



Providing local news to the Minneapolis lakes community since 1976

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SILVER THREADS, GOLDEN NEEDLES: Stitching Together 50 Years of the Hill & Lake Press

By Susan Lenfestey, Cofounder



Happy 50th Birthday to the Hill & Lake Press: 1976-2026! That's 600 monthly issues! (Updated illustrations: Richard Boehm)

Susan Lenfestey is a cofounder of the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Lowry Hill.

By the time you receive this paper, we will have turned the tattered pages of 2025 and done our best to sprinkle the pages of 2026 with hope.

And speaking of tattered pages, in 2026 the Hill & Lake Press will turn 50.

Here is how it began. In 1974, we moved to Minneapolis, leaving an “intentional” farm community in western Massachusetts for the preferred unintentional community of a city neighborhood.

A few years later, I joined what was then called the Lowry Hill Homeowners Association. After suggesting a name change to include all residents, I proposed publishing a newsletter and noted that my clever husband, Jim, had the chops to make it happen. The board agreed and even provided some funding.

Around the same time, the East Isles Residents Association had a similar idea. With Win Rockwell as editor, they published one issue of what was called the EIRA News in 1976. Jim called Win and suggested collaborating under the name Hill (Lowry) & Lake (Isles) Press. The next issue carried that name. And so it began.

After a few more issues, the Kenwood Neighborhood Association wanted in. Shortly after that, Cedar-Isles-Dean joined as well. Each neighborhood helped with funding and recruited an editor.

Bylaws? A board of directors? We were just kids, in love with our city, our neighborhood and sometimes each other. We wanted to build community and cover local issues that the “biggies,” the Star and the Tribune, did not. Yes, there were two daily papers at the time. Hence the slogan under our

logo, Where the Biggies Leave Off.

And the logo. Is it a goose? A duck? No one knows for sure. Roger Boehm, a freelance artist, was our illustrator. He showed up at layout sessions to enliven the pages with quirky, free-range critters and designs. Roger now lives in Northfield and graciously agreed to update our mystery fowl for this issue.

Did I mention free? We all worked for free. Writing, production and distribution were done by volunteers. Our only expenses were supplies such as rubber cement, graph paper, press type and printing. Printing required the editor to drive the pasted flats to a print shop in Shakopee. Children, this was before the electronic age.

Editors rotated responsibility for each issue, month by month. Being editor meant planning articles, lining up writers, photographers and illustrators, editing typewritten submissions, handing them off to an ace typist and hosting layout sessions.

At layout, a dozen or so people gathered in editors’ homes to cut out typed columns and paste them onto large cardboard flats, then create colorful headlines by pressing letters onto graph paper, one by one. We sustained ourselves with adult beverages, sharpened our humor and built bonds in the process. In many ways, the process mattered as much as the product.

We paid our minimal expenses by selling ads. Because we covered the Lakes area and social media did not exist, advertisers lined up. At one point, there was a waiting list to advertise in the Hill & Lake Press. We were flush.

That led to the question of how to spend our money. Did I mention we were very young? We threw a party. There were prizes, skits, food, drinks and dancing. Word spread, with wildly exaggerated stories, and soon more people signed up to help with the paper. We threw more parties. It was a lark.

After a decade or so, our founding crew grew older, and other demands took hold. New editors, writers and illustrators stepped in to carry the torch. Layout sessions moved to the new Kenwood Rec Center, a practical shift that also changed the party vibe.

Some writers continued, including the clever husband, also known as the Urban Coyote. As technology arrived, what had been

a group effort gradually became a solo one. Articles were emailed. Layout happened on a computer screen. We lost the glue, in every sense.

Other changes followed. At one time, there were roughly 30 neighborhood papers like ours. As people turned to online news, print faded. What kept the Hill & Lake Press afloat for the last two decades was the dogged devotion of editor Jean Deatrick and a small group of friends who continued to send her stories, like Craig Wilson who founded the Meet Your Neighbor column in 2008.

Four years ago this February, Craig asked Jean if he could lend a hand. She told him he should be the editor, as she was tired. Jean died less than a year later. Craig created a board of directors to put the paper on firm legal footing, taught himself layout software, learned AP style, thanks to pros like Kathy Low and Jill Field, and assembled a crew of worker bees to reinvigorate it. And here we are nearly 50 issues later on our 50th anniversary.

What began as a black-and-white 16-page paper now averages 24-28 full-color pages. Instead of relying on volunteers to toss papers onto doorsteps and into bushes, we now mail the paper to over 16,000 households, finally reaching neighbors in apartments. We still rely on advertisers and donors like you. We are not flush, but we are overdue for a party for the community to celebrate, so stay tuned.

Looking back at early editions, it is striking how some themes persist: developing Uptown, rerouting traffic, protecting parks, though the tone has changed. We were a more unified city and our discourse was less intense. When we wrote about



When ICE Hits Home

Page 3

Hennepin County Attorney: Five Candidates, One Job, Very Different Ideas of Justice

Page 13

Acclaimed Local Author and Neighbor: JACK EL-HAI

Page 17

Group Fitness vs. Personal Training

Pages 20-21

SUN DOGS: Nature Continues to be Rad

Page 25



(Image: Brandon Colpitts)

ice, we meant the skating rink. Today, we face challenges we never imagined.

Technology has reduced the community it takes to put out a print newspaper, but it has expanded the community we try to connect.

We may have lost some of the bonhomie of the glue-pot days, but we have double downed on our commitment to covering local issues and their impact on this place we call home. And we — well, some of us — look forward to doing that for another 50 years.

50TH

ANNIVERSARY

1976 - 2026

Hill & Lake Press

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TO THE letters editor

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 as space permits), and we reserve the right to edit for clarity and length. We do not publish submissions from anonymous sources; all contributor identities must be verified.

Excited About New Bike Lanes on Hennepin

As an avid cyclist, I want to applaud the long-awaited improvements to the Hennepin Avenue bike lanes. Riding a bike in a city can be a dangerous pursuit. Cars do not always see you. Trucks, construction vans and landscaping features make it difficult for cyclists to see traffic at four-way intersections. When you factor in rush-hour congestion, speeding cars and distracted drivers, it is a wonder we cyclists try at all.

In my 50 years of cycling, I have been door-swiped, sent to the emergency room and have had numerous falls because of road conditions and my own blunders. Riding the backstreets through Uptown during the construction phase, I was nearly clipped by UPS trucks and had to ride up onto sidewalks to avoid errant cars. I even hopped a few curbs for my own safety.

Now that the Hennepin Avenue project is complete, I can breathe a sigh of relief. That is not to say the bike lanes are completely safe. I still pay attention on Hennepin Avenue. I still obey traffic laws. But for the most part, it is a far safer route when I am exiting the Greenway or running an errand to Kowalski's.

I sometimes think Minnesotans forget how lucky we are to live in a state with strong local guidelines that protect pedestrians and cyclists from motorized vehicles. Not every state abides by the same standards. We are a better community for it. I sure am grateful. See your local bike store and wheel up.

Tom Trondson
Lowry Hill

Have You Seen Jeff?

Jeff is a homeless man who wanders around Cedar-Isles-Dean pushing his worldly goods in a shopping cart. I have talked with him many times. He says he is "in transition," no doubt, and he knows baseball statistics galore. He often hangs out at Rustica and Punch Pizza, where he writes in a notebook with a pen. I once saw him sleeping in the periodical section of Barnes & Noble.

I assume he stays in a shelter at night and is turned out in the morning. A few months ago, I bought him a coffee and a slice of banana bread at Rustica, for which he was grateful. Where he will go now that the cold weather has arrived is anybody's guess.

If you see him, buy him a coffee and a slice of banana bread and be grateful for what you have.

Michael Rothman
Cedar-Isles-Dean

A Response to Susan Lenfestey's Article, "We Can Do Better, Minneapolis. Here's How."

Bravo to Ms. Lenfestey for her proposal to eliminate caucuses. On the other hand, she writes, "Combined with caucuses, ranked choice voting's promise of a more democratic process falls flat when participation requires time, childcare and a how-to manual just to cast a knowledgeable vote." This is a very old manipulative propaganda device, somewhat akin to a doctor saying, "Combined with cancer, that hangnail spells big trouble ahead."

As for manuals, most people have only the dimmest grasp of Robert's Rules of Order. If caucuses were to continue, perhaps a routine regimen of pre-caucus practice should be placed on autopilot. However, nearly no one requires anything resembling a manual to meet the RCV "challenge" of counting from one to three or just one, if the voter so chooses.

Which brings us to the claim that "one in five voters did not rank candidates at all. They selected only Jacob Frey; a smaller portion did the same for Omar Fateh." So, four out of five voters did rank. And the point is?

Ms. Lenfestey is absolutely right that voters were inundated with campaign mailers. But then she suggests holding party primaries in April. That would mean seven months of party-based general election inundation, plus the pre-April mail that would inevitably arrive. All of this for nonpartisan offices.

One reason for ranked choice voting's creation was the notoriously low turnout for primaries, whether partisan or nonpartisan. I do concede that having a large field on the ballot is a complicating factor. So why not compromise with a tweak along the lines of the Alaska Two-Step, widely regarded as the current gold standard of electoral reform?

My suggestion is a "vote for one only" primary held the day after Labor Day, with the top five candidates, regardless of party, advancing to the general election, where ranked choice voting would be used.

Darryl G. Carter
Bryn Mawr



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WHEN ICE HITS HOME

By Courtney Cushing Kiernat



Courtney's sister Wendy and her daughter. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

Courtney Cushing Kiernat is a staff photographer and regular contributor. She lives in Kenwood.

My 36-year-old sister called me in a panic this week, afraid that the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) would arrest her. At 2 years old, she joined our family after being adopted from her home country of Honduras. She was a resilient little peanut,

and that resilience has carried her through many hard times. But nothing prepares a person for the fear of being arrested by ICE, of having their life upended and their child traumatized. While my news consumption has lessened in 2025, I am still an avid MPR listener and get the newspaper delivered to my door. I consider myself fairly informed about local and world events. Yet when it came to the real threat of ICE, I was simply an informed media consumer going about my day, sharing frustration and anger with friends and colleagues from a safe distance. That distance disappeared the moment my sister called. It is easy for me to move through my day and pretend everything is OK. I am not fearful that ICE agents will surround me, masked, with guns within arm's reach, to forcibly arrest me. I am not fearful that I will be taken and my family will not know where I am being held or whether I am safe. I am not fearful that, in the chaos of confiscated phones and shouted commands, my husband's phone number will slip from my mind as I plead with a bystander to call someone, anyone, for me. I am not fearful for myself or my children that they will be traumatized by my hypervigilance or by rehearsed reminders of what to do if ICE comes to their school or takes me away in front of them.

"...I am fearful for my sister and her daughter, who are just as American as I am yet targeted because of the color of their skin."

But I am fearful for my sister and her daughter, who are just as American as I am yet targeted because of the color of their skin. It is hard to find hope when my sister calls in a panic, afraid she could be arrested simply for going about her day, contributing to our community as a volunteer, taxpayer, neighbor and mother. It is hard to find hope when my niece has to be reminded what to do if ICE approaches her or her mom. I am, by nature, a glass-half-full person, and I need to take action.

I help my sister prepare, just in case she is picked up by ICE. I prepare myself for what to do if I witness another human being detained. I give to and volunteer with organizations that support immigrants. I know I can and should do more from my position of safety, even when it feels overwhelming. So I focus on where I can make an impact, with my sister and within my community. Everyone is someone's child, someone's friend, someone's neighbor, and if you're lucky, someone's sibling. I owe it to my sister to speak up, act up and show up.

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THE UPTOWN WINTER WONDERLAND MARKET WARMS A COLD DAY

By Carla Pardue



(Images: Darin Kamnetz)



Carla Pardue is a super volunteer and the outreach coordinator at the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in East Isles. The wind howled and the snow came sideways at this year's Uptown Winter Wonderland Holiday Market, but none of that seemed to matter. Neighbors came anyway. I have volunteered at the market all three years it has existed, and each year more people have shown up. After years of disruption and uncertainty, the simple act of gathering feels meaningful. People lingered, talked and laughed and seemed genuinely glad to see

one another. Children, and those young at heart, delighted in the free crafting and fun photo-ops at True North Studio. Several were lucky to receive a mini snowflake from a Snow Queen who stopped by. My post this year was a table of framed photographs from past Uptown Art Fairs offered in exchange for donations to the Uptown Association. The images stretched back to the 1990s and they stopped people in their tracks. Strangers leaned in together pointing out long gone storefronts, familiar faces and moments they remembered. Many left smiling with a framed print under their arm.

Those old photos did more than decorate walls. They reminded us that Uptown has always been a place of creativity, energy and community. They carried memories of what has been and quiet optimism for what comes next. Despite everything Uptown has been through, the community is still here. The vibe is still here. The joy of being together is still here. I love Uptown. It is my home. It is the people who keep showing up who make it work and who are helping make it joyful again. See you next year.

METRO TRANSIT OPENS NEW E LINE BRT SERVICE

By Terry White



Minneapolis city leaders, including Mayor Jacob Frey (in green tie), City Council Vice President Aisha Chughtai (speaking) and Council Member Katie Cashman, mark the reopening of Hennepin Avenue in Uptown Minneapolis. (Image and caption: Kyle Stokes/Axios)



The E Line, a new bus rapid transit route, began service in Uptown on Dec. 6. (Image: Metro Transit)

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

Metro Transit officials marked the opening of the new E Line bus rapid transit route with a ribbon-cutting and media event on Dec. 6, 2025.

Local elected officials attended, including Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene, who represents District 3.

“Buses on the E Line arrive every 10 to 15 minutes, with all-door boarding and fewer stops.”

The E Line runs from the University of Minnesota campus through downtown Minneapolis and Uptown, continues southwest to France Avenue and West 44th Street, and terminates at the Southdale Transit Center. The route replaces Local Route 6 and is designed to reduce travel times

by making fewer stops and requiring riders to pay fares before boarding.

“The E Line project cost \$64 million to construct, not including ongoing operating expenses.”

Adult rush-hour fare is \$3.25. Riders can pay using a refillable Go-To Card or the Go-To app. Stations along the route feature heated shelters, enhanced lighting and additional security cameras.

The E Line is part of Metro Transit’s bus rapid transit expansion and joins the A, B, C, D, Orange and Gold lines. Metro Transit reports that ridership on those lines has increased since last January.

The E Line project cost \$64 million to construct, not including ongoing operating expenses. The route will use 18 articulated, 60-foot buses with all-door boarding. Service runs daily, excluding the hours between 1 a.m. and 4:30

a.m., with buses arriving every 10 to 15 minutes — a 30% increase in service compared with the former Route 6.

If weekday ridership matches Route 6 levels, Metro Transit projects about 3,800 rides per weekday. At full rush-hour fare,


“The E Line will increase service by about 30% compared with the former Route 6.”

fare revenue would take more than 14 years to equal the project’s capital cost. A 20% increase in ridership would reduce that estimate to about 12 years. According to the Metropolitan Council, the operating subsidy for a route of this type averages about \$6.15 per ride.

Additional bus rapid transit lines are in development and scheduled to open in 2027. The Green Line Extension, also known as Southwest light rail, is under construction and is projected to

have a capital cost of more than \$3 billion. Officials continue to evaluate the costs and performance benchmarks for major transit projects, including ridership and operating subsidies.

Incorporating bus trips into daily routines can support public transportation use and help reduce vehicle miles traveled.



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E Line

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Hill & Lake Press

NEIGHBORS REPORT POLICE RAID AT 2815 HENNEPIN AVENUE

By Craig Wilson

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

Businesses and residents in the vicinity of the 2800 block of Hennepin Avenue say they witnessed a significant police presence at a storefront at 2815 Hennepin on the morning of Dec. 19, 2025.

According to nearby neighbors, at least five squad cars and roughly 15 officers arrived around 9:15 a.m., some carrying rifles, and entered the building through the rear alley entrance.

Witnesses reported that officers appeared to go in and out of the building for about an hour and that police later returned around 11:15 a.m. the same day.

Several residents said they were told the activity was tied to a high-risk warrant connected to a larger investigation and that some of the focus appeared to involve the basement beneath the storefront.

Foil-covered windows block view.
The windows of the business at 2815 Hennepin are covered in foil, preventing visibility inside.
Nearby residents have long

raised concerns about late-night gatherings in the area, describing large groups of people congregating between 2:30 and 6 a.m. on weekend nights, at times for several months at a stretch. One neighbor also noted that contractors performing cleaning work last week were instructed not to go near the basement entrance.

“According to nearby neighbors, at least five squad cars and roughly 15 officers arrived around 9:15 a.m., some carrying rifles, and entered the building through the rear alley entrance.”



2815 Hennepin Avenue South (Image: Google Maps)

Following the police activity, neighbors reported seeing a vehicle towed from the alley with a blown-out rear windshield and what appeared to be bullet holes in the back of the car.

The Hill & Lake Press contacted the Minneapolis Police Department for comment and an update on the incident but has not received a response.

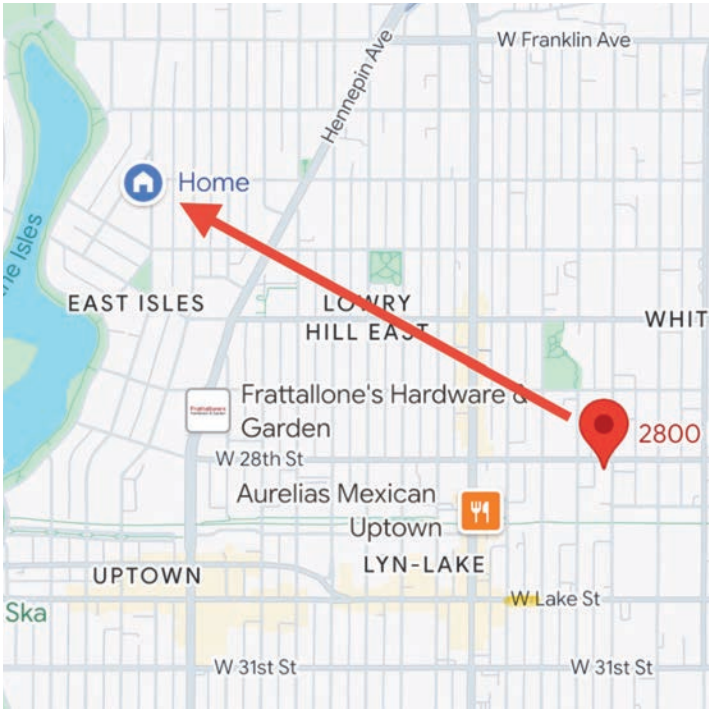
This account reflects observations from neighbors in the vicinity who are concerned about ongoing activity at the property. Hill & Lake Press will continue to follow this story as it develops.

STRAY BULLET ENTERS EAST ISLES HOME, RAISING FRESH SAFETY CONCERNS FOR RESIDENTS

By Craig Wilson



(Images: Quinton Courts)



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

An East Isles couple is grappling with shock and frustration after a stray bullet pierced their kitchen window earlier this month, narrowly missing one of them and their dogs. The incident, which took place around 8:20 p.m. on the evening of Dec. 17, 2025.

Quenton Courts said he was not home at the time, but his husband, Preston, was sitting in the living room with their dogs when he heard glass shatter. Startled, he ran toward the kitchen. “He noticed there was glass on the floor and was just instantaneously puzzled,” Courts said. “Then he looked at the window and

saw two bullet holes.” Shards of glass were scattered across the room, and a single bullet lay on the floor. The projectile appeared to have traveled in a steep downward angle. “It came basically from the direction of our neighbor’s house, but from a vertical direction, like standing above the house,” Courts said.

Neither Preston nor the neighbors heard gunfire. After calling the neighbor to confirm, Preston dialed 911.

When officers arrived, they were immediately struck by the angle of the entry. The bullet had come from the southeast side of the home in a trajectory police said could not have been fired by anyone on the street or from ground level. Officers

quickly identified it as a “flyer,” a term used for a bullet fired from far away that travels unobstructed in an arc before landing elsewhere.

Police told the couple that Preston’s call came in at the exact same moment ShotSpotter technology detected gunfire at 28th Street and Pleasant Avenue in the Whittier neighborhood near, roughly a mile and a half away. The city’s crime dashboard later showed three related activations: the ShotSpotter alert, Preston’s 911 call, and a separate report of shots fired near the same intersection.

Inside the kitchen, the bullet’s path was chilling. Officers told the couple the bullet entered at abdomen height, crossed the center of the room—where the couple regu-

larly prepares meals—and struck the trim of the basement door at knee level on the opposite side. “They said he was really fortunate he wasn’t in the room at the time,” Courts said. “Or our dogs, because one of them would have been shot.”

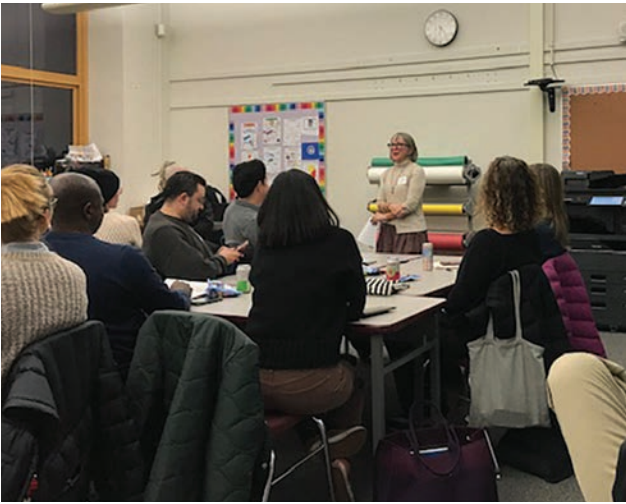
This is not the couple’s first brush with unpredictable danger. “This is two years after we experienced a car randomly flying over the median, taking out three sections of our fence and landing in our neighbor’s dining room, and tossing a gun into our yard,” Courts said. “We bought a lottery ticket after this one.”

But the ongoing stress adds up. “It raises questions about livability,” Courts said. “Since moving to Minneapolis in 2021, we’ve tried to channel our energy in positive ways. I’ve been on the East Isles Neighborhood Association since 2022, volunteering and leading programming. But as millennial homeowners in the city, we often stop and question the value of living here. We love our neighbors and we love old houses and we love what Minneapolis could be, but it’s been four pretty exhausting years after we’ve also captured a carjacking and multiple auto and property thefts all from our video doorbell.” He paused before adding: “We’re just kind of tired.”

Police collected the bullet, and the investigation remains open. The couple noted that officers handled the situation with empathy and professionalism.

KENWOOD SCHOOL HOSTS DISCUSSION OF TECHNOLOGY IN CHILDREN’S LIVES

By Alexi Tabrizi



Parents at the Kenwood School discussion on technology and how it is impacting the lives of children. (Image: Minneapolis Public Schools)

Alexi Tabrizi is mom to a first grader at Kenwood Elementary and has lived in Minneapolis the past seven years after being based in Berlin, London and NYC for her career in global tourism. She lives in the Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhood.

About 40 parents and caregivers recently gathered at Kenwood School for a thoughtful discussion organized by the Kenwood Site Council on how technology is shaping children’s lives and the shared challenges of setting boundaries and limits. Participants reflected on how play has changed since their own childhoods, why technology limits can be difficult to enforce, and strategies that have helped children stay present and engaged.

The session was led by Alyssa Polack, Kenwood’s instructional coach, along with parent facilitators Corey China, Annie Meister and Alexi Tabrizi. The conversation was intentionally open and judgment-free, with families coming together to look for solutions as a community while also thinking ahead to future decisions around smartphones and social media. To encourage participation, the Kenwood PTA sponsored childcare at the adjoining rec center. Heidi Johnson, Kenwood Community School principal and Kenwood Site Council co-chair, said, “Opportunities to come together as a school community to discuss issues weighing on the hearts and minds of educators and caregivers are incredibly valuable. I’m grateful for the chance to work in partnership with fam-

ilies to support safe, healthy and intentional uses of and access to technology at each grade-level band.” The meeting marked the first of three planned evenings hosted by the Kenwood Site Council on this topic. The next event will include a screening of the award-winning

“I’m grateful for the chance to work in partnership with families to support safe, healthy and intentional uses of technology.”

— Heidi Johnson, Kenwood Community School Principal

45-minute documentary “Screenagers” in mid-January. The film explores youth mental health, screen time and digital wellness. Childcare will again be provided, followed by a group discussion that organizers expect will build on the strong conversation and engagement from the first event.



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ELLA BAKER STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THIRD ANNUAL CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

By Craig Wilson

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

Ella Baker Global Studies and Humanities Magnet School is preparing to send its eighth grade class on its third annual Civil Rights Tour, a signature capstone experience that brings students through key sites of the Southern Civil Rights Movement.

Teacher Sam Quincy, who helped launch the trip several years ago, says the tour has become one of the most powerful learning experiences the school offers.

Ella Baker, located on Hennepin Avenue, is a global studies magnet school that builds its curriculum around what Quincy calls “global competencies,” skills and attitudes students need to collaborate, show empathy and use evidence to support their ideas. “It’s a liberal arts look at education,” he said. “Working with others and choosing empathy are two of my favorites.”

The school adopted its current name in recent years, moving away from the former Thomas Jefferson School designation. The name change came through a community and student process that aligned with the school’s new magnet identity.

Quincy recalls that numerous ideas were proposed, including references to local places, but younger students ultimately drove the vote to honor Ella Baker.

“She’s known as the grandmother of the Civil Rights Movement,” Quincy said. “She

“The tour is also more expensive this year. With district budgets tighter and experiential learning funds reduced, Ella Baker families must rely heavily on fundraising.”

taught so much to Martin Luther King and leaders of SNCC. The students really latched onto her, and it was a great choice.”

The upcoming Civil Rights Tour reflects that legacy. Students will begin in Atlanta, vis-

iting Dr. King’s birth home and Ebenezer Baptist Church, then travel by bus to Montgomery to tour the Legacy Museum, created by Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative.

Quincy describes the museum as “the best I’ve ever been to,” noting its sweeping narrative of African American history beginning in the 1600s.

From Montgomery, students will stop in Selma to study the 50-mile march and the events of Bloody Sunday, then continue to Birmingham to visit its civil rights museum and key historical sites.

The group will end the trip back in Atlanta, with a visit to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Quincy said this year’s eighth graders, many of whom have been in the magnet program since fourth or fifth grade, are particularly well prepared to engage with global human rights themes.

The tour is also more expensive this year. With district budgets tighter and experiential

learning funds reduced, Ella Baker families must rely heavily on fundraising. A flyer for the trip notes that \$25 covers a meal, \$50 supports a day of bus travel and \$100 pays for a hotel room. Quincy said community support has been strong, with help from Washburn High School’s student government and National Honor Society.

“It’s been more work, but it’s building excitement,” he said. “Students are more invested than ever.”

Quincy added that the trip often becomes a defining moment for students before they enter high school. He recalled a past participant whose experience on the tour helped shift his sense of direction and confidence. That student is now preparing to graduate and considering a future in education.

“Big experiences like this help kids look ahead and dream big,” Quincy said. “That’s what this trip is all about.”



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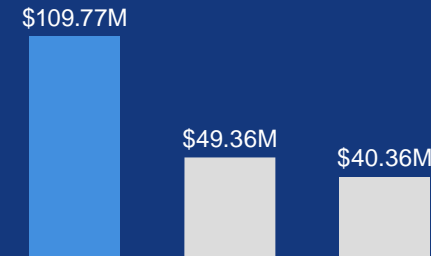
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WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO THE TREES?

Article and Images by Susan Lenfestey



Bifurcated trees along Summit Avenue in Lowry Hill.

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

A recent walk along Summit Avenue from Girard to Kenwood Park in Lowry Hill revealed block after block of bifurcated trees. Their lofty canopies remain intact, but the trunks are deeply notched in the middle. It was clear they had been cut back to avoid contact with power lines running through the branches. Still, the question lingered. Did the cuts have to be so drastic?

To find out, we contacted Chris McMaster, director of forestry for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. McMaster said the Park Board is not responsible for this trimming. Xcel

Energy holds a franchise with the city to protect its power lines and contracts out that work. Aside from notifying the Park Board about the general areas where work will occur, Xcel and its contractors have little interaction with Park Board forestry staff. Contractors are, however, expected to follow established pruning standards while protecting the lines.

McMaster also noted that after Dutch elm disease devastated the urban forest in the 1970s, the utility told the Park Board it planned to bury all electrical lines by 1990. Replacement trees were planted with that assumption in mind. Burying the lines later proved too costly, leaving mature shade trees competing for space

with overhead power lines.

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CIVIC DUTY PRECEDES CITY CELEBRATION

By Susan Lenfestey

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

Just as the hangover from the November election was starting to fade, here comes another round of political cocktails, merriment or not. A doozy of a caucus arrives Feb. 3, with candidates for county board, county attorney, senate and governor all seeking endorsement.

Caucuses for statewide races tend to draw larger crowds than city races and can be more contentious. But until the Minnesota Legislature finds the moxie to do away with them, it remains our civic duty to show up. Paula Chesley explains what to expect at the upcoming caucuses elsewhere in this issue.

If you need a post-caucus palate cleanser, take heart. The 22nd annual Luminary Loppet returns to Lake of the Isles on Feb. 7. If you have never walked across an icy lake on candlelit paths or under a canopy of hanging ice globes, prepare to be dazzled by the beauty of winter and the magic of lowercase ice.

If you love the warmth of community in the middle of a cold winter night, this is your chance to be part of it. Volunteers are needed to help turn thousands of buckets of lake water into ice luminaria and to light the candles

CAUCUSES FEBRUARY 3RD

Precinct caucuses will be held Feb. 3, with candidates for county board, county attorney, senate and governor seeking party endorsement.

Statewide races often draw larger crowds and can be contentious. Caucuses remain one of the few ways residents can participate directly in party decision-making. Paula Chesley explains what to expect elsewhere in this issue.



**YOUR ISSUES.
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LUMINARY LOPPET 7TH

The 22nd annual Luminary Loppet returns to Lake of the Isles on Feb. 7, transforming the frozen lake into glowing paths of ice and light.

Volunteers are needed to help create ice luminaria and light candles. Freezing begins in early January and shifts fill quickly. Learn more or sign up at – loppet.org.



that glow inside them. It is a chilly task and a metaphor for so much else.

There are many other volunteer roles as well. Visit loppet.org sign up. Hurry. Much of the freezing begins in early January, and slots fill quickly.

Whether you are a creator or a spectator, the Luminary Loppet is a reminder of why we endure, and even love, our winters and why our city remains a great place to live, despite its challenges and caucuses.

NEIGHBORS LAUNCH UPTOWN UNITED TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF UPTOWN

By Craig Wilson

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

In Uptown, where civic energy has long ebbed and flowed with the neighborhood's fortunes, a new community-led effort is taking shape.

Uptown United has formed in recent weeks with a simple goal: to bring residents, business owners and neighborhood stakeholders together to engage constructively on issues affecting Uptown and the surrounding Hill & Lake area.

The effort grew out of a letter written by South Uptown resident Kevin Norman, who shared both his affection for the neighborhood and his concern about ongoing challenges facing local streets, businesses and public spaces. Circulated among neighbors and business owners, the letter struck a chord

and sparked conversations that soon evolved into a broader organizing effort.

“Uptown has always been shaped by the people who live and work here,” Norman said. “Uptown United is about creating a way for neighbors to connect, share concerns and focus on practical steps to support the neighborhood.”

Norman and his wife, Gina, have spent much of their adult lives in Minneapolis. After nearly a decade in Oakland, California, they returned in 2022 and chose to settle in Uptown. That experience, Norman said, reinforced the importance of early, community-based engagement when neighborhood challenges begin to surface.

Uptown United describes itself as non-partisan and community-led, with an emphasis on respectful dialogue, civic participation and collaboration. Early efforts include a let-

ter-writing campaign to city leaders and plans for an in-person community gathering in the coming weeks.

At a time when many residents feel disconnected from decision-making, Uptown United reflects a familiar impulse in this neighborhood: neighbors stepping forward, organizing themselves and insisting that Uptown's future should be shaped by the people who call it home.

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DISTRICT 3 HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER RACE DRAWS FOUR DFL CONTENDERS AHEAD OF FEB. 3 CAUCUSES

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.

With DFL precinct caucuses scheduled for Feb. 3, a new election cycle is underway for the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. In District 3, incumbent Commissioner Marion Greene is seeking another term as three challengers campaign for the party’s endorsement ahead of the 2026 election.

The Hennepin County Board oversees a \$3.15 billion budget, and commissioners will earn up to \$134,753 annually beginning in 2026. Despite the scope of the role, county races often receive less media attention than contests for mayor or City Council.

District 3 includes St. Louis Park and parts of southwest Minneapolis and downtown Minneapolis.

Marion Greene, Incumbent

Greene, elected to a third term in 2022. On her campaign website, she highlights her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, including directing federal relief dollars toward rental assistance, housing stabilization and eviction prevention programs. She also points to investments in mental health services, maternal health initiatives, gun violence prevention efforts and anti-hate programming.

Greene emphasizes her work on

climate and sustainability, including the adoption of Hennepin County’s first Climate Action Plan and the creation of a Climate and Resiliency Department. Her broader priorities include reducing racial and economic disparities, expanding affordable housing, improving transit and strengthening community connections. Greene endorsed City Council Members Katie Cashman (Ward 7) and Aisha Chughtai (Ward 10) in the 2025 election.

Website: <https://mariongreene.org>

The Challengers

Three candidates are currently running to challenge Greene.

Josh Bassais

Bassais says he is running to “lower costs, improve services, enhance safety and deliver accountable, community-focused leadership.” He describes growing up in south Minneapolis, working as a union business representative with LIUNA and UNITE HERE, managing multimillion-dollar private-sector budgets and serving as president of the Lyndale Neighborhood Board.

His platform frames public safety as “real safety,” supported by mental health care, treatment access, stable housing and community-based responses. He also emphasizes faster pathways to housing assistance, stronger transit connections and modernizing county services so residents can get clear answers rather

than bureaucratic dead ends. Bassais lost to Ward 8 City Council Member-elect Soren Stevenson in 2025, securing an impressive 4,600 votes on the first ballot.

Website: <https://www.joshfordis-tract3.com>

Kevin A. Chavis

Chavis describes himself as a lifelong Minnesotan with experience in the Minnesota Army National Guard, labor organizing and eight years working for Hennepin County supporting people in substance-use treatment programs.

His platform focuses on “stable homes,” expanding safety-net programs and ensuring communities have meaningful input in transit planning. Chavis also supports maintaining HCMC as a publicly owned safety-net hospital. Another key priority is a “zero waste” strategy that includes broader organics access for multifamily buildings and businesses, along with long-term planning to close the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center.

Website: <https://kevinchavis.org>

Abdihakim Ibrahim

Ibrahim, a member of the St. Louis Park School Board, describes himself as an immigrant, parent and engineer whose campaign is rooted in “lived experience” and results for families. His platform emphasizes affordable housing, community-centered public safety built on trust,

economic opportunity and environmental responsibility.

He also highlights youth and school-focused priorities, including expanded mental-health supports, Safe Routes to School initiatives and stronger after-school programs. Ibrahim supports more frequent bus service, improved winter maintenance of transit stops and broader climate resilience strategies.


Website: <https://abdihakimibrahim.com>



CAUCUSES FEBRUARY 3RD

The DFL precinct caucuses are scheduled for Feb. 3. Candidates are encouraging supporters to participate in the caucus process as the first step toward securing the party’s endorsement.





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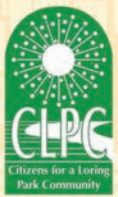




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HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY: FIVE CANDIDATES, ONE JOB, VERY DIFFERENT IDEAS OF JUSTICE

By Paula Chesley



Outgoing Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty has often been a polarizing figure. Moriarty is not running for reelection. (Image: Mary Moriarty)

Paula Chesley is a regular contributor and lives in East Isles.

What should the Hennepin County attorney actually do?

That question sat at the center of a series of interviews I conducted in mid-December with candidates seeking to lead one of the most powerful offices in local government.

I spoke with five candidates, Anders Folk, Cedrick Frazier, Hao Nguyen, Matt Pelikan and Francis Shen, each in a 20-minute Zoom interview before our Dec. 15, 2025 copy deadline.

A sixth candidate, Diane M. Krenz, announced her candidacy near the deadline and did not respond to an interview request at the time.

This print story offers a glimpse of those conversations. The full interviews are available online at hillandlakepress.org.

What became clear very quickly is that while the candidates often use the same words, public safety, accountability and reform, they mean very different things by them.

Some candidates, including Folk, Nguyen and Pelikan, framed the county attorney pri-

marily as a prosecutor whose first responsibility is restoring public trust in safety and accountability.

Shen described the role more broadly as that of a system manager responsible for fairness, discretion and long-term outcomes.

Frazier emphasized the county attorney as one part of a larger public safety ecosystem that must work in concert with schools, communities and lawmakers.

All agreed the job has changed. None agreed on exactly how.

The candidates’ backgrounds help explain those differences. Folk is a former federal prosecutor now in private practice. Frazier is a sitting state legislator and labor attorney. Nguyen has spent his career as a prosecutor and previously worked as a police officer and corrections officer. Pelikan is a civil litigator. Shen is a University of Minnesota law professor whose work bridges law, neuroscience and artificial intelligence.

Those experiences shaped how each candidate talked about crime.

When asked about their philosophy, Folk spoke about focusing resources on the people doing the most harm while keeping others out of the system when possible.

Nguyen repeatedly returned to fairness and proportionality, describing prosecutors as ministers of justice who must weigh accountability alongside dignity.

Pelikan framed safety as a fundamental right that has been weakened by ideological conflict. Shen argued prosecution should focus less on reacting to harm and more on preventing it through data, science and individualized responses.

Frazier emphasized prevention, intervention and the need to invest deliberately in what works.

Several candidates stressed prevention and rehabilitation. Others emphasized consequences. All acknowledged the tension between the two.

That tension sharpened when the conversation turned to how their tenure would compare with that of current Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty.

Folk said the Moriarty era would end on Day 1, with renewed collaboration among prosecutors, law enforcement and public safety partners.

Pelikan also called for a clear break, arguing that coalitions needed for reform and safety have fractured.

Nguyen and Frazier emphasized bridge-building and trust, with Nguyen stating his tenure would look “very different” from Moriarty’s.

Frazier said he would focus more on prevention and intervention.

Shen said the system itself needs modernization rather than a simple return to past practices.

On addiction and opioids, there was more agreement, but still meaningful divergence.

All five candidates rejected treating addiction itself as a crime. Folk, Nguyen and Frazier emphasized prosecuting traffickers rather than users.

Pelikan argued that in some cases, court-ordered intervention may be necessary to save lives and protect communities.

Shen focused on addressing demand and using neuroscience-informed approaches to reduce recidivism.

Juvenile crime revealed some of the sharpest contrasts.

Frazier and Shen emphasized prevention and early intervention.

Nguyen and Pelikan said there are cases where incarceration is necessary to protect both the public and the youth involved. Shen focused on clearance rates and the need for swift and certain responses to change behavior.

The final question, what have you changed your mind about, often revealed the most.

Candidates spoke about evolving views on cannabis, ghost guns, addiction, public space and whether meaningful reform is even possible.

Shen said he would not be running if he did not believe change could happen.

Taken together, the interviews do not show a simple divide between tough-on-crime and reform-minded candidates. Instead, they reveal five distinct theories of justice competing for the same office at a moment of deep public concern.

This print article is only an introduction. The full interviews, including complete answers from each candidate, offer in-depth perspectives and are available online.



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A look back...

hill AND lake press

January 28, 1978

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Hill & Lake Press

Join us in taking a look back at some of the highlights from our past 50 years.



Winter Jewelers & Burch Pharmacy
Corner of Hennepin Ave. & Dupont Ave., S
Circa 1930s

2 letters editor

The PRESS invites letters from the community about the community. To be considered, letters should be signed and include the writer's address.

Change The Name

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Gary Weissman for his excellent job of researching and reporting on the origin of street named in the Hill and Lake neighborhood. This is the first time this information was brought together in one place.

Unfortunately, Weissman confirmed my suspicions that my street was named after General Philip Henry Sheridan. That Sheridan should not receive any such honor. Let us examine his record. He was suspended from West Point for assaulting a cadet sergeant. Civil War hero? His record in that encounter was spotty at best. After the war he was appointed military governor of Texas and Louisiana, but his rule was so harsh that President Andrew Johnson relieved him of his duties. Sent to the West, Sheridan attained his infamous place in history as the source of the phrase, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian". Under his orders, hundreds became "good Indians", most were women, children or old men. As if this were not enough, Sheridan antagonized conversationists by encouraging the slaughter of buffalo to extinction as a solution to the "Indian problem".

General Sheridan needs to be removed as the source of our street name.

hill AND lake press

The issue planning meetings of the Hill & Lake Press are open for anyone wishing to work on the paper in any capacity: writing, art, layout, distribution, advertising, typing, editing, whatever. No previous experience or special skills are required.

At the meeting, usually the Tuesday following the distribution of an issue, we critique the previous issue and brainstorm about the requirements for the next one. At this time art and writers are identified and graphic and photographic work may be assigned.

The Paper survives on the efforts of neighborhood volunteers. We all have a good time. Please participate.

HILL and LAKE PRESS

January 28, 1978

Lowry Hill Bagman Retires

Erwin Gearty, the well-known Irish wit and man of letters, has packed the mail to our hilltop for the last time. December 24th was the final day he carried mail on his Lowry Hill route, a route that he began 17 years before.

Forget that the mail was always timely and never screwed up, this guy is funny! And generous and friendly and always a pleasure to see coming down the street.

We look forward to seeing him still coming down the street, as a good friend. Anytime.

HILL and LAKE PRESS

January 28, 1978

FINANCIAL NEWS

by Jerry Brennan

The state of real estate and the box car numbers that neighborhood houses are reportedly selling for was a hot topic of conversation at cocktail parties this past holiday. Is it inflation that is driving the prices out of sight or does the Lake of the Isles area offer truly good values in homes today?

To try to get factual answers to these questions and a general overview of the Isles real estate market, Hill & Lake Press visited Dick Thomson of Rees.Thomson. Scroggins, a real estate company that has been active in Kenwood since the early 1920s. Thomson himself recalls that he sold his first Kenwood house in 1939. It was over on Thomas Avenue near the Lagoon, and it sold for \$8400. Dick says the only difference today would be that you would just add one more zero. "That is a lot of change in one man's lifetime," he points out. "That is a multiple of ten, and I have even seen some houses that I sold in my early years in the business that have sold for eleven and twelve times what they sold for then. Generally speaking throughout the real estate market the greatest percentage of inflation has taken place in the lowest priced houses- yet that is a generality that isn't always true, and some of the very large and most impressive Kenwood houses have shown a percentage of inflation greater than some of the less expensive houses."

Thomson's memory encompasses a number of houses that have sold three, four and five times in the last 30 years, and he was able to go to his files and pull out the sale records on a number of these. He showed us files of one house on Mt. Curve (in the 1600 block) that sold in 1956 for \$48,000; in 1969 for \$60,000; in 1972 for \$82,500; and in 1977 for slightly over \$200,000. Thomson said that it is rather typical that the greatest degree of inflation has been since around 1972 or 1973. The inflation was a fairly steady upward line until around that point in time; and from the 1950s to the early 1970s the price of the typical house approximately doubled, but it took 15 to 20 years for that to happen. Then suddenly from 1972 or 1973 to 1977 a lot of them doubled again. Thomson's files showed a house on Irving (in the 1900 block) that sold in 1958 for \$17,500; for \$35,000 in 1972; for \$53,500 in 1975; and for \$70,000 in 1977. A house on Queen that sold for \$49,500 in 1969 showed up at \$69,900 in 1974 and \$97,000 in 1977. Still another Mt. Curve house (1600 block) that sold for \$45,000 in 1956 and \$59,000 in 1969, sold for \$86,500 in 1974.

HILL and LAKE PRESS

January 28, 1978

Wow! Look at c

One on Newton (2200 block) that sold five times over the period went from \$25,000 in 1960 to \$32,500 in 1965; \$44,000 in 1971; \$47,500 in 1972; and \$51,000 in 1973. Another one on Knox (1800 block) jumped from \$65,000 in 1973 to \$110,000 in 1975. Still another Mt. Curve house (1800 block) was sold for \$65,000 in 1973 brought \$110,000 in 1976. One on Lake of the Isles Blvd. that sold for \$90,000 in 1973 sold for \$200,000 in 1977. Still another house on James (2000 block) which in the middle 50s was \$22,500 had reached \$54,500 by 1973, and in 1977, \$92,500. Another one very close by that went for \$52,500 in 1971 sold for \$95,000 in 1977.

HILL and LAKE PRESS

January 28, 1978

Neighborhood Seen

by Jerry Van Ameren

(All images: Hennepin County Library - Digital Collection)

Hill & Lake Press

4

HILL and LAKE PRESS

Son Of "How They Got Their Names"

By Gary A. Weissman

EDITORS NOTE: In our last thrilling episode, Ken Kenwood, Lowry Hill and Clint East-Isles were hanging on the precipice of etymology. As we join them now, they have escaped from the shackles of the Hill and Lake area and are exploring the cave of metropolitan place-name origins.

"Albion," "All Saints," "Brooklyn," "Hennepin," and "Lowell" were all serious contenders for the name of the township which grew up on the west bank of the Mississippi River at the Falls of St. Anthony. But in 1852, George Bowman proposed the name "Minneapolis," a compound of the Dakota Indian word "Minnehaha" (water fall) and the Greek word "polis" (city). Since Bowman was editor of the St. Anthony Express, he had an effective vehicle to advocate his eclectic suggestion, and he eventually prevailed.

Although the water fall leveled out later in the 19th century, the hydraulic connection remains apropos owing to Minneapolis' nickname: "The City of Lakes." To know the origin of the lakes' names is to understand, albeit fragmentarily, the history of the city.

Lake Harriet- Lake Harriet bears the first name of Harriet Lovejoy Leavenworth, the wife of Col. Henry Leavenworth, who was commander of the military contingent sent in 1819 to establish a fort at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. The Leavenworths remained here less than a year, for Col. Josiah Snelling assumed command in 1820. If one's name is to be posthumously affixed to an inanimate object, better a pretty lake in Minnesota than a federal penitentiary in Kansas, which is Husband Henry's legacy.

Lake Calhoun- That a northern city should name a lake for John C. Calhoun, Senator from South Carolina and Vice President of the United States (under both Quincy Adams and Jackson) who resigned over States' rights, at first seems anomalous. But it is explainable when one learns that Calhoun was the Secretary of War (during the Monroe Administration) who issued the order for Col. Leavenworth to bring a detachment of troops to build a fort, around which grew the city of Minneapolis.

Lake of the Isles was so named for the four (now two) islands in its center; Cedar Lake takes its name from the red cedar trees which no longer grow on its littoral.

Lake Nokomis was originally called Lake Amelia after Amelia Gooding, the daughter (or wife) of Captain George Gooding, a senior officer in the Leavenworth detachment of 1819. The Park Board Commissioners changed the name in 1910 to Nokomis, for the grandmother of Hiawatha. Longfellow's poem, "Song of Hiawatha" (published in 1855), had made the name "Minnehaha" famous; so the Park Commission opted

to give the lake closest to Minnehaha Falls a name with thematic consistency.

Loring Park Lake- Formerly Johnson's Pond and Jewett Lake, this small lake (as well as the park around it) was renamed for Charles Loring, the first president of the Park Board.

Lake Minnetonka - Though not in Minneapolis, Minnetonka is the most important lake in the metropolitan area. Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey coined the name in 1852 by joining two Dakota words "Minne" (water) and "Tonka" (great).

The metropolitan area comprises seven counties: Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Scott, Carver, Anoka, and Washington. Like those of the lakes, the county name origins provide anecdotal interstices for the outline of the area's historical development.

Hennepin County was supposed to be called Snelling County (after the commander of the army unit that built the fort which gave rise to the city of Minneapolis). But at the last moment, the Territorial Council chose to name the county after the Belgian missionary, Father Louis Hennepin, the first European to see the Falls of St. Anthony. Joining LaSalle's expedition to explore the Great Lakes in 1678, Father Hennepin was captured by the Sioux while canoeing up the Mississippi (he was rescued by Duluth). Hennepin not only wrote about the waterfall but selected its name as well (after his patron saint, Anthony of Padua).

Ramsey County is named for Alexander Ramsey, Mayor of St. Paul, first appointed Governor of the Territory of Minnesota (by President Zachary Taylor), second elected Governor of the State of Minnesota, U.S. Senator for two terms, and Secretary of War in the Hayes Cabinet.

Dakota is the name which the indigenous people in the area called themselves. The French (and later the English and the Americans) called them Sioux (a term which the Dakota found insulting), short for Nadouesious, a Gallic bastardization of Nadonecerons, the Algonquin word for the Dakota, meaning "enemy".

Scott county is named for Winfield Scott, the first American military person after George Washington to rise to the rank of Lieutenant General. Dubbed "Old Fuss and Feathers" because of his obsession with resplendent uniforms, Scott was evidently a superb leader in battle and is credited with having professionalized the U.S. Army in the early 19th century. A hero in the War of 1812 and in the Mexican War, Scott was the Whig candidate for president in 1852 (he lost to Franklin Pierce). General Scott visited the local area in 1824, and it was on his recommendation that the War Department renamed the military installation (then Ft. St. Anthony) Ft. Snelling (after Co. Josiah Snelling, commander of the troops who completed the construction of the fort).

Carver County - Captain John

Carver of Massachusetts decided to explore the upper Mississippi Valley after his military service in the French and Indian War. He negotiated a treaty with the Sioux (Dakota), who granted him a huge tract of land along the Minnesota River. After his death, Carver's

heirs laid claim to the land, but the federal courts held that private citizens could not obtain land from Indians. Hence, the land came into the public domain, and the county graciously named the jurisdiction after the unwitting donor.

Anoka is a Dakota word meaning "on both sides." It refers to the fact that in the 1850's the town was settled on both sides of the Rum River. The county took its name from the town.

Washington - Like thirty-one other States, Minnesota has a county named after the first President.

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"Kenwood is very fortunate in retaining the high levels of value and desirability and demand that it has," Thomson stated. "The 'Fenwoods' of a lot of other cities have not fared as well and have suffered from inroads of commercialism and other adverse factors." Thomson feels that the same civic consciousness that has preserved Minneapolis' downtown and brought Minneapolis to the forefront culturally is responsible for much of Kenwood's perpetual youth. "The shakers and movers and doers - the establishment, if you will- has never deserted Fenwood. Today you find that a lot of the people living in Kenwood houses are living in the houses that belonged to their friend's parents when those people were going to the Kenwood school. There are a lot of third and even fourth generation families living in houses that are still known by the names of people who owned them forty and fifty years ago.

As to the near-term future, Thomson feels that Kenwood prices are bound to stay strong. Kenwood offers more house for the money still, even at today's prices, than a person can possibly go out and build for that money. Fenwood is value-anchored by Lake of the Isles and its surrounding park, by its convenience to downtown and by the determination of its people to keep it as it is. Factors relating to energy and the constantly increasing costs of building cause people to think more favorably than ever about living close in and living in older homes.

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BUILDING RESILIENCE IN DISTRICT 61A

By Rep. Katie Jones



District 61A Representative Katie Jones. (Image: Katie Jones)

Rep. Katie Jones represents Minnesota House District 61A, which includes most of the Hill & Lake Press distribution area. Elected in 2024, she served her first term during the 2025 legislative session and lives in the Wedge.

As we begin a new year, it is a natural moment to reflect on how far we have come and where we are headed.

I am grateful to have worked with so many of you over the past year. We have truly needed one another, particularly as our community experienced deep harm from gun violence.

Former Speaker Melissa Hortman, her husband Mark, and Annunciation Church shooting victims Fletcher Merkel and Harper Moyski were taken from us. These losses weigh heavily on our community.

Even in these difficult times, it has been an honor to represent House District 61A.

I valued the work of the 2025 legislative session and was proud to help protect major policies we hold dear. Despite a tied Minnesota House that limited the policy progress many of us hoped for, I

am pleased that we successfully passed a state budget.

At the same time, actions by the federal government added

“This coming session, I am in this with you to build a more just, resilient and thriving Minnesota.”

complexity and urgency to our work, including cuts to programs supporting medical and scientific research and Medicaid.

Federal immigration enforcement activity has also caused fear and disruption in local communities.

In response, Minnesotans have organized to protect one another, the Minneapolis legislative delega-

tion has worked with government partners to share accurate information and identify ways to keep residents safe and economically secure, and state leaders across all branches of government have taken a coordinated approach to respond, including ongoing legal efforts to restore funding and protect Minnesotans’ rights.

Meanwhile, rising costs continue to strain working families.

Changes at the federal level ended Affordable Care Act tax credits that helped lower private health insurance costs, and their loss is expected to drive premium increases.

“We cannot give in to despair. Minnesotans are determined and resilient and must continue to look ahead.”

Many families are already struggling with the cost of food, energy, child care and housing. In the upcoming session and beyond, the state must take a hard look at how to fill gaps in critical services so basic needs are met.

Despite these challenges, we cannot give in to despair. Minnesotans are determined and resilient and must continue to look ahead. We are entering the year with a major bright spot.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, Minnesotans will have access to paid family and medical leave, providing up to 12 weeks of medical leave and 12 weeks to bond with a new child or care for a loved one, with a maximum of 20 weeks total.

Locally, the completion of Hennepin Avenue construction and

the launch of the E Line bus rapid transit mark welcome milestones.

While construction was challenging for businesses, funding from the state’s Promise Act helped support beloved establishments such as Queermunity and Bobby Bead.

Building on those lessons, I secured a pilot program to create grant funding for small businesses along reconstruction corridors, planting the seeds for a long-term effort so neighborhoods are not forced to choose between infrastructure improvements and local business survival.

Sen. Scott Dibble and I also secured continued funding for Bridge for Youth, which provides inclusive shelter and services to young people experiencing homelessness. Ensuring safe housing and support for our most vulnerable neighbors remains a priority.

I was also proud to partner with the Lower Sioux Indian Community and a women-led architecture team to allow natural materials in the building code, an important step for climate resilience and local industries.

For generations, Minnesota has been built on a simple promise: If you work hard, you can build a good life here.

That promise depends on leaders willing to invest in working families, ensure a fair playing field and create an accountable and accessible government.

In the coming session this February, I will be working on gun violence prevention, Downtown and Uptown revitalization and expanding housing and transportation options, among other priorities.

I am in this with you to build a more just, resilient and thriving Minnesota where everyone can live a good life.



PLEASE BE IN TOUCH:
rep.katie.jones@house.mn.gov



Hill & Lake Press

The Hill & Lake Press is a non-profit newspaper funded and supported by its advertisers and neighborhood associations:



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• Kenwood Neighborhood Organization (KNO)



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ACCLAIMED LOCAL AUTHOR AND NEIGHBOR:
JACK EL-HAI

By David Piper



Jack El-Hai pictured in front of a painting by Madison, Wisconsin-based artist Kelli Hoppmann. (Image: David Piper)

David Piper is a retired judge and regular contributor. He lives in Kenwood.

From his home in East Isles, author Jack El-Hai has spent decades exploring the shadowed intersection of medicine, morality and power. His 2013 book, “The Nazi and the Psychologist,” inspired the 2025 film Nuremberg, a tense psychological drama set against one of history’s most consequential war crimes trials.

The book examines the unlikely and unsettling relationship between Douglas Kelley, a young American military psychiatrist, and Hermann Göring, one of Adolf Hitler’s closest lieutenants. Kelley was tasked with evaluating captured Nazi leaders ahead of the 1945–46 tribunal, an assignment that would shake his faith in psychiatry and haunt him for the rest of his life.

The film Nuremberg has received strong reviews for its performances and historical grounding. It focuses on Kelley’s encounters with Göring and the moral ambiguities of studying evil up close. I recently saw the film and was struck by one scene in particular: the prosecution calls Göring, the defendant, as a primary witness. In the United States, the right to remain silent has long applied in criminal cases and has applied in military tribunals since the 1950s.

I was also surprised to learn, both from the book and the film, that Kelley did not diagnose Göring as a psychopath. Today the term would likely fall under antisocial personality disorder. Göring was, after all, one of the architects of the Holocaust.

I interviewed El-Hai at his home early in December. The family cat, Vivian, watched in-

tently from a nearby chair, one paw neatly resting atop the other.

El-Hai and his wife, Ann, have lived in the neighborhood for 30 years and have two adult daughters. He said they have no plans to move.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What led you to become a writer, and what is your next book?

I was interested in writing as early as junior high school. I grew up in Los Angeles and sold my first article at 17. After graduating from Carleton, I wrote short stories for literary magazines but wasn’t making much money. A friend at Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine invited me to write short pieces, and that grew into feature writing for Minneapolis St. Paul Magazine, Minnesota Monthly, City Pages and eventually national publications.

Over the years, I’ve written around 600 articles and several books. One of them, “The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness,” explores the life of Dr. Walter Freeman, the physician who popularized lobotomies.

I just finished a book called “The Case of the Autographed Corpse.” It will be out in about a year. It centers on Silas Edwards, an Apache medicine man wrongfully convicted on flimsy evidence by an all-white jury of murdering his wife in 1933. His case was later reinvestigated by Erle Stanley Gardner, the trial lawyer who created Perry Mason, through his Court of Last Resort, an early version of the Innocence Project. The book looks at their partnership and the flaws built into the justice system. A condensed version of the story appeared in the December 2020 issue of Smithsonian Magazine.

What drew you to figures like Kelley and Freeman, whom you have described as renegade scientists?

I was drawn to medical stories and dark stories. Medical narratives are rich. They involve conflict, ethical dilemmas, life-and-death stakes and the relationship between doctor and patient. I’ve also always been interested in darker material.

I came to love the research process of non-fiction. You’re always deciding which story to tell and which details matter most.

Only one of my books has a happy ending, my 2025 book “Face in the Mirror.” It’s about the first successful face transplant at the Mayo Clinic.

How satisfied are you with the film Nuremberg?

I’m happy with it and relieved that I can recommend it to my friends. No historical film is perfectly factual, but Nuremberg is essentially

factual. It delivers the core messages that mattered to me.

The film focuses more on Justice Robert Jackson and on Göring’s testimony than my book does and it compresses decades of Kelley’s life. But it’s faithful where it counts. I’ve seen it three times and still think it’s a strong film.

Do you think the film serves as a warning about authoritarian-leaning regimes?

I don’t see how you could watch it and not think about current politics. When I wrote the book in 2013, extremist ideologies were still at the fringes. That’s no longer true.

None of that was planned by me or the director. It’s simply the direction the world has moved.

In the film, Kelley and Göring appear to manipulate each other. How accurate is that?

Both were masterful manipulators. Kelley was 33 and Göring was 53. Kelley wanted access to Göring’s reasoning, motivations and worldview. He hoped to determine whether the defendants shared a common psychiatric disorder. He ultimately concluded they did not.

That conclusion shook his faith in psychiatry. If psychiatry could not explain men like that, what could?

The film does not clearly explain whether Kelley was evaluating Göring or treating him. If he was evaluating him, their conversations would not be privileged. If he was treating him, they would be protected by doctor-patient confidentiality.

Their relationship was deeply complicated. Kelley never forgot the frightening aspects of Göring’s personality. Göring had no conscience or empathy and sought power above all else. Kelley treated him medically while also reporting conversations to the prosecution without telling him. He was torn between his duties to his patient, the U.S. Army and the court.

Was Göring a psychopath?

I don’t think so. The first major study on psychopathy was published in 1941 and I’m not sure Kelley had read it by the time of the trial. He read it later. I saw a copy of the study in his library when I visited his son.

Kelley never used terms like psychopath or sociopath. He relied heavily on the Rorschach test, which we wouldn’t do today. He did describe Göring, and possibly others, as narcissistic personalities but he did not consider that an illness. It’s a trait many people have.

Most narcissists are not mass murderers.



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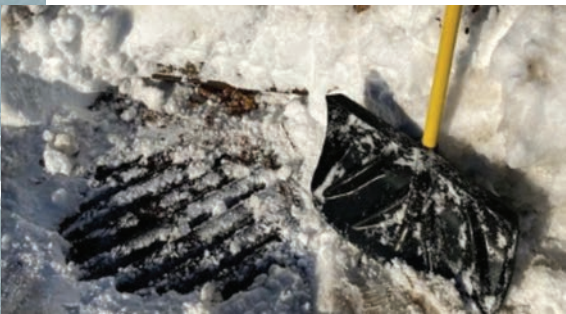
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Lowry Hill Update

Thanks to all who participated in Holidays on Hennepin! From the volunteers and shoppers, to the many sponsors, to the 67 businesses local businesses who made it possible. We look forward to repeating this successful event in 2026!

Thanks to all who braved the cold for our NYE Skate! Another community skate is coming up on Jan. 31, as part of the annual Winter Party—stop by to warm up with hot cocoa, pit fires, and good cheer.

Did you know storm drain street trash pollutes lakes and rivers? Debris breaks down in the elements, then drains into our waters. But adopting a drain is free, and takes only a few occasional minutes to maintain: mn.adopt-a-drain.org



Lowry Hill Board Meetings

Jan. 6 • Mar. 3 (Feb. off) 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 Service Saturdays

Jan. 17 • Feb. 21 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.

Neighborhood Safety Meeting

Jan. 29 Thurs. 6:30 PM
Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church (2020 W LoTI Pkwy)
Hear updates from the City and MPD on improvements in safety in our neighborhoods and area. Speakers TBA.

Lake of the Isles Winter Party

Jan. 31 Sat. 1 – 3 PM
Lake of the Isles Skating Rink (2500 E LoTI Pkwy)
Stay warm with pit fires, free treats, open skating, and your lakeside neighbors at this outdoor winter party!

2026 Giving

We rely on neighborly support to fund area programs, events, and advocacy. LHNA is 501(c)(3)—all donations are tax deductible: donorbox.org/support-lhna

lowryhillneighborhood.org

for full details, newsletter sign-up and more



Lake of the Isles Winter Party

Chill out with lakeside neighbors! Bundle up and gather on the lake for a cozy outdoor party. We'll help you warm up with good vibes, crackling fire pits, free hot cocoa and Isles Bun & Coffee's legendary puppy dog tails.

If the ice cooperates, we'll have free ice skating rentals so you can glide into the fun. Whether you're skating or sipping cocoa, this is a winter party you don't want to miss!

Saturday, Jan. 31 • 1–3 PM
Lake of the Isles Ice Rink + Warming House
2500 E Lake of the Isles Pkwy

We're also looking for volunteers to help keep the event running smoothly—from setup and take down to helping skaters hit the ice. Interested? Email info@eastisles.org.

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WHY GO? THE PRODIGAL PUBLIC HOUSE

By Jason Suss



The Prodigal is located at East 26th Street and First Avenue South, just a block from Eat Street. (Image: Jason Suss)



Jeff and Randi Cowmeadow, owners of The Prodigal Public House (Image: www.prodigalpub.com)

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 @AProperPour.

Openings and Closings.

Before we get to this month’s featured spot, I should address last month’s article. Sadly, despite just having opened, Mari’s has temporarily closed. Did they last longer than Matriarch? It’s got to be close. They haven’t given a reason and it’s unfortunate the closure happened the same day the article was published, as I’m certain that would have sent a flood of my loyal readers to visit. There is, however, hope. They posted on social media that they plan to reopen in the spring. Fingers crossed.

Now, on to this month’s spot: The Prodigal Public House.

A public house, or pub for short, is a bit different from a bar. Bars tend to be fast-paced, focused on cocktails, decor and night-life. A pub is meant to be a casual, cozy, community-focused place with hearty food, good beer, whiskey and conversation. The Prodigal is exactly that.

It’s owned by Randi and Jeff, who just hap-

pened to meet and fall in love in a pub. When you go, and you should, you’ll probably meet Jeff. He’ll walk right over, introduce himself, shake your hand and make you feel like he couldn’t possibly be happier that you’re there. But it doesn’t stop there.

The patrons do the same. Each time I’ve gone, I’ve ended up in a fun conversation with the person next to me. In fact, on one visit I happened to sit next to Craig Wilson. I offered to start writing a monthly article about eating and drinking in the neighborhood, and here we are.

In addition to all the friendly people, there are decorations covering the walls, a piano that someone might just sit down and play and a super-cute back room that’s great for small groups.

The Drinks

Like any good pub, The Prodigal has a solid beer selection. You’ll get a proper 20-ounce pour of Guinness or Harp, a classic ESB made just for them from Padraig’s brewery and a variety of other local favorites. The cocktails are pub-appropriate and the whiskey selection is substantial. A handful of wines and nonalcoholic options round out the list. The bartenders are friendly and the kind who will remember you and your order after a couple of visits.

The Food

Pub fare is usually hearty, stick-to-your-ribs cuisine. Along with the expected bar apps, various fried parts of chickens, potatoes and vegetables, they also offer the obligatory fish and chips. There are flatbreads and sandwiches, too. But the real star is the pot pie. There’s a chicken option, a veggie option and a rotating special. Hot flaky crust, savory gravy and lots of filling make it one of the best in the city. I got about a quarter of the way through writing this article before deciding that one of them will be my dinner tonight.

So Why Go?

A cold beer, a hot meal and a room full of cheer, absent of pretension. At least half the people there will be regulars. Some have probably been there all day, and they may be there tomorrow, too. I think there are two types of people in the world: those who go to a bar because they know everyone there and those who won’t, for the same reason. This is the perfect pub if you’re the former.

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MAKING THE CASE FOR GROUP FITNESS TRAINING: I THRIVED IN A GYM THAT PROMISED PUKING

By Molly Mogren Katt



(Images: Dain Rodriguez-Hines)

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.

Is the internet trolling you with nonstop messages telling you to lift heavy weights and eat a gazillion grams of protein or your body will turn into dust? How annoying, especially because all the science says it is true. If the idea of picking up a barbell scares the ever-loving crap out of you, yet you are weightlifting curious, let’s talk.

In the fall of 2009, my then-boyfriend, now husband, Josh, joined TwinTown Fitness, a small gym in the Wedge specializing in something called CrossFit. The only time I had heard the word CrossFit was at my big box gym, where signs reading “Please no CrossFit workouts” wallpapered the weight area. Josh would proclaim, “It’s great. I almost puked today. You should come.”

Oh yes, let’s add nausea to something that is already hard enough to prioritize. I politely declined.

“The girl who felt systematically humiliated during every Presidential Physical Fitness Test suddenly doing a pull-up?”

Fast forward four years and I am still dating this Josh fellow. He mentioned the gym had launched a summer workout program at Kenwood Park. Just bodyweight workouts, none of that clanging barbell stuff I had seen and heard through the gym’s open garage

door. What the hell. I gave it a whirl and I loved it.

Eventually, I graduated to workouts inside the regular gym at the corner of 26th and Aldrich, clanging weights and all. TwinTown Fitness, which has not been associated with the CrossFit brand since 2020, offers hour-long group fitness classes capped at 14 participants.

“Workouts are rarely the same, which is perfect for my ADHD brain.”

Classes begin with mobility work, followed by a warmup and then the main workout. Maybe it is 20 minutes building up to a heavy set of squats followed by a six-minute high-intensity cardio burner. Or it could be 30 minutes of a dozen different strength and conditioning movements. Workouts are rarely the same, which is perfect for my ADHD brain.

While I hobbled around like an arthritic flamingo for the first few weeks, my body adapted quickly. I started feeling genuinely strong, something I thought I already was thanks to my big box gym workouts. After a few months, I could do a pull-up. Just one, but still. Me?

The girl who felt systematically humiliated during every Presidential Physical Fitness Test suddenly doing a pull-up? The only time I ever came close to barfing was during my first pregnancy, which I am fairly confident had more to do with morning sickness than burpees.

TwinTown co-owners Peter Bekke and Brock Harling coached classes at the gym before purchasing it from the founder in 2015. Since then, TwinTown has evolved from a place known for intense workouts into one known for meeting members where they are. “We work hard to make sure each person gets

the workout that is right for them every time they are here,” Bekke says. “Sometimes a tough challenge is perfect, but sometimes something lighter is what we need. There is no pressure to perform or keep up with the person next to you. The goal is to leave feeling accomplished.”

When I started at TwinTown, my priorities were mostly about physical appearance. Over the past dozen years, I have experienced marriage, miscarriage, two pregnancies followed by two C-sections, postpartum depression and significant hormonal changes. This place supported me through all of it. When I returned after my second child, in a body that felt weaker than church basement coffee, I never felt judged. I felt supported.

If you are looking to “win” at exercise, you can certainly do that here. But most TwinTown members are not competitive or judgmental. They are people like me who want to build strength, maintain mobility and enjoy that sweet blast of endorphins.

Many of us are in it for the long haul, knowing that living independently at 90 means working on strength and stability now. And you are never too old to start. Two of the most beloved members of our community are a couple in their 70s.

If that sounds like you, come hang with me at TwinTown. I will even hold your hand through your first workout, even if it is sweaty.



MAKING THE CASE FOR PERSONAL TRAINING: RECLAIMING STRENGTH IN THE AGE OF READING GLASSES

By Craig Wilson



Andrew Heaton rotates among clients during a small-group coaching session on a wintry Thursday, guiding individualized workout routines and offering posture corrections and spotting tailored to each person’s goals. The approach makes personal training more affordable and encourages independence. (Images: Craig Wilson)

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

I have always joked that I was built with a body for football but a heart for the arts, think Ferdinand the Bull. I grew up grateful for good genes that made it easy to put on muscle and stay in pretty decent health without thinking too hard about it.

For most of my adult life, exercise was something I did the way people floss. I knew I should and I felt better when I did, but I was never chasing peak performance. Maintenance was fine with me.

Then came middle age and the pandemic, a combination that seems to have rearranged many of our bodies in ways we did not exactly ask for. That easy muscle-making I had relied on for so long quietly shifted into fat-making.

Like everyone else at the time, I was trying to work via Zoom and stay sane through home crafts and expanded wine drinking. Exercise slid down the priority list and I found myself floating in a strange limbo where nothing felt quite right, but I did not know what to fix first.

Before all that, I had been part of a nearby boutique health club, now shuttered, with ample parking in the BP, Before Pandemic. It was polished and social and, at the time, exactly what I needed. When I gave up my downtown office and started working virtually from home, the built-in community became a lifeline.

The routine of showing up, sweating alongside the same familiar faces and riding the dopamine wave of both social connection and a runner’s high kept me steady.

But the deeper I got into the club, the more I saw behind the curtain. The human flaws, the small dramas, the things you cannot unsee once you see them. When the pandemic hit, my departure from that world lined up with everything else going sideways.

Like many people, I tried to piece together a fitness routine at home. Virtual Peloton classes, long walks around the lakes and improvised workouts in rooms never meant to be gyms. It kept me moving but never truly pulled me back into a routine I looked forward to. Something was missing.

Then a friend mentioned Los Campeones Gym in Whittier.

This friend is many things but not someone I would expect to evangelize a weightlifting gym, the one and only Susan Lenfestey.

My stereotype of the place was clear. I pictured walls lined with giant humans preparing for competitions and an energy I was not interested in navigating. Still, I was curious enough to poke around online. That is when I found a profile for Andrew Heaton.

Andrew’s focus on aging well through strength training immediately stood out. This was not a lift-big-or-go-home coach. This was someone talking about functional movement, cardiovascular health and long-term well-being.

I reached out and we talked. It was easy, un-

“Andrew’s focus on aging well through strength training immediately stood out. This was not a lift-big-or-go-home coach. This was someone talking about functional movement, cardiovascular health and long-term well-being.”

rushed and refreshingly human, without a used-car pitch. He did a full assessment of my flexibility, strength, sleep habits and movement patterns. Then he built a corrective plan that met me where I actually was, not where I wished I still were.

I appreciated the range of coaching options at different rates, including one-on-one sessions,

small groups where he rotates between clients while encouraging independence, home visits and virtual options.

I have been working with him for eight months and the improvements are real. My back pain is easing. My strength and flexibility are returning. I feel like I have a roadmap again.

As for Los Campeones itself, it is the opposite of fancy. The parking lot is small but there is free street parking, or you can ride your bike. The equipment is well used. The amenities are basic. And yet it might be the most judgment-free environment I have ever exercised in. People of every age, gender identity, race and body type move through their routines without pretense. No one is there for the drama. They are there to work.

I liked it so much that I joined the gym so I could train on my own outside of sessions with Andrew, a sign that I am becoming independent again.

Somehow, against my own expectations, I have found my place. A no-frills gym, a solid coach and a reminder that taking care of ourselves can be simple when we stop making it complicated and just show up.

Coach Profile: Andrew Heaton, M.S.
Health & Human Performance Specialist
Email: andrew@lifestrengthfit.com
Location: Los Campeones Gym,
2746 Blaisdell Ave., Minneapolis 55408

Andrew Heaton helps people get stronger, move better and feel good in their bodies as they age. Since 2007, he has worked with more than 330 clients, helping them overcome chronic health issues, sleep better, reduce stress and build lasting strength and mobility. He holds a master’s degree in applied kinesiology and is a National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach and Strength and Conditioning Specialist, with a practical, client-centered approach that blends mobility work, strength training and everyday lifestyle guidance. He trains clients at Los Campeones Gym, in their homes or virtually.

HILL & LAKE COMMUNITY SHOWS UP FOR WINTER

Images by Courtney Cushing Kiernat



COLD PLUNGES, HOT SAUNAS AND COMMUNITY AT PORTAL

By Andy Wright



Andy Wright soaking in the heat a PORTAL sauna.
(Image Andy Wright)

Andy Wright resides in the Lowry Hill neighborhood.

Passing the former Jiffy Lube building on Excelsior Boulevard last summer, my partner and I wondered what was going on inside now that a new sign reading “Portal” had appeared. The building was dark and mysterious. When we got home, we looked up the Portal website, which described it this way:
“PORTAL° is a category-defining network of contrast therapy social clubs where adults can socialize over habitual well-being without substances or phones.

“We build healthy, resilient communities with our unique blend of ancient contrast therapy traditions and modern social spaces. PORTAL° offers a holistic experience in a curated space to support connection and elevate your daily wellness routine with the benefits of thermaculture.”
The photos were alluring, even exotic. The following week we showed up at Portal and after our initial free session, we both joined immediately. There was no question we had found a valuable resource, and a convenient one.
I had been a member of another local sauna and cold plunge club, but it required a trip on Interstate 94, something I avoid whenever possible. This new option was a 10-minute bike ride or a five-minute drive. Perfect.
A few months later, I now arrive first thing in the morning most days of the week. The experience has been transformative, allowing me to both relax and energize before starting my workday. It provides a deep emotional and physical reset in a way that exercise alone does not seem to offer, though I do mix in a 15-minute yoga and isometric workout during the hot and cold cycles.
Especially during Minneapolis’ polar season, the spa-like setting offers an otherworldly escape. The space is filled with large plants, including massive palms, and custom-made mosaic artwork above the cold plunge pool gives the mind something to linger on as the hot and cold contrasts shift one’s awareness. The experience clearly reflects a significant financial investment. From my perspective, it has been worth every penny.

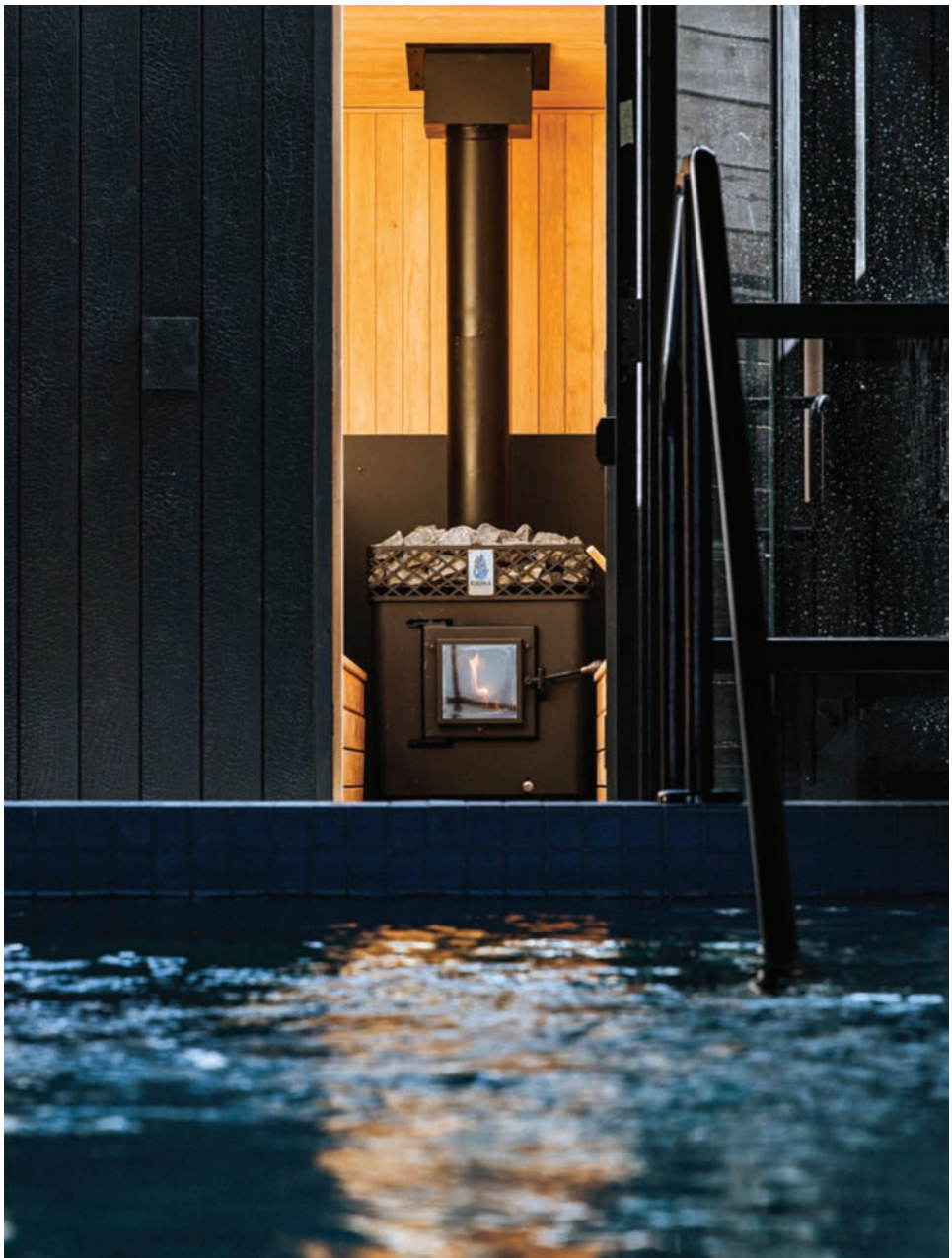
The social aspect has been just as meaningful. From casual conversations to deeper philosophical discussions, I have made new friendships. As someone running a small business largely on my own, I have found those connections to be invaluable.
Sharing a commitment to health creates easy common ground. We are all there for the same reason: to make our lives richer, more grounded and more thoughtful in a world that feels increasingly chaotic and unstable.
For those who are curious, and even for those who are not, I recommend making a trip to Portal. See what it is about and notice how it affects your body and psyche. You may find yourself hooked, as I did.



With locations in:
Minneapolis –
3120 Excelsior Blvd
Minneapolis, MN 55416
- Open seven days a week
Denver
Boulder



(Images: PORTAL°)



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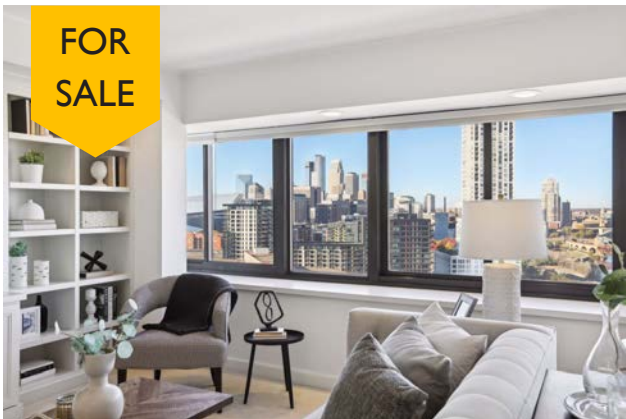
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1201 Yale Pl #1505, Minneapolis \$610,000 • Represented Buyer



401 N 2nd St #202, Minneapolis \$693,000 • Represented Seller



Riverview Tower, 1920 1st St S, Mpls #2001 1BR/2BA • \$165,000



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SUN DOGS: NATURE CONTINUES TO BE RAD

Article and Images by Courtney Cushing Kiernat

If you live in Lowry Hill, you have probably seen Brandon Colpitts. He is the bald guy with binoculars, usually looking up and scanning the trees or the sky for birds.

If you ventured outside during the cold morning hours of Thursday, Dec. 4, you may have been treated to another quiet aerial spectacle, courtesy of the sun. Sun dogs, also known as parhelia or mock suns, appeared on either side of the rising sun, casting rainbow arcs above and below it and, when conditions are strong enough, forming a white halo known as a parhelic circle.

Like the aurora, sun dogs require just the right conditions. The sun must be low in the sky, and the air must be cold. Ice crystals in high, thin clouds lie flat, forming tiny hexagons that act like prisms. Their shape and orientation allow them to refract sunlight at a minimum angle of 22 degrees, focusing the light into bright spots at the same height as the sun. Because red light has a longer wavelength, it refracts less, which is why the inner edge of a sun dog glows red, transitioning outward through the colors of the rainbow.

Humans have been noticing and marveling at these celestial phenomena for thousands of years. Pliny the Elder was among the ancient writers who documented them. Shakespeare also referenced sun dogs in “Henry VI, Part 3,” casting the appearance of three suns as an omen of victory. He lingered on the image and barely mentioned the battle. Some things are simply more memorable.

As always, nature has more good news. There are also moon dogs. Getting outside at all hours of the day remains unbeatable. And if these moments teach us anything, it is to keep looking up.



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LINDEN HILLS 4321 UPTON AVE SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MN

LOWRY HILL 1007 W FRANKLIN AVE SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MN

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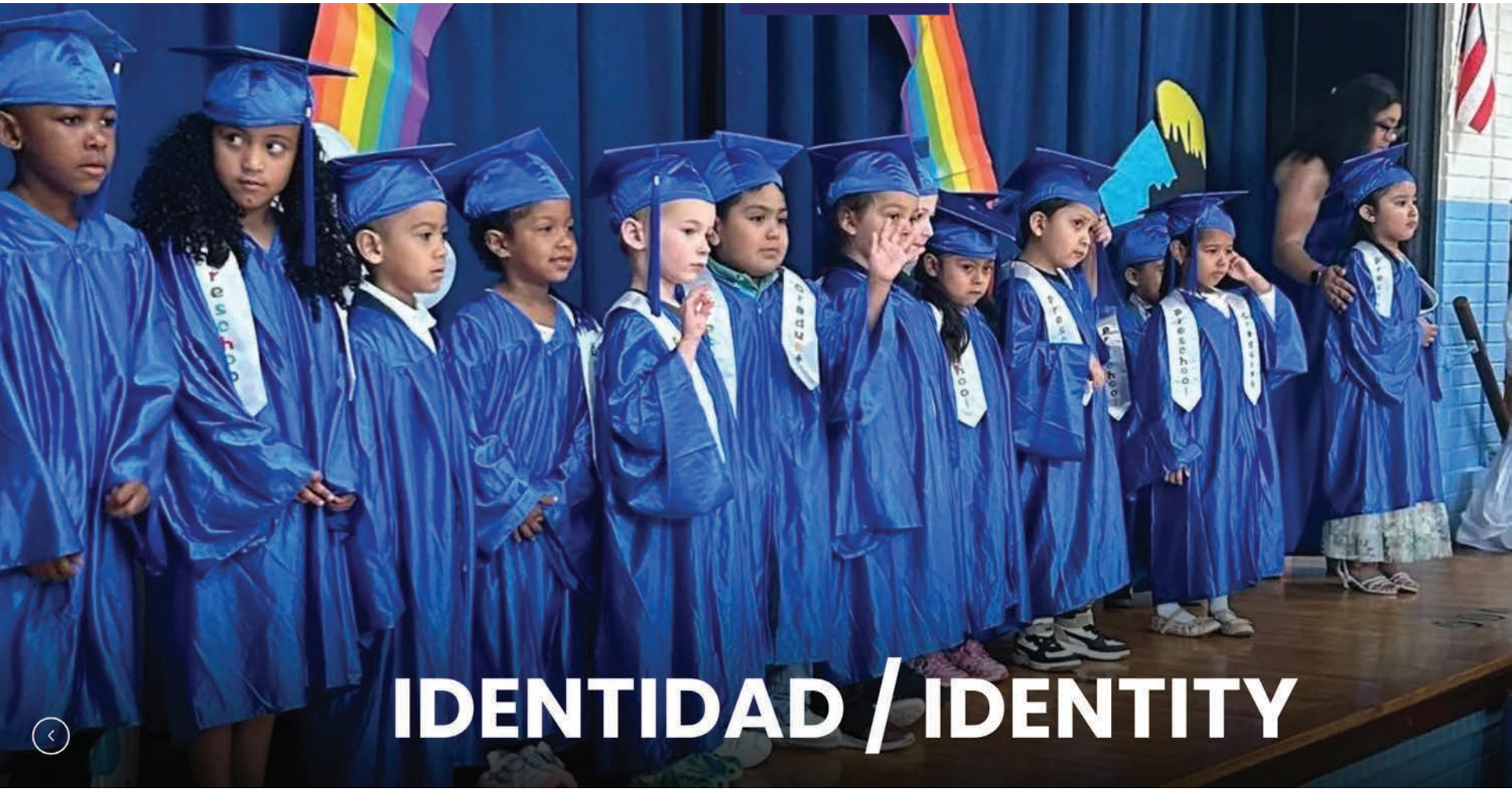
Sebastian
Joe's

WE HAVE COFFEE, TOO

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

WHEN NEIGHBORS SHOW UP, SCHOOLS LIKE EMERSON THRIVE

By Molly Dengler



(Image: Minneapolis Public Schools)

Molly Dengler is a South High School graduate, a Kenwood neighbor and the parent of a fifth grader at Emerson Dual Language School. She lives with her family as caretakers of Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church and serves as a member of Colectiva Bilingüe, supporting Spanish Dual Language schools across Minneapolis.

Show up for a Minneapolis public school. As budgets shrink and student needs grow, volunteers, advocates and neighbors are what keep schools safe, welcoming and functioning.

Emerson Dual Language School in Loring Park offers one clear example. A dual language school teaches academic content in two languages, in this case English and Spanish, with the goal of developing bilingualism, biliteracy and cross-cultural understanding.

Native English speakers and native Spanish speakers learn together, treating language as a “superpower” rather than a barrier. In fact, Emerson is the most “highly efficient” (i.e. overenrolled) MPS school at 100% capacity according to mpschools.org.

As a parent at Emerson and a Kenwood neighbor who lives just a mile away, I have spent the last four years seeing firsthand how profoundly community partnerships shape a public school.

Emerson, like many Minneapolis public schools, has endured historic budget cuts. Interventionists, support staff and program positions have disappeared while student needs have grown.

Many Emerson families also work multiple jobs or have schedules that make in-school volunteering difficult, especially now.

Even so, Emerson thrives not because it has more but because neighbors and community partners choose to show up.

I served as board president of one such partner, Colectiva Bilingüe, the Bilingual Education Collective. Colectiva connects all five Spanish dual language schools in Minneapolis and pushes families to think beyond individual classrooms toward collective improvement.

It coordinates grant writing, supports di-

verse parent leaders and works to ensure resources are shared equitably, not captured by the loudest or wealthiest schools.

That work shows up in tangible ways. Phyllis, who lives in a nearby apartment building, began volunteering in the school library. With a small City of Minneapolis Partnership Engagement Fund stipend, she launched a breakfast recycling system that is now part of daily school life and persuaded the city to install two new trash cans on 15th Street. She also created a Reading Buddies program and sign-up system that allowed us to attract neighbors, not just parents.

Charlie, another neighbor, started as a Reading Buddy and returned this year to support the same students in third grade. He watered the school garden all summer and now helps manage traffic during Emerson’s hectic arrival and dismissal periods. Like Phyllis, his presence has become part of the school’s fabric.

These are not small contributions. They shape whether hallways feel calm or chaotic, whether a child is noticed that day, whether a garden survives the summer and whether fam-

“Community partnerships are not just helpful. They are essential.”

ilies feel safe sending their children to school during periods of heightened ICE activity.

Community partnerships are not just helpful. They are essential.

While Emerson has benefited from a growing network of volunteers and advocates, many Minneapolis public schools have not. They still need consistent community support to form the safety net all children deserve.

For Kenwood and Loring Park neighbors, that might be as simple as crossing Hennepin, walking through Emerson’s doors and asking how you can help.

If you have ever wondered how to support a public school, whether it is the one down the block or one with fewer resources across the city, here are three easy places to start.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS IN JUST 30 MINUTES A WEEK

BE A READING BUDDY – ENGLISH OR SPANISH
30 minutes a week can change a child’s reading trajectory, especially where interventionists have been cut.
Sign up: <https://signup.com/go/iEEMONK>

SERVE AS A SAFETY PATROL
A short morning or afternoon shift helps families feel safe, particularly in schools near busy streets.
Sign up: <https://signup.com/go/zNCPXxC>

VOLUNTEER AT ANOTHER COLECTIVA BILINGÜE SCHOOL
Some dual language schools are still building volunteer networks. Supporting them strengthens bilingual education citywide.
Sign up: <https://signup.com/go/YCVkAsr>

Volunteers cannot replace lost staff, but they do strengthen the safety net around students. When neighbors show up, children feel seen, supported and safer.

Emerson shows what is possible when community steps in.

HOW I LEARNED TO WAKE UP HAPPY

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,

Happy New Year! Looking for a resolution? Well, I have one for you, one that everyone, even the most stalwart resolution breakers, can keep. I say this because if I can keep it (and I have for this entire year), you can, too. And it will improve your life.

I did not choose this resolution or read about it anywhere. It came to me organically. Last New Year’s Eve, I went to a party and was met with an offer. One of those propositions that, in the moment, appears tantalizing but not without risk or demanding consideration. In these situations, the devil sits on one shoulder screaming, “Go for it, Dorothy,” followed by a chorus of FOMOs and YOLOs and other justifications for behavior usually filed under madness.

On the other shoulder rested an angel whispering a simple caveat: “You will hate yourself in the morning.” I listened to the angel and went home.

On my desk sat my already prepared to-do list (henceforth referred to as “List”) for the next day, Jan. 1. I added “Wake up happy” and went to bed. In the morning, grateful for my decision, I checked off “Wake up happy” with a smile.

Later that day, there was a brunch I did not want to attend. I was partied and peopled out. It was piercingly cold. But I had said I would be there and knew the hosts, good friends, would be disappointed if I did not show. My fireplace (the devil’s inferno) beckoned, and all I wanted was to curl up with a book by the flames. Again, I listened to the angel, got

ready, drove to the suburbs, and you know what? I had a blast.

I stayed far longer than planned and drove home happy. I walked straight to my not-even-begun List for the next day and wrote “Wake up happy,” knowing I would.

That is when I decided to add “Wake up happy” to my List every day, truncated to “WUH 😊!” If anyone ever saw my List, they would have no clue what any of it meant. Honed over years of daily list-making, nearly every item (there are usually 25–30) is written in code only I can crack. I love and live by my List — it gets me out of bed each morning. There is always something to do.

But I digress.

WUH 😊! is the only New Year’s resolution I have ever kept because it is easy and requires only conscious intention. Every day, we face both temptation and dread. There is something that looks fun, like diving into a sleeve of Girl Scout cookies, that will bring regret the next morning, or something that feels heavy, like calling customer service, that brings relief and even joy once the endless hold music and (finally!) conversation are over.

Over a year of waking up happy, I have learned that doing what I do not want to do far outweighs not doing what I am tempted to do. When I cross off WUH 😊! each morning, I reflect on what brought me happiness the day before. It is a nudge, a mini gratitude journal, and a pat on the back all rolled into one.

Even when I am in a funk, there is always some small thing that can lift my spirits or spark pride for having done, or not done, something. It does not have to be a grand event or gesture. Often, it is catching up with an old friend or doing something kind for someone else.

I hit a rough patch in late August, when it was hard to get out of bed, much less feel happy. One morning, I stared at WUH 😊!, unable to think of a single thing to celebrate. Then I realized that simply slogging through the previous day, without succumbing to the wretchedness that enveloped me, was something to be happy about. In the spirit of “this, too, shall pass,” it meant I was one day closer to feeling better. I crossed it off.

The beauty of this yearlong practice is that it is one day at a time. Eventually, it gets inside you, becoming a quiet barometer for moving in a positive direction. It has changed and improved my life.

There is a good chance you already do, or do not do, something each day that is worth being happy about. The key is recognizing it. You, too, can wake up happy. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

— Dorothy



POST SCRIPT
CITY COUNCIL APPROVES FUNDING
FOR NEW DOWNTOWN PUBLIC RESTROOMS

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.

The City Council approved Amendment No. 29 to the mayor’s 2026 budget in a 10-1-2 vote, allocating \$700,000 to fund up to eight public restrooms along Nicollet Avenue downtown.

The initiative was spearheaded by outgoing Council Member Katie Cashman, with Council Members Rainville, Chavez and Chowdhury listed as co-authors. Council Members Ellison and Jenkins were absent. Council Member Palmisano cast the sole vote against the amendment.

Under the proposal, the city would contract with an outside vendor to provide restroom units as a service rather than owning or maintaining the facilities. The request for proposals would be managed by the Public Works Department.

One potential vendor cited during discussions is Throne, a company that provides self-contained, technology-enabled restroom units. The units are equipped with sensors that monitor usage around the clock from a remote location. Users access the restrooms through a mobile app, text message or tap card and are allotted a 10-minute time limit. Users who exceed the limit may be restricted from future use.

The units feature touchless flushing and faucets, enhanced ventilation and climate

control, and are designed to be tamper-resistant and durable. They do not connect directly to water or sewer lines. Wastewater is stored in a holding tank, and gray water from hand washing is reused for flushing. Sensors notify the vendor when tanks require servicing.

Use of the restrooms would be free. Because the units are portable, they could be relocated based on pedestrian traffic and demand. The restrooms typically operate on solar power, with the option to connect to an external power source if needed.

If implemented as planned, the restrooms are intended to provide a clean and accessible option in high-traffic downtown areas. City data show that between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, Minneapolis 311 received 27 complaints related to human feces in public spaces. Cleanup of those incidents is currently handled by Downtown Improvement District ambassadors. City officials cited the data as one indicator of the need for additional public restroom facilities.

Funding for the restroom program would come from the state’s 2013 Streetcar Value Capture Fund. Although no streetcar project is currently planned, the fund remains active. John Micevych, a staff member in Cashman’s office, said the fund is authorized to exist for another 25 years, providing a stable source of revenue.

In 2021, the Minnesota Legislature expanded allowable uses of the fund to include

broader transit-related purposes, making the restroom initiative an eligible expense.

Some concerns were raised about potential misuse of public restrooms, but supporters said the design and monitoring features of the proposed units are intended to address those issues.



An ADA-compliant restroom, by potential vendor, Throne Labs. (Image: courtesy of Throne Labs)



This isn't marketing. It's feedback.

M **Mary**
6 reviews

★★★★★

I have received excellent care by several of the dermatologists at Lakes Dermatology for about 5 years. I'm in my 70's and have seen many doctors over my lifetime. The exceptionally kind and skillful doctors and the support staff at Lakes Dermatology always put me at ease. They have earned my full confidence.

N **Nicholas M**
Local Guide · 113 reviews · 35 photos

★★★★★

Punctual and thorough. I went in for a whole body scan. Appointment started on time and the Dr. checked me over, scanning high risk areas twice. She spent time describing things to watch out for in the future, which I appreciated. Would highly recommend.

C **Courtney**
3 reviews

★★★★★

I recently saw Dr Gunasekera and she was the best! So sweet and caring. I was going somewhere else previously and felt like I was part of an "assembly line" so to speak, but felt very welcomed and heard here with my concerns.

❤️ 1

R **Rachel**
Local Guide · 10 reviews · 7 photos

★★★★★

I have been a patient of Dr. Gehrig's for 6+ years and won't go anywhere else. I have been so comfortable with Lakes Dermatology! Recently had laser treatment and the experience was wonderful. They calmed my nerves by explaining the process and answering all my questions. Very thoughtful and thorough and my results are amazing!

❤️ 🙏 2

M **Mary**
10 reviews

★★★★★

This was my husband's first visit with Dr Sellinger. He feels she is the best dermatologist he has ever had as she listens well, is very competent, professional, and personable. The entire staff is best in class and we recommend them to friends and family.

K **Kelly**
4 reviews

★★★★★

Dr. Marisa Chapman is so personable, thorough, honest and a star in her profession. I am grateful for her help.

❤️

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