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Providing local news to the Minneapolis lakes community since 1976

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OPEN STREETS, OPEN HEARTS, OPEN UPTOWN

By Susan Lenfestey

Susan Lenfestey is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

On Sept. 20, despite competition from Farm Aid and skies that threatened rain but held off, Open Streets Hennepin was a resounding success.

Thousands of people walked, rolled or danced along Hennepin Avenue between 26th and 34th streets in Uptown. They sampled treats, listened to bands, visited new and longtime businesses, and took a break from the often-divisive daily grind to enjoy the simple things that connect us.

The Hill & Lake Press was a sponsor of this year’s Open Streets and hosted a table near the store formerly known as Apple. Copies of the paper were handed out, and new ideas were welcomed. Storyboards featuring clips of articles dating back nearly 50 years drew attention — especially those with a familiar ring, including controversy over the development of Calhoun Square. Yes, there was one.

According to the Uptown Association, which sponsored the event, “Open Streets Hennepin is proudly presented in partnership with the City of Minneapolis to promote vibrant, people-centered streets that celebrate community, support local businesses and create safe, car-free spaces for all to enjoy.”

Uptown is coming back.
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Open Streets Uptown drew thousands, transforming Hennepin Avenue into a lively, car-free celebration of community, local business and connection — a resounding success that showed Uptown at its best.
(Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



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BELOVED PUPPETS ON THE MOVE: IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST RELOCATES TO HENNEPIN

By Craig Wilson, Editor

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

On Sept. 27, community members gathered at the Avalon Theatre for a puppet caravan — a joyful procession that moved the theater’s beloved collection of puppets to their new home. Dozens of volunteers arrived with trucks, vans and helping hands to carry this legacy forward. At 11 a.m., the caravan set off, marking both continuity and renewal for one of Minneapolis’ most treasured community arts institutions.

Founded in 1973, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, also known as HOTB, has long been a cornerstone of Minneapolis’ cultural life. Best known for its spectacular larger than life puppets, the theater has created unforgettable

puppetry that merges artistry with activism, weaving together environmental, social and spiritual themes. Generations of artists and neighbors have built, carried and performed with these larger-than-life puppets, which have come to embody community storytelling itself.

The caravan brought these puppets — symbols of decades of collective creativity — to a new home at 2441 Hennepin Avenue S. across the street from Spyhouse Coffee, infusing fresh energy into the Hill & Lake community. The move reflected the theater’s ongoing evolution as it adapts to changing times while holding fast to its mission to nurture creative empowerment through the joy and magic of puppetry performance and education.

Continued on page 10



In a historic move, HOTB’s beloved puppets journeyed through Minneapolis in a puppet caravan, marking the start of a new chapter in their five decade story.
(Image: Elina Kotlyar)



Hill & Lake Press

Founded in 1976, Hill & Lake Press is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit reporting community news and events, educating and informing neighborhood residents about issues of the day. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Hill & Lake Press.

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Our goal is to offer readers diverse perspectives on newsworthy events or issues of broad public concern to the Hill & Lake community. Our copy limit is 300 words (750 words for a commentary or space permitting) and we reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.

Jeanette Colby Brings Leadership and Vision to Park Board

As a former Ward 7 Minneapolis City Council member, I am proud to support Jeanette Colby for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, District 4. Jeanette has shown through her career and community work that she is committed to protecting and enhancing the park system that makes Minneapolis such a special place to live. She understands that parks are more than green spaces — they are gathering places that nurture families, connect neighbors and support health and well-being. Her vision emphasizes equity, listening to the voices of residents, and ensuring that every neighborhood has access to safe, well-maintained parks. Jeanette brings both professional experience in arts and parks administration and a personal passion rooted in her own childhood experiences in Minneapolis parks. That combination of expertise and lived connection makes her uniquely qualified to serve. I know Jeanette will do the hard work of policy and oversight while keeping her focus on what matters most: preserving our parks for the enjoyment and benefit of all. She is a thoughtful leader who listens, collaborates, and builds solutions. District 4 and the entire city would be fortunate to have Jeanette Colby on the Park Board. I encourage my fellow residents to join me in supporting her candidacy.

*Lee Munich
Former Ward 7 Minneapolis City Council Member*

Why I’m Supporting Elizabeth Shaffer for City Council

As a super proud Bryn Mawr neighbor, I’m supporting Elizabeth Shaffer for City Council in Ward 7. Elizabeth has already shown us what calm, steady and responsible leadership looks like in her role on the Park Board. She listens, she brings people together, and she gets things done — the kind of leadership Minneapolis needs right now. Her priorities — safe public spaces, support for workers and small business owners, fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship and stronger connections across wards — reflect what matters most to our community. At a time when politics feels so polarized, Elizabeth offers practical, solution-focused lead-

ership. I trust her to put residents first and help build a healthier, more prosperous Minneapolis for all.

*Amber Senn
Bryn Mawr*

Cashman Is a Climate Leader

The unseasonably warm weather in the middle of September was a reminder that climate change is still here, making life harder and more dangerous for people across Minneapolis. From smoky air to more dangerous heat and storms, no one can escape the consequences of a changing climate. It’s on all of us to do everything we can to stop climate change from getting worse and to help people adapt to changing conditions. Climate change is one of the reasons I’m supporting Katie Cashman in Ward 7 for City Council this fall. Our local elected officials have a lot of power when it comes to making choices around climate and local environmental health that affect our everyday lives. Councilwoman Cashman has been a strong leader on climate and environmental issues in her two years on the council. She helped to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Xcel and CenterPoint Energy to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This will ensure energy companies bring clean, low-cost solutions to lower-income households. Cashman helped pass an ordinance allowing climate-responsive boulevard gardens instead of input-heavy turf grass, increasing green space across the city. And she has plans to provide additional climate-responsive services, ordinances to reduce salt pollution in our waters, investments in the circular economy and expanded recycling options to move toward a zero-waste city. We have many challenges ahead, with climate continuing to be an overarching concern. I am voting for Katie because she is a steadfast champion for climate, and I know she will use her position to work with others toward solutions across the city.

*Christy Marsden
East Isles*

Parkway Debate Should Focus on Safety, Not Bans

I was glad to see the parks candidate questionnaire include a question about parkway closures, as it’s an issue close to my heart (“Meet the Candidates for District 4 and District 6,” September 2025 issue). I love our parks, but too often the volume of through-traffic and speeding makes them stressful to enjoy. My neighbor has clocked cars going over 40 mph on Cedar Lake Parkway, and I’ve personally been passed while driving 25 mph — well above the posted 20 mph limit. That’s why I was disappointed in the framing of the question and the candidates’ responses. The issue is not about banning

cars. The real conversation in our community is about calming traffic, so parkways are safe and accessible for everyone. A neighborhood survey this summer drew more than 40 responses asking for slower speeds and traffic-calming measures. Concerns about accessibility are valid. But accessibility is already harmed when cars speed through at unsafe levels. Calmer traffic benefits everyone — especially children, seniors and people with disabilities — by making it safer to cross the street, bike, drive or simply enjoy our parkland. This should not be an “us versus them” issue. Parkway closures are just one idea. The bigger picture is creating streets that balance access with safety, comfort and enjoyment for all. That, I hope, is a goal we all share.

*Benjamin Lester
Bryn Mawr*

Why I Support Omar Fateh for Mayor

As a longtime Minneapolis resident, I believe Omar Fateh offers the visionary leadership our city needs. Critics call Omar “too radical,” but Minnesota history shows what that really means. Paul Wellstone faced the same dismissal when he championed working families, yet he inspired a movement that still shapes our politics. Every transformative Minnesota leader has been labeled “radical” by those desperate to preserve the status quo. Omar’s record speaks for itself: 54 bills authored with bipartisan support, including the North Star Promise, which has already sent more than 16,700 students to college tuition-free. His plan to end unsheltered homelessness by 2027 adapts proven “housing first” strategies from Houston and Dallas. Mayor Jacob Frey says he wants to turn Minneapolis into a playground—just another way of Disney-fying our obvious decline. Who is Minneapolis for—tourists, suburbanites or the people who live here? The city has always been a tale of two Minneapolis. Even as some neighborhoods prospered, Black, brown, Indigenous and immigrant communities faced systemic disinvestment and over-policing. These disparities have only deepened under current leadership. Meanwhile, Frey spent \$330,000 in 2024 clearing 17 homeless camps, only to watch them reappear. Corporate chains replace local businesses while developers prosper and working families get priced out. This isn’t recovery. It’s managed decline. We need a leader who lifts people up, not one who preserves the systems that cause suffering. Don’t fear someone they call “too radical.” Fear more of the same failed approaches. As Wellstone taught us: We all do better when we all do better.

*Christin Crabtree
Kingfield*

Jacob Frey Is the Steady Leadership Minneapolis Needs

Voters who want the best for Minneapolis must reelect Mayor Jacob Frey. His goals are to pursue thoughtful, real solutions to the difficult challenges facing the city. His principal opponent, Omar Fateh, and Fateh’s Democratic Socialist allies on the City Council support policies that would worsen these challenges and cause serious harm.

Violence at homeless encampments: Frey has worked to close dangerous and unhealthy encampments, connect people to treatment and expand real housing opportunities. Fateh’s proposals? He wants to make the encampments bigger by providing portable toilets and ending regulatory enforcement.

Public safety: Minneapolis has among the lowest police staffing per capita in the country. What would Fateh do? Cut the recruitment budget and divert the money to unaccountable nonprofits. Frey has pushed for more police staffing while also overseeing important and successful police reforms.

A shrinking tax base: Fateh and his City Council allies support rent control similar to St. Paul’s, which has cratered that city’s rental market and increased rents. Study after study has shown that rent control dries up investment, slows construction and worsens affordability.

Integrity and leadership: Fateh is tied to fraud, lies and corruption. Frey has always operated with integrity. His strong, compassionate leadership was evident most recently in connection with

the tragic Annunciation shooting. The stakes for Minneapolis are high. Frey has shown steady leadership in crisis and a commitment to building a safer, stronger city where renters, homeowners, businesses and civic life can thrive.

Lee Mitau
Lowry Hill

Coloring Outside the Lines



Ruby Zimmerman, a Manhattan native with a passion for nature, has turned a lifetime of experiences into art. From introducing modern dance to Japan in the 1950s to painting landscapes of the Southwest, Hawaii and Vermont, she now inspires neighbors through the Art and Design program at Kenwood Isles Condominiums — always coloring outside the lines. Her artwork is currently on display at Kenwood Isles through November. (Images: Jill Zimmerman)



HILL & LAKE PRESS TO LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE IN OCTOBER

By Craig Wilson, Editor

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

The Hill & Lake Press is getting a digital upgrade. After years of publishing primarily in print and maintaining a static website, the neighborhood newspaper will launch a new and improved online platform in October.

The motivation for change came from readers themselves. Over the past year, countless neighbors told us they wanted more ways to connect with the stories of our community. They wanted to share articles more easily on social media, find past issues without digging through stacks of paper and enjoy a smoother reading experience on phones and tablets.

The new site delivers on those requests. Built on a dynamic platform, it will allow readers to browse, search and share stories with a click. Features like an improved archive, mobile-friendly design and email updates will make it easier to stay connected to neighborhood news.

For the Hill & Lake Press team, the upgrade also creates opportunities to grow. A modern site allows us to better support adver-

tisers by hosting ads directly on the platform, with more flexible placements and tracking to help local businesses reach their audience. As the site develops, we’ll also be able to integrate multimedia options — including video, audio and eventually podcasts — giving readers new ways to experience the stories of our neighborhoods.

Our print tradition remains the heart of the Hill & Lake Press, but the new website reflects how many people engage with news today. We’re excited to carry for-

ward our mission of connecting neighbors, now with more tools for the digital age.

The new website will officially debut in October. Readers can expect the same trusted local journalism — with new ways to access, share and support it. We’re especially grateful to contributor Terry White, board member Dominic Saucedo, Jessica Armbruster with Racket, and the team at Lede for their help and guidance in developing our new website.

→ **COMING IN OCTOBER:**
A NEW HILL & LAKE PRESS WEBSITE

The Hill & Lake Press is launching a new website in October. The upgraded platform will make it easier to:

- Share stories on social media
- Search and browse past issues
- Read on mobile phones and tablets
- Utilize other mediums like podcasts and video feed
- Receive email updates

The site will also provide better support for local advertisers. Visit – hillandlakepress.org

GENERAL ELECTION

IN-PERSON
Tuesday, November 4th

MARY McKELVEY
for Minneapolis
Park Board at-Large

Scan Here
to find out more

EAT THE RICH!

By Susan Lenfestey

Susan Lenfestey is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

“When the people shall have nothing more to eat, they will eat the rich.”

Attributed to Rousseau

But first, there are a few things to consider.

Not all rich are alike, and the labels can be misleading. Just because they shop at the Wedge — or more likely Whole Foods — does not mean they are organic, any more than using Ridwell to recycle means they are environmentalists. It’s important to know just who you are eating.

The USDA ratings provide some guidelines, although they are for beef, so of little use to pescatarians, vegetarians and vegans. Or cannibals. According to the interwebs, the USDA grades on tenderness, juiciness and flavor, “primarily using marbling (intramuscular fat) and maturity.” The eight quality grades, from highest to lowest, are Prime, Choice, Select, Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter and Canner.

Let’s cut to the chase. It’s the Primes, the well-marbled rich currently grazing in and around the feed lot of the Oval Office, who ought to be first on the menu, although that’s as appetizing as digging into a plate of oily whale blubber. And it’s the tougher Utility, Cutters and Canners who should be pardoned and turned out to pasture to fatten up.

It’s the middle range where things get murky, and to be honest, where I fit in. On the USDA scale of rich I fall somewhere between Select (“a leaner grade

which may result in less juiciness and flavor”) and Commercial (“from older animals, with less marbling”). And so do many of my friends and neighbors, the people currently lumped together by some in our city and labeled as “the rich.”

So I write to defend my people who may be middling on the beef chart but get five stars on the human chart. They are creative, generous, and, gasp, politically progressive. They may be bankers who fund the arts and non-profit social services, or developers who build affordable housing, or CEOs who attract people to our city by providing good jobs and benefits. They have funded the campaigns of Gene McCarthy, Walter Mondale, Paul Wellstone, Al Franken and on and on.

Some were moderate Republicans who supported that long-lost breed of Republicans like Arne Carlson and Dave Durenburger, but with the arrival of MAGA, now support centrist Dems. They pay the taxes that provide the blanket of services that too many in our city and country desperately need.

Minneapolis grew up as a milling town on a powerful river, not a slaughterhouse on a slough. We’re founded on wheat, not meat. And other than the gluten thing, which I make light of, and the stolen land and brutalization of indigenous people, which I do not, we should be proud of that.

But we are the North Star on the edge of the tundra.

Along with the hard work of diverse Minneapolitans, it took the vision of some early wealthy leaders — the Primes of their day — to recognize the importance of investing in the arts, the parks and the quality of life in this remote part of the land.

They contributed generously to museums and theaters. They put aside large tracts of prime land to preserve as parks. They may have been rascals in their private lives, which I know nothing about, but in their public lives



Marie Antoinette, led to the guillotine on October 16, 1793, in William Hamilton’s 1794 painting Marie Antoinette Being Taken to Her Execution. The work, now housed at the Musée de la Révolution française in Vizille, captures the queen’s final moments. (Image: Harrison W. Mark / World History Encyclopedia, public domain)

they were pretty Choice. I’m talking about the Walkers and Lowrys and Pillsburys and Daytons and Crosbys and Dunwoodies and Bennetts and Hills and the Bells and many more, with apologies to the scions of any I have not mentioned. They helped build a prosperous arty city that attracted people like me and my family to move here 50 years ago, before our neighborhood became such a hoity toity hot spot. And theirs is a mantle many of us picked up and tried to carry on, attracting another generation to the city, some of those who have now labeled us and would like to eat us. Or maybe just skewer us.

Before you do, keep in mind that beef can be labeled, but people can’t. We are no more alike than pebbles on a beach or grains of wheat. Learn more about who we are, then choose your meal carefully.



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WOMAN’S CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS STILL HERE — FOR NOW

By Susan Lenfestey

Susan Lenfestey is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

Last spring it was announced that the historic Woman’s Club of Minneapolis — one of the few surviving organizations from the early 1900s, when more than 3,000 clubs formed as part of the women’s movement — had finally run its course. The building would be put on the market, its future uncertain.

Well, not so fast.

Thanks to a dedicated board and determined membership, the Club’s educational programs have resumed, along with the social and musical events held in the classic lounge overlooking Loring Park. For now.

The nonprofit tenants also remain. Diva International, which guides Black girls toward self-discovery and positive outcomes, and Involve MN, which uses the Club’s kitchens to produce more than 10,000 meals a week for people in need, still have a home. For now.

The Club today operates as a hybrid. The building is no longer open for weddings and private parties, but lectures and concerts continue. The popular Thursdays@5 social gathering is

“Thanks to a dedicated board and determined membership, the Club’s educational programs have resumed, along with the social and musical events held in the classic lounge overlooking Loring Park. For now...”

back. The bar still serves drinks at those events, with food catered by Heather’s, the beloved South Minneapolis restaurant.



But nothing gold can stay.

Despite strong programming and a deep commitment to community, the Woman’s Club continues to struggle with the costs of maintaining a 100-year-old building.

A committee of Club leaders, developers and community partners is working with interested parties to find a path forward that honors the Club’s past, respects its present commitments and secures a viable future. As the Magic 8 Ball would say: Outlook good. For now.

Flowers are not the only thing in bloom at the Woman’s Club. Important programming continues to thrive in this storied space, keeping its legacy alive. (Images: Woman’s Club of Minneapolis)

THE WOMAN’S CLUB
OF MINNEAPOLIS

**WOMAN’S CLUB
PROGRAMS**

— OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- **THURSDAYS@5**
 - Every Thursday, 5–7 p.m. Lounge, cash bar, snacks, live music
- **TUESDAY PROGRAMS**
 - 10:30 a.m. socialize
 - 11 a.m.– noon presentation
 - 12–1:30 p.m. lunch
- Oct. 7: Mary Walters — Restoring 158 acres to prairie
- Oct. 14: Larisa Netterlund — Theatre in the Round history

- **GREAT DECISIONS**
 - 5:30 p.m. socialize
 - 6–7 p.m. presentation
- Oct. 8: Christi Siver — Artificial Intelligence and National Security

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Jeanette Colby

for Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
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FINAL PHASE OF HENNEPIN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION NEARS COMPLETION THIS FALL

By Craig Wilson, Editor



Despite the headaches of reconstruction, life carries on along Hennepin Avenue and its cross streets. At Hennepin and Franklin, neighbors still gather for ice cream at Sebastian Joe's — even as they weave through orange signs and construction cones. (Images: Craig Wilson)

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

The two-year reconstruction of Hennepin Avenue South is finally entering its home stretch. City officials say that the last major phase, stretching from 26th Street to Douglas Avenue, is on track to wrap up this fall, bringing an end to one of the most disruptive — but also most ambitious — public works projects in Uptown in decades.

What's Happening Now

The current phase focuses on new sidewalks, curbs, gutters and asphalt paving, along with major utility replacements such as storm sewers and hydrant connections. Between 24th and 26th streets, a single southbound lane remains open to keep businesses accessible, but from 24th north to Douglas, the roadway is still closed to traffic as crews push to finish before winter. Crossstreets have also seen temporary closures. Westbound Franklin at Hennepin closed for roughly four weeks in September, while Colfax at Franklin will be shut for about two weeks to allow signal and pavement work. Sidewalk detours are posted throughout the corridor.

Businesses Adapt

Local businesses have endured difficult months, with sales down sharply for some storefronts during the most intensive construction. Owners cite noise, dust, blocked parking and rerouted deliveries as obstacles. Even so, many say they are optimistic about the long-term payoff. “They’ve done a good job limiting the impact on businesses and the neighborhood, especially considering the scope of the reconstruction and how much work had to be done” said Paul Trott, owner of Kenwood Barbers. “If the improvements bring more people back to Hennepin, then all the hassle and disruption will have been worth it in the end.” The reopening of the Lake-to-26th stretch earlier this year offered a glimpse of what’s ahead. With new pavement, wider sidewalks and smoother traffic flow, businesses there have reported a modest rebound in customer visits.

What's Next

By late fall, city crews expect to finish the mainline pavement and most sidewalk work along the final stretch. Landscaping, irrigation and other “punch-list” items will carry into next year, but officials expect the corridor to be largely completed and func-

tional by the end of the 2025 construction season. The rebuilt avenue is designed with all modes of travel in mind. Dedicated bus boarding zones will serve the upcoming Metro E Line rapid transit, while redesigned intersections and wider sidewalks are meant to improve pedestrian safety. Bicycle facilities and curbside space for deliveries and ride-share pickup are also part of the plan.

Looking Ahead

For Hill & Lake readers, the completion of Hennepin Avenue will reshape how our neighborhoods connect to Uptown and downtown. The corridor, long seen as both a bottleneck and a destination, is poised to become a more walkable, transit-friendly link. There is no denying the strain on businesses and residents who endured years of noise and detours. But as one restaurant manager put it: “We just want to get to the finish line. If the end result is a street that works for everyone, then maybe the struggle will have been worth it.”

More info & updates:
minneapolis.mn.gov/government/projects/hennepin-ave-s

RECONSTRUCTION QUICK FACTS

- Project scope: Full reconstruction of Hennepin Avenue South from Lake Street to Douglas Avenue
- **PHASES:**
 - Phase 1 (Lake to 26th) — Completed in 2024
 - Phase 2 (26th to Douglas) — Wrapping up fall 2025
 - **WORK INCLUDES:**
 - New pavement, sidewalks, curbs and gutters
 - Upgraded storm sewers, water lines and hydrants
 - Updated street lighting and signals
 - Landscaping, irrigation and streetscape features
 - **DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS:**
 - Safer pedestrian crossings and wider sidewalks
 - Dedicated transit boarding areas for the future METRO E Line
 - Bicycle facilities and curb space for deliveries, patios and ride share
 - **TRAFFIC IMPACTS:**
 - Southbound lane open between 24th and 26th to maintain business access
 - Ongoing closures at some intersections, including Franklin Avenue
 - **COMPLETION TARGET:**

Main construction finished by late fall 2025; landscaping and finishing touches into 2026.

LYNDALE AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION PLAN DRAWS CRITICISM AT OPEN HOUSE

By Terry White



Attendees review Hennepin County’s proposed Lyndale Avenue reconstruction plan during a Sept. 10 open house and at Open Streets, where many voiced concerns about the design. (Images by Terry White)

Terry White is a regular contributor. He is also the author of the Better Minneapolis newsletter and podcast. He lives in Field.

Hennepin County officials presented their latest design proposal for Lyndale Avenue at a Sept. 10 open house, but many attendees voiced concerns about the plan.

The event, held at SpringHouse Ministry Center, showcased the county’s proposed reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue between Franklin Avenue and 31st Street. The corridor, last rebuilt in the 1930s, is slated for a full overhaul of the roadway, lighting, sidewalks and underground utilities. Construction is expected to begin in 2027.

Since August 2023, when feedback collection began, the county has logged more than 43,000 comments.

Much of the discussion has centered on competing priorities. Business owners in the corridor have pushed for preserving parking and vehicle access, while bicycle and

pedestrian advocates have called for dedicated bike and bus lanes.

The county’s compromise design has drawn criticism from both sides.

One of the most disputed features is a shared-use path planned for the east side of the avenue, intended for both bicycles and pedestrians. Many cyclists favor the “orange” option, which would add a two-way bikeway from 29th Street to the north end of the corridor and remove parking on the east side to make room for a dedicated bus lane from 24th Street northward. Supporters wore orange clothing at the open house to signal their preference, though only about a quarter of attendees appeared to do so.

Other options previously considered included the “blue” plan, which featured a two-way bikeway but no transit lane, and the “purple” plan, which proposed a bus lane but no bikeway.

Another point of contention is a concrete median planned for the

intersection at 29th Street. The design would block northbound drivers from turning left there, requiring them to detour to 26th Street. Attendees also raised concerns about potential parking loss from wider boulevards and large corner bump-outs.

According to the county’s website, the project will bring “safety and accessibility upgrades, more green space, and better transit experiences. For businesses, there will still be parking available and curbside space that allows for deliveries, patios and rideshare pick-up and drop-off.”

The county is continuing to seek public input.

Officials noted that Lyndale Avenue is a major city corridor, and changes will affect the success of Lowry Hill East, Whittier and Uptown for years to come.

Plans and comment forms are available at beheardhennepin.org/lyndale-avenue

**LYNDALE AVENUE
RECONSTRUCTION
KEY CONTACTS**

- Josh Potter, P.E. – Project Manager (Design)
612-596-0820
josh.potter@hennepin.us
- General project feedback / questions
transportation@hennepin.us
- County Commissioner Marion Greene (District 3)
Represents the Hill & Lake neighborhoods
marion.greene@hennepin.us
612-348-7883
- Staff contacts (scheduling and constituent services):
- Elie Farhat, Policy Aide
612-348-7125
elie.farhat@hennepin.us
- Laura Hoffman, District Aide & Scheduler
612-348-0863
laura.hoffman@hennepin.us



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DORAN'S KEYSTONE UPTOWN PROJECT CLEARS PLANNING COMMISSION, SURVIVES APPEAL

By Craig Wilson, Editor



The Doran project is planned for Hennepin Avenue and 31st Street in Uptown, marking a new chapter in the neighborhood's future redevelopment. (Image: Doran Companies)

Craig Wilson is the editor of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

The future of one of Uptown Minneapolis' most visible corners came into focus this summer when the Minneapolis Planning Commission approved Doran Companies' redevelopment plan for part of the Seven Points site at Hennepin Avenue and 31st Street. The 228-unit apartment building, which would replace the former CB2 and Kitchen Window spaces, also withstood an appeal at City Hall, allowing the project to move ahead into detailed planning.

Planning Commission Approval

On July 21, the commission voted to amend the existing planned unit development for Seven Points. The decision authorizes Bloomington-based Doran to demolish the structure and replace it with housing. City planning staff recommended approval with standard conditions, including updated landscaping plans and submission of an inclusionary zoning compliance plan before permits are issued.

Roughly 20% of the apartments will be reserved for households earning up to 50% of area median income, consistent with Minneapolis' inclusionary zoning requirements.

Retail Debate

The most hotly contested element of the project is what it leaves out: ground-floor retail. For decades, Uptown's identity has been tied to storefronts, nightlife and the hum of activity around Lake and Hennepin. Critics argue that replacing street-level shops with utility rooms, bike storage and a fitness center creates a "dead zone" along the avenue.

Molly Reichert, a Southwest Minneapolis resident and architecture professor, filed an appeal argu-

ing that the design violates zoning rules requiring retail along Hennepin. "Ground-floor retail is what creates lively, livable cities," she told city leaders, citing her research in both Minneapolis and Barcelona. Others rallied behind Doran's proposal, noting that Seven Points has struggled with high vacancies, especially in the wake of e-commerce, the pandemic and social unrest. Today, about 65% of the mall's retail space sits empty, and LA Fitness — one of the last tenants to leave — closed in September. Supporters say bringing hundreds of new residents to the block is the surest way to stabilize Uptown's future.

Doran CEO Anne Behrendt has emphasized that the ground-floor space is flexible and could be converted to retail if market conditions improve.

The Appeal

Opponents advanced their case to the City Council's Business, Housing and Zoning Committee in mid-August. Some pointed to an alternative concept circulated by developer Michael Lander, who sketched a vision of small-scale shops along Hennepin and distributed it on postcards across the neighborhood. Supporters of the appeal said it better reflected Uptown's character, while critics dismissed it as unfunded and aspirational.

On Aug. 13, the council committee unanimously denied the appeal, siding with planning staff who argued that the broader Seven Points development already met retail requirements. The vote preserved the commission's approval, clearing Doran's plan to move forward.

Conditions and Next Steps

Before construction begins, Doran must meet several conditions: finalize landscape planning,

complete its inclusionary zoning plan and coordinate with public infrastructure projects in the area. The timing is significant, as the city is in the midst of reconstructing Hennepin Avenue South between 26th Street and Douglas Avenue, a multiyear overhaul that will reshape sidewalks, bike facilities and transit stations through fall 2025.

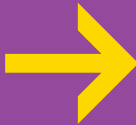
Behrendt told Axios that the project's financing is lined up, meaning construction could begin "quickly" once permits are secured.

Community Impact

For residents and businesses, the Keystone Uptown project is both a promise and a gamble. Advocates believe new housing will draw more customers to Uptown's shops and restaurants, spur transit ridership and improve street safety through higher foot traffic. Skeptics fear the loss of retail frontage, worry about a bland and suburban-style design and question whether Uptown's eclectic character will survive another wave of change.

City staff frame the project in practical terms: more housing supply, affordable units, better pedestrian access and investment in a district that has seen too little in recent years.

With approvals in place, the debate now shifts from "if" to "how soon." Whatever its ultimate impact, the Seven Points block — once a retail anchor — is on its way to becoming a new residential hub at the crossroads of Hennepin Avenue and 31st.



SEVEN POINTS REDEVELOPMENT – QUICK FACTS:

- **DEVELOPER:**
 - Doran Companies
- **LOCATION:**
 - Southeast corner of Hennepin Avenue and 31st Street, Uptown Minneapolis
- **PROJECT TYPE:**
 - Apartment building within the Seven Points planned unit development (PUD)
 - Units: 228 total
 - Affordability: 20% reserved for households at 50% of area median income (AMI)
 - Retail: No new street-level retail; existing mall retains 173,000 square feet (currently 65% vacant)
 - Parking: Structured parking integrated with the project (stall counts pending)
- **DESIGN CONDITIONS:**
 - Updated landscaping plan required
 - Inclusionary zoning compliance plan must be approved before permits
- **TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT:**
 - Planned alongside Hennepin Avenue South reconstruction (through 2026)
 - Debate over bikeways, bus lanes and vehicle access factored heavily into comments
- **APPROVALS:**
 - Minneapolis Planning Commission approval on July 21, 2025
 - Appeal denied by City Council Business, Housing & Zoning Committee on Aug. 13, 2025
- **NEXT STEPS:**
 - Detailed design, financing and permits; construction start possible once approvals finalized



SEVEN POINTS
UPTOWN

THE HEART OF THE BEAST RELOCATES TO HENNEPIN Front page

The relocation also coincided with other creative momentum on Hennepin. AWH Architects, a firm long committed to community-centered design, moved into offices on the second floor of the former Fifth Element building. Its arrival, together with the puppets, signaled a renewed spirit for the corridor — a stretch of Hennepin that has endured years of struggle. Between the pandemic, social unrest and two long years of construction, many businesses faced daunting challenges. Neighbors described the puppet caravan as more than just a move — it

was a celebration of resilience, creativity and the rebirth of a community artery that has long defined Minneapolis. “The street has been through so much,” said architect Alex Haecker, owner of AWH Architects. “To see these puppets — such symbols of joy and imagination — coming down Hennepin, it felt like hope returning.” Organizers echoed that sense of renewal, calling the event a resounding success. “We were overwhelmed by the support,” Executive Director Elina Kotlyar shared afterward.

“Volunteers showed up to honor decades of art and ensure these puppets keep inspiring future generations.” For nearly 50 years, these puppets have brought magic to Minneapolis. The recent caravan offered a chance to create new memories alongside the figures that mean so much to the city. Now settled into their new home, the puppets’ journey forward continues, hand in hand with Hennepin Avenue’s revival. Once the new space is fully established, HOBT will open the next chapter of community programming. Veteran artist Gustavo Boada, to-

gether with a team of HOBT teaching artists, will lead a series of large puppet-making workshops focused on Alebrijes, brightly colored Mexican folk art sculptures of fantastical creatures. Everyone is welcome — with details coming soon on hobt.org and HOBT’s social media channels.



Now settled into their new home on Hennepin Avenue, HOBT’s puppets will once again anchor community life — with space for workshops, creativity, and new traditions. (Image: Elina Kotlyar)



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WARD 7 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES MEET THE PUBLIC IN TWO FORUMS

By Marty Carlson

Marty Carlson is a regular contributor. He lives in Kenwood.

As summer wound down and convention season wrapped up, the Ward 7 City Council race entered a new phase in September: candidate forums.

Two events were held that month — one at the Loring Green condominiums on Sept. 11, and another at the Bakken Museum on Sept. 15 — featuring incumbent Katie Cashman and Park Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer. A third candidate, Corey Vest, did not participate.

Candidate forums involve moderators posing questions, with each candidate given a set time to answer. There is no direct candidate-to-candidate exchange, making for a more civil atmosphere than traditional debates.

Civil Tone, Substantive Exchanges

Both forums were calm, orderly affairs. Moderators kept the discussion even-handed, audiences were respectful, and candidates kept their remarks focused on policy. While the tone was largely courteous, the candidates occasionally mixed in light barbs and compliments.

At the Bakken event, sponsored by the League of Women Voters Minnesota, candidates had one minute per response. At Loring Green, the format allowed two minutes. Both events lasted about an hour, including opening and closing statements.

The result gave audiences a chance to hear meaningful contrasts between the candidates on issues such as public safety, fiscal policy, transit, the environment and economic development.

Opening Statements

In her opening remarks at both venues, Cashman described herself as a candidate of change who had “met the moment” as a collaborative council member, working with all 13 of her colleagues and the mayor to author ordinances. She highlighted environmental initiatives, the replacement of street lighting, a new playground on the Loring Greenway and 10 miles of protected bikeways as examples of “common ground” wins.

Shaffer characterized herself as pragmatic and responsive, citing her record of consensus-building on the Park Board. She noted the board’s new endowment, its environmental



Council Member Katie Cashman and Park Board District 4 Commissioner Elizabeth Shaffer, present competing visions for Ward 7 at a League of Women Voters forum ahead of the Nov. 4 election to decide the next council member. (Image: Terry White)

and clean water initiatives, and the launch of free youth programming citywide. Her top priorities, she said, are respectful governance, livability and public safety, and economic vitality.

Areas of Agreement

The candidates shared positions on several issues. Both supported an assault weapons ban and expressed caution about converting Nicollet Mall to pedestrian-only. Both backed office-to-housing conversions as a downtown revitalization strategy, and both opposed a city-level income tax.

Points of Disagreement

On George Floyd Square, Shaffer said she supports the mayor’s plan and would resist further delay. Cashman argued that “good decisions take time” and that outstanding issues remain.

On decreased federal funding, Shaffer warned of a looming fiscal challenge that should be met with belt-tightening and a focus on core services. Cashman agreed on the challenge but called for lobbying for more funds and diversifying revenue, including a proposed 2% hotel room fee.

On the mayor’s race, Shaffer endorsed Mayor Jacob Frey’s reelection bid and noted his endorsement of her campaign. Cashman said she has not endorsed a candidate and would work with anyone elected.

Watch the Full Forum

While the Loring Green event was not recorded, the Bakken forum was livestreamed and remains available on the League of Women Voters Minnesota website: lwvmn.org.



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Rob Hubbard, Minneapolis Star Tribune

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THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF ISLES: NEIGHBORS WAIT FOR ACTION

By Susan Lenfestey



The scariest house on Lake of the Isles doesn’t need Halloween decorations — vacant for years, it already gives neighbors the creeps. (Images: Tom Hoch)

Susan Lenfestey is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

October, being the month of ghosts and haunted houses, seemed a good time to check in on the property at 2737 E. Lake of the Isles Parkway to find out what the heck is going on. Hill & Lake Press has written previously about the once-lovely house that has been left empty and neglected by owner Terry Persaud since 2012. In the February 2024 issue, Sean Murphy detailed the deterioration of the house and Persaud’s puzzling lack of upkeep. After he failed to pay taxes, Hennepin County foreclosed on the house in 2023, raising hopes for a new owner. But despite testimony from neighbors and the City of Minneapolis, the county allowed Persaud to pay the \$63,000 due and reclaim the property with no restrictions. At the time, Persaud promised to reha-

bilitate the house within six to nine months. Trick or treat. In the October 2024 issue, Mike Erlandson reported that nothing had been done and, in fact, things had gotten worse — with squatters and squirrels moving into the house, and ongoing safety issues, including a gas leak requiring an emergency nighttime repair. A recent check-in with neighbors revealed more of the same: the front door left wide open, the garage door partially open, people freely accessing the building, foot-high grass, and garbage strewn about the property. If there is any good news in this creepy story, it’s that neighbors are heartened by the efforts of Minneapolis inspector Wayne Murphy, who says the property has been a thorn in his side for years. According to Murphy, on Sept. 1 of this year, the house was placed on the city’s new prolonged vacancy program, which starts

with a \$250 monthly fine and doubles every month until it caps at \$2,000. He’s hopeful the fines will be expensive enough to capture Persaud’s attention and prompt action. Murphy also noted steps the city is taking to discourage vagrancy and make the property less of an eyesore. Crews have hauled garbage, boarded the garage and mowed the lawn. Persaud is responsible for paying for these services. Trick or treat. Neighbors are encouraged to call 911 if they see anyone in the house or attempting to enter it. Other, less serious complaints should be directed to 311, where — if nothing else — they create a paper trail. As long as taxes are paid, there is nothing the county can do. It’s up to Persaud to restore the house or sell it to someone who will. For now, this scary house is one to avoid on Halloween.

WILL VOTE

I WILL VOTE

VOTE!

I WILL VOTE

I WILL VOTE

I WILL VOTE

I WILL VOTE

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Check website before visiting.

Election Day


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CLEM SNIDE W/ DAVID HUCKFELT

SATURDAY 18TH
DELICATE STEVE

SATURDAY 25TH
POLIÇA ALBUM RELEASE SHOW

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Lowry Hill Update

Thanks to all who attended the 2025 Super Sale! A record 140 sales swept six neighborhoods. We appreciate everyone who sold, shopped, or volunteered to make it happen. Special thanks to DAV Dept of MN, who facilitated pick-up of most of the unsold items for charity donation.

Thrill Uptown returns on Oct. 25, a reimagined Thrill Kenwood, where communities gather for a synchronized, global dance to Michael Jackson's Thriller. As always, it will be a fun, ghoulish experience—don't miss it!

This December, LHNA is leading **Holidays On Hennepin**! Eat, shop, explore, and celebrate on a new and improved Hennepin Ave. Businesses can get in involved for free! Learn more and follow along from holidaysonhennepin.com.



Lowry Hill Board Meetings

Oct. 7 | 1st Tues. 6:30 – 8 PM
Kenwood Community Center: 2101 W Franklin Ave
Join us for neighborhood updates! To join the agenda, please email lhna@lowryhillneighborhood.org.

Lowry Hill Neighborhood Walks

Oct. 18 • Nov. 15 3rd Sat. 10 – 11:30 AM
Start + end at Sebastian Joe's: 1007 W Franklin Ave
Join us for friendly walks around Lowry Hill! Get outside, meet neighbors, pick up litter, and build community.

Thrill Uptown

Oct. 25 Sat. 2 – 6 PM, 5 PM dance
Seven Points: 3001 Hennepin Ave S
Join the 16th annual Thrill Kenwood—reimagined and relocated! This high-energy event gathers community for a synchronized, global dance to Michael Jackson's Thriller, while supporting local businesses and collecting food donations. All are welcome!

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Nov. 4 Tues. Polling places open 7AM – 8 PM
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Photo courtesy of Alex Cook, youarelovedmurals.com



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WHY GO?: WATERBURY IS WORTH A VISIT

By Jason Suss



Jason Suss spent 15 years in tech before leaving the corporate world to pursue his passion for cocktails. For the past 12 years, he has worked on both sides of the bar at local restaurants. He now lives in Lowry Hill and owns @AProper-Pour.

If you haven't heard of Waterbury, you're not alone. It's the restaurant inside the Waterbury House apartment building — the high-end luxury complex wedged in that odd triangle near the fire station, Whole Foods and Bde Maka Ska. Like everything else in that corner of the city, it's surrounded by construction. The building and restaurant share almost the same name, which makes it even easier to miss. But it's there. Let's talk about it.

First, the ownership: the same group runs Oliver's and Bricks in Blaine and Shoreview, along with the food and beverage program at the charming Lora hotel in Stillwater. That includes Feller and its bar, The Long Goodbye. I've stayed at Lora, eaten and drank at both, and had a great time. It's an ideal spot for a staycation. This group knows what it's doing.

So, what's the deal with Waterbury? Honestly, it's a little confusing. It looks and feels like a boutique hotel restaurant and lounge, even though it's attached to apartments. That's probably intentional — these are some of the priciest apartments in the Twin Cities. There's free indoor parking through the garage door on the south side, though it's valet only on Wednesday nights when there's live jazz. The big lot just south of the building is free to the public after 5:30 p.m. Mon-Fri and All-day Sat, Sun, and Holidays.

The Food

Waterbury keeps ambitious hours: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. most days, until 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. That schedule, plus the all-day coffee bar, reinforces the hotel vibe. The menu runs the gamut — calamari, potstickers, sandwiches, falafel, salads, pasta, bison short ribs, and more. Prices range from a \$12 happy hour burger to a \$65 steak frites. I tried the burger with shoestring fries. Both were good, and the room seemed full of satisfied diners.

The Drinks

Now my specialty. The bar is well stocked with quality spirits and a thoughtful wine list. The cocktail menu mixes signature house creations with classics, plus a strong lineup of non-alcoholic options. My gripe? The flowery descriptions. Just tell me what's in the glass. I'll decide if it "elevates me to new levels of glamour and luxury." Someone clearly got carried away with ChatGPT. Still, the drinks were solid. No surprise there — the bartender used to work at Matchstick in Stillwater, which has a legendary library of 2,000-plus premium spirits.

So, why go?

That's where it gets tricky. Everything I had was good, and reviews back that up. But aside



Waterbury's polished dining room offers boutique-hotel vibes without the hotel. Guests toast cocktails from the well-stocked bar alongside a menu ranging from burgers to bison short ribs. Located at 3012 Excelsior Blvd., Suite 101. (Images: Waterbury)

from its polished, upscale chain-hotel-lobby vibe, I wasn't sure what Waterbury wanted to be. Safe and crowd-pleasing seems to be the mission. Nobody's leaving unhappy — assuming they know that the place exists. Prices are on the

high side, but that's par for the course now. Food and drinks are high quality, the décor is attractive and the staff is attentive. For value, aim for happy hour.

→ WATERBURY HIGHLIGHTS

- Live jazz on Wednesday nights
- A place to grab coffee and knock out some work at 9 a.m., 2 p.m. or 7 p.m. or anytime
- A weekday drink with an old coworker at 3 p.m.
- Dinner with family, friends or coworkers from the suburbs, with something for everyone
- A sit-down Monday lunch in a neighborhood with few options
- A higher-end alternative to the West End in St. Louis Park
- A discreet beer on the way home from the country club
- A non-sports bar where you can still catch the game

So, give it a try. Water you waiting for?

THE FIRE...

Photos by Eric Jorgensen



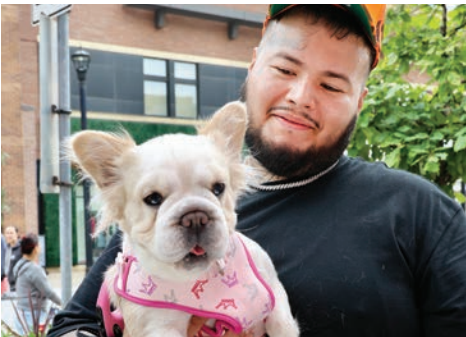
...& ICE CREAM EVENT

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OPEN STREETS, OPEN HEARTS, OPEN UPTOWN

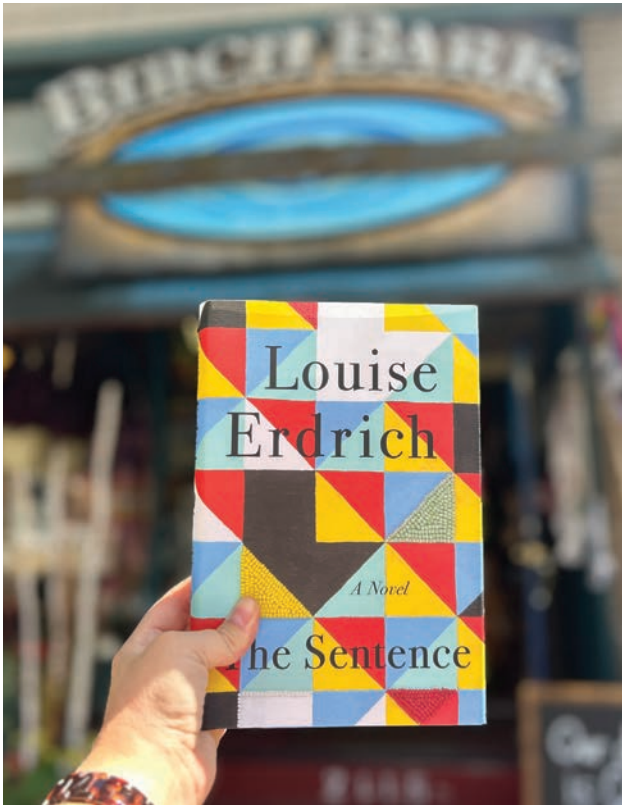
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IN DEFENSE OF READING LITERALLY ANYTHING

By Molly Mogren Katt



Left: The triumphant moment Molly Mogren Katt musters the courage to visit Birchbark Books in Kenwood to purchase “The Sentence” by Louise Erdrich. (Image: Molly Mogren Katt) Right: Birchbark Books & Native Arts. (Image: Courtesy of Jenn Ackerman of The New York Times)

Molly Mogren Katt is a writer, entrepreneur and mom who launched HeyEleanor! on Substack to document facing her fears. She is a regular contributor and lives in the Wedge.

Dear reader, let me take you back to my most humiliating experience.

In 2015, “Hey Eleanor” — my blog about doing one thing every day that scared me and writing about it — caught the eye of a celebrated Minnesota Public Radio host.

She booked me on her weekly roundtable discussion. I held my own alongside a well-known PBS travel host and a local hip-hop artist. A few months later, the MPR host told me she’d enjoyed our last conversation and asked if I’d like to return — specifically, to talk about why people lie about having read a book.

“You know, like why someone might say they’ve read Harry Potter when they actually haven’t,” her producer explained. Cool. Count me in!

On the day of the recording, I arrived at the station ready to share my compelling thoughts on not reading Harry Potter with all those good MPR listeners driving their Volvos. The host introduced the topic and her “three smart guests” — a bookish writer, a bigwig at a nonprofit and me. Then she posed a question about Minnesota author Louise Erdrich.

Neither of the other guests had read any of Erdrich’s books. But oh, how they still had plenty to say! As both men waxed on about her novels and awards and bookstore, I felt my face bloom with heat. I had two options: lie or tell the truth. I did the latter.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t even know who we’re talking about.”

I patted myself on the back for keeping it real, thinking this would provide a perfect segue: Why do we lie about reading things we haven’t? Obviously because we don’t want to seem stupid! And look at me with my vulnerability. It’s all going to be OK!

The host shook her head in disgust, then reset the conversation.

“OK then,” she said. “I’m [MPR HOST] here, talking with three smart people about why someone might lie about having read books they haven’t actually read. Or at least I thought I was talking to three smart people.”

I shriveled into a raisin. I hoped for a fire alarm to blare. A tornado. A sharknado. Anything to get me out of the studio. I spent the

rest of the hour trying to assure the host and her overly educated listeners that “Me Molly! Me read good! Me big brain in head!”

I never listened to the broadcast. But don’t worry, it plays rent-free in my mind. Once I overcame the shame — which took years — I embraced my anger. I realized the host wanted to talk about why people lie about reading books because she thought less of those kinds of people.

I, on the other hand, believe that we should encourage people to read whatever they like — even if it’s campy thrillers or the latest Colleen Hoover novel. Those books make publishers so much money they can invest in lesser-known writers working on the actual next Great American Novel our MPR friend wants you to know she read before you did, you pathetic loser.

“Can you imagine a Pulitzer Prize-winning author putting words to the place you call home — knowing the neighborhood as intimately as you do, writing about bruises yet to heal? Of course you can, because you live here too.”

Fast-forward to 2025.

This summer, my kids attended six weeks of camp at Kenwood Elementary School. Directly across the street, you’ll find Birchbark Books, owned by author and National Book Award/Pulitzer Prize winner Louise Erdrich. Maybe you’ve heard of her? But if you haven’t, that’s OK! I won’t be a jerk about it.

I finally mustered the courage to walk through its blue door. I browsed the main ta-

ble, covered in new releases. I read note cards with mini reviews of the staff’s favorite books. Finally, I found what I came for: Erdrich’s 2022 novel, “The Sentence.”

A young woman rang up my purchase. “You know,” she said. “This book actually takes place right here in this bookstore. And all over the neighborhood.”

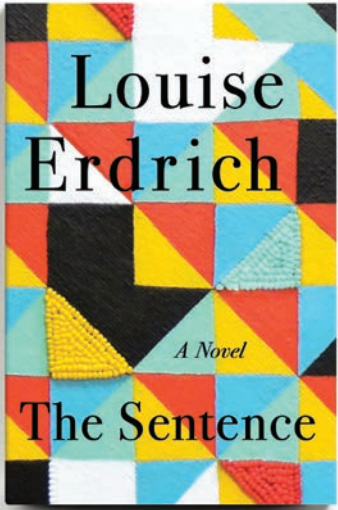
“I know,” I said, hoping I wasn’t blushing. “That’s actually why I’m buying it.”

I devoured the book in less than a week. It takes place all over Minneapolis, but mostly in South Minneapolis — where I’ve lived for nearly 20 years.

Tookie, a woman who works at Birchbark, battles literal and figurative ghosts from her past. The story takes place between November 2019 and November 2020, a challenging time for everyone but especially in Minneapolis, where the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder continues to affect everything — politics, commerce, transportation, public safety, art, day-to-day living, you name it. I think about him every single day.

Can you imagine a Pulitzer Prize-winning author putting words to the place you call home — knowing the neighborhood as intimately as you do, writing about bruises yet to heal? Of course you can, because you live here too.

“The Sentence” made me laugh and brought me to tears. It’s the best book I’ve read all year. I highly suggest you read it. But if you don’t, no need to lie to me about it. Only a snob would think less of you for not reading a book.



FROM DENTAL FLOSS TO WEIRD AL: RETHINKING HOLIDAY GIVING

A monthly column by Dorothy Richmond

Dorothy Richmond is founder of the Dear Neighbor column and a longtime resident of Cedar-Isles-Dean.

Dear Neighbor,

It’s October. Already the holiday assault has arrived: stores, ads, mindsets — leaving many of us wide-eyed and perhaps horrified at the prospect of the most wonderful time of year.

The biggest hurdle often involves gift-giving. Kids’ presents are easy. Unless there’s a Cabbage Patch Kids or Tickle Me Elmo frenzy afoot, Barbies, books and board games can be found right up to the last moment. Gifts for adults who seem to “have everything” are trickier. I’m one of them, at a place in life where I get a bigger thrill from getting rid of things than acquiring them. My wants and needs have merged.

My daughters are marvelous at treating me, knowing well my two favorite gift categories: consumables and events. Consumables are simple — jugs of iced coffee, unwaxed dental floss (why is it so hard to find?), fancy soaps, black-ink pens. Last Christmas, they gave us tickets to see Weird Al Yankovic, who performed in June at Treasure Island Casino in Welch, near Red Wing. A night out with my girls is what makes a great gift magnificent.

I fell in love with Weird Al’s genius in 1995, on a road trip with my friend Kay. She was on a business trip in Santa Fe and invited me to meet her afterward. We spent a few days exploring the city, then drove up to Bandelier National Monument. Kay had a pile of cassettes in her car, and as I pawed through them — no, nah, nope, ick — there was Weird Al. Yes! I’d always liked him, but he hadn’t yet reached my top shelf like Van Morrison did the first time I

heard him. I liked Weird Al because he was unquestionably talented, and I’m a sucker for the accordion — and for weird.

It was his polka version of Iron Butterfly’s “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida” that hooked me. I convulsed with laughter and replayed it until Kay threatened to throw the tape out the window if I didn’t stop. Since then, I’ve followed Weird Al, mostly on YouTube, so seeing him live with Daisy and Lily bordered on a religious experience. The crowd was an amalgam of weirdos of every stripe, many clad in Hawaiian shirts — his signature sartorial choice. We sang, we danced, we laughed. We were happy, and we were one. Few things in life can generate all that.

Weird Al himself is as fascinating as his music. Alfred Matthew Yankovic was born in 1959, the only child of Mary Elizabeth and Nick Yankovic, and grew up in Lynwood, California. He is of Slovene and Croatian descent. He began accordion lessons the day before his seventh birthday after a door-to-door salesman offered lessons on accordion or guitar. His parents chose the accordion because, according to Weird Al, “they were convinced it would revolutionize rock.”

He is extremely intelligent, starting kindergarten a year early and skipping second grade before graduating high school at 16 as valedictorian. He earned an architecture degree in 1980 from California Polytechnic State University, where dormmates first dubbed him “Weird Al”— a nickname he turned into a professional persona. Though trained as an architect, he never practiced. By 1987, his band was touring as the opening act for the re-formed Monkees.

Weird Al’s first hit was “My Bologna” in 1979, a parody of The Knack’s “My Sharona.”

His first television appearance came in 1981 on Tom Snyder’s “The Tomorrow Show,” where he performed “Another One Rides the Bus,” his take on Queen’s “Another One Bites the Dust.” On YouTube, you can watch percussionist Jon “Bermuda” Schwartz bang on Weird Al’s accordion case to keep the beat, adding sound effects like horns and whistles.

Though he plays several instruments, his signature remains the accordion. His videos are equally unforgettable. I’ve never disliked one, but my favorite is “Tacky,” his send-up of Pharrell’s “Happy.” It features several familiar faces, none more wondrously tacky than Jack Black, who, as one commenter put it, “was born to be in this video.” “Tacky” always makes me “Happy.” Weird Al on YouTube remains a source of continuous delight.

So, adult children of parents, this holiday season think about giving Mom or Dad the gift of fun. And make sure to include yourselves.

— Dorothy



Hill & Lake Press

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NEW FLAVORS
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Sebastian Joe's

TREASURE HUNTING IN THE ‘HOOD

By Paula Chesley

Paula Chesley lives in East Isles.

My neighborhood Super Sale experience began the day before the annual event, which was on Sept. 13 this year. As a buyer, I armed myself with \$1 and \$5 bills — faster and more universal than Venmo, despite my friends’ teasing. I studied the map, targeted dense blocks and multi-family sales, and emailed my partner a list.

As a child, I learned garage-sale wisdom from my grandma: show up on time and always bargain. A third rule — know when to walk away — came to mind at 8:55 a.m. in Lowry Hill when I spotted a new KitchenAid

mixer priced out of reach.

Biking with a backpack and big blue Ikea bag proved to be the smart move. At my friend Quinton’s sale on Irving, repeat customers snapped up his men’s clothes, netting him \$580.

Later, I found Sarah’s coats — Calvin Klein and North Face — for \$3 each. No bargaining needed.

We also bought bracelets and played kids’ games, then took a lunch break before returning for “buyer’s market” deals in the afternoon. I bargained a foosball table down to \$3, and at a Bluebird and Blooms sale, a volun-

teer persuaded me to buy more while sharing the nonprofit’s mission of bringing flowers to memory care residents.

Walking home with a second full Ikea bag, I overheard visitors marveling at our neighborhood’s charm. That evening, Quinton hosted neighbors on his porch, while others laughed with friends beside piles of unsold items waiting for pickup.

The Super Sale isn’t just about bargains. It’s economic development, community-building and a reminder of what makes our neighborhoods special.



Neighbors across Hill & Lake neighborhoods came together this September for the annual Super Sale, turning streets and yards into a lively marketplace of treasures, bargains and community spirit. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)