

THE FEDS SAY THE SURGE IS OVER. MINNEAPOLIS ISN'T SO SURE.

By Will Stancil



At sunset on Bde Maka Ska, neighbors moved into place and became an SOS. The last light of day caught the ice at their feet and turned the moment into something both magical and powerful. (Image: Jeff Schad Imagery)

Will Stancil is a lawyer and housing policy researcher. He lives in Lowry Hill.

The federal government's siege

of Minneapolis appears to be in its ending phases, but the aftermath is only beginning. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Border Patrol flooded the

city starting in December under Operation Metro Surge, with as many as 3,000 officers patrolling neighborhoods and conducting raids.

In hindsight, the operation's turning point was the murder of Alex Pretti on Nicollet Avenue. The killing, filmed from multiple angles by observers, collapsed the Trump administration's narrative that Pretti was a threat.

What remained was one of the most shocking law-enforcement killings ever caught on camera: a disarmed man on all fours, shot ten times in the back at point-blank range by masked paramilitary agents in broad daylight.

Following the footage, political support for the operation faltered. Border Patrol commander Greg Bovino was removed and reassigned. He was

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DEAR NEIGHBORS: IT'S TIME FOR BORING, UNSEXY WORK

By Molly Mogren Katt



Lowry Hill neighbors are flying the Minnesota state flag along Fremont Avenue South, a quiet but powerful show of solidarity as Minneapolis navigates a painful chapter. (Image: Craig Wilson)

Molly Mogren Katt is a writer and mother of two. This story originally ran on her post *Hey Eleanor!* on Substack. She lives in the Wedge.

“How's everything feeling now that ICE is leaving?” a producer from a national news organization asked through my speaker phone, following up on a story I'd helped her with in early in January. I thought about it as I bandaged my index finger, one of many cardboard cuts I've picked up while organizing thousands of pounds of donated food and hygiene products.

“I mean, I spent six hours today getting 400 bags of supplies to families, so I guess it feels the same.”

Wait — people are still sheltering in place?

I explained that while the overt chaos and violence may have ended, the ICE occupation has not. The week Tom Homan replaced Greg Bovino and announced the departure of 700 ICE agents, three parents at my kids' school disappeared. ICE changed tactics. They're quieter now, less dramatic, not the fodder that drives clicks and engagement. The news cycle moved on. We have not.

I'm writing this on Feb. 19. As of today, a team of six parents and a handful of educators from our school are distributing groceries, toilet paper, toothpaste and school supplies to 75 families every week. We're working with immigration

“Teachers should be focused on instruction, not learning the habeas petition process or scrambling to find emergency mental health services for children.”

lawyers. We're patrolling the streets. Last month, we covered rent for 70 families. This month, we're aiming for 120. Most people need at least \$1,000. You can do the math.

The version of me that existed way back in November last year would think there was zero

chance of this happening to Minneapolis. The older, wiser 2026 version of me is Ted Lasso slapping a “Believe” sign. While we may share this planet with some despicable human beings (looking at you, Stephen Miller), the good ones outnumber the bad. I know we can help 120 families stay in their homes one more month. We'll do it through Venmo, GoFundMe, T-shirt sales, small business fundraisers and pounding our networks with ask after ask.

But what happens April 1st? May 1st? Beyond?

This is not sustainable. Our small but mighty group is exhausted, as is every other one just like ours. We are not mutual aid professionals. We're regular people with regular jobs and responsibilities — cooking and cleaning for our own families, caring for aging parents, driving kids to swimming lessons. Teachers should be focused on instruction, not learning the habeas petition process or scrambling to find emergency mental health services for children. After rent assistance, help locating mental health services is our biggest request.

The children are not OK.

For the families we're supporting — our kids' friends and

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50TH ANNIVERSARY 1976 - 2026

Hill & Lake Press

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

Thank You Hill & Lake Press

Thank you for offering your wise and informed perspective about what is happening in our city, state and country. I have been a reader of the Hill & Lake Press for many years. It has usually been fun to read, sometimes a bit parochial and self-important depending on the topic and the writer.

My sense is that under your leadership, Craig Wilson, the paper has become much more than a neighborhood publication focused on the most privileged of concerns. You have elevated it into an important resource that helps residents understand what is happening in Minneapolis at a critical moment for our community.

Thank you for helping us stay informed.

*Susan Smoluchowski
Lowry Hill*

Appreciation for Thoughtful Reporting

You nailed it. What an excellent article you wrote, “Minneapolis Is Unifying, America Is Dividing.” Thank you for such a well thought out essay on why Minneapolis is unifying and why the rest of the United States is not. Your publication continues to be top notch.

I look forward to the Hill & Lake Press each month and I just sent you a small donation.

*Joan Moser
The Wedge*

Congratulations

To the entire staff of the Hill & Lake Press: just a huge congratulations on the latest issue. The quality of the articles and the comprehensive nature of the coverage was literally unbelievable for a local newspaper.

I realize that excellence has been your standard all along, but with so many critical issues in our neighborhood it was especially important in this latest is-

sue. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who clearly work so hard to put out this extraordinary product.

*Bill Mease
Kenwood*

A Bouquet of Gratitude

My partner’s mother would often say, “Give them their flowers while they are here.” I want to take a moment to thank you, your staff, and reporter Will Stancil for the excellent coverage and editorial perspective in the February issue.

The February issue provides extraordinary reporting and powerful photography during a historic moment for our city. The lead story, “Under Federal Siege: Minneapolis Is Rising,” offers an eyewitness account that reflects what many residents have experienced and continue to experience. The front page editorial, “Minneapolis Is Unifying, America Is Dividing,” captures the outlook and spirit of the majority of Minneapolitans. We are aware, informed, caring, courageous and committed to showing up for what we believe in and for each other.

Thank you for your coverage of the peaceful protests and vigils following the deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti involving ICE activity in Minneapolis. This issue is especially important because it documents, in a timely and vivid way, how recent events have affected residents at what many are calling “ground zero.” The memory of Renee Good and Alex Pretti is held closely in our minds and hearts. People in Minneapolis, and far beyond our city and state, are giving them their flowers.

Thank you for your journalism.

*Jenn James
Bryn Mawr*

Lowry Hill Gallery Opening

I want to share exciting news for our neighborhood and for the arts community in Minneapolis. A new contemporary art space, Lowry Hill Gallery, will open March 7, and will feature work by Minnesota and regional artists with a focus on representational painting, drawing and fine art prints.

The gallery is led by Andrea Bubula, former director of Groveland Gallery, with Muriel Lang serving as gallery manager. It is located at 1009 W. Franklin Avenue in the heart of Lowry Hill, near the newly reopened Hennepin Avenue. The 3,400-square foot storefront has 15-foot ceilings, uninterrupted exhibition walls, free street parking and full wheelchair accessibility. It is easy to reach from I-94, Uptown, Downtown and the nearby Kenwood and East Isles neighborhoods.

Lowry Hill Gallery will rep-

resent a wide roster of established artists as well as the estate of noted Minnesota artist Mike Lynch. The gallery plans regular events in conjunction with exhibitions, including opening receptions on Saturday afternoons and evenings. All events will be free and open to the public.

The debut exhibitions open Saturday, March 7, and run through April 11. This new space promises to be a meaningful addition to our neighborhood and to the broader arts landscape in Minneapolis.

*Andrea Bubula
Owner*

Shame On Walz

In his news conference on January 25, Governor Walz invoked the image of Anne Frank hiding from the Nazis as comparable to illegal immigrant violent felons seeking to avoid ICE.

Frank and her family were betrayed by neighbors in Amsterdam and turned over to the Nazis, who shipped them to Auschwitz, where Anne, then 16, was murdered in the gas chambers for the crime of simply being Jewish.

Moreover, our distinguished Governor previously compared ICE agents to the Gestapo, Adolf Hitler’s shock troops who rounded up Jews for delivery to the concentration camps.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington has rightly condemned Walz’s statements as “deeply offensive.”

Surely, we should all be able to agree that invoking Holocaust imagery during these tense times is truly despicable, and deserves our strongest condemnation. Has Walz no shame, no sense of decency, no soul?

It is written, “For what should it profit a man, that he should win the entire world but forfeit his soul.” (Mark, 8:36)

Walz is an embarrassment to our state, and not worthy to serve another day. He should be consigned to the ash heap of history.

*Mark R. Miller
East Isles*



It’s “I Love to Read Month” at Kenwood School!

Throughout March, Kenwood Woodchucks will celebrate “I Love to Read Month” with Spirit Days, a Read-A-Thon fundraiser, and a Book Fair. Community members are invited to support Kenwood’s kids by sponsoring students in your neighborhood for the Read-A-Thon and do-

nating new or used foreign language books for use in Kenwood classrooms.

This year Kenwood School's annual Read-A-Thon runs March 2-13. This is our largest fundraiser of the year! Our goal is to raise \$15,000 this year and 100% of proceeds go to the Kenwood PTA. The money we raise funds art residencies, inclusive school gatherings, field trips, and more. You can support us by sponsoring readers in your neighborhood with a pledge per minute or a flat rate, or donating directly to the school. Donations of \$20 or more may be made at the Kenwood PTA website here



Important: If you use this option, please list the student you're sponsoring in the "order note" prior to checking out.

In partnership with Scholastic, Kenwood School is once again hosting an Online Book Fair open to the neighborhood. The book fair is open online from March 9-22. You can visit our site here



Lastly, as our school continues to welcome students from around the world we aim to keep our classroom libraries stocked for all students. We currently have students whose first languages include Spanish, Ukrainian, Dari and Pashto. The school is seeking donations of gently used books from the community in Spanish, both fiction and nonfiction, that would be suitable for elementary school students. Examples include: "Diary of a Wimpy Kid", "DK Eyewitness Books", "Dogman", "The Baby-sitter's Club," beautifully illustrated picture books, engaging books about dinosaurs, space, planets, animals, and natural resources. Donations can be delivered to the main office and will be used to expand classroom library book selections.

Thank you for your continued support of Kenwood Community School

Mary Chandler
Kenwood

Corrections

In the Jan. 1 article "District 3 Hennepin County Commissioner Race Draws Four DFL Contenders Ahead of Feb. 3 Caucus-

es," we incorrectly reported that Commissioner Marion Greene had endorsed Council Member Aisha Chughtai in the 2025 Minneapolis Ward 10 City Council race. She did not issue an endorsement.

In the February letter to the editor from Searcy Lillehei, we misspelled her last name.

We regret the errors.

Hill & Lake Press Is Hiring a Business Manager

The Hill & Lake Press, a nonprofit community newspaper serving the Minneapolis lakes neighborhoods, is seeking a part-time Business Manager to oversee financial and operational systems. The role supports advertising management, budgeting and reporting, donor and compliance tracking and smooth day-to-day operations in collaboration with the Editor, Treasurer and Board.

Ideal candidates have experience in nonprofit or business administration, strong organizational skills and a passion for community journalism.

Learn more or apply at:



As a pink and orange sunset spread across the sky, neighbor Martha Bigelow sent her kite rising into a blue sky while neighbors on Bde Maka Ska formed an SOS on the glowing ice. (Images: Craig Wilson)



(Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

IT'S TIME FOR BORING, UNSEXY WORK. Front page

classmates — things are nowhere close to normal. Savings are gone. Jobs have been lost. And even if an employer is holding a position (restaurants, construction), many businesses are barely staying afloat. They can't offer the hours needed to support a family. Parents are stressed about rent even though they desperately want to work.

These are people who survived war, famine and refugee camps.

Some spent months walking from Ecuador through the Darién Gap — a roadless stretch of rainforest known for poisonous snakes, disease, flash floods, sexual violence and gangs — with hopes of building a better life. I once thought I deserved a medal for road-tripping to Traverse City in a Chrysler Pacifica with two kids under five. These families have more grit in their pinkie nail than I have in my whole body.

Those of us with means, with privilege, must stay engaged. Before we pat ourselves on the back

for showing up 50,000 strong on the coldest day of the year — which was incredible and perhaps the most Minnesotan thing ever — before we write our acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize we honestly deserve, let's remember this is not over. The dramatic moments are gone. What remains is the basic, boring, unsexy work we cannot crowdfund our way out of. It's time to ask our elected officials to match our effort.

Where to Start

If you're wondering how to help, start by advocating for an eviction moratorium (do that here: <http://bit.ly/OMSrecovery>). This is not rent forgiveness. It would simply protect tenants from eviction if they cannot pay rent. Yes, we all experienced this trauma, but the only sliver of safety many families have is their home. How about we wait before taking that away from people who couldn't work because of a paramilitary operation?

Please ask our elected offi-

cial to invest in ongoing recovery, especially in our underfunded public schools.

And in the meantime, even though we're burned out and tired, please donate to the rent relief fund for our school's Wolfpack Community Fund (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/community-support-for-wolfpack-families>) or Venmo me @molly-mogren. Our people need help. We are not giving up.

“Those of us with means, with privilege, must stay engaged”

**EVICTION MORATORIUM**

Add your name to the list of supporters for this moratorium here — <http://bit.ly/OMSrecovery>

**DONATE TO RENT RELIEF**

Donate here — <http://www.gofundme.com/f/community-support-for-wolfpack-families>

Or by Venmo here — @molly-mogren

KENILWORTH AND CEDAR TRAILS REOPEN AFTER SIX YEARS OF LIGHT RAIL CONSTRUCTION

By Andy Schwarm



Cedar LakTrail (Image: TrailLink)

Andy Schwarm is an avid bicyclist and the treasurer of the Hill & Lake Press. He lives in Lowry Hill.

Earlier this winter, the remaining sections of the Kenilworth and Cedar Lake trails reopened after nearly seven years of closure for construction of the Southwest Light Rail project. The full return of what Minneapolis officials call the most intensely used trail in the

“After nearly seven years of construction, Minneapolis’ Bike Freeway reconnects the city.”

city's park system was met with excitement and relief. Cyclists and pedestrians now have restored access from Target Field and downtown to Cedar Lake Parkway and the Midtown Greenway.

Large portions of the trails closed in 2019 when the Metropolitan Council began heavy construction for the Metro Green Line Extension. The pedestrian and bike corridor runs parallel to the BNSF Railway line out of downtown Minneapolis, where track installation and construction of three new light rail stations required shutting down key segments of the high-volume commuter route.

When work began in 2019, officials expected the Kenilworth corridor to be closed for three years. The project grew more complicated, and trail changes drew early resistance after more than one

thousand trees were removed along the formerly shaded route to make room for the expanded rail corridor.

As part of the rail project, the trails have been rebuilt with new fencing and signage. Work is ongoing near Target Field, where fencing narrows the Cedar Lake Trail. A zigzag detour also remains at the Midtown Greenway and Kenilworth connection south of Cedar Lake. The Metropolitan Council plans a public celebration of the full reopening once remaining work wraps up this spring.

The long closure significantly disrupted both commuter and recreational access from downtown to the Chain of Lakes. Plowed in winter, the corridor connects three of the most heavily used dedicated trail systems in Minneapolis: the Kenilworth Trail, the Cedar Lake

Trail and the Midtown Greenway.

The Cedar Lake Trail opened in 1995 as the first federally funded rail-to-trail conversion in the United States. The Rails to Trails Conservancy has called it “America’s first bike freeway” because it was designed for high-volume commuting, with two bike lanes and a separate pedestrian path.

The Metropolitan Council estimated that the trail saw about one million visits prior to its 2019 closure, with the Kenilworth corridor alone supporting an average of 2,100 cyclist trips and 400 pedestrian trips daily.

Construction forced many of those users onto less safe roadways and slower, less direct routes. The winter reopening brings the network back online before the higher-use months of spring and summer.

A CITY REMEMBERS IN ICE

By Brian Lucas



At the 2026 Loppet's Enchanted Forest, candles and ice sculptures honor the lives of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, two community members who were fatally shot by federal immigration enforcement agents in January. Good, a poet, was killed during an Enforcement and Removal Operations action, and Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse, was later killed in a separate confrontation with Border Patrol agents. The memorial — visited by neighbors, friends and loved ones — stood as a place to remember their lives, grieve together and reflect on the broader impact of these events on the community. (Image: Craig Wilson)

Brian Mogren and a crew of volunteers braved single-digit wind chills to install ice memorials honoring Renee Good and Alex Pretti. His dedication, from the 40-hour vigil on the North Side to the glowing sculptures at the Luminary Loppet, reflects his belief in community, healing and showing up for neighbors when it matters most. (Images: Brian Lucas)

Brian Lucas is a regular contributor. He lives in Kenwood.

On a frigid February day, with wind chills in the single digits, Brian Mogren and a team of volunteers hauled blocks of ice from a truck to the shoreline of Lake of the Isles.

Cold hands and windswept faces were no match for their sense of purpose: bringing the community together to honor the memories of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.

"I knew this was something we had to do," Mogren said. "This community has been through so much, but we've also come together, and the Loppet offered a great way to bring our tribute to thousands of people."

From Vigil to Loppet

Mogren is one of the organizers of the North Side Luminary Light Up, an annual event held at the Old Highland Peace Garden at 18th Avenue and Emerson Avenues North. This year's gathering, held Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, was billed as a celebration of light, love and community.

The 40-hour vigil honored Good and Pretti while also celebrating immigrant neighbors and emphasizing solidarity. The event raised more than \$5,000 for immigrant families at Ascension Church and School located in North Minneapolis.

As part of the vigil, Mogren commissioned two 20-by-40-inch ice sculptures depicting the now-iconic portraits of Good and Pretti. Mogren designed the tributes, and a local ice company carved them. After witnessing visitors' emotional response, he decided to bring the sculptures to the Luminary Loppet.

"These two images really capture the spirit of Alex and Renee," Mogren said. "People at the event were sometimes breathless as they stood before them, just taking it in, tears falling. It was an emotional experience."

Personal Symbols of Remembrance

Volunteers added individual touches to each memorial. Good's display featured white roses and letters spelling out "See the Good." Pretti's memorial spelled out his name in ice and included bicycle tires, symbolizing his love of cycling. The exhibits also featured poems written after their deaths by poet and activist Amanda Gorman.

"We felt like we needed to respond to the pain the city is experiencing," Mogren said. "When we first installed them and people began to walk up, I just broke down. I had been working long hours and was sleep deprived, but seeing the finished work was overwhelming. Sometimes it's too much. I've seen people turn away

and stand with their backs to the ice, just crying."

The memorials were placed in the Enchanted Garden area of the Luminary Loppet, joining the lanterns and illuminated displays that draw thousands to the lake each year.

"To experience this kind of beauty is just so fleeting and ethereal, almost like their lives. They're gone too soon. Beautiful and gone too soon."

— Brian Mogren

Beauty, Grief and Community

For Mogren, the ice sculptures offered a moment of collective healing.

"I am in awe of how people are stepping up for one another and for our neighbors who are living in fear," he said. "When I asked for help with the North Side event, people just showed up. Even today, we had six or seven people come to the garden to get a head start so everything would be exactly right."

After the Loppet concluded, Mogren and other volunteers returned nightly to keep candles glowing at the memorials for as long as the tribute could endure. He said there was something fitting about using ice — "the good kind of ice," he noted — to honor Good and Pretti.

"To experience this kind of beauty is just so fleeting and ethereal, almost like their lives," Mogren said. "They're beautiful and gone too soon." While the sculptures will melt, he said, the legacy of the neighbors they honored will not.

MINNEAPOLIS UNDER FEDERAL SIEGE Front page



Wanted poster at Franklin Avenue and Hennpin Avenue South. (Image: Courtney Cushing Kiernet)

replaced with Tom Homan, the administration's "border czar."

A Leadership Shake-Up and New Tactics

Bovino relied on shock-and-awe policing — convoys of armored vehicles, tear gas in crowded streets and highly visible intimidation. Homan adopted a different strategy: unmarked cars, masked men and covert operations.

Observers report that large-scale tear-gassing declined. But the number of unmarked vehicles and aggressive encounters increased. Neighbors who had grown accustomed to tracking black SUVs suddenly found themselves tailing more discreet, unpredictable vehicles.

Observers Keep Watch as ICE Adapts

Thousands of local observers continued patrolling neighborhoods daily. Their numbers have decreased since January's peak, but remain substantial. Observers report that federal officers are thinner on the ground but far from gone.

ICE activity quietly shifted into the suburbs and Greater Minnesota, where resistance was less organized. Agents increasingly opted for smaller vehicles. In multiple cases, observers were boxed in, threatened at gunpoint or followed.

Despite Homan's Feb. 13 announcement that the operation had

ended, federal activity still appears in pockets of the metro. Suburbs continue to report encounters, and observers still spot ICE vehicles daily.

No reliable public count of remaining agents exists, and no timetable for their departure has been released.

A Drawdown Announced, but Doubt Remains

Trust is scarce. Too many earlier statements were false, mis-

"January was devastating for businesses."

leading or contradicted by on-the-ground evidence. Observer networks remain wary and continue patrols until the withdrawal is indisputable.

Few are willing to predict when that will be.

Whenever it finally happens, Minneapolis will have to confront the damage.

Schools Face a Crisis of Trust

Public schools across Minneapolis experienced steep drops in in-person attendance. Declines in some buildings resembled the early COVID years, as many families — especially families of color — sheltered at home for safety.

Whether all students will return remains an open question.

An Uneven Path to Economic Recovery

January was devastating for businesses. Customers stayed home. Some were in hiding; others avoided areas where federal agents deployed violence. Many employers struggled to reassure immigrant and nonwhite staff that coming to work was safe.

February brought signs of recovery, but unevenly.

Restaurants along Nicollet Avenue report booming business — helped by visitors to the growing Alex Pretti memorial and by neighbors determined to support affected communities. One owner said they were having "the best business they'd ever seen."

But across Uptown Minneapolis — on Lyndale, Lake and Hennepin — the rebound has been slower. Some businesses may not survive the occupation, the latest in a string of blows to the district.

Hill & Lake residents looking to help the city recover can make a difference simply by visiting local stores and restaurants more often.

"What remained was one of the most shocking law-enforcement killings ever caught on camera."

The Future of the Observer Networks

It's unclear what the observer networks will become. Many volunteers say they will not trust federal assurances until they see empty streets for weeks.

These networks also built deep bonds — often under pseudonyms — that could resurface in future civic engagement or organizing.

Their legal status remains murky. Police in Richfield and Bloomington have recently ticketed or arrested observers, sparking political tension. Yet federal attempts to prosecute observers have mostly collapsed. Felony indictments were downgraded or dismissed, a tac-

it acknowledgment that observers did not commit crimes. The U.S. Department of Justice has struggled to staff cases after resignations within the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's office.

Will Families Feel Safe Again?

No one can predict when the social contract will be restored.

Thousands of families have spent months indoors. Will they trust that ICE has truly left? How long before they return to work, school and community life? Will they feel safe again in a city that could not guarantee their safety?

Many may remain in hiding long after the last agent leaves — not out of paranoia, but lived experience.

Minneapolis Won — But the Cost Is Enormous

Despite the trauma, Minneapolis proved something vital. The federal government justified its invasion by claiming that removing

"Observers report that federal officers are thinner on the ground but far from gone."

immigrants strengthens society. Minneapolis exposed that as a lie.

Neighbors defended neighbors across lines of language, ethnicity and immigration status: Latino, Hmong, Somali and more.

Even as the long march to normality begins, one truth remains: the full force of the federal government could not break the bonds between us.

For all the damage already felt — and the hardship still to come — Minneapolis won.

SPRING IS HERE. TIME FOR A SCOOP.

LINDEN HILLS 4321 UPTON AVE SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MN LOWRY HILL 1007 W FRANKLIN AVE SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MN
KINGFIELD 4301 NICOLLET AVE SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MN



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Mention Hill & Lake Press & we'll make a \$20 donation to the Joyce Uptown Food Shelf when you call for a quote!

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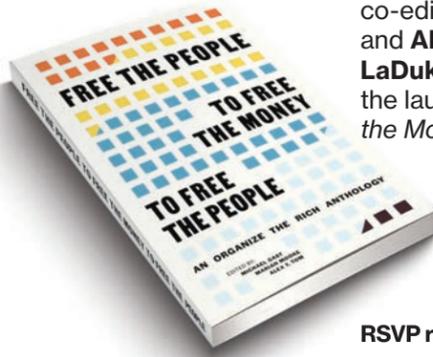



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MINNEAPOLIS BOOK TALK!



Please join us for a conversation with co-editors **Michael Gast, Marian Moore,** and **Alex T. Tom**, joined by **Winona LaDuke** and **Laura Flynn** to celebrate the launch of *Free the People to Free the Money to Free the People*.

Thursday 3/19
6:30 - 8:30 PM
@ Moon Palace Books
3032 Minnehaha Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55406

RSVP required moonpalacebooks.com/events

1976 50TH ANNIVERSARY 2026

Hill & Lake Press

'Where the biggies leave off...'

Lowry Hill Update

It's been heartening seeing the community respond to this moment. Rent relief is a priority right now—many residents can't even leave their homes. Whether you need resources or are looking for ways to help, visit lowryhillneighborhood.org/ice.

Uptown Farmers Market is seeking vendors for its 2026 season! Those interested in vending or volunteering this summer can apply for both at uptownmarket.org.

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




Resources: ICE in Our City
www.lowryhillneighborhood.org/ice

There are so many ways to help out in this moment—check out a shortlist of actions you can take. Do what you have capacity and resources to do. Every single bit helps, and ongoing support after these events leave the news cycle is always needed. Stay safe, neighbors!

Lowry Hill Board Meetings
Mar. 3 • Apr. 7 1st Tues. 6:30 – 8 PM
Kenwood Community Center: 2101 W Franklin Ave
Join us for neighborhood updates! To join the agenda, please email lhna@lowryhillneighborhood.org.

Lowry Hill Service Saturdays
Mar. 21 • Apr. 18 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.

Support Lowry Hill in 2026
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

TIME FOR A MINNEAPOLIS FLAG THAT UNITES & INSPIRES

Editorial by Craig Wilson

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

In 2024, after years of debate, Minnesota adopted a state flag worthy of its people.

The new North Star banner has taken center stage at rallies, community gatherings and yes, even protests. It has been reimagined in murals, stitched onto jackets and waved proudly at moments of collective resolve.

I wrote about this in the January 2024 issue of the Hill & Lake Press.

It turns out a good flag matters.

In recent weeks, as Minneapolis residents have shown extraordinary unity in response to the surge of federal ICE activity in our city, creativity has been everywhere.

Handmade signs. Poetry. Murals. Chants. Ice sculptures. The people of Minneapolis have demonstrated remarkable artistic firepower in defense of their neighbors.

Which raises an obvious question: if we can produce that much creativity on short notice, why is our city flag so uninspired?

Some readers may reasonably ask whether this is really a priority right now given the very real crises Minneapolis is facing. I get that. Many of us could not pick the city flag out of a lineup.

I did not even remember what it looked like until I went back and checked. But that forgettability is part of the problem.

Our Current Flag Does Not Reflect Us

Let's be honest. The current Minneapolis flag looks less like the banner of a major American city and more like something that might hang in the lobby of a community and technical college circa 1955. It is earnest. It is tidy. It is also boring.

And boring is not who we are.

Minneapolis is bold, complicated, generous and artistic. We are a city of lakes and poets, of neighborhood organizers and entrepreneurs, of Indigenous, immigrant and multigenerational communities that continue to shape its identity.

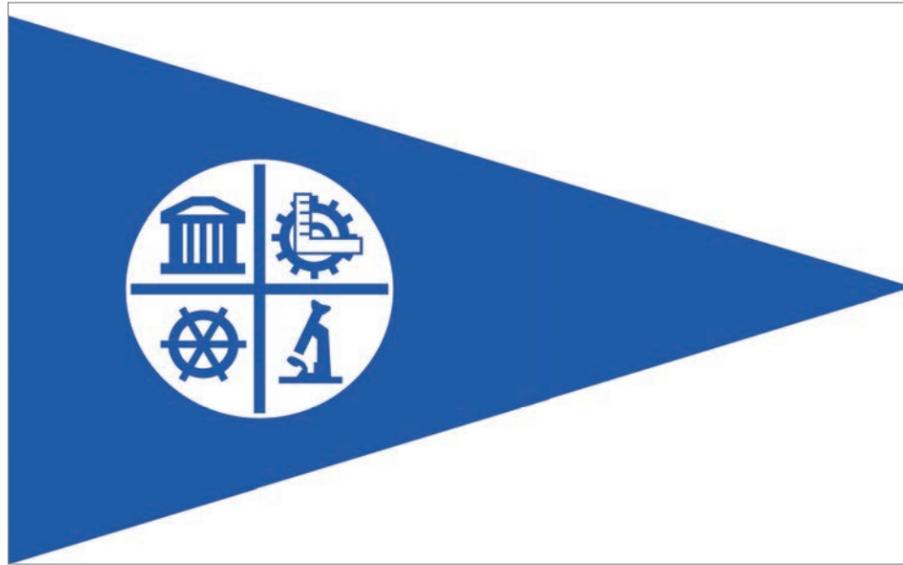
We deserve a symbol that reflects that vitality.

Look at Chicago. Its four red stars and blue stripes are instantly recognizable. The flag appears on buildings, tattoos, coffee mugs and winter hats. It is civic shorthand for pride.

The same is true in Amsterdam, where the triple X flag is both historic and ubiquitous.

Doesn't Minneapolis deserve an icon that unifies and inspires us?

Minneapolis has no shortage



The flag of Minneapolis was created in 1955 after a citywide contest won by high school student Louise Sundin. Designed to symbolize a "brilliant future," it features a royal blue pennant and a central white circle divided into four symbols representing education and the arts, labor and industry, lakes and rivers and scientific progress. Vexillologists — experts who study the history, meaning and design of flags — often critique the Minneapolis flag for its fussy details and reliance on multiple small icons. Its complexity makes it hard to draw from memory and difficult to recognize at a distance, two core tests of strong flag design. (Image: City of Minneapolis)

“Minneapolis has never lacked imagination. What we lack is a symbol worthy of it.”

of urgent challenges that deserve our full attention, from public safety to housing affordability to the everyday work of keeping a city running.

A flag redesign will not fix those problems.

But this is one small, achievable act that can do more than symbolize unity. It can create a shared emblem that steadies us, inspires us and helps guide us into our collective future.

A Process That Can Work

I recently spoke with Luis Fitch, who chaired the State Emblems Redesign Commission that developed Minnesota's new flag.

He was supportive of the idea of a Minneapolis redesign and emphasized what made the state process successful: an open public design competition, broad cultural representation, transparency and guidance from professional vexillologists, the scholars of flag design.

The lesson from the state effort is clear. Design by committee can work if it is structured, inclusive and grounded in principles of good design.

Keep it simple. Use meaningful symbolism. Limit the color palette. Make it distinctive.

I have also spoken with moderate and progressive members of the Minneapolis City Council, as well as the mayor. Across ideological lines there is openness to reimagining our city's flag. That alone feels like progress.

A Stake in the Ground

At a time when Minneapolis has been tested and has responded with courage and unity, we should have a banner that captures that spirit.

The Minnesota flag has shown us what is possible when a community decides it deserves better symbolism.

So here it is, a stake in the ground.

Let's do this.

Let's launch a thoughtful, inclusive public process to create a Minneapolis flag that represents all of us.

A flag that children can draw from memory. A flag that artists want to reinterpret. A flag that shows up on storefronts and at festivals and at moments when we stand together.

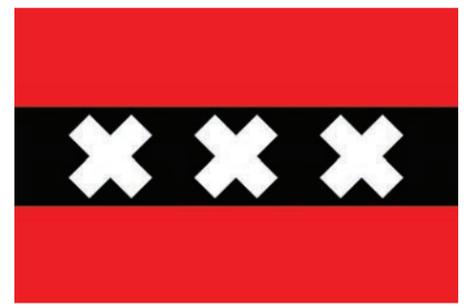
It's time for a flag as strong and creative as the city it represents.



The new flag of Minnesota features an eight-point white North Star on a field of deep blue and sky blue. The darker field forms an abstracted silhouette of the state when the flag is horizontal. When the flag hangs vertically, the dividing line resembles the Mississippi River flowing northward toward the guiding star, symbolizing Minnesota's motto, "L'Étoile du Nord," or "Star of the North." The colors reflect the state's many waters and northern skies, while the simple, symmetrical layout allows the flag to fly correctly in any orientation. Designed to replace the previous seal-based flag, the new banner follows recognized principles of good flag design and represents a unified, modern Minnesota. (Image: State of Minnesota)



Chicago's iconic flag features two blue stripes representing Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, separated by three white bands for the North, West and South Sides. Its four red six-pointed stars honor key moments in the city's history, including Fort Dearborn, the Chicago Fire, the World's Columbian Exposition and the Century of Progress Fair. Widely embraced across the city, it has become a powerful symbol of civic pride. (Image: City of Chicago)



The flag of Amsterdam features three white Saint Andrew's Crosses on a black stripe between two red fields. The crosses date back to the city's medieval coat of arms and are often interpreted as representing courage, determination and compassion. Bold and unmistakable, the design has become one of Europe's most recognizable civic symbols. (Image: City of Amsterdam)

WE SUPPORT JUSTICE. WE ALSO NEED TO STAY OPEN.

Commentary by Judy Longbottom



Judy Longbottom (Image: Courtesy of The Uptown Association)

Judy Longbottom is a small business owner in Uptown.

As Minneapolis debates how best to respond to federal immigration enforcement, many small business owners in Uptown are feeling squeezed from all sides.

We are 100% supportive of getting ICE out of Minneapolis. But we are also asking neighbors and city leaders to remember the workers and small business owners who are trying to survive in an already fragile corridor.

For nearly 30 years, my husband and I have worked to build our version of the American dream in Uptown. Over the past five years, we and hundreds of others have endured what feels like wave after wave of crisis: two years of construction, COVID-19, the unrest following the murder of George Floyd and now heightened tensions tied to ICE activity.

More than 400 businesses have closed in the area. Just last week, a longtime Lake Street medical practice that had served the community for more than 20 years shut its doors after exhausting its life savings trying to stay afloat. It did not qualify for city or state relief funds.

Our employees remain our top priority.

We kept all of our staff employed through the last five years, even when it meant sacrificing significant portions of our retirement savings. Our employees are like family. That has been our priority.

But weekly strike calls aimed at demonstrating solidarity against ICE are creating a new dilemma for small operators. It is terrifying not to participate. It is also terrifying

to participate. Closing for even one day can mean the difference between making payroll and falling short.

One employee recently told us they would not be working on a designated strike day. This person has worked with us for eight years, lives in the neighborhood and walks to work. Anyone who believes a small business in Uptown can easily absorb another lost day of revenue may not understand the razor-thin margins we operate under.

We will remain open, not as a sign of support for ICE, but because our community relies on us daily and our staff relies on their paychecks.

At the same time, public safety concerns are escalating.

New restaurant owners preparing to open in Seven Points this spring recently called to share their worries about open drug use and disorder outside their space. Another restaurateur has security footage of two individuals smoking what appears to be fentanyl in a vestibule before starting a small fire to keep warm, causing exterior damage and nearly igniting the building.

A property manager in the district reports daily incidents of people entering commercial spaces to defecate. Retailers describe repeated harassment and trespassing. Business owners say individuals often become combative when asked to leave, aware that police response times are slow and that they are likely to be released back onto the street.

Two weeks ago, our own back door was damaged, costing \$500 in repairs.

The toll is financial and emotional. Many of us are stretched to the limit. I recently experienced a panic attack, something that has never happened to me before. Conversations with fellow business owners reveal similar strain.

On Feb. 10, Uptown business members gathered at a local venue for a safety meeting. Police officers and a city attorney attended to discuss tools such as “No Trespassing” signage that allows law enforcement to intervene on private property when proper documentation is filed.

A new police substation has quietly opened nearby with donated furnishings and equipment, intended to increase presence and responsiveness.

Officers at the meeting acknowledged the challenges they face when confronting large groups with limited staffing.

Uptown has weathered what feels like four tsunamis: COVID-19, civil unrest, ICE-related tensions and a visible drug crisis that is claiming lives and eroding the

sense of safety that once defined the corridor.

Many residents and business owners support strong, principled opposition to policies they believe harm immigrant neighbors. But they also question tactics such as broad boycotts of national companies that operate local franchises or employ neighborhood residents.

Targeting the local small businesses causes harm to our local employees.

A recent community email encouraged boycotts of corporations alleged to have contracts with ICE. Soon after, our locally owned store received a one-star review referencing a shipping carrier’s federal contracts. Our employees live in the neighborhood. They pay rent here. They buy groceries here. When revenue drops, it is our neighbors who feel it first.

Do boycotts aimed at multinational corporations truly affect corporate leadership, or do they reduce hours and wages for local workers?

These are not abstract questions for us. Every week, someone walks in or emails

“We want ICE out of Minneapolis. We also want a city left standing when that happens — with jobs intact, storefronts open and residents who still believe Uptown is worth fighting for.”

asking for a job. As more storefronts go dark, opportunities shrink.

City leadership faces an enormous burden. No one envies the weight of those decisions. But small business owners are asking that economic survival and public safety remain central to the conversation.

We want ICE out of Minneapolis. We also want a city left standing when that happens — with jobs intact, storefronts open and residents who still believe Uptown is worth fighting for.

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PARK BOARD ADVANCES MALL AND OPEN PARKWAY PLANS AFTER HEATED DEBATE

By Terry White



The Mall. (Image: Ryan Jandl)

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

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board voted Feb. 4 to advance two controversial measures affecting city parkways and rejected amendments that supporters said would have strengthened community input.

Seven commissioners supported both the Mall and Open Parkways resolutions. Commissioners Kay Carvajal Moran, Dan Engelhart, Meg Forney, Am-

ber Frederick and Jason Garcia, along with Vice President Kedar Deshpande and President Tom Olsen, voted in favor. Commissioners Cathy Abene and Charles Rucker opposed both measures.

What the Measures Do

The Mall resolution directs the superintendent to study possible implementation of parts of the long-range plan for the Mall that includes removing roadway and creating a shared-use space called a “Woonerf.” The Open Parkways resolution calls for creating criteria to evaluate perma-

nent infrastructure for temporary closures of parkways.

Both passed on 7–2 votes.

Amendments Rejected

In a 6–3 vote, the board defeated amendments from Abene and Rucker that would have required forming a community advisory committee before any additional steps on the Mall plan and on the Open Parkways proposal, which is intended to close select parkways to automobile traffic.

Abene said the amendments were intended to increase community engagement. Rucker, a longtime firefighter, warned that narrowing or removing road access could slow fire and emergency response. He noted that several nearby apartment buildings use older balloon construction that can allow fires to move rapidly. He said emergency vehicles need clear and direct access.

Several residents who spoke during open time echoed those concerns. They cited petitions and neighborhood surveys showing opposition to roadway removal and expanded closures. Some urged the board to adopt the amendments to rebuild trust and ensure meaningful public input.

Majority Says Existing Policy Is Enough

A majority of commissioners argued the additional advisory requirement was unnecessary. Staff said the Park Board already has an engagement policy that requires assessing what level of public input is appropriate for each project. Larger capital projects also require public hearings under board rules.

Supporters said a new advisory committee would duplicate safeguards already in place and that engagement will continue under existing policy.

After rejecting the amendments, the board voted to approve the Mall resolution. Supporters described it as investigative rather than a final decision, saying it keeps long-term planning moving and allows coordination with upcoming Metropolitan Council work.

Ongoing Tension Over Parkway Closures

The board also approved the separate Open Parkways resolution. Supporters said temporary closures expand pedestrian and recreational access.

Continued on page 14

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CITY COUNCIL RENEWS HOTEL LIQUOR LICENSES AFTER HEATED DEBATE OVER ICE HOUSING

By Terry White



Minneapolis City Hall. (Image: Courtesy of the City of Minneapolis)

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

The Minneapolis City Council voted 8-5 to renew liquor licenses for two downtown hotels after weeks of debate over whether the businesses should be penalized for sheltering federal immigration agents.

some council members argued that the hotels' actions endangered workers and warranted further review. Others said there were no legal grounds to deny the licenses.

Voting against renewal were Council Members Aurin Chowdhury, Elliott Payne, Aisha Chugh-

ed testimony from hotel workers who said they felt unsafe at work and feared retaliation for speaking publicly. Some workers asked others to testify on their behalf.

At a Committee of the Whole meeting, workers described being told to avoid certain areas of the hotels and said a window was covered so agents would not see staff members. Chowdhury argued the situation raised potential civil rights concerns and said the city should create a secure way for workers to document incidents if Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents return.

Wonsley echoed those concerns, referring to "Occupation Metro Surge." She said approving the renewals without further review would amount to the council acting as a rubber stamp.

City officials said a review of 311 and 911 calls showed no documented safety concerns that would justify suspending the licenses. Council Vice President Osman and Council Members Michael Rainville and Jamison Whiting cited the lack of legal grounds as a deciding factor in their support for renewal.

Osman, however, cautioned businesses to "be careful" about whom they partner with to avoid similar controversy.

Several members, including Rainville, said the public dispute had already hurt downtown businesses. Council Member Linea Palmisano said the city should focus on revitalizing downtown.

Som council members also noted that the alleged conduct was unrelated to alcohol service. While the liquor licenses were renewed, the hotels' business licenses could still be reviewed when they come up for renewal in November.

Committee Assignments Spark Dispute

Appointments to boards and commissions also drew sharp disagreement.

Ward 7 Council Member Elizabeth Shaffer objected to be-

ing removed from the Meet Minneapolis Executive Committee, a seat traditionally held by the Ward 7 representative because the Minneapolis Convention Center is located in the ward.

Wonsley, Osman and Chowdhury argued tourism policy should not focus primarily on downtown. Shaffer said Payne had previously assured her she would hold the position and that the change was made the day before the meeting without notifying her.

Ward 4 Council Member LaTrisha Vetaw also criticized Payne, accusing him of misleading her about her appointment to the Municipal Building Commission. The seat instead went to Chughtai.

While Payne has authority to make appointment changes, Palmisano said he did not consult colleagues and was disproportionately favoring more left-leaning members of the council.

Chowdhury defended Payne, saying the organization is called

"Sharp divisions on the council are becoming the norm, not the exception."

"Meet Minneapolis," not "Meet Downtown," and urged colleagues to improve communication.

The council ultimately voted 7-6 to amend the agenda item and restore Shaffer to the Meet Minneapolis Executive Committee. Vetaw said she hoped Chughtai would be successful on the Municipal Building Commission, which negotiates with Hennepin County over city building operations.

The contentious debate continued a pattern of sharp divisions that have marked recent council meetings and suggested ongoing tensions at City Hall.

"What should have been routine became a flashpoint at City Hall."

"Worker safety, ICE activity and downtown's future collided in a single vote."

Chughtai, Robin Wonsley and Jason Chavez.

Chowdhury, who led the push to delay reconsideration of the renewals, became emotional during deliberations. She cit-

What is typically a routine renewal became a flashpoint as



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East Isles Update

Thank you to everyone pitching in to respond to this moment. Rent relief is a priority now—many residents can't even leave their homes. Whether you need resources or are looking for ways to help, visit eastisles.org/ice.

Half our board seats go up for election this spring! Voices from the renter and business communities are encouraged to join the table. Nominate yourself or others online by Apr. 13.

Save the dates for our Apr. 14 Annual Meeting and Apr. 18 Earth Day Cleanup! These are both great ways to meet your neighbors and get involved in East Isles. Monthly Lake Cleanups will start back up again in May.

Safety Walking Club continues to meet bi-monthly. You're invited get to know your neighbors, and put presence on the streets while picking up debris.

Uptown Farmers Market is seeking vendors for its 2026 season! Those interested in vending or volunteering can apply at uptownmarket.org.



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Visit eastisles.org/join to:

- 1 Donate** to support neighborhood events, resources and opportunities.
- 2 Subscribe** to our news and follow our social media to get updates on events and resources.
- 3 Join a Committee** to address green issues, safety, transit and more!



Community Sing
Mar. 7 Sat. 2 – 3:15 PM
Meet at Levin Triangle Park: 26th St & Irving Ave S
Meet neighbors and sing songs with a focus on community, resilience, and coming together.

East Isles Safety Walking Club
Mar. 7 • Apr. 4 • May 2 1st Sat. 3 – 4:30 PM
Meet at Levin Triangle Park: 26th St & Irving Ave S
Get outside, meet your neighbors, pick up litter and contribute to community safety and spirit!

East Isles Board Meetings
Mar. 10 • May 12 2nd Tues. 7 – 9 PM
Grace-Trinity Community Church: 1430 W 28th St

2026 Annual Meeting
Apr. 14 Tues. 6:30 PM social, 7 PM meeting
Grace-Trinity Community Church: 1430 W 28th St
A yearly event to gather together, hear from local leaders and vote for new East Isles board members. Nominate yourself or others now at eastisles.org!

Earth Day Cleanup
Apr. 18 Sat. 9:30 AM – 12 PM
Check-in: Euclid Pl & E Lake of the Isles footpath
All Lake of the Isles neighbors are invited! Free cleanup supplies, coffee and treats at check-in.

Lake of the Isles Cleanups
2nd Sat. May–Sept. 9:30 – 11:30 AM
Check-in: Euclid Pl & E Lake of the Isles footpath
All Lake of the Isles neighbors are invited! Cleanup gear and supplies are available at check-in.

Dates subject to change—visit eastisles.org for the latest.

WHY DO I WRITE?

Commentary by Marty Carlson



Paul Revere's 1770 engraving of the Boston Massacre transformed a moment of state violence into a spark for civic unity. In Boston, this image helped galvanize resistance. In Minneapolis today, it reminds us how communities have always pushed back when their neighbors are threatened. (Image: Library of Congress)

Marty Carlson is a regular contributor, attorney and senior policy aide to Council Member Elizabeth Shaffer. He lives in Kenwood.

February's issue of the Hill & Lake Press was inspiring to me.

The federal invasion of Minneapolis has no parallel in American history, and the degree to which our city has pulled together to resist this onslaught will be remembered long after we are gone.

We're winning, at least for the moment, but the fight is painful. It has already cost lives and it has cost others their liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Reading the many excellent articles, which I hope readers found valuable, made me want to answer a question no one has ever asked: Why do I write?

The short answer is Boston and the American Revolution.

As many of you know, I've been writing for the paper for a number of years, contributing articles on topics ranging from Park Board policy to City Council actions to my last opinion piece, in which I argued, compellingly I think, that I was sad my dog had died.

But why write at all? Truthfully, the answer is Boston and the American Revolution.

What? That sounds nuts and, dare I say, kind of pretentious. Perhaps. But it's nonetheless true.

In 2020, the year before I started writing, we ran headlong into the

pandemic, and that coincided with my son's college search.

On-campus visits were cut short and the world shrank to the field of view of a Zoom camera. Eventually there was a vaccine, and cautiously we're able to poke our heads out of our houses like moles blinking in the sunlight.

It was during that time that we toured colleges in Massachusetts, starting and ending in Boston. The college tours were fine and did not make me yearn for those thrilling days of yesteryear.

But when they were over, I had a chance to explore streets and neighborhoods that were largely devoid of people, but not devoid of history.

Boston is teeming with history, much of it revolutionary.

You can walk the Freedom Trail, covering the site of the Boston Massacre, Paul Revere's house, Copp's Burying Ground and ending at Bunker Hill.

My wife often complains that no vacation is complete without a visit to a church, a cemetery and an old boat.

That's, sadly, true.

But in Boston the church is Old North, where patriots hung lanterns, "one if by land and two if by sea."

The cemeteries hold the bones of Paul Revere, Phillis Wheatley and signers of the Declaration of Independence. And the old boat is the USS Constitution, the oldest warship still afloat.

But it's the words that matter. Boston was known as the Cradle of Liber-

ty, not just for physical bravery, "brave it was," but for revolutionary ideals eloquently expressed.

John and Abigail Adams, his fiery cousin Samuel Adams, the remarkable Phillis Wheatley, Mercy Otis Warren and others all contributed to a free and rich exchange of ideas that helped galvanize an incipient nation into action.

Perhaps my favorite artifact is the bookshop of the twenty-something Henry Knox, whose intellect drew the attention of Gen. George Washington and whose ingenuity and stamina saw dozens of artillery pieces hauled hundreds of miles in winter over the Berkshire Mountains from Fort Ticonderoga through Springfield to Dorchester Heights overlooking Boston Harbor.

There, on the high ground in 1776, they forced the British into retreat, marching down Boston's Long Wharf, never to return. But it started with books. Henry Knox was a bookseller before the cannons and before the U.S. gold depository was named after him.

Today, the building that housed Knox's bookshop is immaculately preserved as a historic site. It's also a Chipotle.

I have wondered for years what to make of that discrepancy, and as I finally reduce my thoughts to writing, I still don't know. But I do know that Henry Knox rose to the occasion and distinguished himself in a way that's remembered 250 years later.

Ideas drove the Revolution, bloody and awful though it was, and it's those ideas, acted upon, that sustain us today.

After visiting Boston's historic sites, I often spent evenings reading about those remarkable people and the power of their expression. And it nudged me into a more public life.

It's not that I hadn't engaged in public-interest work. I had, and I am proud of my record. It just never crossed my mind to write personally to an elected official or to express my opinion as an ordinary citizen.

I simply didn't think anyone would care. It's an attitude that's very Gen X — we're the latch-key kids of the 80's — and which leaves me deeply impressed by the chutzpah of the Gen Z'ers who have organized (truly impressively), run for office, and who have turned youth into an attribute.

But that wasn't my experience. Still, when the Park Board proposed closing the parkway in front of my church, I thought — in all seriousness — of the revolutionaries in Boston,

and I sharpened my pencil and wrote a letter. I didn't really expect it to matter, but that letter found its way out into the larger neighborhood, somehow to this paper, and then onto the front page.

People liked it, and they asked me to keep writing.

So I've kept at it ever since. We're nothing without an informed and engaged citizenry, and if I can play a small, extremely parochial part in that, it feels like a good use of my time.

Since the ICE invasion, I have been absolutely blown away by the coordination, generosity and bravery of Minneapolis residents.

You cannot throw a stick around here without hitting someone who's been shadowing ICE vehicles, blowing a whistle, delivering groceries, helping with schooling or providing some other meaningful support. The teachers are stunning, the twenty-somethings are fierce and the lawyers in my life are albeit in a good way.

This is the spirit of America.

Though the ghosts of patriots past nudged me to engage, it's the broad swath courage of our fellow citizens that gives me hope.

The Trump administration had a plan. They thought that if they pushed us, we would burn down our own city again. They would invoke the Insurrection Act and use us as a laboratory for the future.

Instead, we fought back with cameras, whistles, frog costumes and, fab-

“Bullies can't withstand sustained resistance, and mockery makes them wilt.”

ulously, dildos. Bullies can't withstand sustained resistance, and mockery makes them wilt.

It's far too soon to say this matches the British getting frog-marched down Long Wharf in 1776, but it's not to say that it does not.

Freedom requires critical thought, eloquent expression, physical courage, sacrifice and nearly unending stamina.

I hope Minneapolis hasn't cornered the market on those attributes, but we've them in abundance, and I've never been more proud to be part of this multitude we call home.



Hill & Lake Press

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



• East Bde Maka Ska Neighborhood Association (EBMSNA)



• Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)



• Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association (LHNA)



• East Isles Neighborhood Association (EINA)



• Kenwood Neighborhood Organization (KNO)



• West Maka Ska Neighborhood Council (WMSNC)

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS: HOW NEIGHBORS ARE MEETING THE MOMENT

By Nancy Rand



A pantry set up in a Lowry Hill resident's garage for immigrant school students and their families. Volunteers collect grocery lists, put a call out for specific items and then volunteers shop and deliver groceries from the pantry including personal hygiene products and culturally specific foods. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernet)

“This crisis will end, but the trauma will be long-lasting.”

Nancy Rand is a physical therapist. She's lived in Lowry Hill since 1979.

My neighborhood did not get our daily paper for almost three weeks. After one week of calling the Strib and being told, “We have no way of contacting your carrier,” and replying, “Yes you do. May I speak with your supervisor?” I relayed that our neighborhood would like the Strib to continue paying our carrier during this crisis.

I then sent an email to neighbors and asked them to forward it. They did. I started getting responses from people I didn't know but who truly cared about our carrier. They offered financial support and an attorney offered legal help.

Because our carrier always left us a holiday greeting card, I had his address. I went to his house and learned he had indeed been taken away and sent to Texas. His family already had grocery help, so our group is helping them pay their rent. They cannot go to the bank and I felt like an undercover agent delivering cash. I have since learned he is back home and working at his other job. Someone else has taken over the paper route.

I am also providing groceries for a family in a suburb. They asked for jalapeño peppers. This octogenarian Norwegian-German American was not sure what they looked like and couldn't even spell the word and had to ask my daughter for help.

She laughed and told a friend who knew a Danish newspaper reporter looking for a story about Minnesota grassroots volunteerism. The reporter called me and now there is a funny story about jalapeños in a Danish newspaper.

This crisis will end, but the trauma will be long-lasting. Those of us who do not have to worry about where we will sleep or eat can still help

“Those of us who do not have to worry about where we will sleep or eat can still help others.”

others. There are many ways to speak up for justice and I am proud of how our state has mobilized to insist the Constitution remains the law we must follow.

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

“I live on the block where Renee Good was shot and I was tear-gassed when I went outside to find out what had happened. Later, I photographed the arrival of Greg Bovino on our street, an image that went viral. I'm part of multiple safety networks that monitor ICE activity and warn others. I'm also part of a 'Boots on the Ground' team that shows up to document ICE actions and physically support affected individuals.”

—Jeanne

“I signed up with Neighbors Helping Neighbors after I learned that my paper delivery person had been detained. Through NHN, I've had the pleasure of delivering groceries to three households for the past several weeks.

My experience started slowly, reaching out to families while learning language translation technology. Once the connections were made, we built trust, shared family stories and deeply experienced how all of us must keep resisting threats to our democracy. I've learned new skills and discovered new foods and gained an appreciation for what I have by spending time with a loving family of six living in a one-bedroom apartment. I am now part of the resistance and I'm proud of that.”

—Peggy

To read more testimonials, visit our website.

PARK BOARD ADVANCES PLANS AFTER HEATED DEBATE Page 10

Opponents raised concerns that closures could expand beyond current policy, which allows two events per month. Some speakers worried that increased closures could affect older adults, people with disabilities or residents who rely on vehicle access.

Commissioners did not announce any expansion of closure limits. Supporters said the resolution is aligned with existing policy and engagement processes.

A Divided Board

The 6-3 rejection of the Abene and Rucker amendments showed that most commissioners believe current engagement rules

are sufficient. The majority signaled confidence that safety, feasibility and public input can be addressed during implementation rather than through additional requirements at the front end.

Opponents focused on public safety and neighborhood trust.

By centering the debate on emergency access and fire response, they highlighted concerns about safety rather than traffic.

The Open Parkways vote also underscored a broader divide over the role of cars in Minneapolis park space. Supporters view temporary closures as part of a shift toward recreation and reduced car dominance. Critics

“The deeper divide is over the role of cars in our park spaces.”

warn that closures can limit access and create new inequities.

For residents watching the meeting, the takeaway is not only that the Mall and Open Parkways measures passed.

It is that the board majority appears unified and willing to move forward, even in the face of

organized opposition.

Similar debates over parkways and public space are likely to follow the same voting lines.



DELIVERING PAPERS, BEARING WITNESS

By Carla Pardue



Messages of love and support from local children on bags of groceries and other supplies being immigrant families who are afraid to they leave their homes or send their children to school. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernet)

“I may have been carrying stacks of paper. What people handed back to me was something far heavier and far more beautiful.”

Carla Pardue is the outreach coordinator for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in East Isles.

When I set out to deliver the February Hill & Lake Press with coverage of the ICE occupation last month, I thought I was simply dropping off newspapers. What I walked into instead was a city holding each other up.

All over Minneapolis, in coffee shops, on Eat Street, in the Wedge, the North Loop, Lyn-Lake and Lyndale, people welcomed the paper with a depth of feeling I did not expect. Baristas, shop owners and strangers

thanked me again and again for documenting what was happening in our city. Some cried. Sometimes I cried with them.

I kept hearing the same thing. Everyone has a role in this resistance. Some protest. Some deliver food. Some watch out for children. Some hold vigil. Some document. I never once felt like what I was doing was small.

People told me the paper mattered, that having a physical record mattered, that being seen in print made this moment real.

I visited the Alex Pretti memorial several times while delivering. I found the same feeling there. Grief, yes, but also unity.

No one asked who anyone voted for or what neighborhood they lived in. We were people trying to take care of one another. I have lived here a long time, and I have never felt Minneapolis come together quite like this.

At every stop, the papers disappeared faster than I could replenish them. People took them home, shared them with friends and brought them to their own communities so others could understand what was happening here. Not one shop turned me away. Not one person dismissed the work.

What stayed with me most was how often I heard one word: documentation. People

“What stayed with me most was how often I heard one word: documentation.”

told me they were grateful that our community had something solid and lasting. Not a viral clip and not something that could be edited or distorted.

A printed record of witness and testimony. Something future neighbors can hold in their hands and say, “This is what we lived through. This is who we were.”

I may have been carrying stacks of paper. What people handed back to me was something far heavier and far more beautiful. Proof that in the middle of fear, Minneapolis found its way to each other.

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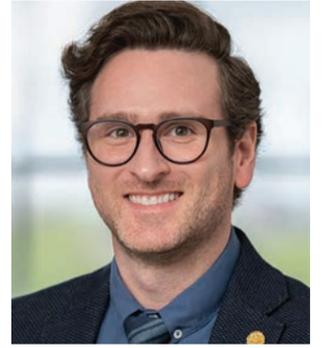
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Leslie Bush
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ARTISTS SPREAD THE ANTI-ICE MESSAGE ON POSTERS, CLOTHING AND SKIN

By Josie Owens



Left: Tattoo by Max Endorf (Image: Max Endorf)

Middle: Freshly upcycled art at Art Price Studio. (Image: Art Price Studio)

Right: Handmade red “Melt the ICE” hats are on display at Minneapolis yarn store Needle & Skein. (Image: Gilah Mashaal)

“The big sense of community doesn’t leave, and we are impacted even while living away.”

— Max Endorf

Josie Owens is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

Art as Protest and Record

What do artists do when injustice happens? They create powerful art to protest, record and share. We are reminded of the tragedy of George Floyd by the colorful murals memorializing him. They do not let us forget what happened. Now the heart-wrenching images of Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti have joined him.

Some artwork was carved in ice and snow, while other pieces serve as permanent visual records. Many artists offered their designs for protesters to wear and carry.

Printing for the Movement

Art Price Studio in northeast Minneapolis was especially busy. The instructions were simple: bring an item of clothing to have it printed with a design by a Minneapolis artist. About 150 volunteers operating 30 active print heads processed roughly 1,000 items each day.

The Minneapolis American Indian Center also hosted print pop-ups. A corollary benefit was the sense of community built while waiting in line. People learned about organized protests, ways to volunteer or simply commiserated.

Bench Pressed located in Seward had colorful art ready for purchase to raise mutual aid funds. Other screen-printing studios, including Afternoon Printing and Twin City Tees, joined in, while bars and coffee shops

hosted printing pop-ups to raise money for neighbors in need.

Knitting Resistance

Textile artists have also been busy. Paul Neary, a designer at Needle and Skein in St. Louis Park, was inspired by the Norwegian resistance movement during Nazi occupation in World War II.

Gnome-like red hats with tassels were worn to communicate solidarity and boost morale. The movement was so effective that the Nazis banned the hats. Signs read: “Wearing of these caps is forbidden beginning on Thursday, 26 February, 1942. From that day forward, the caps will be confiscated from whoever is wearing one.”

Neary saw a parallel to what he describes as the ICE occupation of Minneapolis and designed a “Melt the Ice” hat pattern, which he posted on Ravelry, a fiber arts platform.

The pattern was offered for \$5. As of Feb. 13, it had raised \$692,463 for immigrant aid agencies. Red yarn has become difficult to find in the Twin Cities. Those eager to knit or crochet a protest hat can visit needleandskein.com.

Inked in Solidarity

Some people chose to put protest art permanently on their bodies. Tattoo artist Max Endorf, a graduate of Perpich Center for Arts Education, Minnesota’s state arts high school, moved to Savannah, Georgia, to pursue his career.

Endorf said it has been difficult to be away from his home state during this period of unrest. He recently worked with a client who was also from Minnesota, and they shared what he described as a “weird, shared experience” of trying to reconcile news accounts with the city of neighborly love they knew.

The client initially wanted a tattoo with words expressing his emotions. Endorf, recognizing that iconography can communicate more quickly than text, designed an image of a fist symbolizing resistance and solidarity, barely contained within the outline of Minnesota. The client now bears a forearm tattoo that conveys a powerful message at a glance.

Endorf is relatively new to protest art but said he appreciates creating political tattoos

that evoke a strong message. He is receiving more requests, as are other tattoo artists, particularly for an image inspired by the “Star Wars” Rebel Alliance symbol in which the center spire is replaced with the Minnesota loon.



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A TIMELY EXHIBIT ARRIVES AT MIA: MODERN ART AND POLITICS IN GERMANY 1910 TO 1945

By Josie Owens



Georg Grosz's 1926 oil painting "Pillars of Society" skewers the German elite who backed the rise of fascism. Drawing on Dada and New Objectivity, Grosz uses sharp caricature to portray businessmen, clergy and generals as grotesque and self-serving. The work is part of the collection of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. (Image: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)

Josie Owens is a regular contributor. She lives in Lowry Hill.

A government official with excrement pouring from his head, military leaders gripping bloody weapons while a priest distracts from their actions, and a journalist wearing a chamber pot hat stand behind a judge with a swastika pin. Georg Grosz painted this gritty satire in 1926 as a rebuke to the Weimar Republic. "Pillars of Society" exposes what Bertolt Brecht called "the elite humanity as de facto pigs." It depicts those

"Berlin's masterpieces land in Minneapolis with a stark warning about power, propaganda and the perils of forgetting."

willing to look away as authoritarianism rises and rights disappear. It could be painted today in the United States.

This painting is one of more than 70 artworks traveling from Berlin to the Minneapolis Institute of Art. "Modern Art and Politics in Germany 1910 to 1945: Masterworks from the Neue Nationalgalerie" arrives at a moment when the United States urgently needs it. Once again Minneapolis stands at the forefront of exposing the mechanics of fascism.

These works were created in response to four decades of upheaval in Germany. The exhibition opens at the end of the German Empire and concludes with the rise of Nazism and the Second World War. Some pieces were later reconstructions when the originals were destroyed or damaged by artists who feared for their safety.

Several of Mia's own exceptional pieces appear alongside the loans, including Max Beckmann's triptych "Blind Man's Buff," Ernst Barlach's sculpture "The Avenger" and Käthe Kollwitz's seven woodcuts titled "War." The Walker Art Center has loaned Franz Marc's "The Large Blue Horses," painted in 1911. Marc served in the German army as a camouflage specialist and was killed at Verdun in 1914. Nazis later labeled him a degenerate artist and removed his work from museums.

It is a powerful and jarring exhibition. The colors, compositions and subject matter are often harsh and unsettling. They are meant to be. One should not soften the atrocities of history simply because time has passed. As George Santayana warned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." The artists fea-

tured risked their careers and their safety to expose and challenge the ideology of their time. They recorded events so the rest of humanity would remember.

The show's theme echoes in Mia's own Grosz painting, called "Remembering." After works like "Pillars of Society" made his life unsafe, Grosz fled to the United States in 1932. When he returned to Germany in 1935, he saw that people had ignored the warnings embedded in his art. "I was compelled by an inner warning to paint destruction and ruins," he later said. His 1937 self-portrait "Remembering," in which he cowers as destruction surrounds him, proved prophetic. World War II began two years later.



EXHIBITION INFORMATION

"Modern Art and Politics in Germany 1910 to 1945" runs March 7 to July 19.

General admission is \$20.
Contributor Member+ is free with additional tickets at \$16.
Youth 17 and under are free.
Public tours are offered at 2 p.m. Thursday – Sunday and at 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

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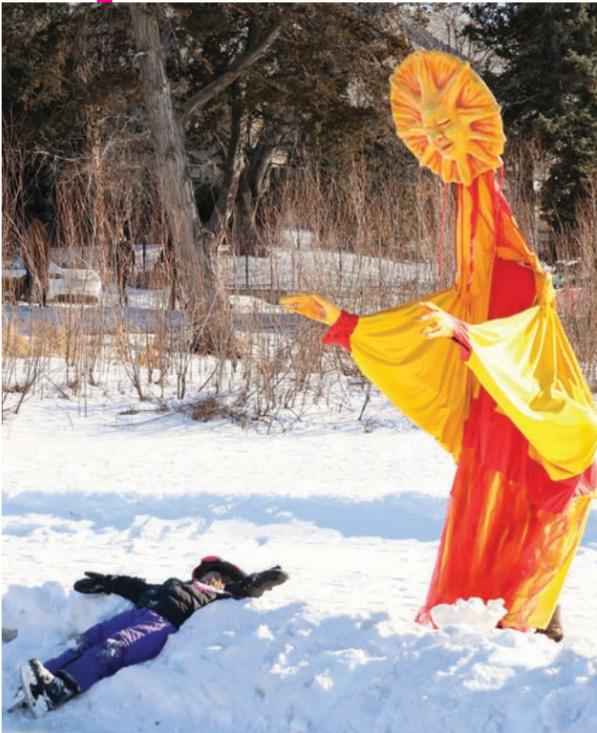
LAKE OF THE ISLES



On January 31, 2026, families gathered for the Lake of the Isles Ice Skating Party, celebrating winter with puppets from the recently relocated Hennepin Avenue-based In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater and warm treats from Isles Bun & Coffee. A collaborative effort by neighborhood organizations including Cedar-Isles-Dean, East Isles, East Bde Maka Ska, Kenwood, Lowry Hill and West Bde Maka Ska that led to laughter, skating and larger-than-life characters made it a picture-perfect Minneapolis tradition. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



ICE SKATING PARTY



“ICE OUT 4 GOOD”: ART, VIGIL AND COMMUNITY RESOLVE IN KENWOOD

By John Larsen

John Larsen is a community volunteer. He lives in Kenwood.

We said yes.

On Jan. 29, just days after Alex Pretti's murder and 17 days after Renee Good's voice was silenced, Hill & Lake Press editor Craig Wilson texted to ask whether we would host a re-created snow sculpture that had been censored elsewhere for being “too political,” referencing ICE OUT.

Our answer was immediate. Yes. We would be honored.

Like so many neighbors, we had been looking for a way to do more. Across Minneapolis, people were delivering food to families afraid to leave their homes. Fundraisers were lifting up immigrant-owned businesses hit hard by ICE's presence.

Neighbors stood watch near schools and alerted teachers and families when armed men in masks appeared. Many gathered in protest and vigil. Our community was showing up, yet many of us still felt powerless. Hosting art on our own land felt like a way to reclaim some agency.

Poet and neighbor Heid Erdrich shared her vision.

Artists would re-create the sculpture on private property, safe from official demolition, and we would hold a candlelight vigil with local poets. My husband, Mike Stewart, and I were all in. A flyer announced a 6 p.m. vigil the following Saturday, timed to coincide with the Luminary Loppet in hopes of a symbiotic relationship.

The next day two teams of artists arrived: Beez in the Schneez, led by Heather Friedli, and Dusty Thune of House of Thune. We chose a highly visible site and, ultimately, created two sculptures. One was a mash-up of the destroyed competition pieces.

The second sculpture was a memorial wall to honor all victims of ICE. Friedli, who conceived the memorial, said “While the full list includes hundreds of names, I could only include a few from this past year and felt it important to emphasize BIPOC community victims.”

Snow was packed into large rectangular forms and the artists began to carve them into shape.

For a week, the artists worked in bitter cold.

We kept a fire going as neighbors stopped by, sharing stories of fear, resolve and solidarity. Thune later said, “It was really emotional having all the people stopping and talking, sharing their stories of what's been going on in the community and how it has impacted them. It felt like a larger community all looking to put their best talents to use to speak out.”

Each morning we were relieved to see the sculptures untouched. As interest grew, we created a Linktree page and installed a custom sign, designed by artist Tristan Thiel, so visitors could learn about the vigil.

Warm weather arrived just before the event. The primary sculpture was wrapped in foil blankets to preserve it, while the memorial was left uncovered so visitors could read the names inscribed there.

In Many Languages, One Message

We planned a program that included silence, artists' reflections, a reading of Renee Good's poetry and poems by local writers including Erdrich. We added songs and luminaria.

In Kenwood Park across the street, volunteers arranged 240 luminaria bags to spell ICE OUT 4 GOOD. Many brought their own candles, and despite the wind, the words glowed across the field.

We also spoke the name of the sculpture in as many languages as possible. The vigil opened in Dakota and Anishinaabe, with call and response from the crowd. Community members spoke in Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic and several Eastern European languages.

A Somali friend, fearful of attending in person, taught us how to say the phrase in Somali. We were reminded that some languages remained unspoken that night out of respect for those who felt unsafe to gather.

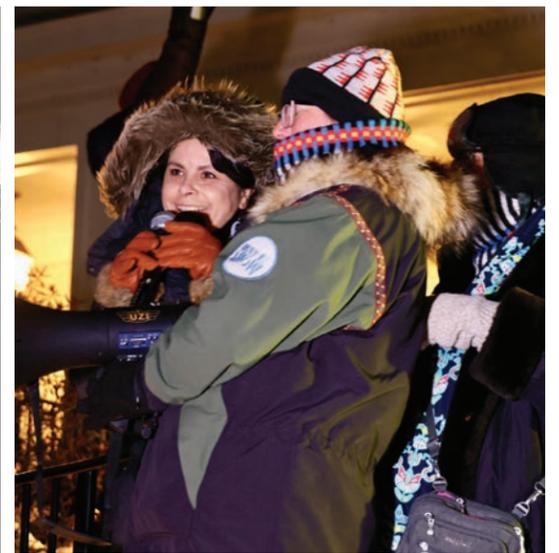
About 500 neighbors attended. Coverage followed from MPR and The New York Times, among others.

A Community Bound by Light and Love

Thune reflected, “It was powerful in that Renee Good's voice was silent yet her message kept speaking on, maybe louder than ever. Putting that sculpture there in Minneapolis was meaningful for me coming from St. Paul. There's always been rivalry, but we're all in it together now. Creating the sculpture felt like I was able to offer some peace, unity and love to our cities.”

We are deeply grateful to everyone who came and to those who made the vigil possible: Heid Erdrich, Heather Friedli, Dusty Thune, Tristan Thiel, Thomas Reprographics, Mary Flood and most of all my husband, Mike, who watched over the sculptures and kept artists and neighbors warm and fed.

We hope each act, however small, brings us closer to decency, kindness, rule of law and respect for constitutional rights. The vigil helped us. It reminded us what community looks like. And it made us proud of Kenwood, the Twin Cities and Minnesota.





(Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)



MEMORIAL WALL HONORING ALL VICTIMS OF ICE

- Herber Sanchaz Dominguez
- Parady La
- Victor Manuel Diaz
- Luis Beltran Yamez-Cruz
- Lorenzo Antonio Batrez Vargas
- Abellardo Avellenada-Degado
- Brayan Rayo-Garzon
- Serawit Gezahen Detene
- Chowfeng ge
- Johnny Noviello
- Juan Alexis Tineo Martinez
- Luis Gustavo Nunez Caceres
- Maksym Chernyak
- Renee Good
- Alex Pretti
- Isidro Perez
- Ten xuan phan
- Jesus Molina-Veya
- Marie Ange Blaise
- Ngon ngoc Nguyen
- Genry Ruiz Guillen
- Huabing Xie

SENDING AN SOS FROM BDE MAKA SKA

Photography by Courtney Cushing Kiernat

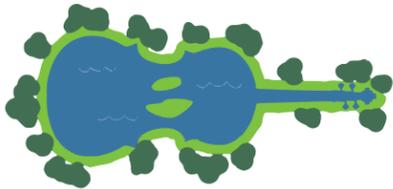


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FIGHTING ICE WITH ICE

By Susan Lenfestey



(Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat, Brian Mogren and Susan Lenfestey)

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

Normally this is the time of year when I am in a post-Luminary Loppet glow, looking at photos of the candlelit evening like newlyweds poring over their wedding pictures and basking in the warmth of the community that made it happen.

But this year was different. Not just because the weather cooperated and Ice Henge and Ice Cropolis took hold on foot-thick lake ice, and the water-filled buckets and balloons froze into lanterns right on schedule, and the Enchanted Forest grew more ice mushrooms and hearts and flowers than ever before.

It was different because this was the year that ice fought ICE. The cruel boorishness of Metro Surge was met with resistance in many forms: protesting, protecting families, pursuing the goon squads and filming their assaults on innocent people, and with ice. Good Minnesota ice.

With a fresh snow cover and deep freeze temperatures, frozen lakes and lawns became our canvases, candles our brushes and the love of ice our secret sauce.

Hardy denizens of the luminary city spelled out messages on the lawn of the State Capitol and on lakes from Nokomis to Bde Maka Ska, holding candles and sometimes each other to form messages to the gods, or at least to passengers in planes lumbering overhead on their flight path to MSP: ICE OUT NOW. SOS. NO ICE.

Then there was the North Side Luminary Light Up, the brainchild of north side resident Brian Mogren, who transformed the summer garden beds in the Old Highland Peace Gar-

den into winter beds of candlelit ice. More on Mogren's efforts on page 5.

Ice Artists Are a Unique Breed

The crew of ice makers at the Enchanted Forest, of which I am one, has always had a Zen-like synchronicity, quietly working on our own pieces in a common space and knowing that a hand or a tool will be given if needed. This year we worked with a different

“We worked with a different spirit this year — more reverent than festive, and with what I can only call love.”

spirit, more reverent than festive, and with what I can only call love.

That night thousands of people made their way past the ice tablets and memorials, up the hill of hearts, through the mushroom patch and past the field of frozen flowers and icy hands and a rising loon and miniature pyramids. Their faces reflected the same joy and reverence and love that we had put into creating them.

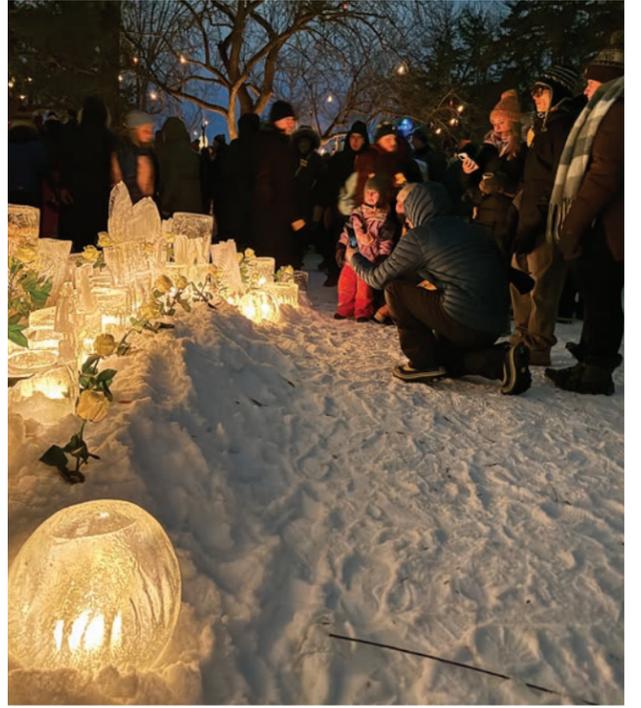
The Thaw

When we returned the next morning many of the candles were still burning. The thaw finally took its toll and the memorials melted away.

We in the luminary city are not fooled by a thaw. We know the ice is still on our lakes as surely as ICE is still in our streets. We know we cannot bake-sale our way out of this crisis. We need reparations from the federal government to pay for the economic damage inflicted by its illegal and costly incursion, and we know that will not happen.

But we also know we will defeat ICE by each of us doing what may feel like the tiniest part. Joined with the efforts of many, those small acts create a powerful whole, like the alchemy of turning water into ice, so clear that light shines through it and so strong we can stand on it together.





NICO'S TACOS

YOUR 2026 IRON BARTENDER CHAMPIONS ARE THE NEAT FREAKS FROM NICO'S TACOS

By Jason Suss



Nico's Tacos serves up a wide assortment of award-winning cocktails alongside authentic Mexican favorites. Pictured at right: Birria Tacos — three quesabirria tacos de borrego (lamb) with rich consommé for dipping, a staple in their homeland of Michoacán. (Images: Nico's Tacos)

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.

Now let's back up.

Each year, the United States Bartenders' Guild Twin Cities chapter hosts a charity competition called Iron Bartender.

Teams from bars across the metro area — including Wayzata, Rochester and Mankato — compete tournament-style at Amsterdam Bar and Hall in St. Paul.

Each round, teams receive a secret ingredient and have eight minutes to prepare four servings of a cocktail using it.

Three drinks go to judges for evaluation. The fourth is auctioned to the audience along with a gift card to the competing bar.

Proceeds benefit the Help the House Foundation, a local nonprofit that supports restaurant workers facing health, financial or other hardships.

This year's event raised more than \$20,000.

**“Eight minutes.
One secret
ingredient.
Four cocktails.
Nico's
delivered.”**

Nico's Tacos took the title.

Competitors were challenged to incorporate ingredients such as chamoy squeeze candy, Dairy Queen Dilly Bars and “buzz button” flowers grown at Cheeky Harvest, an indoor vertical farm in St. Paul.

Nico's created inventive, balanced cocktails each round, earning top marks from the judges.

You may not immediately think of Nico's as a cocktail destination, but the team proved otherwise.

Nico's has three locations — Como, South Minneapolis and Uptown at Hennepin Avenue and 25th Street.

The drink menu features roughly 10 margarita variations along with a broader selection of creative cocktails and several mocktails.

A recent tamarind margarita was savory with a subtle heat. Many drinks arrive in playful, festive glassware.

The décor is equally spirited. The Como location leans fully into Valentine's themes throughout February.

The Uptown restaurant transforms seasonally from November through January. The brand has embraced the holiday pop-up trend with enthusiasm.

The food menu reflects classic taqueria fare. Diners can choose from roughly 18 taco varieties and seven salsas, along with enchiladas, sopes, nachos and tamales.

“From barbacoa and carnitas to birria and lengua, Nico's menu spans tradition and creativity.”

Traditional fillings such as barbacoa, carnitas, shrimp and chicken tinga share the menu with scallops, birria, lengua, nopales and mixed mushrooms.

Nico's also offers catering, private event space and guided tequila and mezcal tastings paired with dinner.

As this is written in mid-February, many restaurant owners remain cautiously optimistic about easing tensions in the area.

Still, the economic strain of recent months has been significant, and many neighborhood restaurants are struggling.

If you are looking for ways to help, consider supporting local restaurant relief efforts. But the simplest and most effective way to make a difference is straightforward: Go!



NICO'S TACOS & AGAVE BAR

LOCATIONS:

UPTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

2516 Hennepin Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55405
(612) 345-7688

50TH AND PENN

4959 Penn Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55419
(612) 216-1188

ST. PAUL

2260 Como Ave
St Paul, MN 55108
(651) 450-8848

MORE INFO & MENU:

nicostacobar.com

info@nicostacobar.com



HEID ERDRICH

By David Piper



Heid Erdrich (Image: Angie Erdrich)

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

Heid Erdrich was born in Breckenridge, Minnesota, and raised in Wahpeton, North Dakota, to an Ojibwe mother and German American father.

She is Ojibwe and enrolled with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Both of her parents taught at a Native boarding school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

One of her seven siblings is Pulitzer Prize-winning author Louise Erdrich, owner of the independent bookstore Birchbark Books in Kenwood. Her sisters Lise and Angela are also authors, and Angela, who lives nearby, is a pediatrician.

Erdrich graduated from Dartmouth College and holds two master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University and a doctorate from Union Institute. She and her husband live in Kenwood.

In addition to writing nine books of poetry and prose, Erdrich has received numerous accolades, most recently the 2025 Camille Gage Fellowship Award, which honors Minnesota artists who have demonstrated a legacy of service through their art and activism.

She said she is especially proud of this award because Camille Gage was a musician and

writer and what Erdrich called an "extraordinary force" for the environment, women's reproductive rights and people experiencing homelessness.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What piqued your interest in poetry and activism?

That's so interesting. At first poetry was not something I thought of as political, just as a young person, a teenager. Then I began to read poets like Tom McGrath, who I didn't understand at the time, but I understood there was something political about it. I read women poets like Plath and Sexton, as many people did, and thought they were powerfully speaking to being a woman in a way I'd never heard.

By the time I was in college, I was more interested in poetry as a political response and a way of thinking about the world and reaching others through poetry.

How did you end up in Minneapolis?

In 1990 my husband and I were driving to get married in North Dakota. We stopped to visit a friend in St. Paul and went to get coffee at the original Dunn Bros., and it was the best coffee we'd ever had. I looked around and every kind of person was in there, every race, every walk of life. There were Native people there, which we didn't see in Baltimore where we met. I said, "Can we move to St. Paul?" My husband said sure. I said, "Let's do it."

What do you do for fun in Minneapolis, and what interests you about your neighbors?

I'm somebody who walks in our parks. That's the great joy, to see the same animals and trees and lakes. That's important to me.

I'm always curious about the creatures or trees that are my neighbors' favorites. I wonder if there's some place they like to go. I really love the crows in the neighborhood. I kind of know some of them by sight and sound. I also really enjoy the muskrats. I always wonder who else has a relationship with these living beings

that share our space.

Do you write poetry when you're inspired on the spot, or do you have a set time when you write?

I'm super undisciplined. I often get ideas for poetry when I'm out for a walk, traveling or looking out a car or plane window. I tuck those away mentally and occasionally on paper. Sometimes I'll email myself something.

If something keeps coming back to me, I'll catch and keep the voice and shape of it. I'll have a kind of synesthesia where I see a physical shape, such as a creek under a bridge, a spiral or a pocket, and then I let the image hold the poem. When I go back to think of that shape, the poem comes back. That's my strange way of doing it, meandering to find something. I do have studio time, but not every day.

I'll go through a productive period and then take a break. I also do a lot of other work to support myself, and that can be distracting. I care about my community. We're in a crisis right now, and supporting other artists and individuals is a huge part of my daily life.

Do you write alone, with friends or through crowdsourcing?

I usually write my own work alone. However, for the poet laureate project and for this iteration of Poetry Service Announcement, promoting poetry as public art, I am writing crowdsourced poems. I communicate with people and we make a little poem together. Then I incorporate it into a larger poem using sometimes hundreds of people's words. I ask questions, they answer, and whatever they say most often gets into the poem.

Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of society, including Native American society?

I think we're at a real turning point for our governance and how free we will be in the future. I'm not tremendously optimistic, but maybe I'm more of a realist than a pessimist. I know there's going to be struggle, and I know I'm going to see people harmed. I want to do what I can to protect the people I

love and the larger community.

I have a lot of faith in the way Minneapolis helps one another, and we're seeing that now. It's extraordinary. We have tenacity and the will to hold on to the city we love. I see neighbors responding to neighbors, which is the most beautiful thing.

Native nations are being tested now too. I'm paying attention to the ways Native nations are being asked to understand our legal position and respond to national forces. The proving ground is here because there are so many Native people in Minneapolis. I've never seen people respond with more creativity. We know how to do mutual aid, and we will continue doing it.

After this interview, you worked with a team of artists and neighbors who created a snow sculpture near Lake of the Isles. Tell us about that.

I had been planning to create some kind of poetry-infused memorial to Renee Good and was in conversation with Heather Friedli, a current artist in the parks. Heather's work is extraordinary. I hoped we could have something ready so people would see it in our neighborhood for the Loppet, but we were just in the planning stages. Then Alex Pretti was killed.

Not long after these terrible losses, two snow-sculpting teams had their work destroyed because of anti-ICE messages. Their work was defaced and disqualified by organizers of two different competitions. I contacted Heather to see if she could create a response in our neighborhood.

My yard is too small and not very visible, so I spent a morning asking around. Because our neighbors are amazing, by afternoon Heather and I were in the yard of generous hosts. She and her team, along with snow sculptor Dusty Thune and his team, went to work. "ICE Out 4 Good" was ready in a week.

We organized a vigil with poetry and song, and 200 neighbors appeared carrying luminaria that were later placed to spell "ICE Out!" It was solace and magic in our coldest days.



Friends.
Neighbors.
Architects.



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LOCAL FILMMAKERS LAND NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT WITH JESSIE DIGGINS DOCUMENTARY

By Courtney Cushing Kiernat



Lars and Torsten Brinkema released their full-length documentary about Jessie Diggins and her mental health struggles on NBC's Peacock. (Left image: Sawyer Brice; Right image: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

Courtney Cushing Kiernat is the staff photographer for the Hill & Lake Press. She lives in Kenwood.

Growing up near Bde Maka Ska, brothers Torsten and Lars Brinkema never imagined their love of Nordic skiing would lead to their first feature-length film streaming on Peacock. Their documentary, *Threshold: The Untold Story of Jessie Diggins*, which had a Feb. 23 debut and chronicles the rise of the most accomplished cross-country skier in United States history.

A Local Path to a National Story

Torsten and Lars, both in their early twenties, merged their lifelong connection to skiing with a growing talent for filmmaking. During the 2023–24 World Cup season, they gained unprecedented access to the U.S. Ski Team and to Jessie Diggins herself.

“We turned to the sport we knew best, and the rest fell into place in a way we never could have predicted,” Torsten said.

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The film is executive produced by actor and skier Patrick Dempsey. It showcases the physical intensity of elite cross-country skiing while revealing a deeper narrative about Diggins’ mental health and eating-disorder journey.

A Story Beyond the Ski Trails

What began as an inside look at an Olympic athlete expanded when Diggins decided to discuss her experiences with mental health and recovery on camera.

“We developed a deep friendship and trust with Jessie, and as soon as she opened

up about her mental health struggles and her willingness to share them, we knew this was the story we had to tell,” Torsten said.

As Diggins’ career accelerated, so did the pressures that shaped her private life. She sought treatment at The Emily Program, a Minnesota-based eating-disorder recovery center. The Emily Program Foundation and the National Alliance for Eating Disorders partnered with the Brinkemas to support the film’s educational outreach.

“I hope people who are struggling feel less alone and more empowered to ask for help.”

“Eating disorders have so much stigma, shame and guilt attached to them,” Diggins said. “I hope the film sparks conversations that remove that stigma. I hope people who are struggling feel less alone and more empowered to ask for help.”

Young Filmmakers, Unusual Access

The Brinkemas have been on the road promoting the film, including time spent in Italy during the Winter Olympics. They readily acknowledge how improbable this success is for a debut project.

“We’ve had a false sense of confidence that carried us from the start of production all the way to the Peacock deal,” Torsten said. “If I had known how hard it is for a small, independent filmmaker to be acquired by a streaming service, I probably would’ve lost hope. We now have the false confidence to make another film.”

Threshold began streaming on Peacock on Feb. 23 and is expected to screen in theaters in spring or summer 2026.

If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, call 1-866-662-1235.



INSIDE THE EMILY PROGRAM

Founded in Minnesota in 1993, The Emily Program has become one of the country’s most respected eating disorder treatment systems, serving adolescents and adults across Minnesota and five other states. The program offers residential, partial hospitalization and outpatient care rooted in evidence based therapies.

Jessie Diggins sought treatment through the program during the height of her competitive career, a decision she has described as lifesaving. Her openness in the film has elevated public awareness of the program and the broader need for accessible mental-health resources.

What They Treat -

- Anorexia nervosa
- Bulimia nervosa
- Binge-eating disorder
- Atypical and mixed-presentation eating disorders

Why It Matters Now -

Across the United States, eating-disorder diagnoses have risen sharply in recent years, especially among young adults and women. The film’s release is expected to increase referrals and encourage early intervention.

How to Find Help -

For support or screening, call the **National Alliance for Eating Disorders** at **1-866-662-1235**.



EVIL

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,

Two days after Alex Pretti was killed and two weeks after Renee Good suffered the same fate, I heard Sen. Rafael Warnock of Georgia interviewed and he said something that haunted me: “Evil always goes too far, containing the seed of its own destruction.”

It is hard not to sense evil in these killings.

I have long been fascinated by the concept of evil. As a philosophy major in college, we often discussed good and evil, and it was always engrossing.

The best sermon I have ever heard was long ago. I was 27, and the day before I had driven up from St. Louis to move back to Minnesota, a hellish trek of boredom and heat. It was August and my car, a 1972 Dodge Dart, had no air conditioning. I arrived at my parents’ house outside Northfield late Saturday evening, planning to stay for a few weeks until I could move into my house in St. Paul.

The next morning at 7 a.m., my mother demanded, “Get up, Dorothy, we’re going to Mass.” Nooooo! was all I thought, but I said nothing because going to church was nonnegotiable in my parents’ house. I consoled myself knowing that the 7:30 service was the shortest one, in and out, and I could return and go back to bed.

It was business as usual until the priest said that day’s sermon would be delivered by the deacon, a young seminarian named Lee, younger than I was. I wrote him off, confident that whatever he had to say would be lame and I could zone out. I was wrong.

Deacon Lee began by asking for a show of hands of anyone who had been to Itasca State Park, the headwaters of the Mississippi River. Hands shot up, including mine, and I recalled one of those standard Minnesota summer vacations up north where I “jumped across the Mississippi River.”

He continued: “Think of this as your infancy. It’s small, gentle, life is easy.” I was perking up. “Now imagine yourself in a canoe going down the river. At first it’s simple, as childhood should be. You paddle downstream and when you’re tired you pull over to one side or the other to rest. After a while, however, the river gets wider and more complicated, like life. One day you’re tired in the middle of the river, needing rest. But you realize it’s the last day you can choose one side or the other. After that, you’ll need to hug one shore and remain close to that side. It’s up to you which side you choose. So, it is with good and evil.”

By then I was wide awake. Deacon Lee had just explained the essence of free will.

Evil is never necessary. It is always a choice.

I recently watched “Hitler and the Nazis: Evil on Trial,” a documentary series on Netflix. It was riveting, a semester’s worth of education packed into six one-hour episodes. I had long known that Adolf Hitler wanted to be an artist, applied to the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and was rejected twice. He was not without talent. While he could render buildings skillfully, he could not draw people.

Think about great portraitists such as Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci and John Singer Sargent. They captured their subjects’ souls. Perhaps Hitler’s was already hardened, like the concrete structures he favored, and he could not see or imagine other people’s souls.

It is a choice not to see others’ humanity, to disregard someone else’s happiness or freedom

or even life. We can always see a person’s humanity if we want to, if we try.

Hitler did not seek out smart, critical-minded people who could think ethically and engage with him in truth-seeking. Instead, he courted the disenfranchised, unemployed, uneducated and angry young men who became known as the Sturmabteilung, or Brownshirts, notable for their street violence against “the other.” Hitler gave them voice, purpose and extremism, the seed that led to his destruction and theirs.

In his bunker with Eva Braun, his wife of fewer than 24 hours, after Adolf tested the potency of a cyanide pill on his beloved dog, Blondi, they took cyanide. He then shot himself. Some honeymoon.

Which side of life’s river do you choose? The side that celebrates human souls or the side that denies human souls to anyone who disagrees with you? However you would put it, choose wisely.

— Dorothy



Moral courage is requisite to meet the wrong and to proclaim the right.

— Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 327 —

MANY OF US FEEL IT.

We are living in a moral moment that is multiplying into a new movement, and is led by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

If you are weary, if you are carrying anger, fear, or grief, or simply need to sit in stillness, you are warmly invited to stop in to rest, reflect, repair, and renew.

**COMMUNITY PRAYER AND SHARE GATHERINGS:
Wednesday Evening Testimony Meetings**

Every Wednesday 7:30–8:30 pm

This contemplative service includes a Bible-based message for our community and time to hear from one another how prayer is moving lives forward—toward healing, justice, and peace.

**A REFUGE FOR THE HEART – A ROOM OPEN TO ALL:
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Bookstore Open: Tu, Wed, Th 12-6:30, Fri, Sat 10-1

A quiet, comforting place to pause, breathe, and pray for ourselves, our community, and the world. Find ideas to steady thought and strengthen courage. Take with you inspiration and resolve for the days ahead.

**SPECIAL EXHIBIT - MARCH, WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH: Mary Baker Eddy and more**

Come see our Women’s History Month exhibit focusing on Mary Baker Eddy. It also includes women of Minnesota whose moral courage led their work for justice, equality, healing, and more.

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SCENES FROM HILL & LAKE LAND



In Hill & Lake land neighbors are surviving, thriving and finding joy in the cold. From frozen trails to glowing ice art to everyday moments wrapped in wool, down and laughter, these snapshots capture the spirit that makes Minneapolis shine even in its coldest season. (Images: Courtney Cushing Kiernat)

