many diets begun after the holidays are over before Valentine's Day. So, what are some resolutions we can make that we can (hopefully) keep? And which also benefit our community?

Resolution 1: Discover a new local restaurant each month. I did this one year and had so much fun learning new (to me) gems in my neighborhood. University Ave. is home to one of the most diverse arrays of cuisines in the Twin Cities, with many making famed chef Andrew Zimmern's lists for best places to eat in town. Bonus points for bringing a neighbor or even making it a night out for the block. However, dining out can be expensive so maybe instead you find a new grocery store. Or any retail store.

Resolution 2: Become more environmentally and energy efficient – and saving money in the

process. Zero Waste Saint Paul is an organization with helpful tips on how to become more environmentally friendly with your waste (for more information, check out zerowastesaintpaul.com and look for the article in last month's *Monitor*). Another way to be more sustainable, environmentally friendly and save money is to acquire used goods rather than buy new. The Midway-Frog-town Exchange is a Facebook page dedicated to residents interested in buying, selling or giving away items. A Goodwill is also located on University, along with more second-hand stores. If you'd rather just give away your old clothes, another wonderful place is Dress For Success, a nonprofit who accepts donated professional women's attire so others can have nice outfits for a job interview.

The Midway is known for having some of the best transit options in the Twin Cities, from bus routes to light rail and bus rapid transit. Using public transit eliminates another idling motor on the road and the added risk of wear and tear on your vehicle. If you are planning to park some-

where with paid parking, taking public transit may be a cheaper option.

Resolution 3: Connect more with the community. Our lives are busy, and we all get into habits where we go directly home after work and don't emerge until the morning. But people are happier when they are more engaged with the outside world, and what better way than with others who live near you. I spent six years on the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, and it helped me get to know more neighbors and find out what's happening where I live. It also allowed me an opportunity to help shape what happened too. With so many charities close to us, find one with a mission you can become passionate about. Or perhaps you just help organize more neighborhood or block parties (it can happen more than just National Night Out).

Resolutions don't have to be broken. And they can be more than just self-fulfillment. Resolve to learn more about your community – you'll meet interesting people and have a good time!

To the Editor

Military pollutes, too

Dear Editor:

The *Monitor* is a great community resource and keeps so many people 'in the know'. I appreciated the November issue with the focus on local foodies.

A statement attributed to Colin Anderson sticks out. On page 6, 3rd column, middle of the 3rd paragraph, it states "...while letting them know that the biggest polluter is the agriculture industry."

As an organic proponent from a long line of farmers, I agree that industrial agriculture is a big part of the problem. And, I'm glad that Anderson points to the industry – not the farmers caught in the system. However, I believe that the statement is not accurate. He may mean carbon emission, but consider these findings. In a quick search I found agriculture listed as third in carbon emissions. "In 2010, global greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector totaled 4.7 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalent, up 13 percent over 1990. Agriculture is the third largest contributor to global emissions by sector, following the burning of fossil fuels for power and heat, and transportation." We can't afford

to ignore fossil fuels used for heat, power and transportation. Source: The EPA website.

However, there is another sector that should be exposed. A huge 'elephant in the room' question is, how much does US military pollute?

"In 2017, the US military bought about 269,230 barrels of oil a day and emitted more than 25,000 kilotons of carbon dioxide by burning those fuels. The US Air Force purchased \$4.9 billion worth of fuel, and the Navy \$2.8 billion, followed by the Army at \$947 million and the Marines at \$36 million." Jun 28, 2019 from qz.com.

Another perspective from Science Daily: "The U.S. military's carbon footprint is enormous and must be confronted in order to have a substantial effect on battling global warming, experts argue. ...the US military is one of the largest climate polluters in history, consuming more liquid fuels and emitting more CO2e (carbon-dioxide equivalent) than most countries." So, perhaps a future issue on carbon use in the neighborhood and what we can do about it. Or, exposing pollution and cleaning it up.

Thanks for listening!
Donna Goodlaxson

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News for you!

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Story ideas always welcome.

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

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The *Monitor* is for profit and for a purpose – and we don't sacrifice one for the other. We consider ourselves a zebra company, one that

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

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Health & Wellness

Invite darkness into your home joyfully

Our lives are filled with artificial lights from overhead, and also from electronic devices. Here are some suggestions for inviting darkness into your home joyfully in the winter months:

- If time and money allow, cook warm, aromatic soups, stews, and breads.
- Before bedtime, avoid using your phone or social media.
- Try having zero light in your bedroom when it is time to sleep. Cover your digital alarm clock with a book or magazine.
- Take unhurried baths and naps without guilt. Our bodies need more rest and relaxation at this time of year.
- Observe the phases of the moon, and recognize that we all have seasons of waxing and waning.
- Light candles and enjoy watching them burn.
- Consider your attitude toward darkness; is it positive or negative? If negative, is it based on real or imagined experiences?

Winter is a time when the natural world slows down. In Minnesota, bears, bats, bees, and chipmunks are among the many creatures that hibernate in dark, cozy places. Perennial plants and trees go into dormancy, using stored resources to survive the cold winter months. If you (or your family) have ways of unpacking the gifts of darkness, please consider sharing them with fellow Monitor readers. Email your ideas to editor/publisher Tesha M. Christensen at Tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com.

GIFTS OF DARKNESS

>> from 1 The Hamline Midway Coalition held a Winter Solstice Celebration on Dec. 20 at Newell Park with live music, hot cocoa and cider, chili cook-off, sledding, and bonfire. Marlow was there with her family and said, "Being in the dark with friends and neighbors can inspire a different sense of connection and community."

AT RIGHT - Eily Marlow believes that reclaiming darkness is essential for our spiritual and emotional well-being. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark

by Jan Richardson (abridged and used by permission)

Go slow if you can.
Slower. More slowly still.
Friendly dark or fearsome,
this is no place to break your neck
by rushing, by running,
by crashing into what you cannot see.
Then again, it is true:
different darks have different tasks,
and if you arrived here unawares,
if you have come in peril, or in pain,
this might be no place you should dawdle.
I do not know what these shadows ask of you,
what they might hold that means you good or ill.
It is not for me to reckon whether you should linger
or you should leave.
But this is what I can ask for you.
That in the darkness there be a blessing.
That in the darkness there be a welcome.
That in the night you be encompassed
By the Love that knows your name.



Give drumming a try at Women's Drum Center

Classes foster mind-body connection

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Bettie Seitzer was looking for a musical community nine years ago, and found it at the Women's Drum Center (2242 University Ave. W.).

The blue and bluegrass musician had worked in a traveling band until she got married and started a family. At her first class, she knew she would be drumming for a long time. She now serves as the center's executive director, leads "Women Who Groove," and teaches two beginning level classes.

The Women's Drum Center (WDC) offers beginning level, intermediate and advanced level classes in stick and hand drumming to any interested women. There are co-ed classes in beginning and advanced level West African drumming, and a monthly "Beat Cabin Fever" series offered for adults and children in the winter months. Workshops in 2020 will focus on unique instruments, including the African xylophone (called gyil). WDC offers private lessons; Health Rhythm programs at offsite community centers and care facilities; and facilitators for drumming at birthday parties, retirement parties and other group gatherings.

How can the center help people be healthier in mind, body and spirit?

Seitzer: There is a growing body of research that demonstrates the health benefits of drumming; it enhances feelings of well-being, challenges mind and body through learning a new activity and creates a sense of community and collaboration that many people are longing for these days.

Drumming fosters a mind-body connection through engagement in a new activity where we use our muscles differently and learn new things every time we drum. Experts agree that learning new things keeps our brains flexible and young!

I like to tell my participants that by drumming they are creating new neural pathways and synapses. I am privileged to hear from so many of my participants how drumming has improved their lives. Just a few examples:

- One participant had struggled with insomnia for years, she found that her ability to relax and sleep improved significantly
- Another member came to us after the loss of her husband, she said she hadn't smiled in months and drumming has

brought a new joy into her life. She smiles all the way through class now!

• Multiple people have told me that they feel a very warm sense of community, and refer to their classmates as the "sisters they chose for themselves"

Participants tell me that at the end of class they feel both relaxed and energized! I have found that to be true myself.

How does drumming contribute to mindfulness and centering?

Drumming engages our bodies through movement; each class is geared to a skill level so that participants find easy things and slightly challenging things each time they attend. The motions of drumming become automatic and allow a person to really "be in the moment." I am always delighted with how quickly a group falls into sync, playing together with a shared sense of pulse – that shared experience furthers the centering that people tell me they experience. The shared energy and experience allow the cares of the world to just drift away.

It is such a unique experience that it takes us outside ourselves into a clam state of being – even when we are playing very energetic pieces!

DRUMMING >> 12

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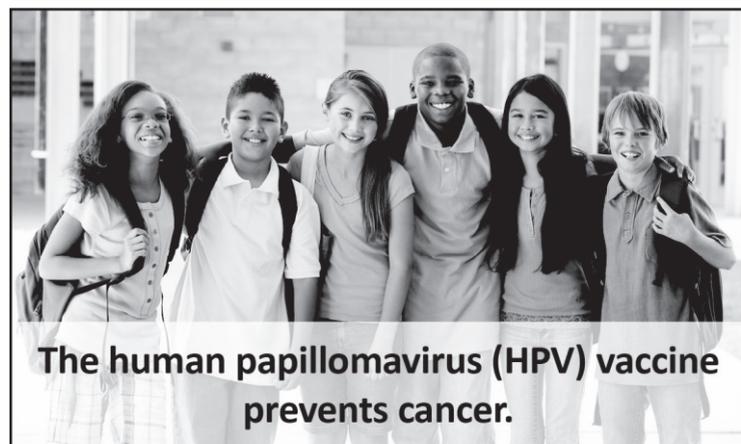
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INSIDE SCHOOLING DECISIONS

Get a glimpse into the lives of local families who are navigating through the many educational choices available today, and forging a path that fits their families.

PRIVATE SCHOOL: Maternity of Mary Saint Andrew Catholic School (MMSA)

Meet Traci Schabert, who currently sends two boys, Alex (grade 8) and Andrew (grade 2) to MMSA, and has two MMSA graduates, Jack (grade 12) and Mary (grade 10).

Why did you select this school?

We joined the school community when our oldest could, at three years old. Jack is almost 18 now. We have had a child at MMSA every year since 2005. We chose MMSA because of the love and passion we received from the teachers and staff. They all truly loved working together, were passionate about the kids and were all dedicated to helping us identify our children's talents and help with the areas they struggled with.

What do you appreciate most?

All of our children are so different. One of our children truly struggled with some classes. The teachers went above and beyond helping by staying late, coming in early, emailing us, calling and doing what was needed to help



her not only get to grade level but to exceed. She is now taking accelerated classes in high school in these subjects. We have another child who was bored at school because it was too easy for him. Mrs. Warden has been working with him and a few other students who need excellent stead math. He will be going to high school in the fall, and he will be taking precalculus as a freshman.

What skills do you think are most important for schools to teach kids in 2020?

Skills needed are not just school subjects like math and sci-

ence. Compassion, understanding, teamwork, community and understanding one another are all things that are greatly needed.

Share your school hacks or tips.

As soon as our kids could crawl I had a plastic laundry basket filled with board books in our living room. They could crawl over, pull, chew, play and look at these books. They learned to love books from this stage on. As kindergartners we made special trips to get their own library cards and made regular trips letting them pile large numbers of books in our book bags.

IMMERSION SCHOOL: Yinghua Academy

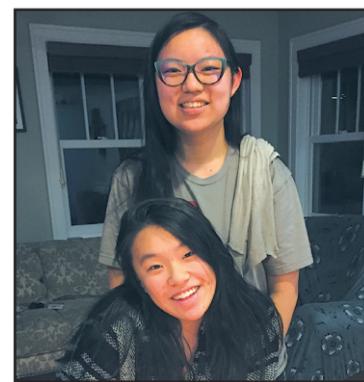
Meet Starr Eggen Lim, who is married to Albert. Her daughter Lily is now in 11th grade at Highland Park High School, and daughter Magdalena is currently a ninth grader at Highland Park High School. They are at Highland because Yinghua Academy has an agreement that kids can continue their Chinese education at an appropriate level at Highland Park in St. Paul.

Why did you select this school?

Being that our children are Asian and adopted, it was a good fit as they would learn much about their birth culture as well as having Asian role models and influence.

What do you appreciate most?

Having my kids learn to read, write and speak Mandarin has so many advantages. If they ever chose to search for their birth parents, or even wanted to live or experience their birth country, having the language and cultural understanding would help to cross over so many barriers that could inhibit that from happening. I also wanted to give them the opportunity to feel at ease around other kids in college who may be international students from their birth country, whereby they could understand and feel a part of that community. Yinghua Academy not only provided this backdrop for my kids, but also having a second language like Mandarin allows so many doors to be opened for them. When learning a second language at the tender age of five, kids absorb things so much easier. Having the ability to read,



write and speak can open potential careers opportunities, as well. The school's academic expectations are quite rigorous and kids have adapted well into all kinds of high school experiences.

What skills do you think are most important for schools to teach kids in 2020?

As far as the most important skills for kids to learn, I would think preparing them to be global citizens is a priority. Language immersion does help to accomplish this. Critical thinking is probably one of the most important skills for kids to learn as our current administration (in my opinion) has become so harsh on scientific research, facts, and the media in general. Learning how to decipher facts from fiction and how to ask questions is critical to our society's survival as a democracy.

CHARTER SCHOOL: Career Pathways

Meet Kelina Morgan, whose daughter Nasi is in ninth grade at Career Pathways.

Why did you select this school?

I chose Career Pathways for her because it was close to my employer, and it offered a non-traditional way of learning, with small class sizes.

What do you appreciate most?

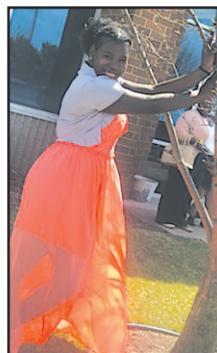
Career Pathways also is a welcoming place with diversity of race, culture, religion, and sexual orientation. It's a place where my daughter feels a sense of belonging. We've lived in various cities, including Vadnais Heights and Somerset, Wis. It was important to me that she attended a school where the staff and students welcome diversity.

What skills do you think are most important for schools to teach kids in 2020?

I believe that acceptance and appreciation for differences is a valuable skill to learn, as well as life skills needed to find and maintain a career if college is not the choice.

Share your school hacks or tips.

Because education is important to us and can open many doors, our family hacks on how to help kids learn are 1) read to kids early and daily, 2) require they read at least 20 minutes five days a week, and 3) purchase workbooks for their next grade level that they complete over the summer breaks to continue learning.



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HOMESCHOOL

Carrie Pomeroy is mom to Bridger, grade 11, who has been homeschooled his entire education and is now attending the University of Minnesota for PSEO; and Cassidy, grade 8, who was homeschooled for part of her education and is now attends Edvisions Off-Campus, an online, project-based charter school.

Why did you select these options?

Before I had children, I taught homeschooled students through the Loft Literary Center back in the mid '90s and early 2000s. I got to know several families very well over the course of almost a decade of work with them, and I was just really inspired by the freedom and flexibility these families had to learn at their own pace, as well as their freedom to pursue learning in a way that seemed very effective and enjoyable for their kids. I remembered feeling so often when I was in school that I was just watching the clock and counting down the days until the weekend or until vacation, and what I noticed about these homeschooled kids I was working with was that they seemed so happy and engaged in what they were doing; there was a feeling of flow in their endeavors and a self-directedness that was pretty exciting and infectious. I talked to my husband about it, and we both thought homeschooling was worth a try. We asked our kids every year if they wanted to check out school, but my son never did. My daughter's work at Edvisions Off-Campus for the last two years has been a natural extension of homeschooling. As she hit her middle-school years, she wanted more accountability and structure for her learning, but she didn't want that accountability from me. She also knew that I'm not that great at providing structure. Now, with input from her Edvisions advisors, she creates projects to learn about subjects that interest her and decides

how she'll demonstrate her learning, whether through a research paper, a slideshow, a timeline, or whatever she and her advisors decide would help her grow in her learning. She also has to manage her own time and make sure she's putting in the work to get her projects done in a timely way and earn credits in a variety of subjects. It's a really good fit for her learning style and personality.

What do you appreciate most?

When I waited until they were ready to learn something and genuinely interested, they seemed to retain so much more of what they learned than when I forced learning because of some artificial, imposed timeline for when they "should" learn something.

I especially appreciated that after years of being read out loud to many hours a day, both my kids taught themselves to read using Calvin and Hobbes and Garfield comic books. That was so empowering and pain-free! They learned to read "late" by school standards, around age seven, but went from being pre-readers to fluent readers very, very quickly, and they are now avid, voracious readers and curious, thoughtful writers.

Now that my son is attending college classes at the U for PSEO, my daughter is attending Edvisions, and they are both thriving, I wish I could go back and reassure my past self that things were going to work out OK. There was a lot of anxiety for me about choosing this path, so it feels really good to be on this side of our homeschooling journey rather than just starting out.

What are the challenges?

Many people think that a drawback of homeschooling is a lack of socialization, but that



really hasn't been a problem for us in the ways that many might think it would be. Both my kids have been able to make friends both in the homeschooling community and outside of it, with people of many different ages. My daughter has learned to work as part of a group as an Irish dancer, a martial artist, and by acting in plays, as well as doing volunteer work in our community. My son has also volunteered locally, something I think is really important.

Share your school hacks or tips.

The biggest one for me is being attentive, noticing what interests my kids, and finding ways to help them learn more, find mentors and resources, and go more deeply into that interest, while also knowing when it's time to back off and not lean too hard into making everything a teachable moment.

Another really important thing for me has been being aware that sometimes even when they don't seem like they're really learning or doing something educational, they may actually be doing something really valuable to their growth. For instance, my son has always loved video games. When he was younger, he got pretty involved on online gaming forums discussing gaming techniques and strategies and helping mediate disputes among other gamers. That really built his writing skills, even though that kind of writing wasn't a traditionally academic pursuit. Eventually, he also started writing game-inspired fiction. Now, I really think his experiences with writing about video games for an audience of other interested gamers have profoundly shaped his abilities as a writer. He understood from an early age that writing needed to be clear, concise, organized, and interesting to capture and hold other people's attention; I don't think we always learn those things from more abstract academic writing assignments that we just do for a grade.

PUBLIC SCHOOL: Como Park Senior High

Angela Rein is mother to Como Park Senior High School students Eloise (senior), Nicholas, (junior), and seven (fremen); and 2018 graduate Maureen. Lucille is a seventh grader at Murray Middle School.

Why did you select this school?

All five children attended Crossroads Elementary, Montessori and then Murray Middle School. We chose Murray and Como because their father, Mark, is an alum. All of the children thus far have benefited from the AP classes offered at Como Park Senior High. I would like to add, that as a parent of five children, all three schools did a fantastic job of recognizing each Rein child as a their own individual. The staff never compared the younger ones to the older ones.

What do you appreciate most?

I love the sense of community at both Murray Middle School and at Como Park High School. Como Park High School has so much diversity. I feel that is so important in learning how to work with people in the adult world. I've always liked the leadership at both Murray and Como, along with the dedication of the teachers. The teachers have always been available to

work with the kids either before or after school. Communication with the parents has been fantastic at both schools. Crossroads was great with communicating with parents, too.

What are the challenges?

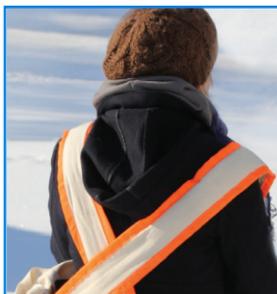
Funding is always an issue with public schools. Class sizes can be quite large at times, although it is better this year.

What skills do you think are most important for schools to teach kids in 2020?

Time management; responsibilities for one's actions; to feel comfortable to ask for help when needed; how to navigate the internet for reliable sources; and respect for "Everyone."

Share your school hacks:

My kids need to be self-sufficient. I guide them when asked for help. I receive notifications of missing assignments, but it is up the student to do the work and turn it in. Turning it in seems to be the difficult part for some. You cannot force a child to study, but you can help them understand the end result. Each child is unique and has their own destiny. I cannot determine that, only the child has control over that. Each child has their own pathway. It is important for parents to understand that the pathway belongs to the child, not the parent. I find that to be the hardest thing in regards to parenting.



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Development plan at 'superblock' evolving

By JANE McCLURE

A 2016 master plan for the Midway Center "superblock" outlined an ambitious vision of 18-story high-rise office buildings along Snelling Ave., as well as apartments, hotel space and commercial properties. Redevelopment reality could be quite different. How different is still unknown.

That lack of specifics frustrated attendees at the Dec. 16, 2019 Union Park District Council's land use committee meeting. More than two dozen people turned out to hear about the property, which is bounded by St. Anthony, Snelling and University avenues and Pascal St.

Since Allianz Field opened for its inaugural season in 2019, area residents and business owners have wondered when the rest of 34.5-acre site will be redeveloped. There is also unhappiness that Minnesota United FC hasn't contributed toward a community benefits fund for neighborhoods around the soccer stadium, despite pressure from Union Park District Council and Hamline

Midway Coalition. The fund is meant to support a range of community improvements, based on ideas gathered in a public input process.

Most attention at the district council meeting focused on redevelopment. Minnesotan United FC principal owner Dr. Bill McGuire asked for patience. He also said that while plans are in the works, those behind redevelopment must persuade potential partners that there are exciting plans for the property.

"The odds of (the site) looking exactly like the master plan are zero," he said. While there is still a vision of a mixed-use urban village as outlined in the 2016 plan, it won't be to the scale city planners imagined.

The lack of action on redevelopment is causing the most frustration. "Who makes the decisions?" said Hamline-Midway resident Jonathan Oppenheimer. "Who should we hold accountable?"

When the pace of redevelopment was questioned, McGuire said, "We have a good thing here.

We don't have the rest of it yet." He added that Allianz Field is something the community can be proud of and it will spark redevelopment.

"You have a quarter of a billion dollar stadium that the whole world is talking about ... streets, trees, grass and people. Five hundred thousand people came to this neighborhood in 2019 because of redevelopment," McGuire said.

Minnesota United and the shopping center owners are working with the architecture firm Populous, which designed the stadium itself. What's envisioned is a smaller, mixed-use village-type development.

"I spend more time on this than anybody," he said, describing himself and Midway Center owner Rick Birdoff as the two decision makers. McGuire and his partners lease Midway Center from its longtime, New York City-based owners.

McGuire estimates that more than \$1 million has been spent on planning for redevelopment, which could start in the fall. But



there are issues to work out with the city and Metropolitan Council, which owns the former bus garage property at the northeast corner of Snelling and St. Anthony, before development can proceed.

Redevelopment of the entire site has an estimated cost of \$850 million. The initial projects McGuire sees are an apartment complex with up to 240 units, a hotel and buildings adjacent to the Great Lawn with first-floor food vendors and offices on the upper floors.

One challenge with redevelopment, especially when affordable housing is considered, is that the Midway Center property is valued up to \$5 million per acre. But McGuire said some level of affordable housing hasn't been ruled out.

The site also has its challenges with a high water table along

Snelling and the high costs of providing parking, especially underground parking.

Much hinges on what development partners can be brought in. The Midway Center redevelopment also is affected by what happens on the Midway Marketplace block to the east, where Walmart closed last year.

In the meantime, less than half of the Midway Center strip mall is still standing, along with three smaller buildings along University.

One likely change is that the Great Lawn park area north of Allianz Field is poised to become an entertainment district, which was the topic of a St. Paul City Council public hearing on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at City Hall. The parkland agreement with MUSC LLC keeps the green space open to the public as part of the city park system. Delaware North, which oversees food and beverage concessions at Allianz Field, has applied for an extension of the liquor service area on the Great Lawn as well as the areas between and across Shields Ave. to allow patrons to consume malt liquor, strong beer and wine at events held there. The change would be in time for 2020 events.

{ Monitor in a Minute }

By JANE McCLURE

Como going from 4 lanes to 3

The St. Paul City Council in December asked for a lane configuration change on Como Ave., which is needed to implement a larger project.

The city is asking that the Ramsey County Department of Public Works implement a four-lane to three-lane conversion on Como Ave. between Canfield St. and Snelling Ave.

Como Ave. in that area is a county road. The change sought would be meant to tie into planned city-county improvements on a longer stretch of the street between Raymond and Hamline avenues this year.

Como is part of the city's Grand Round citywide system on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, including sidewalks, bike lanes and trails. The Grand Round plans have been in place for several years.

The project scope includes construction of an off-street trail along the north side of Como between Raymond and Hamline, narrowing the street to encourage slower traffic, construction of bump-outs, installation of wayfinding and placemaking elements, and installation of street lighting to improve safety for all roadway users. It also includes the lane conversion between Canfield and Snelling.

A traffic speed study conducted in July 2019 identified 85th percentile traffic speeds at 39 miles per hour in the eastbound direction

and 41 miles per hour in the westbound direction, well in excess of the posted 35 mile per hour speed limit.

But the conversion also includes prohibiting on-street parking on both the north and south sides of Como between Canfield and Snelling. Parking counts were done, and meetings were held in the community.

Fewer billboards?

Outfront Media's efforts to relocate a billboard near the Interstate 94-Highway 280 interchange will be in the hands of the St. Paul City Council, as a result of an appeal by St. Anthony Park Community Council.

The St. Paul Planning Commission unanimously approved a non-conforming use relocation Dec. 20. The billboard would also be converted to a dynamic display, with a lighted message that will regularly change. The billboard would be visible from the highways at its location at 2516 Wabash Ave., just west of Highway 280 and north of Interstate 94.

Billboard relocation and conversion ordinances would require Outfront Media to remove as many as 35 smaller billboards throughout St. Paul neighborhoods.

Which neighborhood billboards eventually come down would be determined in negotiations between Outfront Media and city staff in the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI), said Senior City Planner Anton Jerve.

By JANE McCLURE

Reuter Walton unveils Fairview plans at Fairview and University

Two seven-story apartment buildings could rise at the northwest corner of University and Fairview avenues. Minneapolis-based Reuter Walton Development presented plans for 279 apartments in December to the Hamline Midway Coalition Development Committee. The project will go through the city approval process in 2020.

The complex will be one of the first new affordable housing projects on University west of Snelling Ave. The property, which is comprised of commercial buildings and a parking lot, is owned by Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota. Reuter Walton was selected as developer through a request for proposals process conducted by the property owners, and has a purchase agreement for the property.

Paul Keenan, vice president for development at Reuter Walton, outlined the project. The University-Fairview development would be its first affordable housing project, Keenan said, with a mix of apartments offered at 30 to 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). Rents could be as low as \$71 per month for a studio, at 30 percent of AMI.

Two buildings are proposed, one with 157 units and the other with 122 units.

The buildings would have a mix of studios, one, two and

{ Development Roundup }

three-bedroom units. About 70 three-bedroom and 65 units would have two bedrooms, meeting a high demand for larger affordable units.

The buildings would share a 150-space Charles Ave. parking space with Goodwill/Easter Seals and would have 127 stalls of underground parking entered from a point mid-block. Each building would be E-shaped, with two plazas fronting University.

The developers studied the station area plans for the Green Line Fairview Avenue Station, the neighborhood plan for Hamline-Midway and other city plans, said Keenan. One goal is to improve the pedestrian experience in the area, with wider sidewalks, public art and preservation of the walkway connection between Goodwill/Easter Seals and the Fairview station.

HMC Committee members liked the idea of affordable housing, but they questioned why the project has no first-floor retail. Keenan said retail space can be challenging to rent. "We've had a lot of retail sit vacant in our developments," he said.

The site has been in transition for more than a decade. Buildings where the parking lot is located were torn down several years ago. Finn Sisu's old building, which most recently was a place of worship, will be torn down, along with another larger commercial building and a former service station/restaurant/retail shop.

Library property up for bids

The long-vacant Lexington Branch Library, 1080 University Ave., is being offered for redevelopment by the St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).

The building, which was originally the Center Theater, hasn't been used as a library since 2005. It was replaced by the Rondo Community Outreach Library. It is zoned for traditional neighborhood three mixed use and is near the Lexington Green Line eastbound station. The property size is .62 acres. Its value, based on a 2018 appraisal, is \$450,000.

The HRA bought the building from the city's library agency in 2014. A structural engineering report indicates that the building, while structurally sound, is in fair to poor condition. City documents indicate that the HRA will consider reuse as well as demolition proposals.

Residents say 'no' to Alatus

Citing the lack of affordable housing and a fear that new market-rate apartments could drive up rents and local property taxes, neighbors voted on Jan. 2 to oppose developer Alatus' request for \$11.25 million in public financing to aid in the construction of a six story, 236-unit mixed-use residential and commercial building at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy.

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Como junior Audrey Power-Theisen was a curator for a new exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. She worked with the museum staff to select and display the artwork for an exhibit in the Harrison Photography Gallery, which will run through mid-June.

Power-Theisen is an exceptional student who has also flourished in Como's art department. She has studied Beginning Photography, Advanced Photography and is currently thriving in AP Studio Art. Her teacher, Mr. Jason McIntyre, nominated her to be a curator and was proud she was selected.

"Audrey is an amazing artist and this opportunity allows her to see the process that museums go through to choose and display art in a world class museum like the Minneapolis Institute of Art," McIntyre said. "It is a very unique experience for a high school student."

13 Como students participated in the Youth in Government Model Assembly program at the state capitol from Jan. 9-12. The program gives high school students from across the state opportunities to serve as legislators, judges, attorneys, lobbyists, government officials and media representatives in the sessions that are conducted by the entirely student-led state government. It was an impactful

News from Como Park High School

Compiled by ERIC ERICKSON, Social Studies Teacher

Art curator, Youth in Government, JROTC service



Como cadets from the school's JROTC program volunteered six hours of their time at Toys For Tots on Saturday, Dec. 14. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

experience for all of Como's participants, organized by Ms. Liz Paone, who teaches in the social studies department and the Academy of Finance.

Forty-two cadets in the Marine Corps JROTC gave their time and effort on Saturday, Dec. 14 volunteering in the Toys for Tots holiday drive. The program was founded in 1947 by Marine Corps reservist Major Bill Hendricks. Como's cadets have made service at Toys for Tots an annual

event during the holiday season. This year's project was organized and led by Junior Cadet Sergeant Eh Say Htoo.

The Como Park Booster Club recently announced the recipients of its grant awards. The following programs and clubs will receive financial support based on their competitive applications: The Technovation Apps Club, Como Park Future Farmers of America Club, Close Up Washington D.C., Ping Pong

Club, Black Student Union, Link Crew, Youth in Government, Counseling Department, and the Cougar Journal - Como's literary magazine.

The Booster Club grants help Como students expand access to a variety of programs, enhance and expand learning opportunities, gain leadership skills, attend events beyond the Como campus, and share their artistic expressions with Como Park High School and the community.

Prospective students for the 2020-2021 school year have been visiting Como throughout December and January, "shadowing" current students to see a day in the life of a Como student. If your student is interested in shadowing, contact Alexis Gray-Lawson who serves as a Parent Coordinator at alexis.gray@spps.org. Como's Showcase Night, an open house to learn more about academic and extra-curricular activities at Como, will take place on Jan. 28 beginning at 5:30 p.m. (see ad on page 6 in the Monitor.)

Briefs

Carter elected Chair of Ramsey County Board

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has elected Toni Carter as Chair of the Board for 2020.

Since 2005, Commissioner Carter has represented Ramsey County District 4 made up of the Saint Paul neighborhoods of Crocus Hill, Desnoyer Park, Lexington-Hamline, Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, Summit Hill, St. Anthony Park, Summit-University and parts of Hamline-Midway, Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland.



Business awards

The Saint Paul City Council is accepting nominations for its Business Awards through Feb. 28. These awards are the next step in City Council's Open for Business initiative that started in 2015 to make Saint Paul an even better place to do business. The winners of the business awards will be recognized at a Saint Paul City Council meeting in April 2020. Find more information and nominate a business at www.stpaul.gov/bizawards.

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Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 5139 34th Ave. S. #17097, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@monitorsaintpaul.com, or call 651-917-4183.

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In Our Community

Hamline Midway Elders

By LAUREL COLLINS, laurel@hmelders.org or 651-209-6542

Monthly Luncheons – Second Tuesday of each month, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m., at Hamline Church United Methodist. Chef Erik Hendrickson will prepare a wonderful meal, blood pressure checks will be provided, and new attendees are always welcome at our “Second Tuesday” luncheon events. Suggested donation \$7.

• Feb. 11 – Scams & Fraud, with Jay Haapala of Minnesota AARP

Cards & Games: Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m. (after luncheon), Hamline Church United Methodist. Stay after lunch to play cards and games with friends. We provide decks of cards, or bring a game you enjoy! Coffee and cookies provided.

Jody’s Documentary Film Series: Jan. 29, 1 p.m. at Hamline Midway Library. Snacks provided. Check website for film description (www.hmelders.org/events.html).

“Friendly Frog” Potluck Lunch and Bingo: third Friday

of each month, 11a.m.–2 p.m. at Frogtown Community Center (230 Como Ave.). Join other Frogtown seniors for a meal and bingo. Bring a dish to share, plus \$1 for supplies, and 5 cents and additional coins for bingo cards.

Chair Yoga with Nancy: Thursday, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. Sitting in a chair or standing and using the chair for support, you’ll learn fundamentals of yoga postures and breathing, practice tension release, and begin building strength and flexibility.

Knitting & Crochet Group – Mondays from 1 to 3 pm (ongoing) at Hamline Church United Methodist. Yarn and needles, tea and cookies provided. The group meets weekly throughout the year to work on projects, such as shawls or scarves that are donated to those in need. New participants are always welcome.

Caring Hearts drive runs through Feb. 23

Jehovah Lutheran Church is collecting toiletries and over-the-counter medications for St. Paul homeless. Members, friends and neighbors are invited to bring toiletries (both large and small-size containers) such as shampoo, lotion, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant and meds such as Tylenol, cold/flu tablets, Ibuprofen, cough drops and children’s and adult vitamins. Also needed are winter hats, socks including large and extra-large sizes, mittens and other items useful for cold weather, as well as lip balm, foot-care corn pads, fungal cream, Pedialyte, small first-aid kits, baby diapers and baby wipes. Bring items to the church at 1566 Thomas Ave. Sunday mornings from 9 a.m.-noon or on a weekday by appointment (651-644-1421 or jelcoffice@gmail.com). Items will be accepted through Feb. 23.

Concert raises money to stop oil pipeline

On Friday, Jan. 24, 6:30-10 p.m., Zion Lutheran Church (1697 Lafond Ave.) will be hosting some of the Twin Cities’ finest roots-rock and folk-country bands for a night of family-friendly music dedicated to stopping the construction of an oil pipeline across Northern Minnesota. Any money raised at January’s concert will be donated to the Line 3 Legal Defense Fund’s ongoing efforts to cover and remit the legal fees of pipeline protesters. Bands performing at the Jan. 24 event include The Gated Community, The Urban Hillbilly Quartet, and Wilkinson James, all mainstays of the local music scene and masters of their genres. This will be the first time they are all sharing a stage together, eager to lend their musical talents to the cause. This will be an all-ages show with a suggested \$10 donation at the door, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Wellness series starts

Willow Tree Healing Center is hosting a monthly Community Wellness Series on the second Friday of every month 6-8 p.m. at 393 Dunlap St. (the former Central Midway Building) in the first-floor conference room. There will be time for grounding and centering followed by a presentation on a topic with a mental health professional. It will end with an opportunity for conversation and support. This gathering will be free of charge and snacks will be provided.

Respectful parenting group meets Jan. 16

Local children’s author, Ioana Stoian, will be sharing her latest children’s book, “Always Be You” on Thursday, Jan. 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. It is part of the Respectful Parenting: Let’s Talk About It! Library Series hosted by The Form Network (theformnetwork.org). Founded in May 2014, FORM is a growing community of parents, educators, students, and administrators who gather monthly to inspire, support and engage in topics relating to early childhood education and parenting. Form provides an open forum for collaborative inquiry, dialogue, and advocacy influenced by Magda Gerber’s Educaring® Approach.

‘Humanize My Hoodie’ screening Jan. 21

Attend the “Humanize My Hoodie” documentary premiere and Q/A Session with Andre’ Wright and Jason Sole on MKL Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 20 at 1 and 4 p.m. at the Phoenix Theater (2605 Hennepin Ave.). This movement is led by Hamline University adjunct instructor Jason Sole and his collaborator Andre Wright. The “Humanize My Hoodie” 285-page graphic novel tells the story of how Wright and Sole turned an idea into a movement spanning the globe.

Fireside Reading series begins Jan. 22

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library will present the annual Fireside Reading Series, featuring six weeks of author readings, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in January and February at the Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. The first author is William Kent Krueger on Wednesday, Jan. 22. The Fireside events are free and open to the public; registration is requested. Patrons can enjoy coffee, cider, cookies, and book signings. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided for all six events with advance notice. www.thefriends.org/fireside.

Get ready for primary

As Minnesota switches from a caucus system to a primary system for the Presidential election, the League of Women Voters St. Paul is working to ensure that all voters have an opportunity to learn the ins and outs the new system. Michael Wall, of the Minnesota Secretary of State’s Office, will lead an information

session on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 6:30-8 p.m. at Saint Paul Neighborhood Network, (550 Vandalia St.). Learn about the new ballot and get informed for the primary vote on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, the first presidential nominating primary in nearly three decades. The program will be cablecast live on SPNN channel 19, and MTN channel 16. Visit www.lwvsp.org to register.

German tips on raising self-reliant children

Does Germany have a leg up on rearing children to be more independent and self-reliant than children in the U.S.? Author Sara Zaske who lived in Germany for almost seven years and wrote about that instructive experience in her popular book, “Achtung Baby: an American Mom on the German Art of Raising Self-Reliant Children” (Picador USA, January 2018) will explore such general and nuanced issues at a public discussion Jan. 29, 2020, at 7:00 pm at the O’Shaughnessy Education Center Auditorium on the University of St. Thomas Campus (2115 Summit Ave). The engaging event is sponsored by the German Department at the University of St. Thomas and the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS).

Town Hall meeting set for Feb. 8

Rep. Alice Hausman, Rep. John Lesch, and Sen. John Marty invite residents of District 66 (parts of St. Paul, Roseville, Falcon Heights, and Lauderdale) to a Town Hall meeting at Falcon Heights City Hall on Saturday, Feb. 8, 10-11:30 a.m. in advance of the upcoming legislative session. “We will discuss the issues and bills that we are working on and listen to ideas and concerns expressed by attendees,” said Marty. “Please join us and share your thoughts and questions.”

Tonic Sol-fa show

Enjoy the award-winning music of Tonic Sol-fa at Roseville Area High School (1240 County Road B2 W.) Friday, Feb. 28, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$19 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors over 60. Day of the concert: \$25 and \$15 for students and seniors. Purchase tickets online at: www.isd623.org/tonicsolfa. Tonic Sol-fa is a ground-breaking a cappella ensemble from Minnesota, in constant development since their formation two decades ago. The New York Times describes Tonic Sol-fa’s sound as “A vocal kaleidoscope... unique to the human voice.”



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'Our Home: Native Minnesota' opens at MN History Center

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Minnesota is a Dakota word that describes the reflection of sky onto water, a well-known image in this state of many lakes and rivers. Dakota and Ojibwe people, as well as people from other tribal nations, have lived in this area for thousands of years.

A new, long-term exhibit called "Our Home: Native Minnesota," opened Dec. 7 at the Minnesota History Center in downtown St. Paul.

"We constantly hear from visitors and teachers that Native stories are fundamental to their understanding of Minnesota history. Now we have a permanent gallery devoted to the stories of today's Native communities," said Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) Director and CEO Kent Whitworth. "These are inspirational stories of survival, resistance, and resilience that offer hope for the future. These stories show how Native people have retained their cultural practices, teachings and values, and their essential connection to home."

The exhibit challenges viewers to see Native Americans in the present tense, while learning about their long history in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest. More than 1,100 people turned out for the opening, and experienced a day filled with Native music, artistry, and games. Free admission was provided by major sponsor U.S. Bank, and associate sponsors 3M and Ecolab.

Mattie Harper DeCarlo is a senior historian with the Minnesota Historical Society, and one of two content curators for "Our Home." She said, "There were so many stories we could have told with this exhibit. Our final decision-making was based on encountering and challenging stereotypes of indigenous people in Minnesota. Native people tend to be seen as either traditional or assimilated. We're really pushing against that way of thinking with this exhibit. Native people have had to adapt to changing circumstances throughout time. We have always been very dynamic communities."

She continued, "This exhibit isn't arranged chronologically. We present historical and contemporary stories side by side. In



Minnesota Historical Society Senior Historian Dr. Mattie Harper DeCarlo (left) and MNHS graphic designer Terry Scheller (right). (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

addition to stories that have not been told before, "Our Home" features historic and contemporary photographs, maps, and artifacts to illustrate Dakota and Ojibwe life as it was – and as it is now."

Harper DeCarlo grew up on the Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota, earned her undergraduate degree from Hamline University, and her MA and PhD in ethnic studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She said, "One common stereotype that still exists today is of Native people as 'savage,' which is fueled by narratives about Dakota and Ojibwe people as constantly at war with one another. Sometimes this stereotype was used as a justification for U.S. colonialism. For example, agents of the U.S. government argued that U.S. peace treaties were necessary to create peace between the two tribes, that they were incapable of otherwise making peaceful agreements."

"However, we show in this gallery that Ojibwe and Dakota people have long-standing friendly relations going back way before the U.S. was ever a presence in the region. The challenge with museum work is how to tell a nuanced, truthful story on an exhibit panel in 75-100 words.

"Native American history is much more complicated than

most people think."

In her work as a graphic designer with MNHS, Midway resident Terry Scheller translates exhibit content into strong visual images that capture and hold people's attention. Scheller was an integral part of the design

team for "Our Home."

She said, "When you work on museum exhibits, you work as part of a team. You learn to see an exhibit as a vessel for telling a story. You can't treat exhibit text like a novel, or even a 30-second ad. You look at it in layers. How

do you want visitors to feel when they walk in? For this exhibit, visitors are met with a feeling of welcome, beauty, peace, and a connection to nature."

Scheller explained, "The main exhibit text is presented in English, Dakota, and Ojibwe. It resonates with all of our audiences, Native and non-Native, and school groups. The text is written with first person pronouns, as if the viewer is being spoken to directly."

Scheller hopes this exhibit will bring native people up to the present in the eyes of visitors. She said, "Native people are relevant today, they're not just stuck somewhere in history." Harper de Carlo hopes that Native people will feel a sense of belonging when they visit "Our Home."

The Minnesota History Center is located at 345 Kellogg Blvd. The museum is closed on Mondays. Paid parking is available in the lot on-site.

Admission to "Our Home: Native Minnesota" is included with regular History Center admission of \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors, veterans/active military, and college students; \$6 ages 5-17; free for ages four and under and MNHS members. Museum admission is free for everyone on Tuesdays from 3-8 p.m.



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HAMLINE HEADLINES

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When: Friday, February 28
11:30 a.m.

Where: Anderson Center, room 304
774 Snelling Ave. N.
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Leo Lectures are free and open to the public; registration is required by February 6.

Visit hamline.edu/alumnierevents to register for in-person or live stream participation.

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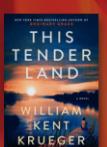
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thefriends.org/fireside

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.





Rebuild Repair Recycle

Pollinator Pathway workshops starting soon

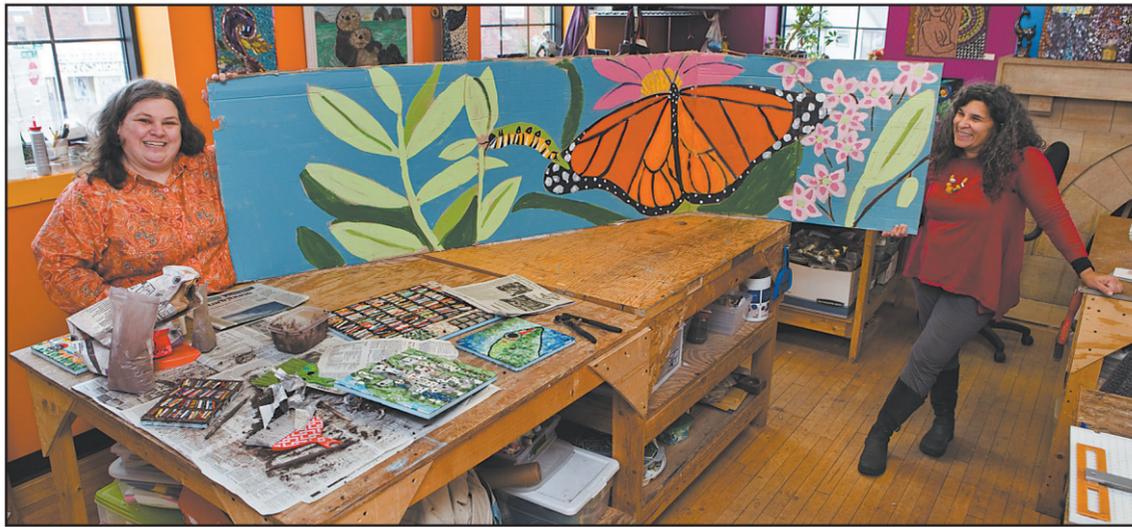
By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

An eight block stretch of North Snelling Ave. will be transformed this summer, connecting Allianz Field to Pierce Butler Meadows with pollinator friendly plantings. Hamline Midway Coalition Executive Director Kate Mudge has secured funding from the Allianz Foundation for the creation of a pollinator pathway. The pathway will be marked by 10 three-foot-tall, mosaic-tiled containers filled with annual and perennial flowering plants.

The public art/environmental project is aimed at both beautifying and unifying the neighborhood.

"The opening of Allianz Field brought a great deal of excitement and energy to the Hamline Midway neighborhood, and we're eager to continue that momentum by working with the Hamline Midway Coalition and Mosaic on a Stick," said Allianz Life President and CEO Walter White. "We are dedicated to making a difference in the community, and welcome the opportunity to provide financial and volunteer support for this project.

"We believe that, as the naming rights sponsor of Allianz Field, it's crucial for us to have a strong connection with community leadership in Hamline Midway. This will help us to have



Tara Nielson (left) is one of the two mosaic artists who will teach the community workshops at Mosaic on a Stick. Lori Greene (right) will design the mosaics. The monarch design for the first container is shown here. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

a better understanding of their priorities for the neighborhood and provide support for different initiatives that connect with our company values."

Lori Greene, owner of the art studio Mosaic on a Stick, will host a series of mosaic-making workshops to bring the large scale containers to life. Her studio address is 1564 Lafond Ave. The workshops are being offered at no cost and are open to the public. Residents and non-resi-

dents are invited to learn how to make mosaic art with local artists Tara Nielson and Juliette Meyers.

According to Greene, "Mosaic is an art form available to everybody. No previous art experience is needed."

The first two workshops will be "Train the Trainer" workshops, offered Thursday, Jan. 16 from 6-9 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 18 from 3-6 p.m. Participants only need to attend one of these to become a trainer. Work-

shops are open to anyone who has made an RSVP. Maximum attendance is 15; minimum age is 11 years. The workshops will continue every other week into the month of May, depending on how long it takes to finish all of the containers. Call Mosaic on a Stick to reserve a spot at 651.645.6600, or visit the Hamline Midway Coalition website at www.hamlinemidway.org.

The inspiration for the first container design came from

Interested in a two-year grant?

The Allianz Foundation is funding the Pollinator Pathway that will be installed along N. Snelling Ave. this summer. Their mission is to promote financial literacy, independence and self-sufficiency of senior citizens, and youth development/inclusion in the Twin Cities area. The organization values sharing their financial resources and expertise with organizations that make a positive impact in communities. Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America makes two-year grants, which typically range from \$15,000 to \$25,000.

Greene's home garden. She said, "I was lucky to find several monarchs on Father's Day last year, eating away at our milkweed plants. They stayed in the garden all summer, and I loved watching them. These community workshops will be a great opportunity to learn to make mosaic.

"The art form is peaceful and uncomplicated; our studio is a wonderful art-making space. We are hoping to have a diversity of art makers join us!"

Safe space

>> from 1

Georgia and Bernard both have family members who struggle with addiction issues. Each grew up witnessing the instability that addiction brings to families. This fuels their passion for helping women committed to the hard work of recovery.

There are no social services offered on-site at a recovery house, but there are rules and requirements. A prospective resident at CVH must be at least 18 years old, have 14 days sobriety from drugs or alcohol, and be able to live in community; each house has between 8-12 residents. Once accepted, a

CVH resident must attend two recovery meetings weekly, such as Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous. She must participate in a weekly social hour, and work with a sponsor weekly.

Like all recovery houses, CVH is private-pay and, by law, is not eligible for grant-funding.

"Understand this," Georgia said. "There is no one face of addiction. We've had every kind of person stay here: professional women like teachers and nurses, and some that are just getting started. One of our cardinal rules is that no matter who you are, you will be respectful to others at all times. Our residents have good days and bad days, but they learn to be there for each other."

There is also no such thing

as a typical length of stay at a recovery house. Bernard said, "Outpatient treatment might last for a few months, but after that - what's your safety net? Our residents can stay here as long as they're continuing to meet house requirements. In recovery, you're living an honest program. If someone relapses and they have to leave, they can come back. We know that life is hard. We give people as many chances as they need."

For more information about Central Village Housing, or to schedule a tour, call 612.401.5794 or email 513centralhouse@gmail.com. View the website at www.centralvillagehousing.com.

Drumming >> from 5

What is the history of the WDC?

The Women's Drum Center (WDC) began in 1989, started by Colleen Hass who wanted to create drumming opportunities for women. One of the most common stories I hear from women joining a class is that they always wanted to drum but were told that women could not be drummers!

I think that there has been a significant change and more and more women are drumming in school and outside schools. The WDC is the only Women Centered non-profit drum center in the country (that we know of) and offers very affordable classes and lessons.

How can people get involved?

Getting involved is super easy! Our website calendar lists all of the options - womensdrumcenter.org. Most people start with one of the beginning level classes; those classes function on a drop-in basis so people can start at any time. The WDC has a vast inventory of equipment so it is not necessary to own a drum; one of our core values is to "share our drums."

Any other comments?

My experience as a teacher and participant have deeply enriched my life, and while drumming may not be for everyone, I do think people should give it a try!

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